



**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF MASS COMMUNICATION**

**GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDE**

**2011 - 2012**

The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication provides this guide to give students the information necessary for them to comply with the degree requirements of the Master of Mass Communication (MMC) program. It outlines the school's academic standards, policies, and procedures. It should be used in conjunction with Arizona State University's Graduate College Policies and Procedures ([http://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/Grad\\_Policies\\_11-17-2010.pdf](http://graduate.asu.edu/sites/default/files/Grad_Policies_11-17-2010.pdf)). It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the Graduate College's Policies and Procedures, this guide and to comply with all university and school requirements.

## **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES**

Applicants must file online with Arizona State University's Graduate College and meet its requirements before the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication can review any application. The application requirements may be found at the Graduate College's website: <http://www.asu.edu/graduate/admissions/>. The Cronkite School offers admission for the fall semester only. All application materials must arrive no later than February 1. Additionally, the Graduate College requires applicants to submit official transcripts in sealed envelopes directly to its offices. It also requires official TOEFL scores for any student whose native language is not English.

The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication requires that applicants submit the following additional items:

1. official GRE scores (the scores will be sent electronically to the Graduate College if the applicant requests they be sent to ASU and uses institution code 4007)
2. a current resume (submitted online with the Graduate College's application).
3. a 350-500 word personal statement of goals, including how the MMC program will help the applicant achieve these goals. This statement also serves as a writing sample (submitted online with the Graduate College application).
4. three letters of recommendation, at least one of which reliably assesses the applicant's ability to succeed in graduate school. These letters should be on letterhead and from professional rather than personal references.

All applications are evaluated by the Cronkite School's graduate committee. The graduate committee makes an admission recommendation to the Graduate College. The Graduate College makes the offer of admission to the student.

Applicants are advised that the admission process is highly competitive.

## **PLAN OF STUDY**

After the completion of 50% of the minimum credit hours required for the degree, students admitted to the MMC program must file an official Plan of Study with the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The Plan of Study is available online via the ASU Web site and the MyASU link: <http://www.asu.edu/>.

The student is able to select the ASU courses that have been taken, those in progress and those the student expects to take in future semesters. Once the Plan of Study is completed it is electronically forwarded to the Cronkite School's graduate office. It must be approved by the members of the Cronkite School's graduate committee and dean. The completed Plan of Study is sent to the Graduate College and then to the Graduation Office. The approved Plan of Study is a contract between the student and the committee members verifying the classes the student intends to take during his/her course of study. Students who have not filed an approved Plan of Study are not eligible for graduation. Changes in the Plan of Study may be made by using the Course Changes to the Graduate Plan of Study available online at MyASU (<http://www.asu.edu/>).

Students who need to file a Plan of Study will be notified by the Graduate College via e-mail. If the student fails to file the Plan of Study within the specified time period a hold will be placed on the student's ASU record. The hold will prevent the student from registering for classes. Once the student has filed the Plan of Study and it has been approved, the hold will be removed. The Graduate College monitors students' POS status and places or removes the holds.

## **TRANSFER CREDIT**

Students admitted to the 30-hour mid-career MMC program may transfer up to 6 credit hours of approved coursework taken before beginning the program; the 6 credit hours may include non-degree coursework. Only courses with a grade of A or B and taken within 3 years of admission to an ASU graduate program may be accepted as transfer credit.

In order to have graduate coursework that was completed at other accredited institutions included on a Plan of Study, a student must petition the Cronkite School's graduate committee. The student also must complete the petition section of the iPOS.

## **TIME LIMITATIONS**

Per the Graduate College, all work included on a student's Plan of Study must be completed within six consecutive years.

## **400-LEVEL COURSES TAKEN FOR GRADUATE CREDIT**

The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication may allow graduate students to enroll in and use up to two 3-credit 400-level courses on their Plans of Study (a total of 6 credit hours). Students taking these courses are responsible for obtaining and completing the 400 Level Course Contract form. The 400 Level Course Contract form specifies what the student must do to receive graduate credit for the course. It must be signed by the professor.

In order for 400-level courses offered in academic units outside the Cronkite School to be included on a Plan of Study, a student must submit to the Cronkite School's graduate office a written statement from the course instructor stating the course is acceptable in that unit for graduate credit and that the student successfully completed the necessary work.

## **RETENTION**

The Graduate College and the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication require students to make satisfactory progress during the time they are enrolled in a graduate program. This includes maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) overall and in courses included on the Plan of Study. (Courses taken as an undergraduate at ASU and reserved for use in a graduate degree program are included in the GPA.)

If a student's GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be notified and placed on probation. If the student's GPA is not raised to at least a 3.0 by the end of the next semester (excluding summer), a recommendation will be made to the Graduate College to remove the student from the Master of Mass Communication program.

If a student earns less than a C in MCO 591 Journalism Skills (Bootcamp), the Cronkite School will recommend to the Graduate College that the student be removed from the program immediately.

MCO 570 Capstone, the culminating experience, requires a grade of "B" or better.

## **APPEALS**

Students who want to appeal a course grade must first discuss the issue with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved, the student may appeal the decision to the school's standards committee. The standards committee will review the issue and make a recommendation to the dean. The dean's decision is final. Students should be aware the standards committee may recommend a grade lower than the one awarded by the course instructor.

If a student fails to make satisfactory academic progress and a recommendation is made to the Graduate College to remove the student from the Master of Mass Communication program, the student will have ten business days to file a written appeal with the dean. The dean's decision regarding appeals is final.

## **PRE-ADMISSION CREDIT**

Credit earned in graduate-level courses (per Graduate College policy) by undergraduate students may count toward their graduate degrees at ASU provided the credit hours have not been used toward a previously awarded degree. Before awarding a bachelor's degree, ASU undergraduate students should contact their undergraduate adviser to set aside graduate courses for use toward a graduate degree.

Reserving a course does not guarantee the student will be admitted to a graduate degree program or that the course will be used to meet graduate degree requirements. A maximum of nine semester hours of credit may be reserved and only courses with a grade of "B" (3.00) or better are applicable. Reserved credit is classified as non-degree credit and must be taken within the six-year time limit to be included on a Plan of Study.

## **GRADES OF INCOMPLETE**

The Graduate College requires students who receive an "Incomplete" in graduate coursework (500 level or above) to complete the necessary work within one calendar year. If the incomplete is not removed within one calendar year, it will become part of the student's permanent transcript and cannot be used on a student's Plan of Study. To receive credit for the course, the student must repeat the course by re-registering, paying fees and fulfilling all course requirements.

MMC students with more than one "Incomplete" at any time will be considered "failing to make adequate progress," will be notified and placed on probation. If the student does not

complete the work to remove the incomplete and earn a letter grade by the end of the calendar year, a recommendation may be made to the Graduate College to remove the student from the Master of Mass Communication program.

With 400-level courses taken for graduate credit, students are required to complete the necessary work to remove an “Incomplete” grade within one calendar year. If the “Incomplete” grade is not removed within one calendar year, the “I” will become an “E.” An “E” cannot be used to meet the requirements for a graduate degree, but it is used to calculate the student’s GPA. Students may retake the class to earn a higher grade, however both the “E” and the new grade will be used in calculating the student’s GPA. If this results in the GPA falling below 3.0, a recommendation to withdraw the student from the MMC program will be made to the Graduate College.

## **APPLIED PROJECT**

A student whose MMC program requires him/her to complete an applied project is eligible to enroll in MCO 593, Applied Project, when s/he has no more than 6 credit hours of coursework remaining on her/his Plan of Study.

The Applied Project is an original study using an academically acceptable methodology. It is primarily a professional product with an academic/theoretical/research foundation and has a significant writing component. Students are required to meet with the senior associate dean to discuss the Project including the faculty members who will serve on the student’s Applied Project Committee. It is the responsibility of the student to approach professors to discuss chairing and serving as members of the Project committee. **The committee is not official until the senior associate dean has received and approved the Applied Project Committee selection form signed by the student and all committee members.**

Students are required to meet all deadlines for submitting their proposals and final projects and for defense dates. These deadlines are set each semester and are available from the Cronkite School’s graduate office.

Once the chair approves the proposal and has given the student permission to distribute it to the other members of the committee, the student may schedule the Proposal Defense. The Proposal Defense should be scheduled at least 10 business days in advance so all members of the committee have adequate time to review the proposal. The proposal should detail the topic of the study, provide the background of the study, the research questions to be answered, methodology, the sample or sources to be consulted, and a timeline for completion. Once the proposal has been successfully defended and the committee members

have signed the Proposal Defense Form, the senior associate dean will authorize the student to register for MCO 593, Applied Project.

The student works with his/her chair and other committee members to complete the project. It is recommended that students meet with their project chairs in person or via e-mail or phone on a weekly basis to make certain that the project is progressing in a timely manner. If a student is not in contact with his/her project chair at least once a month s/he may be considered failing to make satisfactory progress. This may result in a recommendation to the Graduate College to withdraw the student from the program.

Once the chair has signed off on the project and given the student permission to distribute the project to the other members of the committee, the student may schedule the oral defense. The defense date must be convenient to all members of the student's committee. The student may obtain the Application for Authorization to Schedule a Defense form from the Graduate Adviser. The student must submit a final copy of the project to his/her committee members no later than 10 business days prior to the scheduled oral defense.

Both the proposal and project defenses must be conducted in person.

For more information on the applied project see the Applied Project Procedures handout available in the Cronkite School's Graduate Office.

## **TEACHING/GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication has a limited number of graduate assistantships available each academic year. Students awarded these positions are assigned to specific classes or to work with selected professors performing various duties. To be eligible for an assistantship, students must be enrolled in at least 9 credit hours each semester. Students may apply for assistantships by submitting the application form found at the Graduate College website: <http://www.asu.edu/graduate/forms/>. Applications are reviewed each spring for assistantships that begin the following academic year. Assistantships are awarded on a semester-by-semester basis, but often bridge the academic year (both fall and spring semesters).