



**IUP Graduate Handbook**

---

**Master of Science in Strategic Communication**

Department of Communications Media

Handbook Updated 2023-2024

Master of Science in Strategic Communication  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Department of Communications Media  
1175 Maple St., Stouffer Hall 121  
Indiana, PA 15705  
Phone: 724-357-2492  
Fax: 724-357-5503

Program Website: <https://www.iup.edu/commmedia/grad/strategic-communication-ms/>

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
IUP’s Civility Statement .....	1
Affirmative Action .....	1
Title IX Reporting Requirement .....	1
Student Conduct and Student Rights .....	1
Department of Communications Media .....	1
Mission Statement and Program Objectives .....	2
Faculty and Staff .....	2
Admission.....	2
Financial Assistance .....	3
Graduate Assistantships.....	3
Academic Advisement.....	3
Campus Resources & Student Support.....	3
IUP Email .....	4
Graduate Student Assembly .....	4
Programs and Degrees .....	4
Master’s Program.....	4
Doctoral Programs .....	6
Course Descriptions .....	6
Evaluation of Students .....	8
Degree Completion .....	8
Thesis Completion.....	9
Thesis Committee Selection .....	9
Thesis Committee Approval on the Department Level .....	9
Evaluation Outcome for Thesis .....	10
Thesis Research Topic Approval Process .....	10
Approval of Thesis Prospectus - Chapters 1-3 .....	11
Thesis Oral Defense and Completion Process .....	11
Time Limitations.....	11
University Policies and Procedures.....	12
Research.....	12
Appendices.....	13
Appendix A: Student Advising Sheet.....	13
Appendix B: Thesis Committee Identification and Approval Form.....	14
Signature Page .....	15

## Introduction

Welcome to the Master of Science in Strategic Communication program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. This 36-credit program is designed to serve current and aspiring communication professionals by combining writing, research, and production. The program prepares students to pursue a variety of careers in professional communication including crisis communication, communication management, political communication, health communication and strategic online messaging.

### IUP's Civility Statement

As a university of different peoples and perspectives, IUP aspires to promote the growth of all people in their academic, professional, social, and personal lives. Students, faculty, and staff join together to create a community where people exchange ideas, listen to one another with consideration and respect, and are committed to fostering civility through university structures, policies, and procedures. We, as members of the university, strive to achieve the following individual commitments:

**To strengthen the university for academic success**, I will act honestly, take responsibility for my behavior and continuous learning, and respect the freedom of others to express their views.

**To foster an environment for personal growth**, I will honor and take care of my body, mind, and character. I will be helpful to others and respect their rights. I will discourage intolerance, hatred, and injustice, and promote constructive resolution of conflict.

**To contribute to the future**, I will strive for the betterment of the community, myself, my university, the nation, and the world.

### Affirmative Action

<https://catalog.iup.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=951>

### Title IX Reporting Requirement

<https://catalog.iup.edu/content.php?catoid=7&navoid=959>

### Student Conduct and Student Rights

<https://www.iup.edu/student-support-and-standards/policies/index.html>  
[www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

## Department of Communications Media

The Department of Communications Media is housed in the College of Education and Communications. We offer the Bachelor of Science in Communications Media that includes four tracks: Media Marketing, Media Production, News Media, and Media Studies. In addition to the MS degree, we also offer a Ph.D. in Media and Communication Studies. Our production facilities include dedicated space for audio, video,

graphics, photography, radio, and film production.

## Mission Statement and Program Objectives

The Department of Communications Media of IUP is committed to the creation, preservation, expansion, and transmission of knowledge. The Department has the responsibility to include, within its concern, the needs of the profession as a whole and society at large as its resources allow. In meeting these responsibilities, the department is committed to preparing students for communications professions. In doing so, it offers quality undergraduate programs in which students learn to design, produce, and evaluate media messages.

The Department of Communications Media has designed the Master of Science in Strategic Communication program to meet the educational and career objectives of students as well as the needs of employers in the communication field and in higher education. To those ends, the goals of the program are to:

- Balance theoretical, writing, research, and production components to aid students in creating, producing, and delivering goal-oriented messages
- Encourage critical thinking and development of strategies for solving organizational communication problems
- Develop teamwork and leadership skills through integrated communication writing and production projects
- Prepare students for advanced research and doctoral education (research track)
- Prepare students for careers in strategic communication in a variety of professional settings (applied track)

## Faculty and Staff

All full-time faculty members have terminal degrees in Communications and other fields directly related to our discipline. The Communications Media office is staffed by an administrative assistant and student workers. The office can be reached at 724-357-2492.

### Program Coordinator

Dr. Vicky Ortiz  
Department of Communications Media  
121 Stouffer Hall, 1175 Maple Street  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania Indiana, PA 15705  
Phone: 724-357-2492  
Email: vortiz@iup.edu

## Admission

Students seeking admission to the Master of Science in Strategic Communication must complete the online application form; submit official transcripts, two letters of recommendation, a goal statement and a current résumé or curriculum vita.

Students must meet one of the following admission criteria:

- Have completed a bachelor's degree with a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA
- Be an IUP junior or senior seeking early admission to graduate studies  
<https://www.iup.edu/admissions/graduate/howto/early-admission/>

Students are admitted to the Master of Science in Strategic Communication on a rolling admission basis. Students seeking to complete the program in one year must begin their studies in the fall semester.

An early application increases opportunities for financial assistance, including graduate assistantships. Graduate assistantships are assigned to incoming students by June 1. Students seeking assistantships are encouraged to have complete applications submitted by May 1. All graduate assistantship funds are disbursed prior to July 1. Applicants may be considered for admission after that date, but assistantships will not be available.

Graduate Admissions: [www.iup.edu/admissions/graduate/](http://www.iup.edu/admissions/graduate/)

For more information regarding Admission Classification and Provisional Admission for International Graduate Application, view the Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

## Financial Assistance

### Graduate Assistantships

Students may apply for a part-time (10-hour) or full-time (20-hour) graduate assistantship. Students should indicate their interest in a graduate assistantship position by checking the box in the program application and by contacting the program coordinator.

- <https://www.iup.edu/admissions/graduate/financialaid/index.html>
- Office of Financial Aid: [www.iup.edu/financialaid/](http://www.iup.edu/financialaid/)

## Academic Advisement

The program coordinator serves as the academic advisor for students enrolled in the M.S. in Strategic Communication. The advisor will provide guidance on courses that should be taken each semester, according to students' full-time or part-time status. Students should take an active role in the advisement relationship through communication with the advisor, timely registration for classes, and responsiveness in submitting required documents and other information as needed.

## Campus Resources & Student Support

The School of Graduate Studies and Research: [www.iup.edu/graduatestudies/](http://www.iup.edu/graduatestudies/)

Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

Office of Student Billing: <https://www.iup.edu/student-billing/>

Office of the Registrar: [www.iup.edu/registrar/](http://www.iup.edu/registrar/)

Disability Support Services: [www.iup.edu/disabilitysupport/](http://www.iup.edu/disabilitysupport/)

Office of Social Equity: [www.iup.edu/socialequity/](http://www.iup.edu/socialequity/)

IUP Campus Library: [www.iup.edu/library/](http://www.iup.edu/library/)

MyIUP: [www.iup.edu/myiup/](http://www.iup.edu/myiup/)

IT Support Center: [www.iup.edu/itsupportcenter/](http://www.iup.edu/itsupportcenter/)

Veterans and Service Members: [www.iup.edu/veterans/resource-center/](http://www.iup.edu/veterans/resource-center/)  
IUP Writing Center: [www.iup.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.iup.edu/writingcenter/)  
IUP Career and Professional Development Center: [www.iup.edu/career/](http://www.iup.edu/career/)  
IUP Parking Services and Visitor Center: [www.iup.edu/parking/](http://www.iup.edu/parking/)  
University Policy: [www.iup.edu/police/](http://www.iup.edu/police/) | 724-357-2141  
Crisis Intervention 24/7 Hotline: 1-877-333-2470  
Student Registration: [www.iup.edu/registrar/students/registration-resources/index.html](http://www.iup.edu/registrar/students/registration-resources/index.html)

## IUP Email

IUP offers an email account to all active students. **Your IUP email address is the primary means by which the university will contact you with official information and you should use for all IUP official communications. It is your responsibility to check your IUP email regularly.** Visit <https://www.iup.edu/itsupportcenter/get-support/e-mail-and-calendar/general/> to learn more about setting up this account. For more information regarding University Policy on email communications, view the Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

## Graduate Student Assembly

The Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) represents the graduate student body's interests at IUP and within the Indiana community. The GSA makes recommendations related University-wide and graduate-specific policies and in areas of concern in the cultural, intellectual, and social life of the part- and full-time graduate student. Visit [www.iup.edu/graduatestudies/gsa](http://www.iup.edu/graduatestudies/gsa) for more information.

## Programs and Degrees

### Master's Program

The Master of Science in Strategic Communication offers students the opportunity to select one of two tracks, applied or research.

- Individuals who are focused on career advancement or pursuit of careers in the communications industry are most likely to select the applied track. This track requires students to take COMM 793 Internship. The internship is offered only during the summer sessions and is a six-credit experience.
- Individuals who are seeking advanced graduate study after the Master's program are mostly likely to select the research track. This track requires students to take COMM 795 Thesis (six-credits).
- Both tracks require the student to take COMM 715 - Research and Professional Development in Strategic Communication.

The curriculum design incorporates required and elective courses that position students to successfully obtain the following Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of the program, students will be able to:

- Analyze organizational communication needs

- Develop effective, goal-driven communication messages
- Understand audience behaviors to match messages with audience motivations
- Integrate written and verbal messages with digital media production
- Construct strategic messages, utilizing critical thinking and argumentation
- Deliver communication campaigns in writing, in person and online

At the conclusion of the program, students who pursue the applied track will be able to:

- Implement communications strategies, including planning, writing and evaluation in various industries (corporate, health, education, non-profit)
- Apply learning in strategic communication in an experiential education activity. At the conclusion of the program, students who pursue the research track will be able to:
  - Perform research and analyze data
  - Apply learning in strategic communication in a culminating thesis research project

It is possible for full time students to complete the MS in Strategic Communication in 12 months if they begin in the fall semester. Fall and spring semester registration for full time students is four courses (12 credits). To complete the program in 12-14 months, students would take additional elective courses in summer or winter term. Students must complete all 36 programs credits, including either the internship or thesis to graduate.

<b>Master of Science in Strategic Communication – Sample Academic Map</b>			
A Suggested Sequence of Courses for full-time enrolled students			
<b>Fall (year 1)</b>			
3	COMM 511	Theories and Principles of Strategic Comm.	
3	COMM 512	Writing for Strategic Communication	
3	COMM 513	Multimedia Content Development and Production	
3	Research Class	Elements of Research	
Total 12			
<b>Winter (year 1)</b>			
3	COMM xxx	Elective	
Total 3			
<b>Spring (year 1)</b>			
3	COMM xxx	Elective	
3	COMM xxx	Elective	
3	COMM xxx	Elective	
3	COMM 715	Research and Professional Development in Strategic Communication	
Total 12			
<b>Summer (year 2)</b>			
6	COMM 793	Internship (or)	
	COMM 795	Thesis	
	COMM xxx	Elective	
Total 9			
<b>Total Degree Credits 36</b>			



## Doctoral Programs

The doctoral program requires a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond the master's degree: 48 credits of coursework and 12 credits of dissertation work. The curriculum consists of courses in three core areas with required and elective courses available. Additional electives are being developed. Students will be required to develop a planned program of study in consultation with their advisor and the doctoral coordinator.

**Media Research and Teaching:** Provide students with tools for designing data gathering activities, analyzing data, interpreting existing research, and synthesizing new and old information into useful answers and productive new questions.

**Media Uses and Effects:** Familiarize students with models of thought and develop a cognition that critically analyzes the impact of media on culture and instruction as well as the impact of culture and instruction on media.

**Media Processes and Production:** Broaden media development skills while enabling learners to begin work on exploring new media formats and applications.

IUP's PhD in Media and Communication Studies program is, in a word, supportive. With a mix of options designed to accommodate both full- and part-time students, the program's flexibility allows you to pursue the degree without putting your career on hold. The program is offered in a weekend-based format, with class meetings six times per semester.

### Full-time

Students take approximately three courses per semester (including summers), completing coursework in about two years.

### Part-time

Students typically take two courses per semester (including summers) and complete the coursework in three years.

Students may make arrangements, in special circumstances, to adjust their course load or take an alternative load that does not match the full- or part-time cohort model.

Starting in fall 2023, we will be offering this program in a hybrid delivery model, merging face-to-face and online classes.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.iup.edu/academics/find-your-degree/programs/comm/gr/media-and-communication-studies-phd.html>

## Course Descriptions

### **COMM 511: Theories and Principles of Strategic Communication**

Provides students a solid foundation of the study of strategic communication with emphasis on organizational communication theories, strategic storytelling, participatory media, and online media's impact on behaviors and attitudes. Students will learn key elements of the field, analyze and evaluate messages for their strategic communication effectiveness and create and present examples of Strategic Communication in written and oral presentations. This course will provide an overview of discipline specific applications of strategic communication.

**COMM 512: Writing for Strategic Communication**

Prepares students to write goal-driven messages aimed at promoting action across a wide variety of media platforms. Students evaluate and write strategic communications documents for communication platforms including in-person, online and on-air.

**COMM 513: Multimedia Development and Production**

Focuses on the planning, development, and production of multimedia for strategic communication. Particular focus is placed on both the function and promotion of interactions between developer and the target audience with the goal of creating media that both provide content and motivate and equip audiences to respond with user-generated content.

**COMM 611: The Strategic Communicator**

Prepares students to become strategic communicators. Students will learn about interpersonal communication, group dynamics, problem-solving, and conflict resolution to become effective strategic communicators in the field. Course content will help students identify challenges, develop solutions and use appropriate presentation techniques to solve organizational problems.

**COMM: 612: Persuasion**

Introduces students to the theories and practices involved in understanding the creation of persuasive messages, or messages intended to influence people's attitudes, behaviors, and opinions through all forms of media and interpersonal discussion. This course will look at how people process persuasive messages and the subsequent effects of these messages. This course will explore theories of persuasion, attitude change, and message design that can be used for message creation.

**COMM 613: Strategic Communication and Online Campaigns**

Prerequisite: COMM 513

Exposes students to the current and evolving terminology for online distribution of media campaigns. The course will require students to study successful and unsuccessful campaigns of the past. Students will then plan and develop a media campaign that is strategically targeted to a narrow audience and delivered and promoted via online media.

**COMM 712: Global Strategic Communication**

Exposes students to the complexities of strategic communication for global organizations, with an emphasis on leadership and management of communication. Students will be engaged in research, discussion and writing to gain an understanding of how organizations develop information for a multicultural and global audience, both internal and external. Includes analysis of ethical, legal, political and social communication issues around the globe. Skills and practices learned in this course will be transferable to multiple contexts of globally-oriented communication.

**COMM 713: Advanced Strategic Communication Writing and Production**

Prerequisites: COMM 512, 513

Prepares students to write and produce strategic messages at the professional level and to meet the needs of employers in internships and careers. Using theory, research, writing and production concepts from previous coursework, students will be engaged in the purposeful creation of strategic communication products that meet the needs of organizations and audiences. This advanced, project-driven, course provides a culminating experience for students in the applied track of the Master of Science in Strategic Communication.

**COMM 715: Research Development in Strategic Communication**

Provides a broad overview of the diverse perspectives and approaches to strategic communication. Using theory, research, writing, and production concepts from previous coursework, students will be engaged in the purposeful creation of strategic communication products or a research project that reflects the

goals of the MS in Strategic Communication program. This project-driven course provides a capstone course experience for students in the Master of Science in Strategic Communication.

**COMM 720: Political Communication**

Provide students with a survey of communications role in politics and the political process. An interdisciplinary exploration of the field will explore the role of communication in and through legislative processes and outcomes, political campaigns and debate, news media, civic engagement, public opinion, political discourse and political identity construction.

**COMM 745: Health Communication**

Explores the role of communication campaigns in the area of public health. Students will develop the skills necessary to use media strategically to advance persuasive health messages through design, production and dissemination. Applies communication theory to the promotion of health messages.

**COMM 793: Internship**

Prerequisites: COMM 715, departmental approval

Course Description: Provides for a summer experiential education experience in a professional setting. This faculty-supervised experience may include placement at approved academic, business, non-profit, governmental or other organizations in a department or area related to the goals of the MS in Strategic Communication. Students will complete 240 work hours for this six credit culminating experience.

**COMM 795: Thesis**

Prerequisites: COMM 715, department approval

Requires students to design, develop and execute an original research study in an area related to strategic communication. The culmination of the research will be a written thesis.

## Evaluation of Students

For information regarding School of Graduate Studies and Research policies on grading, view the Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

Candidacy and Comprehensive Exams are not administered in this program.

## Degree Completion

As outlined in the IUP Graduate Catalog, all Master's students must maintain a 3.0 Cumulative Grade Point Average to be considered in good academic standing. Students must complete 30 course credits and an additional six credits of either thesis (COMM 795) or internship (COMM 793) to earn the Master of Science in Strategic Communication degree.

Students will apply for graduation following the processes and complying by the deadlines established by the University. <https://www.iup.edu/commencement/graduate/how-to-apply-for-graduation.html>

Once a student has applied for graduation, each student's academic record will be reviewed by the MS program coordinator to determine eligibility for graduation. Any discrepancies will be communicated to the student by the program coordinator.

For more information, view the Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

## Thesis Completion

### Thesis Committee Selection

Each student in the program is responsible for securing a thesis chair from the approved Master's faculty who are current members of the Department of Communications Media. The chair of the thesis committee must be a member of the Department of Communications Media and be approved by the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR) to teach Master's-level courses.

In considering the selection of a thesis committee, the student will consult with potential faculty, the student's thesis chair, and the Master's program coordinator. The student and the thesis committee chairperson will collaborate in the selection of the other members of the committee. The thesis committee will consist of at least three members, all of whom must have approval from the School of Graduate Studies and Research to serve on Master's thesis committees. At least two of the members, the thesis chair and one other, must be faculty in the Department of Communications Media.

Students register for a section of COMM 795 Thesis assigned to their thesis chair. Students will not be given permission to register for thesis credits until their thesis committee chair has been confirmed and approved by the Master's program coordinator.

### Thesis Committee Approval on the Department Level

Each student will submit the Thesis Committee Approval Form (Appendix B) to the Master's Coordinator (MC) by the announced deadlines, typically around mid-term of the semester prior to the student's planned registration for COMM 795. This form will be reviewed and approved by the MC and department chairperson. Students will be notified by the MC of any need for changes to their proposal. Students are advised that faculty signatures on this form do not indicate official approval of a thesis topic – merely the faculty members' consent to serve on the thesis committee.

If the MC and department chairperson deny the student's request for a thesis chair, the student must solicit a new chair from within the department's Master's faculty following the same process as outlined above.

No member of the committee may be replaced, even at the request of the student, without approval by the thesis committee chair. Replacement members are subject to the same approval process as the initial members of the committee. If the student wishes, or needs, to replace the thesis committee chair, approval from the Master's Coordinator and department chairperson is required. If the thesis committee chair or any members are removed or resign from the committee for any reason, it is the students' responsibility to consult with potential faculty and the MC to identify a replacement. If any changes in the composition of the thesis committee occur after the submission and approval of the Research Topic Approval Form (RTAF), a thesis committee change form must be submitted to the SGSR.

Once approved, the thesis committee chair is responsible for supervising and advising the student, coordinating thesis committee meetings, and communicating with the student and other committee members in a timely manner. This obligation continues through the completion of the degree program. The thesis committee is responsible for overseeing the thesis research and the general meeting of degree requirements as pertains to the completion of the thesis, submission of documents including the RTAF, IRB (Institutional Review Board), and thesis drafts by the appropriate deadlines. All committee members are expected to be actively involved in the thesis process, to respond to student questions in a timely fashion, and attend all thesis meetings as coordinated by the thesis chair.

Students in the thesis process are responsible for consistent and timely communication with their thesis committee, particularly the thesis chair. Once the committee has approved the RTAF, the student is expected to maintain contact at least twice a month, or more, until the final thesis is defended and approved. Students are required to submit drafts and respond to requests for revisions to documents by deadlines, as established by their thesis chair and thesis committee. All students, but particularly those students in the thesis process, should be aware of IUP's academic calendar and recognize that when classes are not in session, most faculty are not on campus and not available. Advance planning is necessary to meet related thesis deadlines and is the responsibility of the student. Students are expected to give faculty no less than two weeks to read and respond to thesis-related documents.

The student will be required to defend the completed thesis, in person, during an oral defense. All members of the thesis committee must be present, in person, for this meeting. The defense of the thesis is open to the IUP faculty and MS Strategic Communication students as approved by the thesis chairperson.

### Evaluation Outcome for Thesis

**For students admitted after Fall 2017** – Dissertation and thesis credits will be assigned Pass or Fail as the final evaluation outcome for the taken credits and carry no quality points weighted towards a student's CGPA.

**For students admitted prior to Fall 2017** – Dissertation and thesis credits will be assigned a letter grade as the final evaluation outcome for the credits taken and carry quality points weighted towards a student's CGPA for the number of dissertation credits required for the program. "Extended" dissertation credits are not calculated into a student's CGPA.

For more information, view the Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

### Thesis Research Topic Approval Process

MS students in the Research Track will register for COMM 795 Thesis for six credits. During the term in which students are registered for COMM 715 Research Development in Strategic Communication, they will begin the process of outlining their thesis project and completing the Research Topic Approval Form (RTAF). This form is available on the School of Graduate Studies and Research (SGSR) web site. Students may submit the RTAF and defend their research proposal during the same semester they are enrolled in COMM 715, so long as the thesis committee has been approved.

The completed RTAF must include an indication of special resources, equipment or conditions needed for the research, an intended time frame, and a list of references. While taking COMM 715, students will receive guidance on the thesis process and work with their thesis chair and the instructor on their RTAF and research design. The defense of these documents will be presented, in person, to the thesis committee prior to the submission of the RTAF to the Master's Coordinator. All members of the thesis committee must be present in person for this meeting. The date and time of this meeting will be made available by the thesis chair to the other COMM faculty, who may attend the meeting. Visiting faculty are permitted to ask questions but are not part of any deliberation on the part of the committee and will be excused once deliberations begin.

The RTAF must be found satisfactory by all members of the committee, and an RTAF must be approved and signed by all members of the thesis committee before the candidate can proceed with the thesis research. *The Thesis/Thesis Manual* outlines this procedure and is available from the School of Graduate

Studies and Research (SGSR). Once the committee has approved the RTAF, the student will forward the RTAF and related documents to the Master's Coordinator, College Dean, and the SGSR. Revisions to the research plan may be necessary, as requested by the SGSR, following the submission of the RTAF.

Following approval of the thesis proposal, but before data collection begins, the student must obtain permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (and other review boards as appropriate) following the procedures established for the protection of human subjects. If the thesis is theoretical or data collection involves no human subjects, IRB approval may not be required, or may be expedited.

### Approval of Thesis Prospectus - Chapters 1-3

The thesis committee will require students to submit and defend the first three chapters of their thesis before any data collection may begin. The student will meet with the committee, in person, to review the first three chapters of the thesis and obtain approval of the research methodology before beginning data collection. Students will submit the written draft of the three chapters to the thesis committee no later than two weeks before the scheduled defense meeting.

### Thesis Oral Defense and Completion Process

The student will work closely with, and is expected to meet regularly with, the thesis chairperson to complete the thesis and all related components. The student will be required to defend the completed thesis, in person, during an oral defense. All members of the thesis committee must be present, in person, for this meeting. The defense of the thesis is open to the IUP faculty and MS Strategic Communication students as approved by the thesis chairperson. During the defense, the candidate is expected to respond to substantive and methodological questions related to the thesis. The decision regarding the outcome of the defense will be made by a two-thirds majority vote of the thesis committee members. The thesis must be approved, in writing, by each member of the committee.

The evaluation of the thesis can be pass, pass with revisions, or revise and repeat defense. Students whose thesis is passed with revisions will work with the committee to make the identified revisions and return the document to the committee for review as directed. Students whose thesis is evaluated as requiring revision and a repeated defense will work with the committee to make appropriate revisions and a repeated defense will be scheduled at the discretion of the committee. Students may repeat their defense one time. If the second defense does not result in an evaluation of pass or pass with revisions, the thesis (COMM 795) has been failed and the student is dismissed from the program.

The role of faculty and student visitors at the thesis defense will be determined by the thesis committee chair, but visitors are not part of the deliberation process and will be excused from the meeting at the conclusion of the student's defense. No visitors other than IUP faculty and MS Strategic Communication students are permitted to attend the thesis defense.

Until the thesis is successfully defended, a grade of "R" is assigned to each registered credit. Upon successful completion of the thesis, the final grade assigned will apply to all registered thesis credits. Upon acceptance of the final thesis by the thesis committee, the student must submit copies for review to the SGSR thesis editor.

### Time Limitations

Master's students must complete degree requirements no later than five years from the date of earning

or transferring credits unless the period is extended through student petition. Thesis students must be continuously enrolled for at least one credit of thesis (COMM 795) each semester (fall and spring) annually, through the graduation of the student or until the time limit is exceeded.

## University Policies and Procedures

**University policy is the baseline policy.** Programs may have policy that is more stringent than the University baseline policy; however, not less stringent than the University baseline policy. For questions regarding this statement, please contact [Program Coordinator] or the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

### Academic Calendar

View the IUP Academic Calendar: [www.iup.edu/news-events/calendar/academic/](http://www.iup.edu/news-events/calendar/academic/)

**The Following University and SGSR policies can be found at [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)**

Academic Good Standing

Academic Integrity

Bereavement-Related Class Absences

Continuous Graduate Registration for Dissertation and Thesis

Grade Appeal Policy

Graduate Fresh Start Policy

Graduate Residency Requirement

Leave of Absence Policy

Time Limitations

Time-to-Degree Masters/Doctoral Dismissal Appeal Policy

Time-to-Degree Extensions for Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation

Transfer of Credits Policy

## Research

For more information, visit the website of the School of Graduate Studies and Research:

<https://www.iup.edu/research/>

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Student Advising Sheet

### Master of Science in Strategic Communication

#### Student Advising Sheet

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Banner ID: @ \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Common Core Course Requirements (12 credits)</b>			<b>Sem. taken</b>	<b>Grade</b>
COMM 511	Theories & Principles of Strategic Communication	3	_____	_____
COMM 512	Writing for Strategic Communication	3	_____	_____
COMM 513	Multimedia Content Development & Production	3	_____	_____
GSR 615	Elements of Research	3	_____	_____
<b>Electives (15 Credits)</b>			3	_____
_____			3	_____
_____			3	_____
_____			3	_____
_____			3	_____
<b>Applied Track Requirements (9 credits)</b>				
COMM 715	Research and Professional Development in Strategic Comm.	3	_____	_____
COMM 793	Internship	6	_____	_____
(OR)				
<b>Research Track Requirements (9 credits)</b>				
COMM 715	Research and Professional Development in Strategic Comm. Thesis	3	_____	_____
COMM 793		6	_____	_____
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>36</b>		



## Appendix B: Thesis Committee Identification and Approval Form

### Thesis Committee Identification and Approval Form

This form is due to the Master's coordinator before the middle of the semester prior to registering for COMM 795. For students conducting thesis research in the summer, this is mid-term of the previous spring semester. Students are not permitted to register for thesis credits until this form is completed and approved by the program coordinator.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Banner ID: @\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Thesis Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

---

*Signatures below indicate the faculty members' willingness to serve on this thesis committee, but the committee structure is subject to approval by the Master's coordinator and department chairperson. These signatures do not indicate final approval of any intended thesis topic.*

Thesis Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Student signature indicates he/she is making this request and that he/she has reviewed the SGSR thesis/dissertation web site, pertinent deadlines, instructions for RTAF and IRB submissions, and has read the thesis/dissertation manual.*

Master's Coordinator Approval: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Signature Page

Dear Student,

Congratulations on choosing to further your education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. The goal of the Master of Science in Strategic Communication is your success. So that your experience in the graduate program is the best it can be, this Handbook provides information that is essential to you. It contains information about the policies and procedures of the MS in Strategic Communication program. This document is a supplement to the Graduate Catalog, the Academic Policies and the Thesis/Dissertation Manual prepared by the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Policies and procedures contained in the Graduate Catalog provide the framework for your role as an IUP citizen and a member of our IUP family. The Thesis/Dissertation Manual provides a detailed explanation of deadlines and requirements for submitting a Master's Thesis.

My signature below indicates that I am responsible for reading and understanding the information provided and referenced in this student handbook for the MS in Strategic Communication program.

\_\_\_\_\_[please initial] I understand my program coordinator may share this document with the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

---

Print Name

---

Signature

---

Date

Please remove the page from the handbook, **sign and date**, and return it to the Master's program coordinator by **September 1, 2023**.

The Master of Science in Strategic Communication Program Coordinator will keep this signed document on file.