Program Description

The Master of Science in Public Relations is designed to provide students with the essential theoretical and practical tools they need to develop their careers in public relations and public communication. Students graduating with the MSPR leave with an enhanced understanding of the processes of facilitating and negotiating communication between individuals, groups, and organizations. The program is designed to be valuable to students with a variety of public relations experiences. We welcome students who bring diverse perspectives on the practice of public communication. All of the courses in this program are offered in the evening or online for flexible completion of the program.

Admission Criteria and Application Procedure

The number of students admitted to the program each year is usually limited. Applicants will be evaluated according to the weighting system listed below. If the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of openings, the applicants with the highest ratings will be given first consideration for admission to the program. Applicants who do not meet the admission requirements may be considered for provisional admission.

1. **A bachelor’s degree** in communication or related discipline with significant coursework in communication
2. An undergraduate **GPA of 3.0 or higher**
3. **Standardized graduate admission test (GRE).**
4. Three letters of reference, with at least one from an academic source
5. A completed **Graduate Studies Admission form**
6. A letter of application stating the applicant’s purpose for pursuing a graduate degree in public relations

Total minimum credits required for degree: 30
Online? Yes
Program length (approximate): Courses are offered during fall, spring, and summer semesters. You could finish this program in about 3-4 semesters.
Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Assistantships

Graduate students who wish to apply for financial assistance must be enrolled in a graduate program for at least 6 credits for half-time aid or 9 credits for full-time aid. Non-degree graduate students are not eligible for financial aid. To apply for financial aid, a student must complete the (FAFSA) application. March 1 is the priority deadline. There are loans, graduate assistantships, partial tuition credits, and scholarships available. Please see our website for further information: www.msubillings.edu/grad/

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WICHE eligible! If you live in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington, or Wyoming you can attend for resident tuition rates.

Tuition is subject to change by the Board of Regents of Higher Education.

Careers: What can you do with a degree in Public Relations?

- Health Promotion
- Nonprofit Public Relations
- Community Relations
- Human Resource Management
- Public Opinion Research
- Corporate Public Affairs
- Media Analysis/Planning
- Advertising/Marketing
- Corporate Communication
- News/Informational Writing
- Sales
- Editing
- Fundraising
- Lobbying

Some of our recent graduates responded to a Graduate Data survey taken 9 months after graduation. Of the 4 Public Relations graduates who did respond to the survey, 2 or 50% are employed in their field.

Contact Us

Please contact the Office of Graduate Studies for information about programs, admission requirements, application forms, graduate assistantships, and other scholarship information. We look forward to visiting with you.

David Sullivan, Counselor  
(406) 657-2053  
dsullivan@msubillings.edu

Administrative Support  
(406) 657-2238  
gradstudies@msubillings.edu
Program Structure

I. Program Wide Required Courses (21 credits)
COMT 502 Research Methods*
COMT 514 Issues in Organizational Communication*
POLS 525 Media Criticism*
COMT 527 Public Relations Ethics*
COMT 565 Communication Theory*
Elective
COMT 595 Comprehensive Exam

II. Emphasis Courses (9 credits)
Choose one of the four emphases listed below (Public Relations Theory & Practice, Health Communication, Political and Public Communication, or Media and Society)

Total minimum credits required for degree: 30

Emphasis One: Public Relations Theory & Practice (9 credits)
COMT 522 Issues in Public Relations*
COMT 526 Cases in Public Relations*
COMT 529 Law of Public Communication*

Emphasis Two: Health Communication (9 credits)
Emphasis two required courses (6 credits)
COMT 580 Health Communication*
COMT 581 Media for Social Change*

Choose one course from the following (3 credits)
HADM 605 Evidence Based Management Research & Evaluation Methods*
HADM 607 Health Informatics & Information Systems*
HADM 635 Health Law*
HADM 640 Managerial Epidemiology & Population Health*
HADM 685 Research and Evaluation Methods
HADM 687 Healthcare and Marketing Strategy
HHP 560 Sport Marketing

*With the advisor’s approval, another graduate course may be substituted for this course if the student has previous coursework in this area.
Emphasis Three: Political and Public Communication (9 credits)

Choose two of the following (6 credits)
COMT 529 Law of Public Communication*
COMT 530 Public Influence*
COMT 531 Political Communication*

Choose one of the following (3 credits)
COMT 521 Communicating Online*
COMT 522 Issues in Public Relations*
COMT 529 The Law of Public Communication* (if not chosen above)
COMT 530 Public Influence* (if not chosen above)
COMT 531 Political Communication* (if not chosen above)
COMT 581 Media for Social Change*
COMT 592 Feminist Rhetoric*
POLS 523 Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties*
POLS 558 Public Organization Dynamics*
POLS 559 Program Evaluation and Policy Analysis*

*With the advisor’s approval, another graduate course may be substituted for this course if the student has previous coursework in this area.

Emphasis Four: Media and Society (9 credits)

Choose two of the following (6 credits)
COMT 520 Advertising, Media, and Culture*
COMT 521 Communicating Online*
COMT 540 Popular Culture and Cultural Studies*
COMT 561 Multicultural Mass Communication*

Choose one of the following (3 credits)
COMT 520 Advertising, Media, and Culture* (if not chosen above)
COMT 521 Communicating Online* (if not chosen above)
COMT 522 Issues in Public Relations*
COMT 529 The Law of Public Communication*
COMT 530 Public Influence*
COMT 540 Popular Culture & Cultural Studies* (if not chosen above)
COMT 561 Multicultural Mass Communication* (if not chosen above)
COMT 581 Media for Social Change*

*With the advisor’s approval, another graduate course may be substituted for this course if the student has previous coursework in this area.