

What can I do with a degree in... **COMMUNICATION?**

What is **COMMUNICATION?**

Communication is information. It is a wide-ranging field encompassing a variety of technical skills, creativity and career possibilities involving primarily the media and public relations. It means having knowledge and skills in specialized writing, speaking, listening and learning about your audience in order to share information. Professionals seek out important messages and tell that story either behind or on camera, with in-depth news stories, on social media or with brochures and advertising. A degree in communication can open doors to a wide variety of exciting and creative professional opportunities and experiences.

What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Communication

What are the **CONCENTRATIONS?**

Our degree in Communication gives you a choice of concentrations in **broadcasting, health communication, journalism, or public relations.**

NOTE: The communication program offers a minor for those who have a major interest in another field. You can minor in either communication or in journalism.

Broadcasting: WCU's broadcasting concentration gives you the opportunity to work and learn in an advanced, network-quality digital television studio or in Jackson County's only FM radio station, comparable to any major market radio station.

Health Communication: As a health communication major, you will learn and develop skills in understanding, applying, and managing the way people see, process, and share health information. Health communication



professionals share a common goal: creating social change by changing people's attitudes, and/or modifying or eliminating certain behaviors for the improvement of health and the benefit of society.

Journalism: Our journalism concentration or its associated minor provides the basis for a fascinating and challenging career in field that is changing daily as the traditional print and electronic media move closer together. You will be able to publish your work on the communications student-run news website *The Western Carolina Journalist*.

Public Relations: WCU's public relations concentration will prepare you for a public relations career. Through your coursework you can take on "real world" projects and clients and also participate in Catamount Communications, the student-run public relations firm. WCU's public relations grads can be found in corporations and government agencies.

What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Students declare a Communication major with the Advising Center, 2nd

floor of Killian Annex (OneStop). Please make an appointment with your advisor via your MyWCU. Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Depending on the concentration, our graduates are prepared to become a variety of professionals including journalists, TV and radio broadcasters, video editors, public relations specialists, broadcast news analysts, news anchors, sound engineering technicians, camera operators, spokesperson, and more.

Who employs **COMMUNICATION** graduates?

Our graduates gain employment with a variety of employers including radio and news stations, publication companies, news and magazine companies, schools and universities, conference centers, and business and consulting firms, hospitals and health centers.

MAJOR MAP

How to use this map: Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

1st YEAR

2nd YEAR

EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Many first-year students in the Communications major will focus on the liberal studies requirements as well as introductory Communication courses. [Check out the 8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your faculty advisor.

NOTE: Communication majors must declare a minor, second concentration, or second major. Health communication majors are encouraged to minor in a health-related field.

Students in their second year will likely continue with liberal studies electives, topics related to their concentration, as well as introductory courses with their minor. [Check out the 8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your faculty advisor.

GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to [JobCat 2.0](#).

Depending on your concentration, you can get involved with [WWCU 95.3](#), [Western Carolina Journalist](#), Catamount Communications, or other [WCU student publications](#).

Join professional organizations such as the [Society of Professional Journalists](#), the [Public Relations Society of America](#), the [Broadcast Education Association](#), [WCU chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists](#), or the WCU chapter of [Public Relations Student Society of America](#).

BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Lily Award](#), a program aimed to encourage students to be connected with their community.

Job shadow with professionals in the career area you wish to pursue.

Volunteer with area non-profits or organizations which interest you.

Consider the [study abroad programs related to communication](#). Talk with a study abroad advisor about targeted experience for your areas of interest.

PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Vault](#), [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Connect with a career counselor and work with your department faculty advisor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Attend the [Catamount Career and Networking Day](#) to identify summer, part-time, or internship opportunities for additional hands-on opportunities.

Start developing portfolio website with your accomplishments in class or outside work as part of your Introduction to Professional Development class (in your fourth semester).

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years with their admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Biology
Business Administration & Law
English
Emergency & Disaster Mgmt

Entrepreneurship
Environmental Health
Environmental Science
International Studies

Management
Marketing
Psychology
Political Science

3rd YEAR

Third level courses focus on upper-level Communication courses, special topics relating to your concentration or your chosen minor. [Check out the 8-semester plan for your concentration](#) and make an appointment with your faculty advisor.

Work towards securing required internship possibilities after your junior year (90 credit hours) that will give you practical and hands-on experience to put on a resume.

Consider networking with professionals in your field at national or regional professional conferences such as the [Regional SPJ conferences](#), [Excellence in Journalism, PRSSA](#) and [PRSA regional and national conferences](#) as well as [Broadcast Education Association](#), and [National Association of Broadcasters](#).

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#).

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for MCAT, GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will complete the major coursework requirement, concentration courses, including capstone classes, as well as your chosen minor electives. Be sure to [Check out the 8-semester plan for your concentration](#), make an appointment with your faculty advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Continue to network with professional organizations such as the [Society of Professional Journalists](#), the [Public Relations Society of America](#), or the [Broadcast Education Association](#).

Network with employers and non-profits at the [Cata-mountain Career and Networking Days](#).

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation. The CCPD can help with you with your application materials.

As part of the capstone class, Professional Development Seminar, polish your resume and portfolio website and develop cover letter writing skills.

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

DID YOU KNOW?

MORE INFORMATION

INTERNSHIP Information

All communication major students are required to complete an internship of at least 150 hours. **This is practice in looking for your first job.**

Students are required to keep a detailed journal of all of activities with dates, times, places, and the work that you are doing with your supervisors' evaluation.

SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

The core competencies will center on:

- industry software
- specialized writing for various media
- production of multi-media content for variety of publishing platforms
- professional certifications
- information handling and organization
- curiosity and creativity
- critical thinking and evaluation
- problem solving
- written and oral communication
- professional teamwork
- innovative talents

KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- Enter the profession with industry-standard technical skills, as well as writing and speaking abilities
- Acknowledge and be sensitive toward the concerns of diverse people and cultures
- Develop a personal code of professional ethics

Professional RESOURCES

- Public Relations Society of America: www.prsa.org
- Public Relations Student Society of America: www.prssa.org
- National Association of Broadcasters: www.nab.org
- Radio Television Digital News Association: www.rtdna.org
- Society of Professional Journalists: www.spj.org/index.asp
- American Society of News Editors: www.asne.org

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Communication department at 828-227-7482 or visit communication.wcu.edu

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.