

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, B.A.

**Begin Campus:** World Campus

**End Campus:** World Campus

## Program Description

The Strategic Communications online degree, to be offered via the World Campus, explores the theories, methods, and tools used to structure persuasive messages. The major includes an overview of strategic communications principles and concepts that sets the stage for more advanced studies. Students learn about research and analytic techniques used to design and implement effective communication campaigns that are delivered via traditional and new media options. The use of digital technology and social media is emphasized. The program examines the dynamics of the political, legal, social, and cultural environments that interact to define a communication task or problem. Students also learn techniques to benchmark and evaluate the effectiveness of strategic communications programs and understand how they apply to internal and external constituencies. Students studying strategic communications will refine their critical thinking skills and explore the nature and source of the information message content, medium of delivery, and evaluation of the impact of the message on targeted groups. This program will be accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

## What is Strategic Communications?

The bachelor's degree in strategic communications explores a number of disciplines needed for developing and delivering effective content. These include generating an impactful, relatable message, selecting the best communication channels for proper message distribution, and evaluating communication efforts against established goals and benchmarks. Students have the opportunity to study psychology, statistics, law, research, and other disciplines that can be used to build a strong foundation for effective communication for any company or organization.

## You Might Like This Program If...

- You're a professional who wants to advance your career in strategic communications.
- You are looking to change to a communication-related career.

Strategic Communications offers an ideal course of study if you want to work in a dynamic environment, gathering and analyzing information to create targeted, comprehensive communication strategies to advance your organization's objectives.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-strategic-communications-bachelor-of-arts-degree/>)

## Direct Admission to the Major

Incoming first-year students who meet the program admission requirements are admitted directly into the major. Admission restrictions may apply for change-of-major and/or change-of-campus students.

For more information about the admission process for this major, please send a request to the college, campus, or program contact (listed in the Contact tab).

## Degree Requirements

**For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Strategic Communications, a minimum of 120 credits is required:**

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	29
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	35

**10 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 6 credits of GS courses; 4 credits of GQ courses.**

**3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.**

## Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
COMM 160	Basic News Writing Skills	1
COMM 230W	Writing for Media	3
COMM 428A	Principles of Strategic Communications	3
COMM 428B	Strategic Communications Law	3
COMM 428C	Strategic Communications in a Global Environment	3
COMM 428D	Research & Analytics	3
COMM 428E	Social Media Strategies	3
ECON 102	Introductory Microeconomic Analysis and Policy	3
PSYCH 100	Introductory Psychology	3
STAT 200	Elementary Statistics	4
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 3 credits from the following:		3
CC 401	Internal Communication	
CC 402	External Communication	
CC 490W	Seminar in Corporate Communication	
COMM 403	Law of Mass Communications	
COMM 405	Political Economy of Communications	
COMM 409	News Media Ethics	
COMM 412	Sports, Media and Society	
COMM 419	Comparative National Media in a Global Context	
COMM 495	Internship	

## Supporting Courses and Related Areas

*Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better*

Select 3 credits of COMM courses (other than COMM 100 or COMM 120) 3

## General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

### Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

### Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

## Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

## Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

## University Degree Requirements

### First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

### Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

## Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

## Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

## Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

## Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## B.A. Degree Requirements

**World Language** (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

**B.A. Fields** (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

**World Cultures** (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

## Learning Outcomes

### Professional Values and Competencies

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that graduates of accredited programs be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded

in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;

- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

## Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

## World Campus

### Undergraduate Academic Advising

100 Innovation Blvd  
Suite 225  
University Park, PA 16803  
814-863-3283  
[advising@worldcampus.psu.edu](mailto:advising@worldcampus.psu.edu)

## Career Paths

Successful graduates can expand their career opportunities in a variety of fields involving communications, and may have the opportunity to: analyze and manage advertising, public relations, and integrated marketing communications; develop and maintain relationships and communication with an organization's stakeholders; cultivate an organization's image and reputation; set goals and plan projects to help an audience retain a message; and conduct organized communications campaigns to influence the public image of a person or an organization, or to promote a product or initiative with maximum efficiency. Those skills can make graduates a valuable asset for businesses, corporations, government, and nonprofit organizations.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

(<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-strategic-communications-bachelor-of-arts-degree/>)

## Accreditation

The Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications is evaluated regularly by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, and the Bellisario College has consistently met the high standards of the organization that is dedicated to excellence in professional education in journalism and mass communications. For undergraduate students, accreditation most practically means that upper-level professional classes in each major will be conducted in rooms with 20 or fewer students.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACCREDITING COUNCIL ON EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS (<https://www.aejmc.org>)

## Contact

### World Campus

DEPARTMENT OF ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS  
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University Park, PA 16802  
814-863-2682  
[Michelle.Baker@psu.edu](mailto:Michelle.Baker@psu.edu)

<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-strategic-communications-bachelor-of-arts-degree> (<https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/degrees-and-certificates/penn-state-online-strategic-communications-bachelor-of-arts-degree/>)