



Public Communication (M.A.)

Department Website: <http://www.american.edu/soc/communication/>

1. Learning Outcomes

The Masters program in Public Communication has a number of PROGRAM GOALS for its students. Students completing the Masters program will demonstrate knowledge of the following:

- The principles of strategic communication, including: understanding critical communication issues; identifying and defining target audiences; effective and persuasive messaging.
- The practical application of these principles in a variety of industries and situations (e.g. politics, nonprofit, international, corporate).
- The importance of research in strategic communication.
- A range of communication theories.
- The role of strategic communication in an organization.
- The management of the communication in a professional setting.
- The importance of an ethical approach to all communication activities.
- The impact of communication on our society.

The LEARNING OUTCOMES to achieve the program goals above will ensure that students can do the following:

1. Develop a communication campaign or plan
2. Use qualitative and quantitative research in developing and evaluating communication plans
3. Think analytically and creatively

4. Write clearly, concisely, and strategically in a range of formats and media
5. Use technology in communication activities
6. Present confidently and persuasively

2. Assessment Plan

Measures	Target	Learning Outcomes	Cycle and Reviewers
<p>A "composite" portfolio to be reviewed by faculty, alumni and/or other outside reviewers. Instead of placing a burden on the students to prepare and submit portfolios, we would pull some of their work (assignments) from each class. The following assignments would be selected at random from 10 students in each course indicated. (Direct)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan: COMM640 • Speech: COMM644 • News Release: COMM644 • Fact Sheet: COMM644 • Biography: COMM644 • RFP Proposal: COMM642 • Research Study/Project: COMM738 • Graduate Project/Thesis: COMM744 	<p>Students must demonstrate the outcomes that are relevant to each particular assignment. For example, Outcome #1 would be addressed in the Strategic Plan assignment as well as the RFP Proposal assignment.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Annual or every two years – This direct measure has not as yet been implemented due to resource issues (faculty time and coordinating outside reviewers).</p> <p>The assignments to be selected at random from the courses directly reflect the outcomes. For example, Outcome #1 would be addressed in the Strategic Plan assignment, Outcome #2 is reflected in the Research Project, Outcome #4 is in the News Release and PSA script, etc.</p>
<p>Comprehensive Exams (Direct)</p>	<p>All students must pass the comps to get their degree</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Annual – Students must demonstrate proficiency in the areas of strategic principles, research methods and communication theory. Each exam is reviewed by at least three faculty members.</p>
<p>Capstone Projects (Direct)</p>	<p>All students must</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Annual – Capstones are reviewed</p>

	complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.		the faculty member teaching the seminar course (COMM-744) and discussed in curriculum/syllabus reviews
Public Communication Division Awards. This is a competition which is judged by outside reviewers who are professionals in their fields. (Direct)	Only high achieving students get awards.	All	Annual – Graduating students are nominated by faculty for their work in several categories at the end of each academic year. The work is reviewed by a team that includes faculty and outside reviewers. Awards are given to those students who demonstrate the outcomes in an exemplary way.
Graduating Student Survey – assessment of student perceptions in achieving outcomes (Indirect)	On average students will rate their academic career at least “very good” or “excellent.”	All	Annual – The survey has been administered annually since 2005 to all graduating students. The results are tabulated and reviewed by the Associate Dean and Division Director.
Surveys among internship supervisors (Indirect)	On average, internship supervisors will rate students’ performance “very good” or “excellent” in all categories. The categories directly address the learning outcomes.	All	Each semester – Internship supervisors (i.e. employers) currently evaluate students. This evaluation is reviewed by the faculty member responsible for internships. A uniform rating/evaluation form will be developed in 2009-10. This form will ensure that the ratings are directly related to the outcomes.
A survey of 3-5 year alumni. (Indirect)	On average, alumni will rate their academic career “very good” or “excellent.”	All	Every five years – To assess their transition into and preparedness for the profession. Alumni who have been working for several years should be better able to

			assess their education
Periodic Curriculum Reviews/Faculty Retreats (Indirect)	To ensure that curriculum meets the needs of the profession.	All	As needed – The Public Communication Division monitors its curriculum and uses input from its faculty (many of whom are practicing professionals), adjunct faculty (who are all professionals), and alumni (including the Dean’s Advisory Council – a group of high level alumni who are professionals in the field).
Ad Hoc Research Studies – SOC Image Study, Writing Programs Survey, Career Center Survey, Alumni Focus Groups, Alumni Survey (Indirect)	Surveys conducted occasionally to address specific issues.	Various	Occasional – Studies have been conducted through the Development Office and also in Research Methods classes. Two studies in particular – the Writing Study and the Career Center Survey – provided useful data to evaluate student perceptions toward our programs.
Institutional research – Student Evaluations of Teaching, Campus Climate Survey, Graduation Census, National Survey of Student Engagement (Indirect)	To add context for the evaluation of other data	As context	Annual – The School of Communication and Public Communication Division routinely analyze other data available in order to provide the background by which to understand more specific data.