

MASS COMMUNICATIONS

Graduate Program Head	Anthony Olorunnisola
Program Code	MASSC
Campus(es)	University Park (Ph.D.)
Degrees Conferred	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Dual-title Ph.D. in Mass Communications and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
The Graduate Faculty	View (https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/?searchType=fac&prog=MASSC)

The Ph.D. Program in Mass Communications is administered by the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications. The purpose of the program is to prepare graduates for entry into college and university teaching and research and for a variety of communications-related professions. The program emphasizes the following seven areas of academic strength around which graduate students and their committees may wish to organize the selection of courses and program plans:

- Critical and Cultural Media Studies
- International, Global and Development Communications
- History, Law, Government and Politics
- Media Effects
- Science, Health and Environmental Media
- Strategic Communications
- Telecommunications, Technology and Information Policy

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-admissions/how-to-apply/>). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

All students seeking admission to the program are required to submit Graduate Record Examination scores, official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended (<http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/new-applicants/requirements-for-graduate-admission/>), and three letters of recommendation from individuals qualified to comment on their ability to perform successfully at the doctoral level. In most cases, a completed master's degree is required for admission to the program. In addition, applicants are required to submit a formal statement indicating what they expect to achieve and how their educational background qualifies them for doctoral-level study in mass communications. Admission decisions are made by the college admissions committee.

The language of instruction at Penn State is English. English proficiency test scores (TOEFL/IELTS) may be required for international applicants. See GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/gcac-305-admission-requirements-international-students/>) for more information.

Applicants to the Mass Communications Ph.D. program must have a minimum TOEFL score of 600 on the paper-based test to be considered for admission.

Degree Requirements

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Students admitted to the doctoral program must complete a qualifying examination. For students with a master's degree or equivalent, this examination ordinarily will occur before the student has completed 10 credits of doctoral-level work. For individuals admitted with only a baccalaureate degree and no graduate-level work, the qualifying examination will be administered after 30 credits and before 40 credits of graduate-level work have been completed. The committee designated to conduct the examination will determine whether the student's knowledge of mass communications is adequate for doctoral-level study, specify what deficiencies, if any, must be removed, and pass judgment on a proposed plan of study.

The program requirements include both semesters of the Mass Communications Proseminar (COMM 501), a foundation course and other courses selected by the student, with committee approval, that collectively constitute a coherent sequence appropriate to the advanced study of mass communications. Students are expected to take a minimum of 20 credits in communications-related courses. No more than 6 credits can be taken as independent study credits. Students also are required to take at least one course in research methods approved by the Ph.D. committee.

Upon completion of the course work approved for the plan of study, the candidate will take a comprehensive examination. Following the comprehensive examination, doctoral candidates schedule a dissertation proposal meeting at which the research plan for their dissertation is reviewed and approved by their committee. Upon completion of the dissertation, doctoral candidates present a final oral defense of their dissertations before their committees.

The communication and foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. degree may be satisfied by intermediate knowledge of one foreign language or by an equivalent research skill relevant to the student's field of study.

Dual-Titles

Dual-Title Ph.D. in Mass Communications and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-titles/>).

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Mass Communications and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. Applicants interested in the dual-title degree program may make their interest known on their applications to Mass Communications. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Bulletin page (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/womens-gender-sexuality-studies/>). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in WGSS

prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Ph.D. in Mass Communications and WGSS is awarded only to students who are admitted to Mass Communications doctoral program and admitted to the dual-title degree in WGSS. To qualify for this dual-title, students must satisfy the requirements of the Mass Communications doctoral program, in which they are primarily enrolled, and of the WGSS dual-title program, the latter listed on the WGSS Bulletin page (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/womens-gender-sexuality-studies/>). Within this framework, final course selection is determined by the student and the CAS and WGSS advisers.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Students must meet the Ph.D. qualifying examination requirements specified by the Mass Communications program. The dual-title field must be fully integrated into the qualifying exam for the doctoral program of Mass Communications. The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree must include two Graduate Faculty members from the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. Although this is not normally anticipated, because dual-title students may require an additional semester to fulfill all requirements, the qualifying exam may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

PH.D. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-602-phd-committee-formation/>), the Ph.D. committee of a Mass Communications and WGSS dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least two members of the WGSS Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in WGSS, a member of the committee representing WGSS must be appointed as co-chair.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The WGSS faculty members on the student's committee will participate in developing and evaluating the student's comprehensive exams. The exam will incorporate written and oral components based on the student's areas of interest and specialization and may include questions on a variety of WGSS-related scholarship, perspectives, and/or theoretical concepts. It will follow the basic Comprehensive Exam process in the Mass Communications as described in the Graduate Handbook.

DISSERTATION AND FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION

The candidate must complete a dissertation and pass a final oral examination of that dissertation on a topic that reflects original research in both MASSC and WGSS to earn the dual-title Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Minor

A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>) and GCAC-700 Professional Degree Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>), depending on the type of degree the student is pursuing:

- GCAC-611 Minor - Research Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-611-minor-research-doctorate/>)
- GCAC-641 Minor - Research Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-641-minor-research-masters/>)
- GCAC-709 Minor - Professional Doctorate (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-709-professional-doctoral-minor/>)
- GCAC-741 Minor - Professional Master's (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-700/gcac-741-masters-minor-professional/>)

Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding/>) section of The Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/>) set by The Graduate School.

Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Communications (COMM) Course List (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/comm/>)

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to distinguish among the major perspectives, theoretical concepts, and professional associations of mass/mediated communications research.
2. Students will be able to design and complete an original research study in mass/mediated communications.
3. Students will be able to create a teaching portfolio that summarizes their teaching experience and skills in mass/mediated communications courses.
4. Students will present research at communications-related conferences and publish research in communications-related journals.
5. Students will engage in academic and leadership activities within the College, University, and Profession.

Contact

Campus	University Park
Graduate Program Head	Anthony Olorunnisola
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)	Anthony Olorunnisola
Program Contact	Anthony Olorunnisola 201 Carnegie Bldg. University Park PA 16802 axo8@psu.edu (814) 863-7997
Program Website	View (http://comm.psu.edu/ graduate/)