Mass Communications, Master of Science (M.S.)

MASS COMMUNICATIONS, MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM

Program goals
The Richard T. Robertson School of Media and Culture prepares effective and skilled communicators through quality instruction, advising and student services, based on real-world applications. Through research, professional service and scholarship in applied communications, the school advances the knowledge and practice of a multidisciplinary and evolving media environment. The school values truth, ethics, creativity, innovation, collaboration, cultural diversity, shared governance and community engagement.

The M.S. in Mass Communications with a concentration in multimedia journalism is designed to prepare students to work in a highly competitive and multiple-platform (print, broadcast, online/digital) news environment. The program is for recent graduates who have an undergraduate degree in journalism or a related field, or for more veteran journalists who want to upgrade their professional skills.

Student learning outcomes
1. Demonstrate higher-level skills in concept building with a focus on critical thinking, and in the design of journalism news stories and packages with a multimedia focus
2. Communicate clearly and effectively in written and multimedia platforms to serve news audiences
3. Demonstrate the ability to conduct basic research that is applicable to journalism and multimedia
4. Effectively apply tools and technologies to multimedia news stories and packages as appropriate for the news industry and other communication workplaces

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website (http://www.graduated.vcu.edu) and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs)

Degree candidacy requirements
A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/candidacy)

Graduation requirements
As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info)

Other information
The mass communications graduate handbook is available on the Robertson School website at robertson.vcu.edu/about/advising/handbooks-and-worksheets (http://robertson.vcu.edu/about/advising/handbooks-and-worksheets).

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://graduate.admissions.vcu.edu)

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry:</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.S.</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Jul 1</td>
<td>GRE - General</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Nov 1</td>
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Admission note: The school may admit other student candidates who submit materials beyond the review deadlines, depending on available space.

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), the following requirements represent the minimum acceptable standards for admission:

1. An undergraduate degree in journalism or a related field or several years of professional journalism experience
2. An undergraduate GPA that exceeds 2.7 overall
3. A GRE (general test) score that indicates the ability to pursue graduate work
4. A detailed CV showing work experience in journalism or appropriate educational credentials
5. Three recommendations from persons who are qualified to give information concerning the applicant's ability for the specific program of study proposed
6. A personal statement detailing specific journalism career goals
7. A portfolio of work in journalism

Students who have not completed baccalaureate course work in journalism or who have not had the appropriate professional experience may be required to take undergraduate courses as a foundation. These do not count toward the graduate degree.

**Degree requirements**

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info), students are required to complete course work in core and elective courses and to conduct significant research.

1. Credit hour requirements: This degree requires 36 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate, 30 of which are in the journalism discipline. Students take an additional six credit hours in a collateral area outside of mass communications. Students in this program learn the theory and practice of journalism in an immersion news environment and can further specialize through graduate electives, projects and stories in any number of “beat” areas. For example, students can focus on coverage of health or the environment or concentrate on learning about international media coverage. At least one-half of the credit hours presented for graduation must be at the 600 level or higher.

2. Other: The program is designed so that students will take three courses each semester (fall and spring). During each semester, two of the courses will be offered in the evenings and one will be offered online. Thus, students will be able to complete the course work over two years of study.

**Curriculum requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MASC 611</td>
<td>Research Methods in Mass Communications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 642</td>
<td>Online Journalism I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 643</td>
<td>Online Journalism II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 644</td>
<td>Computer-assisted Reporting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 645</td>
<td>Visual Journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 646</td>
<td>Convergence Law and Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 684</td>
<td>Multiplatform Storytelling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 685</td>
<td>The Business of Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 686</td>
<td>International Journalism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASC 688</td>
<td>Converged Media Applications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select six credit hours from the following electives:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MASC 692</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>MASC 695</td>
<td>Fieldwork/Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADLT (600-level)</td>
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**Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 36**

**Graduate program director**
June O. Nicholson
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(804) 827-0251

**Program website:** robertson.vcu.edu (http://www.Robertson.vcu.edu)