

# South Dakota State University

## Academic Program/Co-Curricular Unit Assessment Plan

Academic Program/Unit Name	Master of Mass Communication Program
Department/Office	School of Communication and Journalism
Department Head/Administrator	Joshua Westwick and Rebecca Kuehl
Assessment Coordinator	Marina Hendricks
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Date	June 1, 2023

### SDSU MISSION & VISION STATEMENT (IMAGINE 2023: ASPIRE. DISCOVER. ACHIEVE)

#### Mission Statement

South Dakota State University offers a rich academic experience in an environment of inclusion and access through inspired, student-centered education, creative activities and research, innovation and engagement that improve the quality of life in South Dakota, the region, the nation, and the world.

#### Vision Statement

South Dakota State University will be a premier land-grant university recognized for high value, innovation, and bold impact.

#### Core Values

**People-Centered:** We recognize leadership is derived from service to others. We are committed to creating a culture where all thrive and are supported on their own personal and professional paths toward lifelong learning, growth, and leadership.

**Creativity:** Creativity is our cornerstone to expand knowledge, develop human understanding, and enrich quality of life. We believe that education and research/scholarship/creative activity reinforce one another and the best academic programs bring innovative teaching and rigorous research together.

**Integrity:** We act with organizational and personal integrity, through honest interactions, professionalism, transparent and accountable decision-making, and respect for others.

**Diversity:** We are committed to diversity of community and ideas. We believe in a supportive, inclusive, collaborative, and cohesive environment with a focus on access. We actively seek collaboration and we respect individuals with differing perspectives, backgrounds, and areas of expertise.

**Excellence:** Excellence is achieved through continuous improvement, assessment, and accountability. We embrace bold action and adapt to an ever-changing environment. Individually, we are experts at what we do. Collectively, our impact is even greater.

#### Goals

- Achieve excellence through transformative education
- Cultivate and strengthen community engagement
- Foster innovation and increase research, scholarship, and creative activity
- Be a growing, high-performing and healthy university

## **PROGRAM/CO-CURRICULAR UNIT MISSION/VISION/GOALS STATEMENTS**

### **School of Communication and Journalism Mission**

**Mission:** To foster the development of exemplary communicators as industry leaders, scholars, professionals, and educators through innovative curricula, research, practice, and opportunities.

**Vision:** To become a premier center for communication excellence.

**Core Values:**

#### **Respect and Integrity**

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity, as well as the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press;
- Practice civility, integrity, and trustworthiness.

#### **Discovery and Innovation**

- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communication professions in which we work;
- Seek out and develop tools and technologies appropriate for communication professions;
- Contribute to knowledge appropriate to communication professions;
- Think critically, creatively, and independently;
- Embrace and champion endeavors that challenge boundaries, reframe definitions, and push the limits of our academic programs and disciplinary understanding;
- Encourage success in scholarship, artistic growth, and the desire for lifelong learning and creativity through reflective practice.

#### **Diversity**

- Demonstrate respect for the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of communication in a global society;
- Recognize the diversity of all learners.

#### **Civic Engagement and Outreach**

- Improve the quality of life for citizens and communities in South Dakota, the nation, and the world;
- Add to a democratic dialogue through professional, scholarly, and creative activities.

### **Master of Mass Communication Program**

The Master of Mass Communication (MMC) is an online degree program that consists of advanced professional studies. While it has theoretical underpinnings, the primary purpose is to enhance knowledge and skills for application in professional practice. Fifty percent or more of the courses must be skills-based. This degree targets professionals in journalism, mass communication and related fields and builds on students' current levels of experience and skills, making them more marketable. The Master of Mass Communication prepares students for the increasingly competitive workforce and changing disciplines in mass communications.

Classes are scheduled for 8-week sessions, which run back-to-back during the academic year. Students who complete a Professional Project (Option B) for their degree will take 32 total credits in the program. Working professionals may consider taking additional coursework (Option C) for a total of 36 credits along with fulfilling a professional portfolio requirement. Class size typically ranges from 10 to 15 students.

The following student learning outcomes are designed to meet the expectations of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) with regard to professional values and competencies for professional master’s programs. The ACEJMC assessment guideline states, “The unit regularly assesses student learning using direct and indirect measures that engage communication professionals and annually ‘closes the loop’ to make tangible improvements to curriculum and instruction.”

SLO 1. Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located.

SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

SLO 3. Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.

SLO 4. Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.

SLO 5. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

SLO 6. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;

SLO 7. Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;

SLO 8. Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;

SLO 9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;

SLO 10. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

SLO 11. Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

### Curriculum/Experience Map (“Learning Opportunities”)

ACEJMC Competencies & Values	Introduce/Awareness	Reinforce/Understanding	Master/Application
SLO 1. Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located.	MCOM 705: Introduction to the Master of Mass Communication	MCOM 730: Media Law Case Studies MCOM 513: International Media	MCOM 788: Master’s Research Problems/Project
SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and	MCOM 705	MCOM 786: Conducting Professional Research MCOM 513 MCOM 653	MCOM 788

institutions in shaping communications.			
<b>SLO 3.</b> Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.	MCOM 710: Cross-Platform Storytelling	MCOM 746: Cross-Platform Campaigns MCOM 513 MCOM 620: Writing for Media Audiences CMST 540: Health Communication CMST 541: Current Issues in Health Communication	MCOM 788
<b>SLO 4.</b> Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.	MCOM 705	MCOM 710 MCOM 761: Social Media Management	MCOM 788
<b>SLO 5.</b> Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.	MCOM 705	MCOM 746 CMST 510: Organizational Communication MCOM 574: Entrepreneurial Media MCOM 653: Mass Communications Teaching Methods MCOM 620 MCOM 761	MCOM 788
<b>SLO 6.</b> Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.	MCOM 705	MCOM 786 MCOM 574	MCOM 788
<b>SLO 7.</b> Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.	MCOM 705	MCOM 786 CMST 510 MCOM 653 MCOM 761	MCOM 788
<b>SLO 8.</b> Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.	MCOM 705	MCOM 786 MCOM 574 MCOM 653	MCOM 788
<b>SLO 9.</b> Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.	MCOM 705	MCOM 710 MCOM 746 MCOM 730 MCOM 574 MCOM 653 MCOM 620	MCOM 788
<b>SLO 10.</b> Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the	MCOM 705	MCOM 710 MCOM 746	MCOM 788

communications professions in which they work.		MCOM 761	
<b>SLO 11.</b> Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.	MCOM 705	MCOM 710 MCOM 746 CMST 540 CMST 541 MCOM 653	MCOM 788

## Assessment Methods Description

**SLO 1: Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located.**

### Assessment Method #1

Student Exit Survey (Appendix A)

Students will complete the exit survey at the end the semester they are graduating to assess their own understanding of the ACEJMC student learning outcomes.

**Type of Assessment:** Indirect measure

**Timeline:** Spring 2019, then every subsequent semester

**Oversight:** Program Coordinator

**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** This indirect measure is designed to determine how well students feel they understand the student learning outcomes based on ACEJMC program accreditation standards. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning objectives and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

**Frequency:** Conducted every semester; analyzed every academic year

### Assessment Method #2

Professional Project/Portfolio and Coursework Evaluation (Appendix B)

*Option B:* Student professional projects will be evaluated during or after project presentations by a committee consisting of the project advisor, a professional representative (formerly graduate representative) with experience applicable to the project area, and at least one graduate faculty member.

*Option C:* Student professional portfolios will be evaluated during or after the portfolio presentation by a committee consisting of the project advisor and at least one graduate faculty member.

**Type of Assessment:** Direct measure

**Timeline:** Spring 2018, then every subsequent semester

**Oversight:** Program Coordinator

**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** The direct measure is designed to ensure that the program is meeting the values and competencies required for ACEJMC program accreditation. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning outcomes and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

**Frequency:** Conducted every semester during program presentations; analyzed every two years.

**SLO 2: Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.**

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**SLO 3: Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.**

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#### **Assessment Method #2**

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**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** The direct measure is designed to ensure that the program is meeting the values and competencies required for ACEJMC program accreditation. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning outcomes and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

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#### **SLO 4. Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.**

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**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** This indirect measure is designed to determine how well students feel they understand the student learning outcomes based on ACEJMC program accreditation standards. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning objectives and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

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**Oversight:** Program Coordinator

**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

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**Frequency:** Conducted every semester during program presentations; analyzed every two years

**SLO 5: Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.**

**Assessment Method #1**

Student Exit Survey (Appendix A)

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**Type of Assessment:** Indirect measure

**Timeline:** Spring 2019, then every subsequent semester

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**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** This indirect measure is designed to determine how well students feel they understand the student learning outcomes based on ACEJMC program accreditation standards. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning objectives and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

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**Frequency:** Conducted every semester during program presentations; analyzed every two years

**SLO 6: Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.**

**Assessment Method #1**

Student Exit Survey (Appendix A)

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**Type of Assessment:** Indirect measure

**Timeline:** Spring 2019, then every subsequent semester

**Oversight:** Program Coordinator

**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** This indirect measure is designed to determine how well students feel they understand the student learning outcomes based on ACEJMC program accreditation standards. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning objectives and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

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**Timeline:** Spring 2018, then every subsequent semester

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**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** The direct measure is designed to ensure that the program is meeting the values and competencies required for ACEJMC program accreditation. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning outcomes and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

**Frequency:** Conducted every semester during program presentations; analyzed every two years

**SLO 7: Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.**

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**Type of Assessment:** Indirect measure

**Timeline:** Spring 2019, then every subsequent semester

**Oversight:** Program Coordinator

**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** This indirect measure is designed to determine how well students feel they understand the student learning outcomes based on ACEJMC program accreditation standards. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning objectives and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

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**Assessment Method #2**

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**Type of Assessment:** Direct measure

**Timeline:** Spring 2018, then every subsequent semester

**Oversight:** Program Coordinator

**Benchmark:** 4.0 on a 5.0 point scale

**Use of Information:** The direct measure is designed to ensure that the program is meeting the values and competencies required for ACEJMC program accreditation. We will identify gaps in achieving student learning outcomes and adjust curriculum accordingly during the next academic year.

**Frequency:** Conducted every semester during program presentations; analyzed every two years

**SLO 8: Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.**

**Assessment Method #1**

Student Exit Survey (Appendix A)

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**Timeline:** Spring 2019, then every subsequent semester

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#### **Assessment Method #2**

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**Timeline:** Spring 2018, then every subsequent semester

**Oversight:** Program Coordinator

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**Frequency:** Conducted every semester during program presentations; analyzed every two years

**SLO 9: Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.**

#### **Assessment Method #1**

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**SLO 10: Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.**

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**Frequency:** Conducted every semester during program presentations; analyzed every two years

**SLO 11: Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.**

#### **Assessment Method #1**

Student Exit Survey (Appendix A)

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#### **Assessment Method #2**

Professional Project/Portfolio and Coursework Evaluation (Appendix B)

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**Analysis/Major Findings**

N/A

**Action Plan/Time**

N/A

**Action Plan Summary**

Action Item	Description	Due date	Primary person

**Communication Plan**

Yearly assessment results will be shared with the School of Communication and Journalism faculty and staff members at an established School monthly meeting and also with the School of Communication and Journalism Advisory Board Members at their annual meeting. In addition, yearly results will be shared with the School of Communication and Journalism Student Advisory Board. Assessment findings will be translated and appropriate information will be shared through university outlets.

**Reference**

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (2023). *Principles of accreditation*. <http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/principles/>

**Appendix A: MMC Student Exit Survey**

You are invited to participate in our survey for graduates of the Master of Mass Communication program at South Dakota State University. It will take approximately five minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. It is very important for us to learn your opinions. Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate (i.e., combined with data from other MMC graduates). Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact the South Dakota State University School of Communication and Journalism at 605-688-4171 or by email at sdstate.mcom@sdstate.edu.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

*(Students click "NEXT" to start the survey.)*

Please indicate how well you believe your overall education in the Master of Mass Communication program met these objectives:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Legal and ethical principles related to freedom of expression, privacy and intellectual property.					
The multicultural history and role of professionals in shaping communications.					
Developing culturally proficient work that gives voice to traditionally disenfranchised groups in society (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability).					
Best practices in the use of and presentation of images and information.					
Engaging and communicating with clarity.					
Professional ethical principles.					
Use of appropriate research methods and critical thinking skills.					
Use of numbers, data and statistics that are executed effectively and correctly.					
Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation and appropriate medium styles.					
Use of appropriate tools and technologies.					

Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications profession in which you work.					
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Please indicate how your work in the Master of Mass Communication program relates to developing the following skills:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Conflict Management					
Critical Thinking					
Decision Making					
Goal Setting					
Leadership					
Listening and Discussion					
Planning and Prioritizing					
Teamwork					

Please rate each aspect of your educational experience at South Dakota State University in the Master of Mass Communication program:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Curriculum					
Faculty					
Instruction					
Advising					
Program Atmosphere/Culture					
Course Management System (D2L)					

Please tell us about any positive experiences (faculty, courses, etc.) during your time in the Master of Mass Communication program:

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Please tell us about any negative experiences (faculty, courses, etc.) during your time in the Master of Mass Communication program:

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Please indicate any areas you think could be improved (faculty, courses, etc.) in the Master of Mass Communication program:

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What specific types of courses or certificates, if any, would you like to see offered in the Master of Mass Communication program?

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What specific skills, if any, do you think are missing from the Master of Mass Communication program and should be taught?

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Do you plan to continue your graduate education after completing the Master of Mass Communication program?

Yes

No

Please indicate what type of graduate degree you plan to pursue:

Ph.D.

Ed.D.

MBA

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been promoted or offered a position while in the Master of Mass Communication program or contingent upon completing it?

Yes

No

In which category are you working or would prefer to work?

Mass Media and/or Communication

Advertising/Public Relations/Marketing

Education

Agriculture

Healthcare

Service or Government

Manufacturing

Retail

Human Resources

Business

Nonprofit

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Which option did you complete in your graduate studies?

Option B (Professional Project)

Option C (Coursework/Portfolio)

The following demographic questions are voluntary.

Please indicate your approximate annual salary.

Less than \$25,000

\$25,000-\$49,999

\$50,000-\$74,999

\$75,000-\$100,000

More than \$100,000

Please indicate your identified gender.

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Prefer not to answer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your ethnicity.

- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your age.

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- Above 54

**Appendix B: MMC Professional Project/Portfolio and Coursework Evaluation**

This survey is used to gather assessment data on the South Dakota State University Master of Mass Communication (MMC) graduate program by evaluating student professional projects and portfolios. You have this link because you have agreed to participate in the evaluation. Please take the time to complete this survey during or immediately following your evaluation.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

*(Representatives click "NEXT" to start the survey.)*

Representative Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please indicate your role:  
 Professional Representative  
 Project Adviser  
 Department Representative  
 Committee Member

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Professional Project/Portfolio: \_\_\_\_\_

- Type of Capstone Activity:  
 Professional Project  
 Portfolio

- Which category does the professional project best fit?  
 Project for the public sector  
 Project for a client or employer  
 An education-related project  
 A long-form journalism project  
 A video/film project, website, etc.

As best you can, please rate the professional project based on the following criteria:

Student Learning Outcome	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context					
Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications					
Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts					

Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies					
Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve					
Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity					
Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work					
Effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts					
Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness					
Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.					
Contribute to knowledge appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.					