

Academic Policies and Procedures
Handbook for the
M.A. Programs
in
Journalism and Mass Communication

University of Wisconsin – Madison
Updated 2017

M.A. Programs in Journalism and Mass Communication

The master's level graduate programs in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication draw students interested in the intensive examination of mass communication as they prepare for careers as university teachers and researchers or as professional communicators.

Research M.A. Overview

The Research M.A. focuses on developing tools in mass communication research and typically leads to enrollment in a doctoral program. Course work should provide background and training in an appropriate mixture of communication theory and analytical tools; solid grasp of theory and methods should be evident in the student's M.A. thesis. The student defends the thesis before a three-person certification committee in an oral examination at the end of the program. Students typically continue for a PhD once they successfully defend their thesis.

Degree Requirements

- Minimum of 30 graduate credits (courses numbered 300 and above). Students must earn at least 16 credits at UW Madison.
- Students must maintain a 3.25 cumulative GPA in all graduate work and successfully defend a Master's thesis.

The program must include:

- Two 800- or 900-level courses (minimum) in Journalism and Mass Communication
- Twelve graduate credits (minimum) in Journalism and Mass Communication
- Six graduate credits (minimum) outside of Journalism and Mass Communication
- At least 50% of coursework must be at the graduate level. Courses numbered 700 and above are graduate level. Courses at the 300 – 699 levels may include the graduate attribute or not. Consult with the Graduate Advisor, Lisa Aarli, for more information on graduate attributes as you are selecting courses below 699.

Suggested Timeline

- Thesis proposal during the third semester of course work
- Proposal meeting with committee before thesis research begins
- Defense of thesis at end of fourth semester after admission

Coursework: Courses are selected with consideration of the student's specialty in consultation with their advisor. Examples of concepts courses include 500 and 600-level courses like the following, as well as 800-level graduate seminars:

- 560, History of Mass Communication (Crosslisted with History): 4 cr.
- 561, Mass Communication and Society: 4 cr.
- 563, Law of Mass Communication: 4 cr.

- 564, Mass Media and the Consumer: 4 cr.
- 565 Effects of Mass Communication: 4 cr.
- 616, Mass Media and Youth: 3 cr.
- 618, Mass Media and Political Behavior: 3 cr.
- 620, International Communication: 3 cr.
- 658, Research Methods: 3 cr.
- 662, Mass Media and Minorities: 3 cr.
- 669, Literary Aspects of Journalism: 3 cr.
- 670, Technology for Social Change: 3 cr.
- 675, Topics in Government and Mass Media: 3 cr.
- 676, Special Topics in Mass Communication, 3 cr.
- 677, Data Analysis and Visualization, 3 cr.
- 801, Mass Communication and the Individual: 3 cr.
- 802, Mass Communication and Society: 3 cr.
- 803, Mass Communication and Culture: 3 cr.
- 808, Mass Communication History: 3 cr.
- 811, Research Conceptualization & Design, 3 cr.
- 812, Qualitative Methodologies, 3 cr.
- 820, Mass Communication Law: 3 cr.
- 821, Health Communication: 3 cr.
- 822, Global Communication: 3 cr.
- 823, Science and Environmental Communication: 3 cr.
- 824, Race, Ethnicity and Media: 3 cr.
- 825, Ethics and Communication: 3 cr.
- 826, Journalism Theory: 3 cr.
- 829, Political Communication: 3 cr.
- 831, Psychology of Entertainment Media: 3 cr.
- 832, Communication & Public Life: 3 cr.
- 833, Technology & Society: 3 cr.
- 834, Communication and Social Theory: 3 cr.
- 835, History of Emerging Media: 3 cr.
- Other SJMC graduate courses that fit the student's specialization

Criteria for Satisfactory Progress

1. Master's students must earn a minimum 3.25 cumulative grade point average by the end of the second semester in residence and must maintain that GPA for the duration of the degree program. Grades in courses numbered 300 and above count toward the GPA.
2. Master's students who earn grades of "incomplete" must remove those grades in the semester following their occurrence.
3. Master's students must maintain steady progress toward completion of the degree. Full-time master's students can expect to spend 2+ years earning the degree. The time to degree completion varies for part-time students.

4. Master’s students must satisfy all **Graduate School degree requirements**.
The Journalism and Mass Communication Graduate Committee constitutes the Review Board for the M.A degree. The Review Board is charged with all final decisions as to satisfactory progress. A review of each student’s progress is made at the end of each semester and, in cases where student performance has not met satisfactory progress criteria, a letter is sent to the student and faculty advisor. Students who receive such a letter have a maximum of four weeks to provide a written response concerning any special reasons or circumstances relevant to their failure to meet the satisfactory progress criteria. The Review Board will examine all cases involving lack of satisfactory progress to determine appropriate action. A finding of “unsatisfactory progress” by the Review Board may be grounds for a one-semester probation, suspension of funding (if applicable) or dismissal from the graduate program, at the Review Board’s discretion.

MA Thesis: In order to earn an MA Thesis degree, students must write and defend a master’s thesis to a three person committee consisting of the faculty advisor and two other faculty members. All three may be from within the department. When the student defends the thesis, this committee will make a recommendation if the student should continue for a PhD. Final approval comes from the School’s Graduate Committee.

MA Non-Thesis: Occasionally it makes sense for students to graduate with a non-thesis MA degree if they complete 30 credits of graduate level coursework and decide not to pursue a PhD program.

Professional M.A. Overview

The University of Wisconsin-Madison journalism program seeks to bridge the gap between real-world reporting and the theoretical ideal of a profession that serves as a foundation for America's democracy. This program offers the prospective master's student practical skills training in journalism combined with a knowledge of the industry, its history, missions, practices, and relationships with the public. As part of their intellectual development, students critically reflect on the reporting process, even as they will be performing the tasks demanded by the profession. As part of their professional development, students go beyond the 5Ws of traditional journalism and explore multiple storytelling platforms. As part of the contemporary journalism they produce, students produce stories that reflect their curiosity about the local, national, and international worlds around them, to ask questions, and then to deliver the lessons they learn to their communities. Indeed, our students will wrestle with the very meaning of journalism in today's universe, informed by a nuanced understanding of media effects, strategic communication, and other concepts shaping and driving their future careers. A sophisticated journalism, a responsible journalism, a 21st-century journalism: this is what we teach.

The professional M.A. typically leads to careers in news and information production. In collaboration with an advisor, students construct a program of required and elective courses that emphasizes in-depth course work in a variety of non-fiction genres such as investigative reporting or literary journalism. This 30-credit degree should combine a mix of courses on practical communication skills, conceptual knowledge of journalism and mass communication and an area of specialization.

Skills classes are a significant component of this program, however a hallmark of the Wisconsin method of journalism education is that theory and the role journalists play in society are given equal weight. The development of a specialty in journalism is a central component of this program. As such, all applications will be considered, however preference is given to those seeking to pursue and build journalistic credentials within a specialty area in order to seek a job in the professional world. The tracks of study for which our School is known include Political and Civic Journalism, Science, Health, & Technology Reporting, and International Reporting, though other custom tracks can be created. Graduates of the program will enter the journalism profession with a well-developed portfolio consisting of in-depth storytelling in their area of specialty across multiple media platforms.

This program is particularly well suited for people with undergraduate degrees in non-journalism areas seeking journalistic skills to enhance existing areas of interest or general-assignment reporters who seek a specialization. Thus, students should have a strong notion of what kind of specialty they might want to pursue.

Professional-track M.A. students generally return to the professional world. However, UW-Madison Professional-track M.A. graduates may matriculate into our Ph.D. program following a successful completion of the program, provided they complete the necessary theoretical courses, finish their degree on time, develop an MA thesis, and receive permission from the School.

Program Requirements

Internships: Students are required to obtain an internship in a journalistic related media company during the program. Credits and grades will be determined by the student's advisor, in conjunction with formal letters from the internship supervisor at the media company.

- Students are guaranteed a summer internship at Madison Commons (madisoncommons.org), our hyper-local online magazine.
- Students funded through the David Maraniss Fellowship are eligible to apply for a paid summer internship (\$6,000 for the summer) with the Capital Times and the Wisconsin State Journal.
- Students from underrepresented groups are eligible to apply for a paid summer internship (\$6,000 for the summer) with the Wisconsin State Journal.
- Students may also obtain, in consultation with the student's advisor, an outside internship at a media company

Core Skills Requirements: Every professional-track student must take 12 credits of Core Skills in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Students may take more than 12 credits. In consultation with the student's advisor, students may be allowed to take 8 credits in this section, avoiding J335 if they already have the requisite training. Otherwise, the only required course is J335: Intermediate Reporting, which they will take in their first semester. In general, professional-track students will take J335 from the Director of the Professional-track program or a member of the SJMC's Professional-track Committee. Courses that qualify for the other eight credits include: (all courses are four credits)

- 401, In-Depth Reporting
- 404, Interpretation of Contemporary Affairs
- 405, Creative Nonfiction
- 411, Multimedia Design
- 417, Magazine Publishing
- 420, Investigative Journalism
- 453, Media Relations Practice
- 455, Emerging Media and News
- 456, Long Form Video
- 475, Topics in Advanced Concepts and Skills

Journalistic Concepts Class Requirements: Every professional-track student must take at least seven credits of concepts courses that stress the relationship between journalism and major social institutions and publics. This course will be selected with consideration of the student's

specialty. Examples of concepts courses include 500 and 600-level courses like the following, as well as 800-level graduate seminars:

- 560, History of Mass Communication (Crosslisted with History): 4 cr.
- 561, Mass Communication and Society: 4 cr.
- 563, Law of Mass Communication: 4 cr.
- 564, Mass Media and the Consumer: 4 cr.
- 565 Effects of Mass Communication: 4 cr.
- 616, Mass Media and Youth: 3 cr.
- 618, Mass Media and Political Behavior: 3 cr.
- 620, International Communication: 3 cr.
- 658, Research Methods: 3 cr.
- 662, Mass Media and Minorities: 3 cr.
- 669, Literary Aspects of Journalism: 3 cr.
- 670, Technology for Social Change: 3 cr.
- 675, Topics in Government and Mass Media: 3 cr.
- 676, Special Topics in Mass Communication, 3 cr.
- 677, Data Analysis and Visualization, 3 cr.
- 801, Mass Communication and the Individual: 3 cr.
- 802, Mass Communication and Society: 3 cr.
- 803, Mass Communication and Culture: 3 cr.
- 808, Mass Communication History: 3 cr.
- 811, Research Conceptualization & Design, 3 cr.
- 812, Qualitative Methodologies, 3 cr.
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- 822, Global Communication: 3 cr.
- 823, Science and Environmental Communication: 3 cr.
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- 825, Ethics and Communication: 3 cr.
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- 829, Political Communication: 3 cr.
- 831, Psychology of Entertainment Media: 3 cr.
- 832, Communication & Public Life: 3 cr.
- 833, Technology & Society: 3 cr.
- 834, Communication and Social Theory: 3 cr.
- 835, History of Emerging Media: 3 cr.
- Other SJMC graduate courses that fit one's specialization

Track of Specialty Study: By the end of their first semester, students should have chosen a 'track' of study. During the first semester, students will have had an opportunity to sample a specialty that may intrigue them. Working with their advisor, students will design a program

proposal that outlines the topic of interest, relevant coursework, and overall goals for the program. A list of sample courses is available for our department's core specialties, including Science, Health, and Technology Reporting, Political and Civic Journalism, International Reporting. Students are not limited to these topical areas and can devise their own specialties.

Course Credits and Requirements: Master's professional-track students must complete 30 credits, but are encouraged to expand their timeline to fully develop a specialty by taking advantage of the School and the University's resources.

- These credits include the minimum of 12 Core Skills credits, at least 7 Journalistic Concepts credits, and at least 6 credits in electives outside of the School.
- Students are expected to maintain a 3.25 cumulative GPA in all graduate work.
- At least 50% of coursework must be at the graduate level. Courses numbered 700 and above are graduate level. Courses at the 300 – 699 levels may include the graduate attribute or not. Consult with the Graduate Advisor, Lisa Aarli, for more information as you are selecting your courses.

Program Proposal: Students must develop a program proposal, due Nov. 1 of their first semester in the program. In this proposal, students should have laid out their ultimate goal for their program, identified their chosen track and listed possible courses to take and internships to apply for during the next year and a half. This proposal should be about 3 pages in length, and must be signed by the advisor. Failure to complete this proposal by the deadline will result in a 'hold' status for the individual, preventing him or her from registering for Spring semester. All proposals must be reviewed and approved by the School's Graduate Committee.

Advising: Students will be assigned a faculty contact upon entering the program. The student may choose to keep that advisor or identify a new one before the November 1st Program Proposal deadline. While the Director of the Professional-track program will serve as an advisor to some students, she or he will act as an informal advisor to all students in the program. Faculty members retain the right to refuse to accept students as advisees. This faculty advisor will work with the student to develop a program proposal. In addition, the student and advisor will select a faculty specialty contact to consult on the program proposal. This person will serve as a resource that may be helpful with course selection and will be required to sign off on the final portfolio for graduation.

Grad Student Community: During their time in the program, master's students are expected to be active, vibrant members of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication community. This includes attending School functions, presenting a project at an end-of-year grad forum, and working with faculty to raise awareness of the program and its good work to the broader academic and professional communities.

Final Portfolio: In lieu of comprehensive examinations or a thesis, professional-track students develop a portfolio with at least five significant, professional clips or projects (text, electronic, photography, or multimedia) from classes, independent projects, freelance work, or internships for presentation on the job market. Students present their portfolio at the end of their final semester.

Program Timeline

- Program proposal due end of first semester of course work
- Portfolio due at end of course work, typically 3-4 semesters

Criteria for Satisfactory Progress

1. Master’s students must earn a minimum 3.25 cumulative grade point average by the end of the second semester in residence and must maintain that GPA for the duration of the degree program. Grades in courses numbered 300 and above count toward the GPA.
2. Master’s students who earn grades of “incomplete” must remove those grades in the semester following their occurrence. A request for a waiver of this rule may be granted in rare cases. Waiver requests should be submitted to the Journalism and Mass Communication Graduate Committee.
3. Master’s students must maintain steady progress toward completion of the degree. Full-time master’s students can expect to spend 1.5 to 2 years earning the degree. The time to degree completion varies for part-time students.
4. Master’s students must satisfy all **Graduate School degree requirements**.

The Journalism and Mass Communication Graduate Committee constitutes the Review Board for the M.A degree. The Review Board is charged with final decisions regarding satisfactory progress. A review is made of each student’s progress at the end of each semester and, in cases where student performance has not met satisfactory progress criteria, a letter is sent to the student and faculty advisor. Students who receive this letter have a maximum of four weeks to provide a written response concerning any special reasons or circumstances relevant to their failure to meet the satisfactory progress criteria. The Review Board will examine all cases involving lack of satisfactory progress to determine appropriate action. A finding of “unsatisfactory progress” by the Review Board may be grounds for a one-semester probation, suspension of funding (if applicable) or dismissal from the graduate program, at the Review Board’s discretion.

Professional Conduct

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication holds expectations for the highest level of academic integrity and expects professional and respectful conduct in all interactions. Misconduct can result in dismissal from the program.

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance
- Assists other students in any of these acts

Examples include but are not limited to: cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation; paraphrasing from the web without crediting the source; using notes or a programmable calculator in an exam when such use is not allowed; using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own by not properly crediting the originator; stealing examinations or course materials; changing or creating data in a lab experiment; altering a transcript; signing another person's name to an attendance sheet; hiding a book knowing that another student needs it to prepare an assignment; collaboration that is contrary to the stated rules of the course, or tampering with a lab experiment or computer program of another student.

Chapters 14 and 17 of the University of Wisconsin Administrative Code describes misconduct in detail. Refer to <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/> and <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/>

Grievance Procedures

Students who feel that they have been treated unfairly have the right to a prompt hearing of their grievance. Such complaints may involve course grades, classroom treatment, various forms of harassment, or other issues. Any student or potential student may use these procedures except those graduate assistants whose complaint is covered by campus policies for teaching assistants.

Process for student grievances:

- The student should speak first with the person toward whom the grievance is directed. In most cases, grievances can be resolved at this level.
- If this conversation does not yield satisfactory results, the student should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.
- Should a satisfactory resolution not be achieved at that level, the student should contact the program's Grievance Advisor to discuss the grievance. The Graduate Program Coordinator can provide students with the name of this faculty member, who facilitates problem resolution through informal channels. The Grievance Advisor is responsible for facilitating any complaints or issues of students. The Grievance Advisor first attempts to help students informally address the grievance prior to any formal complaint. Students are also encouraged to talk with their faculty advisors regarding concerns or difficulties if necessary.
- If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction the student can submit the grievance to the Grievance Advisor in writing, within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.
- On receipt of a written complaint, a faculty committee will be convened by the Grievance Advisor to manage the grievance. The program faculty committee will obtain a written response from the person toward whom the complaint is directed. This response will be shared with the person filing the grievance.
- The faculty committee will determine a decision regarding the grievance. The Grievance Advisor will report on the action taken by the committee in writing to both the student and the party toward whom the complaint was directed within 15 working days from the date the complaint was received.
- At this point, if either party (the student or the person toward whom the grievance is directed) is unsatisfied with the decision of the faculty committee, the party may file a written appeal. Either party has 10 working days to file a written appeal to the College of Letters & Sciences.
- Documentation of the grievance will be stored for at least 7 years. Significant grievances that set a precedent will be stored indefinitely.
- Students who are experiencing sexual harassment are encouraged to contact the Graduate Advisor, Lisa Aarli, for assistance. University resources for sexual harassment concerns can be found on the UW Office of Equity and Diversity website <http://www.oed.wisc.edu/sexual-harassment-information.htm>. An appropriate process is determined in consultation with campus staff and dependent upon the wishes of the student.

The Graduate School has established policies governing student conduct, academic dishonesty, and sexual and racial harassment. The Graduate School also has procedures for students wishing to appeal a grievance decision made at the college level. These policies are described in the Academic Guidelines (<http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#97>)

Funding and Financial Support

Tuition amounts are set by the Board of Regents of the UW System on an annual basis in the summer for the following academic year. Visit the Office of the Registrar web site for information on tuition costs: http://registrar.wisc.edu/tuition_&_fees.htm. Make sure to select Graduate in the Student Career box.

Several forms of financial aid are available for graduate students: graduate assistantships (including research, project, and teaching assistantships), fellowships, scholarships and loans. Graduate assistantships at the rate of 33% and above cover the cost of tuition and provide a stipend. As research, project, or teaching assistant, students work on research projects or assist faculty in teaching selected undergraduate courses. Advanced Opportunity Fellowships are available for qualified minority or economically disadvantaged nonminority students.

Assistantships

Many of our graduates are funded through assistantships, working under the direction of a faculty member from the joint program, or in one of numerous other departments and programs that regularly look to the joint program to provide them with students with strong communication skills.

Most graduate students who receive support serve as teaching, research, or project assistants. Assistantships are typically part-time positions that pay a monthly stipend. Additionally, positions that are 33.33% or more (based on a 40-hour work week) pay all tuition for the students and also make the students eligible for comprehensive health insurance coverage. Additional information about assistantships may be found on the web at <https://grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/types/>

Scholarships

Through the generous support of our donors, the program is able to make some scholarship money available to graduate students to help pay tuition and fee costs.

Financial Aid

Students who are U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents can apply for Federal Stafford Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized) and for Federal Work-Study through the Office of Student Financial Aid <http://www.finaid.wisc.edu/>. Eligibility is based on financial need. OSFA also offers information on the cost of attendance at <http://www.finaid.wisc.edu/cost-of-attendance.htm>. OSFA also offers emergency short-term loans to qualified students.

Other Assistantships and Hourly Employment

Other employment opportunities are available both on campus and in the community. Openings for full and part-time jobs for students and spouses are listed on the Student Job Center web site <http://jobcenter.wisc.edu/>.

Travel to Meetings and Conferences

An important part of the professional development of graduate student is the participation in professional meetings and conferences. Consult your advisor about the appropriate venues for you to attend. Some advisors may have access to funds to help support travel costs. The School of Journalism and Mass Communication offers a fixed annual stipend to graduate students who are presenting papers at conference. Students should also explore volunteer opportunities at conferences to offset registration costs. Professional MA students may also be eligible for funds to support their attendance at relevant trainings and workshops. Consult the Graduate Advisor, Lisa Aarli, for more information.

Health and Wellness

UW-Madison has a holistic resource for all things wellness called “UWell”. The site includes information and opportunities for wellness for your work/school, financial, environmental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and community. Go to <http://uwell.wisc.edu/>

All enrolled graduate students are eligible for University Health Services (<https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>). There is no charge to students for many basic services including counseling sessions, because services are paid through tuition and fees. Personal health and wellness services are also available in addition to medical services.

Securing Health Insurance Coverage

Graduate students who hold an appointment as an assistant of 33.33% or more or who have a fellowship may be eligible for health insurance and other benefits. *Contact the staff benefits and payroll coordinator in the unit where you have been hired to select one of several health care plans within 30 days of your hire date.*

Grad students without an assistantship or fellowship who are currently enrolled can use the services of University Health Services (UHS), the campus health clinic. Many services are provided at no extra cost, including outpatient medical care during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. UHS is located in the Student Services Tower at 333 East Campus Mall, 608.265.5000. For more info, visit the UHS web site at www.uhs.wisc.edu.

Prescription medications, emergency room visits and hospitalization are not included in UHS benefits. Therefore, supplemental insurance covering these drugs and services is recommended for all students and is required for international students. The UHS Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) is an excellent option for many students. Contact the SHIP office at 608.265.5600 for more information.

Disability Information

Students with disabilities have access to disability resources through UW-Madison’s McBurney Disability Resource Center. As an admitted student, you should first go through the steps to “Become a McBurney Client” at <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/students/howto.php>

Additional [non-academic] disability campus resources (not found through the McBurney Center) can be found at <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/services/nonmcburney/index.php>

The UW-Madison Index for Campus Accessibility Resources can be found at <http://www.wisc.edu/accessibility/index.php>

Mental Health Resources On and Off Campus

University Health Services (UHS) is the primary mental health provider for students on campus. UHS Counseling and Consultation Services offers a wide range of services to the diverse student population of UW-Madison. They offer immediate crisis counseling, same day appointments and ongoing treatment. Go to <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/> or call 608-265-5600. UHS service costs are covered for students through tuition and fees.

There are many mental health resources throughout the Madison community, but UHS Counseling and Consultation Services is the best resource for referrals to off-campus providers. Call 608-265-5600 for assistance in finding an off-campus provider.

Information for International Students

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security requires student visa holders to register with UW-Madison prior to beginning your academic program in the United States. The UW-Madison International Student Services (ISS) office coordinates an orientation to assist students with complying with this requirement. For more information, contact ISS office, room 217 of the Red Gym, 716 Langdon Street, telephone 608.262.2044, e-mail iss@studentlife.wisc.edu, and web address at <https://iss.wisc.edu/>

International Student Services (ISS) is your main resource on campus and has advisors who can assist you with visa, social and employment issues. Visit their website for more information at <http://www.iss.wisc.edu> or to schedule an appointment.

All new international students attend the ISS Mandatory Orientation Program. This is required by both the university and federal visa regulations. At the orientation, new students will register their arrival on the F or J student visa and gain information on maintaining legal status while attending UW Madison. The orientation also offers information on how to get involved in ISS and campus programs, and how to take advantage of services available both on and off campus. Orientation information can be found at www.iss.wisc.edu/orientation_info.

1. The online **Guide for International Students** (<https://apps.iss.wisc.edu/tutorial/>) is a comprehensive and valuable resource for international students and is sent to international applicants initially when they apply for their I-20. The guide provides appropriate resources and information on any of the following topics:

- Obtaining a student visa
- Maintaining immigration status

- Academic/enrollment requirements for international students
- Employment options for international students
- Student Life
 - Consult the Graduate School Guide to Student Life:
<https://grad.wisc.edu/newstudents/>
 - International Student Services (ISS) sponsors programs for international students: <http://www.iss.wisc.edu>
 - Madison Friends of International Students (MFIS) is an organization of volunteers that offers services and programs to international students and their families at <http://www.mfismadison.com/>
- Living in Madison
 - Dependents – visit the ISS website for more information about resources available for dependents: <http://www.iss.wisc.edu>
 - Housing - learn about UW Madison campus, including university <http://www.housing.wisc.edu> and off campus housing <http://campusareahousing.wisc.edu>

2. Sufficient Funds

International applicants are required to have sufficient funds to cover their expenses completely while attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Visit the Graduate School website for more information: <http://grad.wisc.edu/admissions/internationalfinancial/>

3. English Language Proficiency

Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English, must provide an English proficiency test score. Your score is considered too old, and will not be accepted, if it is more than 2 years old from the start of your admission term. Country of citizenship does not exempt applicants from this requirement. Language of instruction at the college or university level, and how recent it has been, are the determining factors in meeting this requirement.

Applicants are exempt if:

- English is the exclusive language of instruction at the undergraduate institution; **or**
- they have earned a degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university not more than 5 years prior to the anticipated semester of enrollment; **or**
- they have completed at least two full-time semesters of graded course work, exclusive of ESL courses, in a U.S. college or university, or at an institution outside the U.S. where English is the exclusive language of instruction, not more than 5 years prior to the anticipated semester of enrollment.
- The required scores are:
 - Minimum [TOEFL](#) requirement: 92 internet (iBT);
 - 580 paper-based test (PBT)
 - Minimum [IELTS](#) requirement: 7.0
- Minimum [MELAB](#) requirement: 82

Under certain circumstances, and with program approval, admission *may* be granted with the following scores. However, as a condition for admission, an English assessment test ([ESLAT](#)) will be required upon arrival, and any recommended English as a Second Language (ESL) course must be completed successfully in your first semester. Below are the ranges in which an ESLAT will be required:

- TOEFL (iBT) 80-91
- TOEFL paper based 550-579
- IELTS 6.5
- MELAB 77-81

4. International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Training

The ITA Training Program helps non-native English speaking TAs (or potential TAs) to improve their oral communication and classroom teaching skills. The program focuses on three areas essential to good teaching.

- **Pronunciation and Communication Skills:** Language practice to make classroom speech more clear and effective.
- **Presentation Skills:** Digitally recorded teaching presentations, tutorials, and peer feedback.
- **Cultural Background:** Discussion of the TA's role, undergraduates' expectations of a TA, and the unique aspects of the US educational system.

In addition to regular class sessions, individual tutorials are scheduled to watch videotaped presentations. The course is offered every semester, fall, spring and summer. The course carries no credits. There are no fees and no required texts. A packet of material from a copy shop will be assigned. Students may enroll directly in the ITA class which is ESL 370. Visit the English as a Second language (ESL) website for more information about that and other classes which support international students.

<http://www.english.wisc.edu/esl/>

Any international student whose native language is not English and who wishes to TA must take the SPEAK Test unless they have scored 26 or higher on the speaking portion of the TOEFL. <http://www.english.wisc.edu/esl/speak.htm>

Additional resources

- Graduate Curriculum Guide (see attached)
- Graduate Advisor – can answer questions and assist with all of the processes listed above, Lisa Aarli, 5132 Vilas Hall, aarli@wisc.edu, 608-263-4858
- SJMC Website – program requirements, financial assistance, TA training
<http://journalism.wisc.edu/graduate/>
- Graduate School Website – policies, funding, professional development, degree completion <http://grad.wisc.edu/>