Master of Arts in Communication Studies

The Master of Arts in Communication Studies is designed for students who wish to advance from this degree to further graduate work and for those wishing to apply advanced communication perspectives, methodologies, and competencies in their careers.

Admission to the Program

Applicants must fulfill all the general requirements for admission to graduate studies at this University. The program welcomes applications from international students and advises them to review the program’s English language proficiency requirements (see D. below).

To be admitted to the graduate program in Communication Studies:

The applicant must submit to the Graduate Admissions Office (in addition to all other required materials):

A. 1. Three letters of recommendation attesting to the applicant’s character, academic aptitude, accomplishments, and potential for success at the graduate level. Applicants are encouraged to secure letters of recommendation from former faculty. Letters from other individuals who can attest to the applicant’s potential for success in graduate school are also welcome.
   2. A 5- to 10-page sample of academic or professional writing; and
   3. A one- to two-page, single-spaced essay describing: the applicant’s interests in Communication Studies; their motivation for pursuing a Master’s degree; why they are applying to CSUSB’s M.A. in Communication Studies, specifically; and how graduate study will help them achieve their personal and/or professional goals.

   

   Note: If the applicant wishes to be considered for a Graduate Teaching Associateship, the applicant must also submit:
   1. a curriculum vitae or resume; and
   2. a one-page statement of intent outlining related experience along with the other application material.

B. The applicant must have completed 6-semester units of undergraduate classes in communication theory and communication research methods, or their equivalents.

C. The applicant must have earned an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 overall and/or 3.0 for the last 60 semester units or 90 quarter units of undergraduate work. In exceptional cases, students with a GPA below 3.0 will be considered. Please contact the graduate coordinator.

D. International students must have received a minimum score of: 550 on the TOFEL Paper-Based Exam; 79 on TOFEL iBT; or 6.0 on IELTS Indicator Overall.

Applicants may also be asked to interview with the program coordinator or graduate committee.

Successful applicants are admitted to the program as conditionally classified graduate students. Advancement to classified status is conditional upon the completion of all prerequisites, as well as completion (after admission) of the following course with a grade of "B-" or higher:

COMM 6000 Introduction to Graduate Study

Graduate Associateships

A limited number of graduate associateships are available, on a competitive basis, for students who wish to pursue the degree full-time. Interested applicants should contact the graduate coordinator in the Department of Communication Studies for further information.

Advancement to Candidacy

1. During the first semester of enrollment, the student shall, with the consent of the faculty member chosen and the approval of the graduate coordinator, select an advisor.

2. Prior to completion of 12 units, the student and advisor shall form the student’s graduate advisory committee. The committee shall consist of the advisor and two faculty members, one of whom may be from a related discipline. The committee shall function to:
   a. approve the student’s program of study;
   b. compose and evaluate the student’s comprehensive examination (if applicable); and
   c. evaluate and approve the student’s thesis or project (if applicable).

3. Upon establishing the committee, and prior to completion of 15 units, the student shall forward for the committee’s approval a plan of study listing coursework to be taken and the culminating experience chosen to complete the degree. The plan of study should reflect some unifying theme.

4. Upon approval of the plan by the advisory committee, the program of study shall be sent to the graduate coordinator for departmental approval resulting in advancement to candidacy.

Requirements for Graduation

1. Students must complete an approved program of 30 units with a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 at this university.

2. Students must receive a "B-" or higher in all required courses.

3. No more than 6 units at the 4000- or 5000-level may count towards the degree. Courses at the 1000, 2000, and 3000 level may not count toward the degree.

4. No course may be counted for which a grade of "C-" or less was received.

5. The student is responsible for fulfilling all other requirements for graduation established by the Graduate Studies Office.

Degree Requirements (30 units)

(Program Code: COMS)

Note: Students must receive a grade of "B-" or higher in all required courses.

Required/Core Courses (12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMM 6000</td>
<td>Introduction to Graduate Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 6001</td>
<td>Theoretical Perspectives in Communication Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMM 6002</td>
<td>Quantitative Research Methods in Communication Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMM 6003</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods in Communication Studies</td>
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</tbody>
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Electives (12-15)
Students choose from the following elective courses. Those completing a Master’s thesis or graduate project as their culminating experience choose 12 elective units. Those completing a comprehensive examination choose 15 elective units.

Students choose their elective courses with the advice and approval of their advisory committee and the graduate coordinator. In doing so, all parties are strongly encouraged to include 6000-level Communication Studies courses in the student’s plan of study, if feasible and appropriate. These courses have been specifically developed for graduate students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication Studies.

Students may, with the approval of the advisory committee and the graduate coordinator, substitute up to six total units of course work from disciplines other than Communication and the graduate coordinator, substitute up to six total units of course work from disciplines other than Communication Studies.

Students may, with the approval of their advisory committee and graduate coordinator, fulfill the culminating experience requirement through a comprehensive examination. The examination tests the student’s mastery of perspectives and competencies in the core curriculum as well as those associated with the individual student's program of study. The examination will be developed and evaluated by the student’s advisory committee, administered during the student's final semester in residence, and carry no academic credit. Students choosing this option must take 15 units of electives and register for:

**Thesis Option (3 units)**

Students may, with the approval of their advisory committee and the graduate coordinator, fulfill the culminating experience requirement by developing and executing an original research project designed to extend or apply our understanding of communication in important and unique ways. The proposal must be approved by the advisory committee, and filed with the Graduate Coordinator. The student will make a public defense of the thesis during the last semester of residence. The completed thesis must be approved by the advisory committee, and carry no academic credit. Students choosing this option must take 15 units of electives and register for:

**Project Option (3 units)**

Students may, with the approval of their advisory committee and the graduate coordinator, fulfill the culminating experience requirement by developing and executing a project with a significant written component. The project shall be developed between the student and the advisor. The proposal must be approved by the advisory committee, and filed with the
Graduate Coordinator. The written component of the project must follow specified guidelines, be approved by the advisory committee, and will be presented publicly during the student's last semester in residence. The completed project must be approved by the advisory committee and the Dean of Graduate Studies. Students choosing this option must must take 12 units of electives and register for:

COMM 6963  Graduate Project  3