



# WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## GRADUATE STUDIES FACT SHEET

### COMMUNICATION STUDIES

#### PROGRAM OF STUDY

The master of arts in communication studies focuses on building better leaders by improving their communication skills. Effective leaders must be strong communicators who need to develop a broad array of communications skills: interpersonal, small group, public speaking, public relations, and persuasive/rhetorical abilities. Consequently, the M.A. in communication studies offers students courses designed to foster leadership abilities in a broad array of communication contexts.

#### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Most students in the M.A. program are full-time working professionals looking to advance their careers through graduate-level instruction in communication and leadership. Students come to the program from a host of industries ranging from media companies to investment firms. Upon completing the degree, students also pursue various vocational paths. Many students stay with their current employer but move into higher level administrative positions. Some graduates start new vocations including the following:

- Pharmaceutical sales
- Corporate training
- Speechwriting
- Fund-raising
- Marketing research
- Human resources
- Public relations
- Web design/social media
- Community affairs
- Special events management

#### ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES

For those interested in pursuing teaching careers and academic work at the Ph.D.

level, this program provides a solid foundation since all courses are built upon communication theory and research. The program also offers a thesis option for those interested in pursuing a large-scale research project in preparation for future Ph.D. work. Students who have completed their M.A. at West Chester University have entered top Ph.D. programs at the University of Texas, University of Maryland, Rutgers University, and Ohio University. Several graduates from the program now work full time as teachers at various colleges and universities throughout the country. Many M.A. graduates are also given the chance to serve as undergraduate instructors at West Chester University. Through these instructor positions, M.A. graduates are able to gain valuable teaching experience before moving on to Ph.D. work.

#### THE CURRICULUM

Since the program is designed to enhance students' communication skills, courses within the program require extensive speaking and writing. Courses are generally taught as small, discussion-oriented seminars, and the majority of course grading centers on student presentations and papers.

The following two core courses are required for both thesis and nonthesis options:

- COM 501 Theoretical Perspectives on Human Communication
- COM 502 Communication Research Methods

Additional requirements for the nonthesis option include completion of the following:

- 15 credits from within the Department of Communication Studies
- 15 credits in master's level courses selected from inside or outside the department (may include a six-credit internship)

- Comprehensive written exam

Additional requirements for the thesis option include completion of the following:

- COM 600 Communication Studies Thesis (six credits)
- 15 credits from within the Department of Communication Studies
- Nine credits of master's level courses selected from inside or outside the department
- Comprehensive written exam
- Oral thesis defense

See the department's Web site for more specific course offerings, <http://communication.wcupa.edu/>.

#### THE FACULTY

The Department of Communication Studies at West Chester University has a large and distinguished faculty who have won university, regional, and national teaching awards. The faculty are also ideally suited to help with their students' professional development goals since they serve as communication consultants to groups and organizations outside the University. In addition, faculty members maintain active research programs in their areas of expertise and have numerous publications (articles/books) in their specialty area. More information on the faculty is available on the department's Web page: <http://communication.wcupa.edu/>.

#### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should submit the following materials to the Office of Graduate Studies and Extended Education:

- Completed graduate application (apply online at [www.wcupa.edu/grad](http://www.wcupa.edu/grad))
- Official academic transcript(s) from all colleges and universities attended,

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demonstrating a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better

- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) score in at least the 50th percentile for the tested pool (test scores waived for students with an undergraduate GPA of 3.5 or better)
- Two letters of recommendation
- Writing sample, “How does communication knowledge bridge my past experience with my future plans?”

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Write: Office of Graduate Studies and Extended Education  
McKelvie Hall  
102 West Rosedale Avenue  
West Chester University  
West Chester, PA 19383

Call: 610-436-2943

Fax: 610-436-2763

E-mail: [gradstudy@wcupa.edu](mailto:gradstudy@wcupa.edu)

Web: [www.wcupa.edu/grad](http://www.wcupa.edu/grad)

Visit: [www.facebook.com/wcugrad](https://www.facebook.com/wcugrad)

*Or contact the department:*

Write: Dr. Denise Polk, Graduate Coordinator,  
Department of Communication Studies  
512 Main Hall  
West Chester University  
West Chester, PA 19383

Call: 610-436-2500

E-mail: [dpolk@wcupa.edu](mailto:dpolk@wcupa.edu)

Web: <http://communication.wcupa.edu>

The Graduate Catalog is available online at [www.wcupa.edu/\\_information/official\\_documents/graduate.catalog/](http://www.wcupa.edu/_information/official_documents/graduate.catalog/).

## ABOUT GRADUATE STUDIES

West Chester University offers high-quality graduate degrees in more than 70 disciplines or areas of study, as well as certificate and certification programs. The graduate studies program has grown remarkably since its introduction in 1960. West Chester University's program is the largest within the 14 institutions in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education enrolling more than 2,100 graduate students.

Programs can be taken on a part-time basis, and most of the graduate classes are scheduled during late afternoons and evenings for the benefit of in-service teachers and other employed persons.

## ABOUT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

A regional, public institution, West Chester University of Pennsylvania offers high-quality undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as certification and certificate programs, in more than 100 subject areas. As the second largest member of the State System of Higher Education, West Chester offers a

full and rewarding educational experience as well as reasonable tuition.

With a rich heritage dating back to the 19th century, West Chester University was founded in 1871 as West Chester Normal School for the purpose of training teachers for the Commonwealth's newly established public schools. In 1960, West Chester State Teachers College expanded its programs to include liberal arts and graduate degrees and, as a result, dropped “Teachers” from its name. In 1983, West Chester State College became one of the 14 institutions in the State System of Higher Education. Along with its university status, the school acquired a new system of governance and the opportunity to expand its degree programs.

Today, more than 15,400 graduate and undergraduate students, as well as 1,500 faculty and staff, study and work on the 406-acre campus. Situated in the Borough of West Chester, the campus is a picturesque mix of Gothic, Victorian, and modern architecture with pleasant, tree-shaded walks.

Strategically located at the center of the mid-Atlantic corridor, West Chester University is just 25 miles west of Philadelphia and 17 miles north of Wilmington, Del. The campus is convenient to major cultural institutions, recreational activities, and commercial businesses, many of which provide internship opportunities for WCU's students.

