

ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS, MA

The Master of Arts in Advertising and Public Relations is designed for aspiring students who wish to gain advanced knowledge and expertise in creating and managing persuasive communication. We help motivated students transition from a tactical to a more strategic, managerial approach to advertising and public relations, while becoming ethical and globally competent thought leaders in their future careers.

The Advertising and Public Relations Master of Arts program offers four concentrations that enable students to develop expertise in areas of proficiencies at the forefront of advertising and public relations.

The **Advertising Creative** concentration helps students build portfolios while learning to solve a client's problems by beautifully wrapping smart strategies in provocative, layered, and memorable ideas.

The **Digital Communication** concentration equips students with skills necessary to strategically communicate effective integrated advertising and public relations messages and campaigns across digital platforms.

The **Media Strategy** concentration equips students with analytic skills necessary to analyze traditional, digital, and social media data, uncover actionable insights, and develop brand strategies leveraging those insights.

The online-only **Marketing Communication Management** concentration is designed for emerging leaders who wish to gain advanced knowledge and expertise in creating and managing persuasive communication in an integrated industry landscape in order to pursue managerial careers.

Admissions

Applicants must meet the admission criteria of the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. In addition to the Graduate School requirements, the M.A. program in Advertising & Public Relations adheres to the following application and admission requirements.

Graduate entrance exam scores are not required for admission or assistantships, but GRE and GMAT scores may increase competitiveness for assistantship funding for main campus applicants.

Applicants may be considered for admission on a permission-to-continue basis if they do not meet the GPA criterion for regular admission.

To receive consideration and evaluation for admission, applications must include:

- A video or written statement of purpose; this should be a maximum of five minutes long (for video) or three double-spaced pages (for written)
- Two (2) letters of recommendation; one academic reference and one professional reference is preferred.
- Three (3) samples of academic and/or professional work; samples that demonstrate an ability in advertising, PR, or a related field.

Qualifications are considered comprehensively, so no single factor determines acceptance to the program. The M.A. in Advertising & Public Relations is selective and does not admit every applicant.

Deadlines

On-campus applicants are admitted into the program for the Fall semester only. Applications for on-campus admission should be submitted by March 1 to be considered for departmental funding and May 1 to be considered for admission.

Online applicants may be admitted year round in Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters. Online applications have priority deadlines of June 1 for fall admission, December 1 for spring admission, and April 1 for summer admission.

Curricular Requirements

The M.A. in Advertising & Public Relations is a 30-36 (based on concentration) credit-hour program designed to provide students with knowledge of industry trends, proficiency in research-driven critical thinking and problem solving, and exposure to scholars and professionals who are well-connected to an evolving communication landscape in order to build a unique expertise in managing persuasive communication.

Students will work with a faculty advisor to create their own career emphasis from a wide range of electives within A+PR and other departments that will help them gain in-depth knowledge for their future career. These electives, along with a core specifically designed to provide students with a true blend of academic and industry knowledge, will help guide their capstone project. Students will choose from two options: a strategic plan for aspiring industry professionals or a thesis for aspiring scholars. In addition to coursework, students will be required to receive professional experience during the summer after their first year in order to enhance the training they receive in the classroom.

Each student's progress will be guided by their faculty advisor. Students in each program must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 during their tenure in the program. Students who receive more than two "C" grades will undergo a faculty review to determine if they should proceed in the program.

Master of Arts in Advertising and Public Relations		Hours
Core Courses (12 hours)		
APR 551	Foundations of Integrated Comm	3
APR 550	Analysis and Insights	3
APR 570	Ethics and Prof Leadership	3
APR 593	Global Comm Management	3
Elective Courses (15 hours) - students that declared a concentration will have a defined set of courses to complete. If a concentration isn't declared, students complete the following:		
Research Course (3 hours - students must choose one of the following or an approved substitution)		3
APR 552	Quantitative Research Methods	3
COM 550	Qualitative Research Methods	
Media Course (3 hours - students must choose one of the following or an approved substitution)		3
APR 522	Media Strategy and Analytics	3
APR 523	Media Relations	
Strategy Course (3 hours - students must choose one of the following or an approved substitution)		3
APR 524	Reputation Comm Strategy	3
APR 525	Brand Communication Strategy	
Electives (6 hours - based on area of speciality)		6
Capstone Project (3-6 hours)		
Students will complete one of the following options:		3-6
Thesis Option (main campus students only; students will complete six hours of the following course)		

APR 599	Thesis Research
White Paper Option (students will complete either 3 hours (DL students only) or 6 hours (main campus students only) of the following course)	
APR 598	Industry Project
Integrated Campaign Option (main campus students only; students will complete 3 hours of each of the following courses)	
APR 597	Campaign Research and Planning
APR 598	Industry Project
Comprehensive Exam Option (main campus students only; students will complete 3 hours of each of the following courses)	
APR 594	Comprehensive Exam Preparation
Elective Course	
Total Hours	30-33

Professional Experience Requirement

Students enrolled in the M.A. program will be required to complete an internship or some type of professional experience during the summer of their first year. This requirement is designed to encourage students to use the skills learned in the classroom in a professional setting. Students will be required to submit a job description to the graduate coordinator for approval prior to completing the internship. Internships will be approved on a case-by-case basis, but typical internships that are approved would require at least 10 hours a week and/or 80 hours during the summer semester in an advertising, public relations or a related role in a professional setting. After completing the internship, students will submit a short (1-2 page) description of what they experienced and learned during the internship, as well as a form signed by their immediate supervisor, in order to satisfy the requirement. International students that must receive course credit for the internship requirement will enroll for one hour in APR 596 Independent Study Research.

Capstone Project

The capstone project will be an individual demonstration of your knowledge of the skills, theories and concepts that you learned in your coursework during the program. Students will work with an advisor to determine the best course of action from the following options:

Thesis (individual only)

Students will work with their advisor to identify a gap in the scholarly research devoted to a topic in advertising and/or public relations. The student will conduct a review of related literature and propose and execute original research that will answer the student's overarching research inquiry. Completing a thesis will be suggested to students that are looking to pursue a doctorate. The thesis can only be completed in the spring semester of a student's second year, or later if needed.

White Paper (individual only)

Students will work with their advisor to identify a problem or opportunity facing the advertising and public relations industry. The student will conduct secondary and primary research in order to assess the problem/opportunity and form insights and recommendations that will address the problem/opportunity. Completing a white paper will be suggested to students that are looking to pursue a career in the advertising and public relations industry. **All distance learning students will complete a white paper.**

Integrated Communication Plan (team-based only)

Students will work in a small team (3-4 students) along with their advisor to create an integrated communication campaign for an organization. The student will conduct secondary and primary research in order to assess the problem/opportunity, create a planning report and develop a campaign book that will address the problem/opportunity faced by the organization. Completing an integrated campaign will be suggested to students that are looking to pursue a career in the advertising and public relations industry that do not have an undergraduate background in the area. The campaign can only be completed by the team during the spring semester of their second year.

Comprehensive Exam

Students will complete a case-focused examination on topics covered in the core theory (APR 551), research (APR 550) and professionalism (APR 570) courses. Students will take a course during the fall semester focused on reviewing those concepts covered in the three courses and will submit a comprehensive case study centered around a topic in advertising and public relations. The comprehensive exam option is available to all main campus students, but the exam option is required for students completing the program the fall semester of their second year (17-month option).

Concentrations

A+PR's M.A. program offers four concentrations that provide expertise in growing areas of advertising and public relations to prepare students for more specialized jobs and train future leaders in global integrated marketing communication:

Advertising Creative concentration (requires additional application; available to main-campus students)

Digital Communication concentration (available to distance learning students)

Media Strategy concentration (requires additional interview; available to main-campus students)

Marketing Communication Management concentration (available to distance learning students)

Advertising Creative Concentration

The **Advertising Creative concentration** helps students build portfolios while learning to solve a client's problems by beautifully wrapping smart strategies in provocative, layered, and memorable ideas. At the completion of the program, students will have a portfolio that highlights their natural talents and emphasizes their newly developed strengths to help students find a job in their area of expertise, either art direction or copywriting. Admission into this concentration requires an additional application. Applications are available the spring semester before students begin the program.

Advertising Creative Concentration		Hours
Program Core		
APR 550	Analysis and Insights	3
APR 551	Foundations of Integrated Comm	3
APR 570	Ethics and Prof Leadership	3
APR 593	Global Comm Management	3
APR 598	Industry Project	6
Concentration in Advertising Creative		
APR 531	Concepting	4
APR 532	Creative Leadership	3
APR 533 or	Copywriting Seminar	3

APR 534	Art Direction Seminar	
APR 535	Portfolio I	4
APR 536	Portfolio II	4
Total Hours		36

Digital Communication Concentration

The **Digital Communication concentration** equips students with skills necessary to strategically communicate effective integrated advertising and public relations messages and campaigns across digital platforms. By learning to gather and assess digital insights, create content specifically for digital media, and leverage the advantages of various digital platforms, the program helps create cutting-edge strategic communicators.

Digital Communication Concentration (online only)		Hours
Program Core		
APR 550	Analysis and Insights	3
APR 551	Foundations of Integrated Comm	3
APR 570	Ethics and Prof Leadership	3
APR 593	Global Comm Management	3
APR 598	Industry Project	3-6
Concentration in Digital Communication		
APR 522	Media Strategy and Analytics	3
APR 541	Digital Communication Strategy	3
APR 542	Writing for Digital Comm	3
APR 543	Advanced Digital Marketing	3
APR 524 or APR 525	Reputation Comm Strategy Brand Communication Strategy	3
Total Hours		30-33

Media Strategy Concentration

The **Media Strategy concentration** equips students with analytic skills necessary to analyze traditional, digital, and social media data, uncover actionable insights, and develop brand strategies leveraging those insights. Through hands-on course work and industry collaboration, students will be prepared to pursue careers in media strategy and planning, brand planning, and advertising and public relations analytics.

Media Strategy Concentration		Hours
Program Core		
APR 550	Analysis and Insights	3
APR 551	Foundations of Integrated Comm	3
APR 570	Ethics and Prof Leadership	3
APR 593	Global Comm Management	3
APR 598 or APR 599	Industry Project Thesis Research	6
Concentration in Media Strategy		
APR 522	Media Strategy and Analytics	3
APR 525	Brand Communication Strategy	3
APR 541 or MKT 543	Digital Communication Strategy Adv Digital and Social Media	3
APR 552	Quantitative Research Methods	3
APR 584	Computational Research Methods	3
Total Hours		33

Marketing Communication Management Concentration

The **Marketing Communication Management concentration** is an online-only, professionally-driven focus that equips leaders with the knowledge and expertise that drives the current interrelated landscape of marketing, advertising and public relations. Through a focus on data-driven strategic planning and emphasis on building ethical leadership skills, the program will help create ethically-grounded, globally aware and business-savvy thought leaders.

Marketing Communication Management Concentration (online only)

Program Core		
APR 550	Analysis and Insights	3
APR 551	Foundations of Integrated Comm	3
APR 570	Ethics and Prof Leadership	3
APR 593	Global Comm Management	3
APR 598	Industry Project	3
Concentration in Marketing Communication Management		
APR 522	Media Strategy and Analytics	3
IBA 555 or IBA 550	Global Market Management Global Business	3
MKT 530	Advanced Marketing Analysis	3
MKT 540 or APR 541	Intro to Digital/Social Media Digital Communication Strategy	3
APR 524 or APR 525	Reputation Comm Strategy Brand Communication Strategy	3
Total Hours		30

Time Limits for Degree Completion Requirements

See Graduate School policy for more information

Academic Misconduct Information

See Graduate School policy for more information

Withdrawals and Leave of Absence Information

See Graduate School policy for more information

Academic Grievances Information

See Graduate School policy for more information

Grades and Academic Standing

See Graduate School policy for more information

Graduate School Deadlines

See Graduate School policy for more information

Application for Graduation Information

See Graduate School policy for more information.

Acquisition of Financial Support:

All admitted and currently enrolled graduate students in good standing in the College of Communication & Information Sciences, both main

campus and online, are eligible to apply for a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA), graduate research assistantship (GRA), and/or graduate administrative assistantship (GAA) position funded by the college by submitting the C&IS Graduate Assistantship Interest Application.

Positions range from 10 hour a week (.25 FTE) positions with half tuition and benefits to 20 hour a week (.5 FTE) positions with full tuition and benefits, although online students are not eligible for university sponsored health insurance. Positions and funding offers vary from one semester in duration to multiple years. Funding levels and lengths are communicated via an offer letter or memorandum of appointment, which will indicate an end date of financial support.

Funding decisions for incoming students are generally made between January and May, and decisions for currently enrolled students without funding are generally made between May and July. Currently enrolled students in good standing whose funding is expiring may petition the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in writing for continued support, and those decisions are also generally made between May and July.

In addition to college assistantships, excellent students may be nominated by the college for University of Alabama fellowships. Fellowship recipients are guaranteed paid tuition and fees, a stipend, and benefits without work expectations for a defined period set by the Graduate School.

Beyond college-funded assistantships, additional funding opportunities may arise from individual faculty or departments in support of grant work, research projects, teaching specific courses, assisting with administrative projects, etc.

All students funded on assistantships must meet the Performance Expectations for Continuing Financial Support (see below) and funding may be removed prior to the end date of financial support in accordance with the Conditions for Termination of Financial Support (see below).

Performance Expectations for Continuing Financial Support:

- The student must be in good academic standing in a degree program in the College of Communication & Information Sciences and be making satisfactory academic progress to the completion of the degree.
- The student must complete all mandatory trainings and abide by all rules and policies held by The University of Alabama, College of Communication & Information Sciences, and the department of their work assignment.
- The student must adequately perform all duties assigned to them in a timely manner as defined by the supervisors of their work assignments, including logging work hours if assigned for the position and submitting a semesterly evaluation of their work assignment.
- The student must remain clear of all infractions outlined under Conditions for Termination of Financial Support.

Conditions for Termination of Financial Support:

Students who meet one or more of the following criteria may be subject to termination of financial support pending C&IS Office for Graduate Studies administrative review. Depending upon the severity of the infraction or the extent of non-compliance, the Academic Unit Head and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies may recommend immediate termination of financial support, termination of financial support at the end of the current semester or termination of financial support at the end of the following semester. Students will be notified in writing of any

decision to terminate financial support prior to the original end date of funding.

- ***Dereliction of Duty.*** Dereliction of duty includes, but is not limited to, failure to comply with UA safety and interpersonal conduct policies; absence from scheduled obligations without prior notification to the supervisor; failure to satisfactorily complete all activities associated with the funded position as defined by the supervisor; failure to submit required performance evaluations, etc.
- ***Academic Misconduct.*** Penalties for resolved academic misconduct cases, including potential loss of financial support, will be determined with guidance from the UA Graduate School and the Office for Graduate Studies.
- ***Insufficient Academic Progress.*** Insufficient academic progress, as determined by the student's advisor and the Office for Graduate Studies, includes, but is not limited to, students taking courses that do not align with the program requirements; students admitted to candidacy who do not make adequate research progress on their dissertation, failure to pass comprehensive exam, failure to pass proposal defense, etc.
- ***Academic Warning & Academic Suspension.*** Students on academic warning from the UA Graduate School are not eligible to hold assistantships. In addition to the loss of the assistantship for the semester of Academic Warning, a review of the student will determine if future committed funding will be revoked regardless of successfully earning good standing within the completion of the next 12 credit hours. In all cases, if a student is suspended, all future funding commitments are revoked.