MASTER’S STUDENT HANDBOOK
2015–2016

Arizona State University
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. The Cronkite is widely recognized as one of the nation’s premier professional journalism programs. Rooted in the time-honored values that characterize its namesake — accuracy, responsibility, objectivity, integrity — the school fosters journalistic excellence and ethics among students as they master the professional skills they need to succeed in the digital media world of today and tomorrow.

Located on Arizona State University’s Downtown Phoenix campus, the Cronkite School leads the way in journalism education with its innovative use of the teaching hospital model, for which it has received international acclaim. The school’s full-immersion professional programs give students opportunities to practice what they’ve learned in intensive real-world settings under the guidance of top-flight professionals.

The Cronkite School owns and operates Arizona's PBS station. The current reach of Arizona PBS, and the school's nightly newscast, Cronkite News, is 4.8 million people in 1.9 million households across 80 percent of Arizona. The weekly viewership is more than 1 million.

Students in Cronkite News Phoenix and Washington Bureaus produce public service journalism for media outlets and consumers statewide and beyond. Carnegie-Knight News21 student journalists produce innovative multimedia investigations into issues critical to Americans, and the business journalism specialization prepares students to report in depth on business, finance and economics. Students in Cronkite News produce a nightly newscast that reaches millions Arizonans on Arizona PBS. In the New Media Innovation Lab, students use digital technologies to forge the future of journalism and create mobile digital products for clients. The sports journalism program offers extraordinary professional experiences and includes Phoenix and Southern California sports bureaus.

The Cronkite School offers the following graduate degrees:
- Master of Mass Communication (professional or mid-career tracks)
- Master of Arts in Sports Journalism

This guide will give you the information you need to successfully complete your master’s degree at the Cronkite School. It outlines the school’s academic standards, policies, and procedures and those of ASU’s Office of Graduate Education (https://graduate.asu.edu/).
ADMISSIONS

Application Procedures
The Cronkite School admits applicants to the master’s programs for the fall semester only. Candidates apply online at http://www.asu.edu/gradapp. The admission process is highly competitive. The Cronkite School’s priority review application deadline is February 1 of each year.

Transcripts
Applicants are required to submit official transcripts from the institutions from which they earned their bachelor’s degrees in sealed envelopes directly to the university’s Graduate Admissions Office. Applicants who are admitted to the graduate program before completing their undergraduate studies must send a second, official transcript to the university showing that their undergraduate degree was conferred. This must be completed before the student can enroll in their second semester of classes. Financial aid holds may be imposed if a final transcript is not submitted.

The Cronkite School also requires the following items:

1. Official GRE scores (applicants should enter ASU’s institution code, 4007, to have scores sent electronically from ETS to the university). The scores must be no more than five years old.
2. A current resume (submitted online with the graduate admissions application).
3. A 350-500 word personal statement of goals, including how the master’s program will help the applicant achieve these goals. This statement also serves as a writing sample (submitted online with the graduate admissions application).
4. Three letters of recommendation, at least one of which reliably assesses the applicant’s ability to succeed in graduate school (typically from a previous professor or instructor). These letters should be on letterhead and from professional rather than personal references.
5. TOEFL score of 100 or more (international applicants only). Applicants who earned a degree in the U.S. are not required to submit TOEFL scores.

All applications are evaluated by the Cronkite School’s graduate committee, and recommendations are made to the university’s graduate admissions office. Applicants will receive a note from the university and the Cronkite School letting them know whether they’ve been admitted.
STUDENT POLICIES, CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

All students are expected to adhere to the ABOR Student Code of Conduct and university policies and procedures:
https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/codeofconduct
https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/PoliciesAndProcedures

Students are expected to regularly check their ASU email accounts for messages from the university and the Cronkite School. Students also are expected to regularly check their MyASU priority tasks for messages and holds from the university. Students are responsible for managing their tuition payments, finances and tracking university academic calendar deadlines.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Cronkite School has a zero tolerance policy toward academic dishonesty that is enforced within every course and educational activity offered or sanctioned by the school. Any allegation of academic dishonesty will be referred to the school’s Standards Committee for review and recommendation to the dean of the school. If any student is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty in any form – including but not limited to cheating, plagiarizing and fabricating – that student shall receive a grade of XE for the class and will be dismissed from the school. There will be no exceptions.

At the beginning of every Cronkite class, each student will be given a copy of the full academic integrity policy, along with accompanying information on plagiarism. Students must sign a pledge that indicates they have read and understood the material and agree to abide by the policy.

The failure of any graduate student to uphold these standards may result in serious consequences including suspension or expulsion from the university.

The policy, along with guidance on how to avoid plagiarism and fabrication, can be found at http://cronkite.asu.edu/assets/pdf/Academic_Integrity_Policy.pdf.

The university’s academic integrity policy can be found at https://graduate.asu.edu/academic-integrity.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students who violate academic integrity policies may be dismissed immediately. Being withdrawn from a degree program can have immediate consequences regarding visa status, and dismissed students are required to leave the country immediately per immigration and visa rules.
SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS KEY POLICIES

All graduate students are expected to make systematic progress toward completion of their degrees. Students are responsible for verifying and tracking satisfactory progress policies as required by their degree program and Graduate Education. If a student fails to satisfy the requirements outlined below, the student may be dismissed from his/her program based on the Academic Unit’s recommendation to Graduate Education.

These policies are outlined below and detailed on the university’s Graduate Education website: https://graduate.asu.edu/key-policies.

GPA (Grade Point Average) and Course Grades
Cronkite School students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) overall and in courses included on their Plans 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 in writing 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, a recommendation will be made to Graduate Education to remove the student from the Cronkite School’s master’s program.

If a student earns less than a C in MCO 502 Journalism Skills (Bootcamp), the Cronkite School will recommend to Graduate Education that the student be removed from the program immediately.

To receive their degrees, students also are required to earn at least a B (3.0) in MCO 570 Capstone.

Incomplete Grades
Students who receive an “Incomplete” grade in a graduate-level course (500-level or above) must 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. This may also delay or prevent a student’s graduation.

Students with more than one “Incomplete” at any time will be considered “failing to make adequate progress,” and 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 Graduate Education to remove the student from the 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 master’s program will be made to Graduate Education.

Continuous Enrollment
Once admitted to a graduate degree program, students must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit hour during all phases of their graduate education.

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit the Maintain Continuous Enrollment request form (https://graduate.asu.edu/file/maintain-continuous-enrollment-masters-and-certificate). This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request to maintain continuous enrollment without course registration for a maximum of two semesters during their entire program.

Students should contact their adviser as soon as possible if they will not be able to meet continuous enrollment.

Maximum Time Limit
All work toward a master’s degree must be completed within six consecutive years.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Students who fail to meet satisfactory academic progress as previously described will be placed on academic probation and notified by mail and email. Details for each situation will be provided in the letter notifying the student that he/she is on academic probation.

Graduate Education will conduct a GPA audit at the end of each semester. Any graduate student with a cumulative GPA below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. The student will receive a notification on their MyASU and an email from the Cronkite School. Typically, students on academic probation will have one semester to be reinstated to good standing.

Students on academic probation may be withdrawn from their academic program upon recommendation of the Cronkite School to university Graduate Education.

For students placed on probation the previous semester who have met the condition of probation, the Cronkite School will send a letter of reinstatement.

PLAN OF STUDY

The Plan of Study (iPOS) functions as a contract between the student, the academic unit, and Graduate Education.
Cronkite School students must submit their iPOSes before enrolling for their third semester. Graduate Education will place an enrollment hold on a student’s account if he/she has not submitted an iPOS by this time.

Only coursework applicable towards a student’s degree must be listed on the iPOS. Detailed instructions on how to file the iPOS will be sent during students’ second semester in the program.

**CRONKITE COURSES**

The Cronkite School offers courses under the “JMC” and “MCO” subject codes. Master’s students who are interested in taking courses not listed in their curriculum sheet (such as JMC courses or undergraduate MCO courses) must contact the graduate adviser for permission to enroll in these courses. The graduate adviser will forward the request to the senior associate dean for approval.

Cronkite School course and professional program offerings are subject to change based on enrollment and school needs.

**TRANSFER CREDIT**

Students who are in the 36 credit-hour master’s programs are not permitted to transfer course work from another institution or from another ASU program.

Students admitted to the 30 credit hour mid-career MMC program may transfer up to 6 credit hours of coursework taken before beginning the program (referred to as pre-admission credits). Preadmission credit hours must be approved by the degree program and the Graduate Education office. Students are responsible for alerting their graduate adviser that they plan on transferring in credits.

To qualify for preadmission credits, the courses must meet specific criteria:
- Be graduate-level
- Have been taken within three years of admission to the ASU degree program.
- A grade of “B” or better must have been earned.
- Must not have been used towards a previous degree.
- Completed at a regionally accredited US institution or international institution officially recognized by that country.

Certain types of graduate credits cannot be transferred to ASU, such as courses taken at a non-collegiate institution, institutions that lack regional accreditation, for life experience, continuing education programs, workshops, etc.
Students must officially transfer in preadmission credit hours through the iPOS system for approval by the academic unit and the Graduate Education office. Official transcripts from where the preadmission credits were earned must be sent to Graduate Admission Services.

**GRADUATION AND DEGREE CONFERRAL**

Students must apply for graduation at the beginning of the term in which they plan to graduate. If a student chooses not to attend the graduation or commencement ceremonies, they must still apply for graduation to earn their degree.

Students who do not complete all requirements in the semester they intend to graduate will need to reapply for graduation the next semester; the application will not be automatically forwarded.

Students must have their IPOS approved before they can apply for graduation. The application to graduate should be submitted online before the application deadline to avoid late fees. For more information, please visit [https://students.asu.edu/graduation-apply](https://students.asu.edu/graduation-apply).

**DEGREE OVERVIEWS**

**Master of Mass Communication**

Degree requirements
The Master of Mass Communication Degree is a 36 credit hour program. This includes 21 credits of required core courses, 6 credits of advanced skills electives, and 9 credits of professional program experience. Students must enroll in the 12 required credits in their first semester.

**Master of Arts (MA) in Sports Journalism**

Degree requirements
The Master of Mass Communication Degree is a 36 credit hour program. This includes 24 credits of required core courses, 3 credits of advanced skills electives, and 9 credits of professional program experience in a Cronkite Sports Bureau. Students must enroll in the 12 required credits in their first semester.

**Master of Mass Communication (Mid-Career Program)**

Students with extensive professional journalism or media experience may be offered the opportunity to pursue the 30-credit-hour mid-career degree option.

Degree requirements
The Master of Mass Communication Mid-Career Degree is a 30 credit hour program. This option will entail a program of study that is highly individualized with course work tailored to the student’s goals. Students should consult with Senior Associate Dean Dr. Barrett to develop an appropriate program of study. Each student’s plan of study must include a minimum of 15 hours
of coursework offered by the Cronkite School. Students can choose to complete the program with an MCO 570 professional program experience or an MCO 593 applied project.

Applied Project
Students interested in completing an applied project are encouraged to meet with the senior associate dean no later than the end of their first year in the program. To enroll in MCO 593, students must complete the applied project form.

**Professional Programs**
Master of Mass Communication (36 credit-hour plan) and MA in Sports Journalism students are required to complete nine credits in one or two professional programs (also referred to as capstone courses).

- 9 credits = 4 full days per week (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)
- 5 OR 4 credits = 2 full days per week (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Students can participate in up to two professional programs. If participating in two professional programs, students should enroll for five credits in one program and four credits in another program for a total of nine credits.
I have read the Cronkite School's Master's Student Handbook for 2015-2016. I understand and agree to abide by these policies.

Name (please print) ____________________________________________

Signature ______________________________________________________

Date __________________________________________________________