

Chart of Factors to Consider When Applying to a Master's in Communication Program

Factor	School #1	School #2	School #3
<p>School and Program Accreditation Research the accreditation of any school and program you are interested in. Understand the type of accreditation and who awarded it. Confirmation of quality by an independent third party helps ensure your degree will be widely recognized.</p>			
<p>Admissions Requirements Make a list of admissions requirements for each program of interest. Reach out to each school's admissions representative to ask questions and introduce yourself to help you stand out from the crowd. Write down application deadlines and start dates so you have time to prepare your application.</p>			
<p>Program Administration and Online Programs OPMs are often operating silently in the background. You will need to ask if a program is administered by in-house staff or an OPM. If an OPM is involved, ask details about their involvement and control of the program. If the program is administered in-house, ask how many years of experience the program administration staff members have educating online students.</p>			
<p>Non-Profit vs. For-Profit Institutions Ask every school if they are operating in a for-profit or non-profit model.</p>			

Kropp, E. (2023, July 21). *Advice for Choosing the Master's in Communication Program That is Right for You*. MastersinCommunications.com. <https://www.mastersincommunications.com/features/advice-for-choosing-a-masters-in-communication-program>

<p>Tuition Costs, Financing Options, and Graduate Assistantships</p> <p>Know the total cost to earn a degree including all tuition rates, university fees, and any other expenses. Ask if tuition rates vary for in-state versus out-of-state residents, especially for students considering online programs. Also, for online programs, do they require any on-campus residencies and if so, how many? That way you can estimate the cost to attend these in-person sessions and include them in your total educational expenses. If you are interested in an assistantship, be sure to ask if any assistantships are available for your program of interest and what the requirements and chances are for earning an assistantship.</p>			
<p>School Payment Models</p> <p>Make sure you understand when you will be billed, for how much, and when payments are expected. List any financial penalties and other consequences for late payments.</p>			
<p>Program Focus Areas and Specializations</p> <p>Determine what you want to learn and what your goals are for your advanced degree. Then, list the features of each program to determine if the program's focus areas and specialization options align with your career goals and needs.</p>			
<p>Program Curricula and Online Instruction Methods</p> <p>Research classes and align those details with your goals. Will the required and elective classes help you achieve your goals? Make notes on scheduling, delivery, flexibility and anything else that is important to you. If you are considering an online program, be sure to ask about online instruction methods and what is required for online students.</p>			

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<p>Faculty and Instructors Determine what you value in an instructor and ask questions about who is teaching and what their qualifications are.</p>			
<p>School Reputation and School Rankings What is the reputation of the school? Does that reputation create any benefits or challenges for you?</p>			
<p>Geographic Location Understand your preferred learning style and modality. Use that information as one factor that helps you decide if you can thrive in one modality (online vs. in-person) or either. For out-of-state online programs, confirm the school accepts students from your state of residence.</p>			
<p>Life Beyond Courses List opportunities and services available to students beyond courses, such as career placement services, access to university librarians and writing center, alumni connections and engagement, and more.</p>			
<p>Extra Factors to Consider List any “extra” features of a program. Then consider if they bring any meaningful benefit to you.</p>			

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