Master of Science in Strategic & Digital Communication
A Handbook for Graduate Students

Welcome to Drexel

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Department Offices and Key Contacts

The Department is located at 3201 Arch Street, Suite 100. The phone number is 215-895-2456. Once you become a graduate student, your student I.D. should gain you access to the building during regular business hours. Student IDs are available at the Dragon Card Office in the Creese Student Center at 33rd and Chestnut Streets.

MS SDC Program

Program Director	Dr. Julia May	Room 163	215-895-5804	julia.may@drexel.edu
Program Manager	Nicole Pearson	Room 151	215-895-2524	nmp39@drexel.edu

Department of Communication

Department Head	Dr. Hilde Van den Bulk	Room 152	215-895-0245	hdv26@drexel.edu
Department Administrator	Sharon Wallace	Room 150	215-895-2456	skw@drexel.edu
Department Coordinator	Nicole Benner	Main	215-571-4130	nb3285@drexel.edu

How We Contact You

All official communication from Drexel, the MS SDC program, and faculty will be sent to your Drexel email. It is imperative that you check it regularly or have it forwarded to your personal email. Your Drexel email will also be automatically enrolled in the MS SDC program listserv. Please read all announcements sent via the listserv as they are important reminders and updates. If you'd like we'd be happy to add your personal email, too.

Academics

Course Requirements

The program in Strategic and Digital Communication (SDC) requires 45 credits. Twenty-one credits (seven courses) make up the Core Curriculum, 12 credits (four courses) must be taken from among COM course offerings as COM-Program Electives, and students choose an additional 12 credits (four courses) as Graduate Electives. These courses can be additional COM courses or classes in other approved subject areas, as long as they are graduate courses (with a course number 500-799) and are appropriate to the student's goals.

The Core Courses are:
- COM 500 Reading and Research in Communication
- COM 574 Organizational Communication in Project Management
- COM 610 Theories of Communication and Persuasion
- COM 613 Ethics for Professional Communication
- COM 615 Media Environments in a Digital World
- COM 651 Media and Communication Policy in a Digitized World
- COM 698 Managing Communication Professional Identities in a Digital Age

Students enrolled in the on-campus program are expected to take their core courses face-to-face whenever possible.

A full and up-to-date list of requirements for the SDC program can be found in the Drexel University Graduate Catalog, along with descriptions of all courses. General requirements for all graduate students are listed on the Office of the Provost website and the Graduate College website.

Plan of Study

[DegreeWorks](#) is an online tool that students use to track progress towards the completion of their degree program, including required courses, number of credits earned, credits still needed, and GPA status. While sample plans of study are available in the catalog, students are encouraged to consult with the program manager before registering for their first term to develop an individual plan of study within DegreeWorks. This will help inform each term's registration and ensure that all required courses are taken at the appropriate time. The plan can be updated as a student moves through the program.

Course Program of Study & Financial Aid

To meet financial aid requirements for loans and loan deferrals, students must be enrolled at least half-time. At the graduate level, that is at least 4.5 credits per term. Only courses which apply to a specific academic program are eligible for most financial aid. Drexel uses a technology referred to as [Course Program of Study](#) (CPoS) to track registration and make sure aid is only applied to qualified courses.

Realistically, since most graduate courses are three credits each, this means students using financial aid to pay for their education or who have loans in deferral while enrolled will need to register for two courses/six credits each term to qualify. Because a Drexel Master's degree requires 45 credits, this will leave one term with only three required credits left to complete the degree program. Adding an unnecessary course does not help because it will not apply to the degree and therefore is not eligible for aid.

If you will be affected, there are a few ways to mitigate this, but they involve planning ahead. You can reach out to the program manager at any point to discuss potential options in more detail. Suggestions include:

- planning to pay for a final term that does not involve federal financial aid
- taking nine credits/three courses in any term that suits your schedule and interests
- adding a [graduate minor](#) to allow you to take an extra course in your final term that is a part of an academic program of study

Questions about financial aid should be directed to [Drexel Central](#).

Grades Policy

The SDC program sets the following minimum grade requirements:

- a minimum grade of "B" must be earned to count as a passing grade for the 21 credits of Core Courses; grades of "B-" or lower are considered failing and the class must be repeated in order to count towards degree completion.
- a minimum grade of "B" must be earned for the 12 credits of COM-Program Electives; grades of "B-" or lower are considered insufficient and the course must be retaken or replaced with another COM course.
- A minimum grade of "C" must be earned for the 12 credits of Graduate Electives; grades of "C-" or lower are considered insufficient and the course must be retaken or replaced with another course. Please note that the [Grades Policy for Graduate Students](#) allows no more than two grades of "C" to count towards degree completion.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Please do not assume that the use of artificial intelligence is allowed for all your assignments in all your courses. Check your course syllabi for academic integrity policies, and/or consult with your individual instructor whether the use of artificial intelligence is permitted in their course(s). For more information please see the University's Academic Integrity Policy as it pertains to the use of artificial intelligence.

Time to Completion and Leave of Absence

As per Drexel University Graduate Policy, all program requirements must be completed within five years of a student's initial date of matriculation. Anyone who exceeds this time may be subject to academic dismissal and would need to apply for Readmission. A student may request up to one additional year, subject to program and Graduate College approval.

For students who need to take a break from their studies, Drexel allows a Leave of Absence of anywhere from one term to up to one year. Students who take the maximum leave time of four consecutive terms will need to apply for Readmission to the program to rejoin their studies.

Transfer Credit

Transfer of graduate courses from elsewhere must be approved by the program director. At least 30 credits towards the degree must be taken at Drexel. A grade of "B" or better is required. Students with prior relevant coursework at the time of admission must complete any transfer credits before matriculation. Once enrolled, students must receive pre-approval of transfer credit before taking a course at another institution. See the Graduate Transfer Credit Policy for full details.

Registration

Students register for classes online through the Drexel One Portal. Students can look up courses each term in the Term Master Schedule by clicking the desired quarter, college, and department.

To register for courses, log on to the Drexel One Portal with your e-mail ID and password. (Visit Drexel IT to find out how to activate your e-mail account.)
1. Click on the "Academics" tab
2. In the Registration Box, click "Register for Courses"
3. Select the term you are registering for
4. Enter the CRN* number(s) of the course(s) you are trying to register for

*A CRN is a course registration number. This number can be found in the Term Master Schedule by clicking "Review the Term Master Schedule" under the Academics tab in Drexel One.

On Drexel One, you can register for classes, check your grades, review financial aid information, etc. Incoming graduate students can register for classes this way before they arrive at Drexel for their first term. Drexel Central will assign you a registration time ticket each term. Go to Registration Time Tickets for more information on registration time tickets or contact the department office.

Independent Study

An independent study is an agreement between a student and a fulltime faculty member to pursue a course of study. They are restricted to students who: 1) want to study a topic beyond an offered course, 2) want to take a course not offered but does fall within the area of expertise of a faculty member, or 3) need a requirement that was not offered during the student's tenure. Students may not take an

undergraduate course for independent study credit.

All students in the MS SDC program can propose a topic for an independent study at any time. A   proposal is required and should be submitted for approval by the Friday of Week 10 **before** the start of the term in which the independent study is requested. Students may obtain a proposal form from the program manager or program director. There is a limit of 6 quarter hours of independent study credits acceptable for the   degree requirements.

Internship

All students in the MS SDC program are required to complete a 6-month, full-time internship or equivalent (for example, a student could do two three-month, full-time placements), or to apply for an internship waiver.

While the program will try to help with placement, students should expect to work on their own as well, to find suitable internships. Students can also make an appointment to meet with a representative at the Steinbright Career Development Center for help finding an internship. Drexel also offers Handshake – a job board with easy access to a large pool of employers and their job postings – to students and alumni. Please note, some internships require applications months before starting dates. The Internship Documentation Form can be submitted as soon as you complete your internship but must be turned in by Friday of Week 10 in the term you expect to graduate.

The internship requirement can be waived if you have sufficient work experience in the Communication field. To request a waiver, please contact the program director. You will need to fill out the Waiver Form and attach a one-to-two-page narrative documenting your work experience in professional communication, a letter from your supervisor, and submit your current resume. This can be done at any point during your time in the program but must be submitted by Monday of Week 4 in the term you expect to graduate.

Students should discuss plans for an internship or waiver with the program director early on in their course work. This will allow for ample time to confirm expectations, plan for sufficient work experience, and complete the approval process in advance of graduation.

See the flyer at the end of this handbook for more information.

Graduate Co-Op Option

Full-time, on-campus SDC students who begin their studies in a Fall Term can choose to gain practical experience through participation in the Graduate Co-op concentration. Students in Grad Co-op will register for the course COOP 500 in their first term, which covers career exploration, resume development, interview techniques, job search strategies, and techniques for success in the workplace. Then students work with the Steinbright Career Development Center throughout their job search, and they remain enrolled in co-op credits while working. Most students find their position through a self-directed job search and not through SCDC. This is all part of the learning experience. You can see a potential plan of study for Grad Co-op in the Drexel Catalog.

Graduate Co-op can be used to meet the program's internship requirement. The Grad Co-op concentration must be added by the time classes begin, so please reach out to the program manager if you have questions or for help enrolling.

Graduation

Students must apply for graduation. The application deadline is usually the Monday of Week 5 of the term in which you will graduate. Drexel students need to be registered for at least one credit during the term in which they graduate. Please take this requirement into consideration when planning your courses and internship. If you complete all coursework, then do your internship, you will need to register for additional credits in order to file for graduation.

Accelerated Degree Programs

Students in certain undergraduate majors – Communication, English, Global Studies, Marketing – can add the MS SDC to their undergraduate program, completing both a bachelor's and master's degree in less time than it would take to do both separately. There are two paths this might take. Coterminal students complete both degrees simultaneously. Students pursuing the 4+1 Model finish their undergraduate degree in their first four years, taking some graduate courses during this time, and then become fully matriculated graduate students in their final year.

In addition to meeting all separate criteria for each degree, specific requirements must be maintained throughout an accelerated program. While still at the undergraduate level, students must register for a minimum of 12 undergraduate credits each term and may not register for more than 20 credits of combined undergraduate and graduate coursework total. Both degrees must be completed within five years of initial matriculation at Drexel. Finally, students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0. If anything happens to prevent completion in five years or the GPA falls below 3.0, the student may be withdrawn from the accelerated degree.

Students in the accelerated program are enrolled as on-campus students and are therefore expected to take their core courses face-to-face. Classes are scheduled in the evenings to avoid conflict with most undergraduate classes and to allow for enrollment during co-op terms.

For students who complete the six-months of full-time, professional communication experience during their coops, the SDC internship requirement will be waived. Anyone who does not meet this expectation through coop will need to add additional professional experience to complete the requirement.

Resources

Drexel Central combines billing, financial aid, and the university registrar. You can reach them electronically via Ask Drexel or by calling 215-895-1600. Hours of availability and response times may vary.

The Graduate College oversees graduate programs at Drexel and acts as an advocate for graduate students. They provide orientation, professional and academic development, social opportunities, and in general work to make the graduate student experience as smooth as possible. Feel free to visit their Graduate Student Lounge in the Main Building! They also maintain a more extensive list of Drexel and local resources.

International Students and Scholars Services provide immigration advice and oversight for Drexel sponsored F-1 students and J-1 visitors. All immigration related questions should always be directed to the ISSS Office to ensure visa compliant answers.

Drexel Information Technology assists students with various technologies and applications. Their Helpdesk is the place to go for problems with access. They also provide free downloads of certain software, and discounted rates and recommendations for students interested in purchasing computers for personal and professional use.

Haggerty Library offers in-person and electronic access to educational materials. There are reservable rooms for individual study or group meetings. Through our library, students can also borrow books from the libraries of the University of Pennsylvania.

Other helpful resources:
- Academic Calendars
- Counseling and Health Services
- Student Health Center
- Office of Health Insurance and Immunizations
- Student Services
- Transportation
- Off-Campus Housing
- Graduate On-Campus Housing
- Events Calendar
- Campus Directions and Map

Professional Standards for MS in Strategic & Digital Communication Students

When graduate students join the MS in Strategic and Digital Communication program, they become members of our academic, scholarly, and professional communities, which often extend beyond the university. MS SDC graduate students are expected to learn, respect, and abide by the professional codes of ethics and conduct that are commonly accepted in their field of study or area of research. These codes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Academic Integrity**: Any work submitted in this program is expected to be your own. Any attempt to present anyone else's work as your own will be considered plagiarism, which is a form of academic misconduct. Proper quotation/citation and references are required. For more clarification on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, please see Drexel's *Student Code of Conduct* and the *Academic Integrity Policy*. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to Drexel's Office of Student Conduct. Always check with your course instructor if you are not sure about the proper use of quotations, citations, or references.

- **Professional Conduct**: In addition to academic integrity, MS SDC students must also demonstrate behavior and communication skills that are consistent with professional standards. The basic elements of professional behavior include tact; sensitivity to the needs and interests of students, staff, faculty and campus visitors, such as for example guest speakers; good judgment; and attention to professional responsibilities. Master's in Communication students have the responsibility to treat university faculty, staff, students and visitors respectfully and professionally. Students should contact the Director of the MS SDC program if they have questions about the specific expectations of this graduate program.

- **Professional Communication Skills**: The following represents the principal elements of professional communication, which apply to spoken and written communication in between

students, instructors, staff members and visitors to campus and in classrooms (e.g., guest speakers). This includes, but is not limited to classroom conversations, email exchanges, online discussion boards, etc.

- o Be polite and respectful.
- o Be sensitive to cultural, religious, political and sexual orientation differences. Be respectful when opinions differ from your own; you can disagree but do it politely and professionally.
- o Address faculty, staff and guests by their appropriate or requested name.
- o Address emails to faculty members, staff, administration, and fellow students with an appropriate greeting and an appropriate salutation. Emails are professional pieces of correspondence, and informal greetings and/or language are not appropriate.
- o Use capital letters sparingly. THEY APPEAR AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING.
- o Review emails before sending them. Check for grammar, spelling, punctuation and tone. Remember that messages can be misperceived in many ways.

- **Writing Expectations**: Professional writing standards are expected in all written communication (including emails) and course work. These include proper formatting, correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and careful proofreading. If you feel your writing skills would benefit from some additional help, consider scheduling an appointment with a member of Drexel's [Writing Center](#) (they offer online appointments). Of course, also don't hesitate to talk to your faculty.

- **Discussion Boards and In-Class Discussion**: Both spoken and written contributions must be significant to the topic and well-constructed and spell-checked (if response is written). Please remember to be polite in both our virtual as well as physical classrooms. Use only language that is appropriate in a professional environment. If you disagree with a classmate or the instructor, please be respectful and courteous.

- **Due Dates**: Course assignments are expected to be submitted by the time they are due. The acceptance of late submissions is at the discretion of the individual instructor. It is the student's responsibility to ensure an assignment was submitted. It is also at the instructor's discretion whether a missed assignment can be made up.

- **In Short -- Student Conduct**: We respect our students and treat them as professionals. In return, we expect the same treatment from you and to each other. Make sure to adhere to the policies outlined in this document. For more information on university policies, regulations, and Drexel standards of conduct, please see [Drexel's Student Code of Conduct](#). Adherence to these professional standards of behavior and communication are essential elements of professional competence. Failure to meet these standards reflects adversely upon a student's suitability for our graduate program and may be grounds for academic probation or dismissal from the MS SDC program.

We look forward to working with you as you undertake your graduate studies, and we hope you enjoy the program. Please never hesitate to contact us for help along the way.

MS in Strategic & Digital Communication

INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENT

HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP

STEINBRIGHT CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SCDC)

The SCDC is available to help you identify internship opportunities, revise your resume, work on cover letters, and prepare for interviews.
www.drexel.edu/scdc

THE MS SDC PROGRAM

We send opportunities via our listserv and can help connect you to alumni and other professional contacts. Our LinkedIn program page is also a great resource:
www.linkedin.com/groups/13568158

HANDSHAKE

A database of employer posted jobs, Handshake is available to all Drexel students and alumni. Sign up at:
www.drexel.joinhandshake.com/login

WEBSITES

indeed.com ~ idealist.org
simplyhired.com ~ looksharp.com

AFTER COMPLETING YOUR INTERNSHIP

Submit the Internship Documentation Form and a letter from your supervisor stating:
1) type of work completed
2) dates and total hours of your internship
3) percentage of work devoted to professional communication

ABOUT

Students in the MS SDC program are required to complete a six- month, non-credit-bearing, full time internship - paid or unpaid - as part of their degree. The purpose of this internship is to ensure program graduates have relevant work experience and are better situated to succeed in the job market.

TIME-FRAME

Students can complete the internship in whatever increments and time-frame work best

- Work a part time internship the entire time they are in the program
- Take the Summer Term off from coursework and do a full time three-month internship, supplemented by additional part time work
- Do a six consecutive month full time internship, either taking a break from coursework completely or working full time and taking one-to-three courses at night or online

WAIVER

Students who come into the program with relevant work experience or are working in a relevant position while in the program have the opportunity to apply to waive the internship requirement. Please contact the Program Coordinator to get more details about the internship waiver.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to find and complete an internship.

Internship Flyer