DEGREE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The M.A. in Strategic Public Relations degree program is designed to meet the needs of both new graduates and young professionals who have an interest in the practice, as opposed to the theory, of communication. It takes a highly applied, case-study approach emphasizing attributes that hiring managers in all kinds of organizations are looking for, i.e. strategic thinking and problem solving ability, skills in content creation, social media, research and writing, and a solid foundation in ethics, globalization, and business acumen. Its purpose is to propel you into a successful career in the exciting, rewarding, and fast growing field of Public Relations and Strategic Communication.

When is the application deadline?

Admission to the M.A. Strategic Public Relations is limited to the Fall term. International applicants must apply by December 1 and must request to have all official transcripts (original language and English translation) and test scores sent to USC Graduate Admission by December 15 to ensure ample time to process their applications. U.S. citizens and permanent residents must apply by May 15 and request to have all official transcripts and test scores sent to USC Graduate Admission by May 30. Incomplete applications are not reviewed by the faculty admission committee.

What content should be in my application resume?

You should submit a current resume listing positions held, including internships, nature of work and dates of employment. Include academic and professional awards, honors, association memberships, subject matter expertise, language(s) other than English, and your familiarity with any research or communications technologies, i.e. software for design, audio/video production, blogging, data analysis, content development, presentations, etc.

What should I address in my Statement of Purpose?

This statement, which should convey your passion for the field, should be two to four pages long, typed and double spaced. Care should be taken to submit a clear, concise and well-written essay that includes facts, not conjecture. The statement should address the following questions:

1. What are your thoughts about public relations as a profession?
2. What are your thoughts about the future of public relations?
3. Why are you interested in studying public relations at the graduate level?
4. If you have given it some thought, what area or type of public relations interests you?
5. How would you describe your ideal job as a public relations practitioner?
6. What makes you an exceptional candidate to study public relations at USC Annenberg?
7. What is it about USC Annenberg’s Masters in Strategic PR that inspired you to apply?
What type of writing sample is required?

The faculty graduate admissions committee is looking for samples of current work. The samples may be news stories, blog items, or press releases. Samples must not exceed 10 pages.

How many letters of recommendation are needed, and from whom?

Two online letters of recommendation are required, and professional recommendations are expected. If you are a recent college/university graduate, submit one academic reference and one professional reference.

You must provide recommenders’ names and e-mail addresses on the online application and they will receive online recommendation forms. Your recommenders must submit a letter of recommendation online in addition to completing the digital recommendation form.

What test scores must I submit to apply?

This degree program application requires a valid GRE score, and TOEFL or IELTS scores from international applicants (when required). Please see the USC Annenberg Graduate Application Checklist on the right for more information on required graduate test scores.

What if English is my second language? Are English language classes required?

Based on demonstrated English language proficiency, an international applicant may be required to complete a USC International Academy English language program before admission to the M.A. in Strategic Public Relations.

How much does the program cost?

The M.A. in Strategic Public Relations requires 40 graduate units. For the 2015-2016 academic year, the estimated tuition cost is $1,666† per unit.

†Actual tuition, mandatory fees and living expenses may be higher or lower depending on your course load and living situation. The estimate should not be considered a bill of expense for USC.

Departmental scholarships, assistantships, and project associate assignments are awarded competitively to domestic and international applicants based on the completed graduate admission application. No additional forms are required for departmental awards. However, you must complete your application by the stated deadlines for full consideration.

For more information on financing your USC education, visit the USC Financial Aid Website: http://www.usc.edu/admission/fa/