



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Master of Strategic Communication

Handbook 2015

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School of Social Sciences
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Information in this handbook is correct at the time of printing; all details may be subject to change

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About the Program

The Master of Strategic Communication is a three-semester course, designed so that full-time students can complete the degree in within one full calendar year, that is, two semesters plus summer. Completion requires undertaking 72 points (12 x 6-point units or equivalent) which may include a work placement or a 24-point research dissertation. The work placement is an opportunity for students to obtain skills and exposure to organisational communication settings in either domestic or international settings, in addition to theoretical, creative, production and strategy units throughout the degree. The research dissertation option provides an important pathway for those interested in academic research—strong performance in this program and the dissertation component can lead to entry to PhD programs and doctoral scholarships.

This course has a very strong international and global focus, designed so that students who complete it can successfully orient themselves to work as communication officers, communication strategists, public relations and advertising officers in any region of the world and particularly within the Asia-Pacific region.

We strongly encourage students who wish to be future leaders in their chosen fields of work to think in terms of the global media and communication environment, particularly in the context of Australia's location within the Asia-Pacific, and Perth as the Australian gateway to the Indian Ocean.

Many members of the teaching team have a strong practical background in communication work and strategic communication governance, in addition to demonstrated research and academic publications in areas that any good strategist needs to understand today in order to navigate the complex world of information exchange: digital cultures, media risk and scandal, political rhetoric, the role of media and communication in the context of identity, and the nuances of planning media and communication production and branding. Some of the units in this program have students working in groups to develop a communication strategy for an organisation of their choice; others encourage students to analyse the field in which communication occurs in a complex digital and social context today. There are many opportunities for students to pursue their own areas of interest and become not only 'specialists' but 'experts' in a particular area of communication while gaining broad knowledge and insight.

This handbook provides details of the units, the teaching mode in which they are expected to be offered, and the unit co-ordinators and teaching staff.

Some units are core (compulsory) and there are a range of elective units available as well.

Some units are taught weekly across the semester while others are offered in an 'intensive' mode (in shorter time-frames with longer in-class activities and supervised group-work) and other units are taught wholly online. This mix of study modes is representative of the increasing range of working types and roles in a professional media/communication environment.

Many on-campus classes will be taught in the purpose-built "UWA Media Room" (SSCI 1.49) and some of the classes will include students from the Master of International Journalism—providing a powerful opportunity for future professionals on "both sides of the communication coin" to begin the process of networking and engaging with each other as our future communication and journalism leaders.

While most of the units have either weekly or intensive classes, much of the work involved in being a student of a Master's program involves private study, group activities and non-supervised research, creative and production activities. Full-time study will involve many non-class hours of work and activity in order to achieve well. We recommend approximately twelve hours per week for each 6-point unit across each semester.

If, in the course of private study and non-teaching learning activities you feel lost, uncertain or unclear on any activity, please do not hesitate to contact any member of staff of the Discipline of Media and Communication—we are always available to help and we aim to ensure your learning experiences at UWA are productive and successful.

The following describes the structure of core and option units for students undertaking the Master of Strategic Communication by Coursework Only.

For students taking the Master of Communication by Coursework and Research, please see p.9.

Units: Semester One

Note: Enrolling students should check the timetable (timetable.wa.edu.au), particularly to avoid any clashes when choosing elective units hosted by other schools or faculties. Times and days of classes offered may be subject to change.

Core Units (students must take all of these units)

COMM5701 Strategic Communication in a Digital Era (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Helen Fordham

Teaching mode: This unit is taught weekly on Tuesdays 12pm-2pm in SSCI 1.49.

This unit introduces the key concepts in strategic communication, overviews the industry, government and community practices of strategic communication, and provides insights into the relationship between strategic communications and the fields of public relations, creative media practices, marketing, cultural analysis and organisational communications management. The unit will provide students with knowledge and skills in relation to (i) strategic communication as the process through which organisations achieve their goals; (ii) training and publicity creative content as strategic communications functions; (iii) communications issues management; (iv) event planning; (v) media liaison.

SCOM5303 Communication Strategies for Change (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Rob Cover

Teaching mode: This unit is taught in 2015 in 4 sessions, Thursdays 12pm-5pm in weeks 3, 4, 5 and 6 in SSCI 1.49.

This unit examines the interface between scientific knowledge, industry, policy and the general community. Emphasis is placed on the basic theoretical principles of communication and the extension of complex information to non-specialist audiences. Students examine different strategies that are used to raise awareness, educate, change behaviour, communicate about risks and promote new technologies. Students develop their understanding and skills in communication, extension, project management, community consultation, science's role in society, ethical issues and the role of information in achieving change.

COMM5702 Digital Media: Theory and Practice (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Mary-Anne Romano

Teaching mode: This unit is normally taught in 2015 in 4 sessions, Thursday 12pm-5pm in weeks 8, 9, 10 and 11 in SSCI 1.49.

The first half of this unit introduces the historical, theoretical and cultural approaches to understanding the changing digital media environment, and its relationship with the processes and practices of contemporary communication, particularly in the context of organisations. Inter-agency, inter-entrepreneurial and inter-cultural online communication and collaborative creative production will be investigated, and may include the role of websites, intranets, online training videos, video resumes and digital media releases. The second half puts into practice the theoretical, historical and cultural learnings by introducing students to the strategic practices of contemporary creative production, including the processes of developing a website, putting together a brief training video or engaging in international collaborative production of strategic information for public audiences.

Elective Units (students should choose one of the following to make up 24 points this semester)

COMM5604 Media Law and Ethics (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Katarina Damjanov

Teaching mode: Weekly 2-hour classes, Tuesdays 3-5pm in SSCI 1.49

This unit examines domestically and internationally legal and ethical frameworks for print, broadcast and online media. Topic areas include defamation law, privilege, court reporting, parliamentary reporting rules, copyright regulations, issues of privacy, the use or avoidance of offensive materials, the rules surrounding freedom of information and general broadcasting laws and regulations.

COMM5605 Issues in Contemporary Global Journalism (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Professor Peter van Onselen

Teaching mode: This unit is taught in a combination of face-to-face and online, as arranged via LMS.

Face-to-face classes will normally be held fortnightly on Fridays between 10am and 2.00pm in SSCI 1.49.

This unit examines domestically and internationally legal and ethical frameworks for print, broadcast and online media. Topic areas include defamation law, privilege, court reporting, parliamentary reporting rules, copyright regulations, issues of privacy, the use or avoidance of offensive materials, the rules surrounding freedom of information and general broadcasting laws and regulations.

COMM4102 Sexuality, Media, Culture (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Kyra Clarke

Teaching mode: This unit is taught in two-hour classes in most (but not all) weeks on Wednesdays 12-2pm.

Digital media has significantly changed the ways in which we think about sex, sexuality, censorship, bodies and identity. This unit introduces students to a range of issues relating to sexuality and digital media. By examining the ways in which digital, interactive media represents, constitutes and circulates ideas of sex and sexuality, students gain a strong, working knowledge of the ways in which digital media is changing ideas related to sex and sexuality, including minority sexual identities, youth sexuality, depictions of sexual material, pornography and censorship. The unit introduces participants to a range of theoretical approaches to the study of digital media and issues in contemporary culture. Some topics covered in the unit include the changing representation of minority sexualities within the growth of digital, online media; the impact of online pornography distribution on perceptions of bodies, advertising, legislation and censorship; issues related to youth access to online sexual material; the persistence of stereotypes related to sexuality and methods for combating them; and the use of online and mobile technologies in sexual behaviour and sexual material sharing (texting/sexting).

MGMT5610 Applied Professional Business Communications (6 points)

Taught by UWA Business School—please online check timetable

This unit is recommended mainly for students for whom English is a second language

This unit helps students develop their English writing and speaking skills to enable them to communicate confidently and professionally in a business environment. Students learn to produce key business documents as well as polished presentations. Additionally, the unit explores critical thinking, researching and referencing skills. The learning in the unit is drawn from a range of disciplines including Accounting, Economics, Employment Relations, Information Management, Management, Marketing and Organisational Behaviour.

MKTG5501 Integrated Marketing Communications (6 points)

Taught by UWA Business School—please online check timetable

Advertising and sales promotion can be powerful influences of choice behaviour when applied at the appropriate time and to the right audience. International and subcultural markets introduce additional economic, cultural, technological, legal and political factors that further complicate the ability to provide an effective integrated marketing communications strategy for the firm, agency or group. This unit reviews the various approaches and philosophies of the marketing communications task and develops a format for developing effective strategies within ethical and legal boundaries.

COMM4101 Concepts in Communication (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr David Savat

Teaching mode: This unit is normally taught weekly in two-hour seminars on Mondays 10am-12pm in SSCI 2.10.

Honours study in Communication and Media Studies offers an advanced understanding of communication and culture through sustained and close attention to particular texts, topics and critical and theoretical issues, and the development of research skills. Students are able to (1) analyse and develop advanced concepts in communication and media studies, particularly as they relate to the Honours dissertation; (2) develop research planning skills for the Honours dissertation; (3) develop time management skills relevant to research; (4) summarise complex texts in a concise and clear manner; (5) communicate critical thoughts and findings in well-developed arguments, both oral and written; and (6) develop advanced research skills.

Enrolment queries should be directed to postgrad-arts@uwa.edu.au

Units: Semester Two

Note: Enrolling students should check the timetable (timetable.wa.edu.au), particularly to avoid any clashes when choosing elective units hosted by other schools or faculties. Times and days of classes offered may be subject to change.

Core Units (students must take all of these units)

COMM5703 Organisational Communication and Project Management (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Helen Fordham

Teaching mode: Weekly 2-hour classes

This unit provides students with an intensive introduction to the forms of communications project management regularly used in contemporary organisational environments. It will examine the theory and history of project management from a communications perspective, integration with strategic planning, project management documentation and templates, and all stages of communications project management from campaign proposals to status updates and finalisation. Risk management will also be covered as an integral element of the contemporary project management environment.

COMM5704 Global Media and Cross-Cultural Communication (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Rob Cover

Teaching mode: This unit is normally taught in blocs of 5-hours, once a week for 4 weeks.

Effective communications strategists today need to be globally oriented, culturally aware and capable of working in an internationalised and transnational environment. This unit provides students with a background on contemporary global media and communications environment, approaches to globalisation as a driving concept in contemporary strategy, and methods for ensuring ethical, inclusive and effective intercultural communication. The unit may involve rehearsing collaborative engagement with students from overseas institutions and programs, and projects that are tailored for a range of communicative situations and professional contexts.

COMM5705 Strategic Representation and Promotion (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Helen Fordham

Teaching mode: This unit is normally taught in blocs of 5-hours, once a week for 4 weeks.

In this unit, students will acquire specific skills in three key areas of strategic communication: (a) graphic, digital and online representation as an integrated communicative function including the use of web-based media for the achievement of organisational strategic goals; (b) the role of visual branding in contemporary strategic communication; (c) representation of organisations through media releases, brochures and other informational mechanisms. Parts of the unit will be taught by guest lecturers drawn from professional contexts.

Elective Units (students should choose one of the following to make up 24 points this semester)

COMM4103 iGeneration (6 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: To be advised

Teaching mode: This unit is normally taught in blocs of 5-hours, once a week for 4 weeks.

In this unit, students explore emerging debates on subjectivity and creative practice in the digital era. In order to fully engage with these fields, assessments include creative analytical practices and ethnographic methodologies, which involves the creation of a digital media piece that explores and experiments with subjectivity, and a self-reflexive essay that analyses and evaluates relevant theory in light of the creative production process. This investigation outlines how the project's theoretical developments transpired in parallel to, and in extension of, the creative process and its findings, and vice versa, as the digital work and the essay enter into a dialectical relationship. The unit is designed to enhance students' existing skills in research, textual analysis and digital media production.

MGMT5610 Applied Professional Business Communications (6 points)

Taught by UWA Business School

This unit is recommended mainly for students for whom English is a second language

This unit helps students develop their English writing and speaking skills to enable them to communicate confidently and professionally in a business environment. Students learn to produce key business documents as well as polished presentations. Additionally, the unit explores critical thinking, researching and referencing skills. The learning in the unit is drawn from a range of disciplines including Accounting, Economics, Employment Relations, Information Management, Management, Marketing and Organisational Behaviour.

MKTG5505 Marketing and Society (6 points)

Taught by UWA Business School

This unit extends student knowledge into areas seldom covered in traditional marketing studies. Students explore the societal and environmental consequences of marketing and, as a result, are better positioned to make more sustainable product-related decisions. They are introduced to the 'life-goal' concepts of life satisfaction, wellbeing and quality of life (QOL) and develop a deeper appreciation of how marketing can positively enhance the aforementioned life-goals. Students examine the potential contribution of market-based economies to equitable globalisation and learn how new technologies can be applied to achieve the above in a more sustainable manner.

Enrolment queries should be directed to postgrad-arts@uwa.edu.au

Units: Summer

Students in Course by Coursework only take one or both of these placements to make up a full 72 point load by the end of study in this program.

Note: for flexibility these can also be taken at other times during the year if students can guarantee they will not interfere with study. More information on the placements can be found later in this handbook.

Although listed as “Domestic” and “International” placements, in the 2015 year, it will not matter if both placements are taken and if both are domestic or international.

More information on the placements will be available in late February 2015.

COMM5711 Work Placement A (Domestic) (12 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Helen Fordham and Dr Rob Cover

This is a placement unit with no formal classes, but will include an introductory seminar/meeting

This 12-point unit requires students to undertake a placement with a local organisation, usually in Western Australia. With university support, students will research the field and approach an industry enterprise, government agency or community organisation in an area of career interest and undertake a substantial research or practical project that benefits the organisation. The project will be assessed by a relevant member of the university staff. The unit will involve an intensive half-day preparatory seminar series and other on-campus classes. (Notes: This unit may be undertaken as an elective by students in the coursework-and-research stream; The placement will be available in all semesters, including during the summer).

Note: Students undertaking the program by Coursework Only are advised to enrol in the unit in the Summer semester.

Note: Students who wish to undertake the internship as part of the Coursework and Research option are advised to enrol in the unit in semester two and take only (a) the core units, (b) COMM5711 Work Placement A, (c) COMM5729 Dissertation.

COMM5712 Work Placement B (International) (12 points)

Unit Co-ordinator: Dr Helen Fordham and Dr Rob Cover

This is a placement unit with no formal classes, but will include an introductory seminar/meeting

This 12-point unit requires students to undertake a placement with an organisation in an overseas context. It may involve an exchange visit to another country in the region, or may be undertaken through online, digital, real-time video or audio communication and collaboration. In some cases, the project may involve a larger group-work team drawn from students in the unit. Choice of organisation will be supported and approved by the university. The placement will involve a suitable project undertaken in an area relevant to career interest and will result in a project and/or final report which will be assessed by a relevant member of the university staff. (Restriction: This unit is not available to students in the coursework-and-research stream).

*Note: This unit is designed so that students who wish to travel to undertake a placement in an overseas setting may do so. However, for those students who are not in a position to travel, the placement can be undertaken by distance with an overseas organisation, run as a form of overseas consultancy. **In other words, you can still take this unit if you wish to make up credit points through a placement and do not wish to fund and undertake a trip to London or Beijing, for example.***

Coursework and Research Option

Students who take the Master of Strategic Communication by Coursework and Research take most of the same units, with a slightly different structure and fewer options, in order to accommodate the time required to produce a strong, coherent, well-planned and well-researched dissertation by the end of the program (taking COMM5729 Strategic Communication Dissertation – see details on the dissertation below)

The Coursework and Research option permits high-performing students who are interested in research, academic or scholarly careers and who achieve a high grade for the dissertation component to enrol later in a doctoral PhD program at this or another university (Note: PhD enrolments at most universities require a dissertation to be completed as part of honours or masters study). This will require a 15,000 – 20,000 word dissertation, supervised by a member of staff.

If you are interested in the research dissertation option, you should discuss your research interested with the Discipline Chair, Media and Communication (Rob Cover) at the time of enrolment. If you have already enrolled in the coursework only option and wish to change, please ensure you contact the Discipline Chair well before 31 March (for students who enrol in semester one) or 31 August (for students who enrol in mid-year).

Students taking the Coursework and Research Option usually enrol in the following to make a total of 72 points:

Semester One

COMM5701 Strategic Communication in a Digital Era (6 points)

SCOM5303 Communication Strategies for Change (6 points)

COMM5702 Digital Media: Theory & Practice (6 points)

1 x elective unit.

Semester Two

COMM5703 Organisational Communication and Project Management (6 points)

COMM5704 Global Media and Cross-Cultural Communication (6 points)

COMM5705 Strategic Representation and Promotion (6 points)

1 x elective unit (or 1 x Work Placement A Unit *instead* of any other electives in both semesters).

Summer

COMM5729 *** Dissertation (*note that the dissertation will usually be worked upon across the year and is usually due in mid-February after the summer units are completed*).

Sample Study Pathways

The following pathways provide some examples as to how students who enrol in different patterns and different time-frames might like to structure their enrolments. These are examples only and there are many other alternatives. Please contact the Faculty of Arts office (Ground floor, Arts Building) if you require any help with planning your enrolment.

Coursework Only Students who start at the beginning of the year and plan to do two placements during the summer (for example, one 2-week placement in December and one 2-week placement in January):

Semester One	Semester Two	Summer
<p>Required: COMM5701 Strategic Communication SCOM5303 Comm Strategies COMM5702 Digital Media</p> <p>Elective: Choose one x 6-point unit from the list of electives on pp.4-5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24 points total</p>	<p>Required: COMM5703 Org Comm & Proj Mgt COMM5704 Global Media COMM5705 Strat Rep & Promotion</p> <p>Elective: Choose one x 6-point from the list of electives on pp. 6-7.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24 points total</p>	<p>Required: COMM5711 Placement A COMM5712 Placement B</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24 points total</p>

Coursework Only Students who start at the beginning of the year and only wish to take one placement during the summer.

Semester One	Semester Two	Summer
<p>Required: COMM5701 Strategic Communication SCOM5303 Comm Strategies COMM5702 Digital Media</p> <p>Elective: Choose <u>two</u> x 6-point units from the list of electives on pp.4-5 (minor overload)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">30 points total</p>	<p>Required: COMM5703 Org Comm & Proj Mgt COMM5704 Global Media COMM5705 Strat Rep & Promotion</p> <p>Elective: Choose <u>two</u> x 6-point units from the list of electives on pp. 6-7 (minor overload)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">30 points total</p>	<p>Required—choose one only: COMM5711 Placement A</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>or</u></p> <p>COMM5712 Placement B</p> <p style="text-align: right;">12 points total</p>

Coursework Only Students who start mid-year and wish to take one placement during the summer (in the middle of the study pathway) and one placement during the June/July non-teaching weeks at the end of the program.

Semester Two	Summer	Semester One
<p>Required: COMM5703 Org Comm & Proj Mgt COMM5704 Global Media COMM5705 Strat Rep & Promotion</p> <p>Elective: Choose one x 6-point unit from the list of electives on pp. 6-7.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24 points total</p>	<p>Enrol in both of these at this time and arrange with the unit co-ordinator which one is taken now and which will be taken at the end of the next Semester One:</p> <p>COMM5711 Placement A COMM5712 Placement B</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24 points total</p>	<p>Required: COMM5701 Strategic Communication SCOM5303 Comm Strategies COMM5702 Digital Media</p> <p>Elective: Choose <u>one</u> x 6-point units from the list of electives on pp.4-5</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24 points total</p>

Coursework Only Students who wish to study part-time over, for example, three calendar years and include two placements.

Year One, Semester One	Year One, Semester Two	Year One, Summer
Required: COMM5701 Strategic Communication 6 points total	Required: COMM5703 Org Comm & Proj Mgt 6 points total	No study this summer (!) 0 points total
Year Two, Semester One	Year Two, Semester Two	Year Two, Summer
Required: SCOM5303 Comm Strategies Elective: Choose two x 6 point units from the list of electives on pp.4-5. 18 points total	Elective: COMM5711 Placement A 12 points total	No study this summer
Year Three, Semester One	Year Three, Semester Two	Year Three, Summer
Required: COMM5702 Digital Media 6 points total	Required: COMM5704 Global Media COMM5705 Strat Rep & Promotion Elective: Choose two x 6 point units from the list of electives on pp. 6-7. 18 points total	Elective: Comm5712 Placement B 12 points total

Coursework and Research Students who start at the beginning of the year and do not wish to take any placements as part of this program.

Semester One	Semester Two	Summer
Required: COMM5701 Strategic Communication SCOM5303 Comm Strategies COMM5702 Digital Media Elective: Choose one x 6-point unit from the list of electives on pp.4-5 24 points total	Required: COMM5703 Org Comm & Proj Mgt COMM5704 Global Media COMM5705 Strat Rep & Promotion Elective: Choose one x 6-point 24 points total	Required: COMM5729 Dissertation <i>(note that you will begin planning the dissertation and starting your research during semester two).</i> 24 points total

Coursework and Research Students who start at the beginning of the year and wish to take a placement as part of this program (Note: only Placement A Domestic is available to Coursework and Research Students).

Semester One	Semester Two	Summer
Required: COMM5701 Strategic Communication SCOM5303 Comm Strategies COMM5702 Digital Media Elective: Do not enrol in an elective this semester 18 points total	Required: COMM5703 Org Comm & Proj Mgt COMM5704 Global Media COMM5705 Strat Rep & Promotion Elective: Enrol in COMM5711 Placement A (minor overload this semester) 30 points total	Required: COMM5729 Dissertation <i>(note that you will begin planning the dissertation and starting your research during semester two).</i> 24 points total

About the Placement Units

COMM5711 Work Placement A (Domestic) – (12 points)

COMM5712 Work Placement B (International) – (12 points)

Organising the Placement

Part of the activity of undertaking a placement in this program involves students soliciting an opportunity (which cannot involve a payment) from a relevant organisation (a domestic organisation for COMM5711 and an international or transnational organisational for COMM5712).

The organisation can be a media or communications organisation, a government department or a charity or volunteer organisation. It should be an organisation for which the student does not currently work, or a separate division within an organisation with which the student already has a connection (i.e., in order to gain a new experience).

Students approach an organisation with (i) a letter of introduction and (ii) a set of instructions for the organisation on the type and limit of the project. The project and activities are negotiated between the student and the organisation and approved by the unit co-ordinator.

Time spent with the organisation will depend on the organisation's set-up, resources and requirements. It may involve working within the organisation for 1-2 days a week or it may simply involve a handful of meetings across the semester with a host organisation staff-member. In the case of an international placement for COMM5712 in which the student will not undertake in-person travel, it may be a series of meetings conducted by skype, supported by regular contact by email.

The organisation is requested to appoint a staff member as supervisor/liaison and with whom the university can discuss any aspect of the project.

Placement Project

A placement project conducted in this unit is a research-based and activity-based project undertaken on an approved topic on behalf of an organisation. The primary outcome of the project can be a final research report, a creative production output such as a set of graphic designs or a website, or it can be a full communication strategy designed for the organisation.

The project should involve a research component and demonstrate skills related to any area of communication, while providing genuine real-life experience for the student and benefits for the organisation.

The project may involve primary or secondary research, although this is subject to approval. It cannot involve human research where that includes research with children or vulnerable groups, or where that research would put the student at physical, emotional or psychological risk.

The Submission

The project outcome will be a written submission of 4,000 – 6,000 words (e.g., a strategy or a project research report) or the equivalent in creative output (e.g., a ten-minute promotional film). Any creative and production output must be accompanied by a 1,500 word exegesis which explains how the work was undertaken and 'situates it within the field of strategic communication).

The Assessment

The assessment in this unit includes (a) meeting the basic criteria of sound placement performance, which is indicated by the organisation providing a short statement to the university; (b) the final project report or outcome which is assessed by university staff. Note that for placement units, feedback is typically only given verbally, so please be prepared to receive feedback in a one-on-one meeting or in a phonecall with the university examiner.

Further information, relevant documentation (including insurance paperwork), letters of support, guidelines on approaching an organisation and sample reports, strategies and outputs will be available on LMS.

About the Dissertation (Coursework and Research Students Only)

COMM5729 Strategic Communication Dissertation – (24 Points)

This unit comprises an individually supervised research project. This is typically a 15,000 – 20,000 word dissertation but other comparable research outputs may be accepted subject to the approval of the supervisor and the program coordinator or Discipline Chair.

The main outcomes of conducting a dissertation are being able to (1) identify a research project; (2) carry out a review of relevant previous research/projects; (3) pursue original research; and (4) produce a well-structured piece of original research.

Students undertaking the dissertation are generally appointed a supervisor at the start of semester two. You generally meet with the supervisor monthly to plan, develop and provide progress reports and draft chapters of the dissertation.

Note: Students undertaking a research component are strongly encouraged to enrol in COMM4101 Concepts in Communication (6 points) as their elective for Semester One in order to receive support in developing a research topic, choosing methodologies and approaches and presenting work.

Timing

The dissertation is a major piece of work and requires very sound planning and engagement with the topic over a longer period of time.

As it is typically due at the end of the summer semester, it is important to begin the dissertation at the start of Semester Two (late July) and to have an idea of what you are interested in researching slightly prior to that.

Bear in mind that your supervisor will be available to meet with you during Semester Two, however she or he may not be able to meet regularly during the summer (academic staff are regularly engaged in research or presenting at conferences during the summer). Therefore it is important to take the opportunity to meet from early on and not leave this to the final months.

The below is a sample time-frame for planning out and conducting research for a dissertation for a dissertation that would ordinarily be due after the Summer semester:

Late February: Broad topic area for the dissertation

Inform the Dissertation Unit Co-ordinator of your broad dissertation topic-area *in writing* by this date or as soon as possible thereafter. The "broad topic area" should include the concepts and/or texts and/or time-practices to be studied—for example, "Using Twitter as a strategy to promote a government service" or "The implications of copyright legislation for creative activities in advertising" or "An assessment of the Department of Immigration's strategies for communicating sensitive information to asylum seekers".

You should also indicate if you wish to build a practical component into your dissertation work, and if so, a brief description of the project – for example, "a set of promotional videos to demonstrate the effectiveness of interactive digital video for communicating strategic intent".

The Dissertation Unit Co-ordinator will appoint a Supervisor for your dissertation as soon as possible after you formally notify us of your broad topic area. Meet with your Supervisor no later than the second week of Semester 2.

Mid-August: Formal Research Proposal

Working with your supervisor and in discussion with other students and colleagues, develop a formal research proposal. Planning out a research proposal includes reading in the relevant area and gaining a good sense of what has been written previously about the topic, and what gaps need to be addressed. A good research proposal will develop a new, original and innovative question to answer. It may include empirical research, or it may be based wholly on an assessment of existing literature. Once completed, your written research proposal should be submitted to your supervisor. *Details and example of what makes a good research proposal can be found on LMS on the COMM5729 Pages.*

Late-October: Progress deadline—first chapter/section

Submit this material to your Supervisor by this date.

Early-November: Presentation

Usually a short presentation on the research proposal, progress-to-date and future directions is made to the Media and Communication staff and to postgraduates in the discipline, as well as other students in the program, (pending student numbers and staff availability). Details are provided closer to the time.

Late-November: Progress deadline—second chapter/section

This should be submitted to your Supervisor by this date. At the end of June you will have been working on your dissertation for more than 5 months of the 8 months available, and you should have produced around 8,000 words and have a very good sense of where your dissertation is going. From this point onwards, you may have less support from a supervisor, but more free time to complete and finalise any empirical research and to work on revising chapters already written as well as refining the overall argument.

Early-January: Progress deadline—third chapter/section

This should be submitted to your Supervisor by this date. At this point you should have around 12,000 of your dissertation written.

Early-February: Progress deadline—revised chapters, introductions, conclusions and other remaining elements

This should be submitted to your Supervisor by this date. At this point you should have a close to complete draft your dissertation written. You may arrange a time to offer a presentation of your research to staff and fellow students, with the aim that any worthwhile advice offered can be used in the final stages of writing the dissertation. Note that this is best decided between your supervisor and yourself.

Mid-February: Progress deadline full draft completed

By this date you should have a full draft of the dissertation. Your supervisor may request a full draft prior to completion although this will not always be the case. You may wish to have a fellow student or colleague read the full dissertation, although you will also spend substantial time revising and editing.

Late-February: Submission

Submit an electronic copy (in one file, preferably PDF) to LMS with a copy also via email to ss@uwa.edu.au and to the Dissertation Unit Co-ordinator. It must be submitted by the time indicated on LMS. Print copies are not required, although you may wish to have copies bound for yourself, for colleagues, as part of a job application folio and for family and friends. *Then celebrate!*

Assessment Dissertations submitted as part of the Master of Strategic Communication are assessed by two examiners within the discipline (none of whom can be your supervisor); in some cases an assessor may be from another discipline or another institution. A grade for the dissertation is confirmed in a full meeting of the discipline staff involved in teaching the program. Please note, assessment can take approximately 4 weeks.

Teaching Team

Dr Katarina Damjanov was appointed to UWA in 2013 and her teaching specialises in digital media and communication design. Before joining UWA, she taught at The University of Melbourne, in the Schools of Social and Political Sciences and Culture and Communication. Prior to commencing her career in academia, Katarina acquired extensive experience working in a range of media and communication industries as a professional producer, journalist, scriptwriter and director. She has been involved in an array of successful commercial and artistic projects for film, television, radio, advertising and digital media.

Dr Helen Fordham began at The University of Western Australia in 2015. Previously, she taught at Notre Dame University, and has extensive experience in both journalism and professional communication.

Dr David Savat lectures in Media and Communication at UWA and the author of *Uncoding the Digital: Technology, Subjectivity and Action in the Control Society* (2012). He is the executive editor of the journal *Deleuze Studies*, and co-editor with Mark Poster of the collection *Deleuze and New Technology* (2009).

Dr Rob Cover is Chair, Discipline of Media and Communication and the author of *Vulnerability and Exposure: Footballer Scandals, Masculine Identity and Ethics* (2014) and *Queer Youth Suicide, Culture and Identity: Unliveable Lives?* (2012), among many journal publications and book chapters. He has worked as a freelance journalist in the community media sector and as a communication strategist for several departments in the Queensland Government. He teaches SCOM5303 Communication Strategies for Change and oversees the research dissertation project for the Master of International Journalism.

Additional staff will be joining the team during the year

Please feel free to contact members of the teaching team with any questions or to seek advice.

However, please remember that as this is a professionally-oriented program, queries need to be delivered in the right way. In some cases, that will involve using online forums or asking a question in a classroom setting or using the phone at an appropriate time.

In many cases, teaching staff are unable to answer queries by email, and some staff will have preferences that differ from others.

Please always be alert to these preferences and always be polite to staff, fellow students and any others with whom you may come into contact in the conduct of studying this degree.

Additional Information about Study in the Master of Strategic Communication

Late Work

Meeting deadlines and due dates is a normal part of the professional workplace and therefore an expectation in this professional program of study.

As with any delays in a workplace submission where one is required to alert their managers or supervisors as soon as a delay is known, it is likewise necessary to your teaching staff in the relevant unit if you believe there will be a delay in submission.

Work that is submitted without an agreed extension will be penalised and will receive no feedback. All student work is submitted online on LMS at the appointed time and date unless otherwise stated by the unit co-ordinators.

LMS (LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)

LMS is based on open-source software known as Moodle (an abbreviation for Modular Object- Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment). All units in the Master of Strategic Communication that include content delivery will provide materials on LMS. Students can access their unit over the internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at their convenience to access learning materials, participate in online activities and submit assignments.

How can students access LMS? Go to the LMS website, <http://www.lms.uwa.edu.au> and log in using your UWA Student Number (found on your Campus Card) and PHEME Password. Click on the **LOGIN** button. Access to LMS requires an active UWA Student Number and PHEME Password. To activate your UWA PHEME account, go to <http://www.pHEME.uwa.edu.au> Select the **Students** section and click on **activate your PHEME account**.

Unit Outlines

The Unit Information Management System (UIMS) is the site at which all official unit details can be found. This material should be read in conjunction with more detailed unit guides, materials and other documents found on each LMS unit page. UIMS can be accessed at: <http://www.unitoutlines.arts.uwa.edu.au/>

Teaching and Learning Responsibilities: Teaching and learning strategies

The university is primarily a place of research and as a student you are here not to be taught but, rather, to take the opportunity to learn. Much like a professional workplace and similar to workplace managers and supervisors, unit co-ordinators and lecturers may not necessarily be available to answer queries right away, either by email or in-person.

The primary task of a university education is to produce critical thinkers; thinkers who are able to operate independently, bring a unique and coherent perspective to problems and who are able to work through complicated issues and problems without direction. You cannot train people to think critically through specific direction and rote learning. Rather, it is something that is learnt through the process of confronting challenges and constructing your own strategies for negotiating these challenges. Developing resilience to cope with complex challenges and demanding assessments and the ability to think critically, creatively and innovatively is one's own responsibility and comes from dedicated, consistent work and a strong engagement with the learning activities at hand.

There will be times when instructions are unclear, assessment criteria are complex and the material you have to work with is not easy to understand at first glance. In the process of developing skills and an orientation to a professional workplace, students in this program may have to learn how to cope with these difficulties, how to find answers to problems, how to rely on colleagues and fellow students for support and, in the process, develop one's ability to thrive in the professional world. ***This is one of the most important skills one can learn from a postgraduate coursework degree.***

Charter of student rights and responsibilities

The Charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities upholds the fundamental rights of students who undertake their education at the University of Western Australia. The University's charter of Student Rights and Responsibilities is available at

<http://www.secretariat.uwa.edu.au/home/policies/charter>