

Corporate and Public Communication Master's (MS) Program Graduate Student Handbook

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This document is intended as a brief overview of the facilities, academic programs, and administrative procedures for graduate students affiliated with the Corporate and Public Communication master's program, within the College of Applied Studies at Florida State University Panama City. More detail can be found by clicking on the links provided throughout the document. Important sources of information for graduate students include the [FSU Graduate School](#) and, in particular, the [information for new students](#), which

includes a campus-wide Graduate Handbook. Other key sources include the [FSU Graduate Bulletin](#), and the General Bulletin's [academic year calendar](#).

About the Corporate and Public Communication Program

The Corporate and Public Communication major in the **Professional Communication Master's Degree** program was designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in dynamic communication roles within both corporate and public sections. This versatile program is available **online and on-campus**, providing flexibility to accommodate diverse learning preferences.

The overall purpose of the Corporate and Public Communication (CPC) major in the Professional Communication degree program is to teach essential skills for graduate students to be successful in communication-based careers. Specifically, the CPC program focuses on training graduate students who are seeking to enhance their knowledge and experience in professional communication and/or gain applied skills for professional growth and career elevation in communication-related positions found in many professional sectors, including corporations, small/large businesses, government organizations, non-profits, and public agencies.

As an Applied Communication program, the CPC major takes a holistic approach to training graduate students across several areas directly related to communication careers, such as: marketing communication, organizational communication, strategic communication, conflict resolution, crisis communication, public relations, persuasion, and data collection/data analytic methods. Thus, students learn how to use a variety of communication channels, tools, and platforms to connect with clients, colleagues, audiences, and other stakeholders.

Program goals

This terminal Master's degree was designed for graduate students currently employed in or seeking professional positions. The program emphasizes applied skills preparing students for a variety of communication careers. The goals of the CPC program include:

- Preparing students for professional careers within business, government, not-for-profit organizations, or educational institutions
- Providing students with experience in making formal communication presentations
- Helping students develop quantitative and qualitative skills in organizational communication contexts and
- Equipping students with basic knowledge of communication theories with particular emphasis on those that apply to corporate and public affairs, public information, and issue management

By providing a broad understanding of different communication strategies, techniques, and best practices students graduate the program with:

- Tools to be effective communicators, problem-solvers, and critical thinkers
- Direct experience planning and implementing marketing campaigns, resolving conflicts, assessing communication practices, and analyzing research
- The ability to navigate complex communication challenges
- Enhanced knowledge for career fulfillment

Location and Facilities

CPC is located in the Holley Academic Center on the FSU Panama City Campus in Panama City, Florida. The physical space includes offices for core faculty and adjuncts, along with student study areas, student veterans lounge/study area, computer labs & a library learning center. The FSU Panama City campus also offers 9 graduate and 20 undergraduate degree programs.

Admissions

Applicants to the MS CPC program apply online through the FSU [Graduate Admissions Application Portal](#). Admission decisions are made by the Professional Communication Faculty. For questions about the application and admissions process, please contact: appliedstudies@pc.fsu.edu or call (850) 770-2280.

Application Deadlines

Fall Admission Deadline: July 1

Spring Admission Deadline: November 1

Summer Admission Deadline: March 1

Florida State University Graduate Admissions Requirements

All applicants for the Corporate and Public Communication master's program must meet both university and program requirements.

1. Complete and submit a graduate application online through the [Graduate Admissions Application Portal](#).
2. Pay a non-refundable application fee of \$30. Application packets will not be reviewed until the fee has been paid.
3. Submit a completed [Residency Affidavit](#). All applicants must submit this form, which is completed online.

4. Arrange for an official transcript from each college or university attended to be sent to the Office of Admissions. Transcripts may be sent digitally but must come directly from the institutions attended. An unofficial transcript may be uploaded for the College of Applied Studies for review.

Corporate and Public Communication Graduate Admission Requirements

In addition to the university requirements, CPC program applicants must meet the program requirements listed below. FSU and the Corporate and Public Communication program applies a holistic approach (i.e., GPA, statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, resume, and related experiences) to the application review process. Applicants that meet the following requirements will be considered for the program but are not guaranteed admission. Applicants with lower GPAs are encouraged to strengthen their application through strong letters of recommendation, a compelling statement of purpose, and relevant work experience. Admission decisions will be provided through the FSU admission application portal or by notification from the graduate program faculty or staff.

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited university and a GPA (Grade Point Average) of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 system) on all work attempted while registered as an upper-division student working toward a baccalaureate degree.
2. In your FSU application, applicants should submit a self-authored, original, statement of purpose addressing their interest and fit for this program. This statement will be evaluated for its style, clarity of purpose, organization, grammar, and development of ideas. In the statement of purpose, all applicants should ensure an answer to at least these questions:
 - Why have you chosen to apply to this master's program?
 - What are your career goals and how does this program help you meet them?
 - Describe your academic and applied professional/organizational experiences that make you a strong candidate for this program (make sure to address both academic and applied experiences)
 - What do you plan to do upon graduation to utilize this degree in your career?
 - Your statement should specifically reference the Corporate and Public Communication graduate program at Florida State University to avoid confusion with other institutions or degrees. It should be well-proofread, answer all questions above, and be 2–3 pages in length, double-spaced, using 12 pt Times New Roman font.
3. Applicants must arrange for the submission of three letters of recommendation through the FSU application process that speak to your ability to succeed in this graduate program. At least one (1) letter is preferred, but not required to be from an

- academic source, one (1) should be from professional or organizational experience, and the final letter can be academic or professional/organizational in nature.
4. Submit/upload a resume or curriculum vitae, which is carefully proofread, professional in nature, and outlines all related academic and professional experiences relevant to this program.

Degree Options and Requirements

Students are required to complete a minimum of thirty-three (33) hours of graduate-level coursework, which includes a capstone final project and a capstone defense in their last semester. All thirty-three hours must be graduate-level coursework (5000 level and above). Twenty-seven (27) hours must be letter graded.

Required coursework includes:

- Twenty-four (24) hours of core classes that include theory and principles, research, methods, and application across communication-related fields
- Six (6 hours) of communication elective courses
- Three (3 hours) capstone course
-

Students who have completed insufficient course work in Communication at the undergraduate level (e.g., students who did **not** major in a communication-related area) may be required to take up to nine additional hours of letter-graded undergraduate course work as determined by their graduate advisors. Note: These additional hours will not count toward completion of the thirty-three (33) graduate-level semester hours.

Master of Science (MS) in Corporate and Public Communication (fully online or in-person)

This program requires a minimum of thirty-three (33) hours of graduate-level coursework, which includes a capstone final project and a project defense to be completed during the students' last semester. It is possible to complete the program in as few as two years if some coursework is completed during summer sessions. All courses must be passed with a "B-" grade or better and students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA throughout enrollment in the program. The program requires students to take:

Program Courses (Updated February 2026)

Theory and Principles (6 credits 5000 level or above)

1. Organizational Theory and Practice (COM 5126)

This course provides an overview of the major organizational communication theorists and shows students how they can be used to diagnose and solve communication and performance problems.

2. Studies in Persuasion (SPC 5545)

This course involves lectures, readings, and discussions of human behavior theories as applied to persuasive communication.

Research and Methods (6 credits 5000 level or above)

1. Communication Research and Analytics (COM 5319)

This course provides an overview of the research methods, concepts, and analytic techniques by which communication research is designed, conducted, and evaluated with a focus on applications in professional and organizational communication disciplines.

2. Assessing Organizational Communication (COM 5127)

This course introduces students to the methods of assessing organizational communication including survey, feedback methodology, assessment, and related issues in applied research.

Applications (12 credits 5000 level or above)

1. Corporate and Strategic Communication (COM 5525)

This course examines the process by which strategic communication programs are planned, developed, executed, and measured with an emphasis on learning to integrate marketing communication elements to advance an organization's goals and success.

2. Group Dynamics and Leadership (SPC 5442)

This course is a review of important concepts and research in group processes and evaluates the competencies required for various aspects of group leadership.

3. Interpersonal Communication and Conflict Resolution (COM 5807)

The purpose of this course is to facilitate critical inquiry and applied analysis of interpersonal communication related to conflict, mediation, and negotiation.

4. Crisis Communication Management (COM 5236)

This class will provide a foundation for students to develop a strong understanding of crisis communication management and gain practical skills necessary to effectively navigate and communicate during a crisis.

Program Elective Courses (6 credits 5000 level or above)

Students may choose from the following electives or select other program approved electives.

(PLEASE NOTE: Any elective courses selected from other university departments may not be covered by the FSU employee or state employee tuition waivers. Students will remain tuition liable for courses not covered by these waivers. Please consult with your graduate program coordinator in the College of Applied Studies for further guidance)

1. Consumer Behavior in Corporate Communication (COM 5576)

This course applies theories and concepts used by businesses/organizations to understand consumer behavior and audience dynamics in corporate communication planning.

2. New Communication Technology (RTV 5423)

This course surveys key issues related to new communication technologies within a variety of communication contexts. Specific topics vary as new technologies emerge.

3. Contemporary Rhetorical Theory and Criticism (SPC 6236)

This course is an analysis of major theories of public communication and their application as critical tools.

4. Statistical Methods in Communication Research (COM 5316)

This course examines statistical methodologies for communication research.

5. Strategic Global and Cross-Cultural Communication (COM 5435) (Previously SPC 6920)

6. Directed Individual Study (COM 5906)

Students select a topic of interest to pursue under the supervision of a faculty member. Results in final project, scope and type to be defined by student and faculty supervisor. May be repeated. School approval required.

Capstone Project

1. Capstone Course in Corporate Communication (COM 5947)

The Capstone course is an applied professional communication project where students demonstrate cumulative mastery of knowledge and skills from core program courses. Graduate students research and execute an in-depth capstone project after completing program core course requirements. This project is comparable in scope to a master's thesis where students demonstrate the ability to produce work that represents independent and critical thinking while applying concepts and theories toward a professional communication situation.

Combined BS/MS Professional Communication Program

Academically strong students may complete the bachelor's program in Professional Communication and master's program in Corporate and Public Communication at an accelerated pace by applying to the [combined bachelor's/master's program](#). Courses taken for undergraduate credit do not count toward a graduate degree, unless the courses are in Communication at the 5000 level or above and are taken after being accepted into the BS/MS program. There is no blanket approval to substitute courses. Any course substitution must be approved by all members of your committee BEFORE substituting.

Program of Study Worksheet

This worksheet is to be completed by the student and the advisory committee prior to the end of the second semester of graduate work. After all signatures are obtained, a digital copy will be provided to the student to retain for reference.

Graduate Advisor

Dr. Brian Parker serves as the general Graduate Advisor to all students admitted to the MS CPC program. CPC students should have at least one advising meeting each semester. Enrolled students should take courses recommended by the Graduate Advisor to ensure timely completion of their degree requirements.

Policies and Procedures on Exemption

Students who have previously taken and passed graduate-level courses required by the CPC program with a grade of B or better, or equivalent courses, are allowed to substitute other courses to meet program requirements. It is the intent of this provision to enable students to acquire more advanced training than would ordinarily be required as part of the CPC degree. Permission must be given by the Graduate Advisor, subject to the advise of faculty.

Leave of Absence Policy

Under special circumstances, graduate students may apply for a leave of absence from the university for a specific period of up to three consecutive semesters (includes summer term). The circumstances justifying a leave include but are not limited to: personal or family medical conditions, call to active military duty, parental leave, death in immediate family, or completion of an off-campus internship. The student must provide appropriate documentation and a rationale for the leave request. Students cannot be on leave during their semester of graduation and must be registered for a minimum of two hours that semester. The university's leave of absence policy may be found in its entirety in the university's [Graduate Bulletin](#). Please consult with your graduate advisor Dr. Brian Parker (bparker@pc.fsu.edu) prior to applying for a Leave of Absence.

Academic Dismissal Policy

Per university policy, academic dismissal constitutes a separation of the student from the University for academic reasons. Students on dismissal will not be permitted to register for courses, including registering as a non-degree student. However, at the time of dismissal, the major professor and/or department chair/director may petition the academic dean for consideration of special circumstances that the professor thinks constitute justification for an

exception to this regulation, but under no circumstances will a student be allowed more than one additional term of probation after reinstatement. The university's policy may be found in its entirety in the university's [Graduate Bulletin](#).

Petitioning for Reinstatement

A graduate level student who has been academically dismissed from the university may petition for consideration to be reinstated. To be considered for reinstatement, a student must provide an explanation of the extenuating circumstances and/or reasons outside of their control that resulted in their academical dismissal and the student's plans for the upcoming semester to regain good academic standing and for future academic success. The graduate student's Petition for Reinstatement form (once completed by the student) should be emailed to appliedstudies@pc.fsu.edu.

All petitions for reinstatement shall be reviewed, and a final decision made by, the Assistant Dean for the College of Applied Studies, in coordination with the college's graduate program faculty, graduate coordinator and director for academic services. All decisions are final and are not subject to appeal. Contact appliedstudies@pc.fsu.edu to request the **Graduate Petition for Reinstatement** form.

Fees and Course Loads

For a detailed official description of graduate tuition rates, student fees, and related costs, consult the [FSU Panama City Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) webpage. Students who are not Florida residents may qualify for in-state tuition through the [Academic Common Market](#) (ACM). ACM eligibility must be established prior to matriculation.

Professional Conduct and Academic Integrity

All students affiliated with CPC program in any capacity are expected to demonstrate the highest professional standards in terms of personal behavior and ethics. Investigation and resolution of alleged violations of the FSU [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Academic Code](#) are coordinated through the [FSU PC Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). CPC program students who have been accused of conduct or honor code violations should alert the CPC program advisors.

Appeals Process

The CPC program values collegial governance based on best professional practices. All actions or decisions of the faculty may be appealed to the Dean of the College of Applied Studies. Specific University procedures exist for grade appeals and other academic grievances,

including Academic Honor Code violations. See [Regulations and Procedures](#) section of the Academic General Bulletin or the website of the [FSU PC Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) for details.

Resources for Graduate Students

Funded Awards and Recognition

Through the generosity of alumni, friends and faculty, CPC students may benefit from the following awards located on the [FSU Panama City Financial Aid and Scholarships](#) webpage. For details on funding and awards offered through The Graduate School, please visit the [Funding & Awards](#) webpage.