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

What is **COMMUNICATION?**

Communication distributes information through specialized skills of listening, speaking, and writing by individuals and in the media.

Students learn how professionals find information for their audiences. Industry standard tools provide students the opportunity to produce professional quality work whether it be news stories for social media, on-air, streaming, or the traditional printing of brochures and newsletters.

Communication is a skill required in all aspects of professional and private lives. It pairs with any other major as an important component of any job.

What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Communication: 2024-2025 Catalog

A **Minor in Communication** is also available: 2024-2025 Catalog

What are the **CONCENTRATIONS?**

The degree in Communication gives students a choice of concentrations in **broadcasting, health communication, journalism, public relations, or interpersonal and cultural communication.**

NOTE: The Communication program offers a minor in Communication or journalism for those who have a major interest in another field.

Broadcasting: WCU's broadcasting concentration gives students the opportunity to work and learn in an advanced, network-quality digital television studio or in Jackson County's regional FM radio station **95.3 WWCU**.

Health Communication: Health communication majors learn and develop skills in understanding, applying, and managing the way people see, process, and share health information. They 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: The journalism concentration and its associated minor provides the basis for a fascinating and challenging career in a field that is changing daily as the traditional print and electronic media move closer together. Students publish their work on the department student-run news website **The Western Carolina Journalist**.

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

Interpersonal and Cultural Communication: The Interpersonal and Cultural Communication Concentration focuses on how people communicate in interpersonal, small group, intercultural, professional, and public contexts. Read more about the concentrations on the **department website**.

What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Students can declare a Communication major with the Advising Center, located in Killian Annex or at the Communication Department office. Students can make an appointment via MyWCU. Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher. Once declared, a departmental faculty member will be assigned.

What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Graduates enter the job market in a variety of places including the media, public relations, and health organizations. Concentrations help guide the job search, but through advances in technology, skills learned in one concentration can be needed in another.

Media jobs include in front of the camera, behind the camera, engineers, sound technicians, on-air personalities, spokespersons, and consultants.

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 Communication 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 continue to take liberal studies courses and begin taking basic communication skills courses for both major and minor students. **Check out the 8-semester plan** to get started on required courses. Check with a faculty advisor for guidance.
GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE	Check out **WCU's DegreePlus program** and choose which events in any of the four categories are of interest. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness. See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via MyWCU.	No matter what the concentration, you can get involved with **95.3 WWCU, the Western Carolina Journalist, PRSSA,** the Health Communication Student Club, **the Western Carolinian**, and WCU-TV. Join professional organizations such as the student chapters of the Society of Professional Journalist and the Public Relations Society of America.
BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY	Connect with the **Center for Service Learning** and ask about the **Spark Award,** a program aimed to encourage students to be connected with their community.	Job shadow with professionals in your career area. Volunteer with area non-profits or organizations. 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 career options or career interests using the **Center for Career and Professional Development's** online resources, **Focus 2,** and **O*Net Online.** Connect with a career counselor and work with a department faculty advisor early on to explore opportunities and experiences available while in college to further develop a professional resume.	Check out **CCPD's list of career-building activities** and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus. Start developing a portfolio website with your accomplishments in class or outside work as part of your Introduction to Professional Development class (in your fourth semester). If planning for graduate school, start a spreadsheet wishlist of admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Biology
Business Administration & Law
Criminal Justice
Emergency & Disaster Mgmt.
English
Entrepreneurship
Environmental Health
Hospitality & Tourism
International Studies
Management
Marketing
Psychology
Political Science
Sports Mgmt.

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.

When the opportunity presents itself attend conferences such as national and regional **SPJ conferences**, **PRSSA** as well as **National Association of Broadcasters** in order to network with professionals.

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 are 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 **National Association of Broadcasters.**

Network with employers and non-profits at the annual Career Fair Plus event, held each Fall and Spring.

Look for and apply for jobs between 4 and 6 months before graduation. The CCPD can help 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 interested.

DID YOU KNOW? Internships are still the number one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 50,000 employers)

MORE INFORMATION

INTERNSHIP Information

All Communication majors are required to complete an internship in their concentration. Students are eligible to complete the 150-hour internship after completing 90 hours including at least the basic skills classes. This gives you a chance to engage with professionals and network as you look for your first job.

Students keep a journal of their time and duties. A supervisor's evaluation is also required.

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 platforms
- professional certifications
- information handling and organization
- curiosity and creativity
- critical thinking and evaluation
- problem solving
- written and oral communication
- professional teamwork

KNOWLEDGE Base

This degree program will prepare students to:

- Enter any of the professions with industry-standard technical skills along with 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: prsa.org
- Public Relations Student Society of America: prssa.org
- National Association of Broadcasters: nab.org
- Radio Television Digital News Association: rtdna.org
- Broadcast Education Association: beaweb.org
- National Communication Association: natcom.org
- Society of Professional Journalists: spj.org/index.asp
- Society for Health Communication: societyforhealthcommunication.org
- News Leaders Assocation: newsleaders.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.

Western Carolina University