

USC Annenberg

School for Communication
and Journalism

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 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. **The application deadline is January 1, 2017.**

What content should be in my application résumé?

List 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 content should be in my personal statement?

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. 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 M.A. in Strategic PR that inspired you to apply?

Application Guidelines

Go to <https://usc.liasoncas.com> to apply.

The online USC Graduate Admission Application opens September 1, 2016.

Upload official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended (including USC) to the Academic History section of the application.

- Include the legend for domestic institutions and the grading scale for international institutions.
- International transcripts should include the original language and the English translation as one document.
- Do not upload transcripts from your student portal.

Upload the following documents before submitting your application:

- CV/ Résumé
- Personal Statement
- Writing Sample
- Copy of your official passport (International Applicants only)
- Proof of Financial Support (International Applicants Only)

Official Transcripts

After receiving your USC ID*, mail official transcripts (original language and English translation) from all colleges and universities attended and any study abroad programs to:

University of Southern California
Office of Graduate Admission
3601 South Flower St., Room 112
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0915

*USC Graduate Admission will send your USC ID via email 2-3 days after you submit your online graduate admission application.

All program materials must be submitted online with the application in English. Once the application has been submitted, you may not upload or change any program materials. Once submitted, all materials and documents become the property of USC and will not be returned.

What type of writing sample is required?

The writing may take various forms: a report for your organization, press releases for clients, news articles, a set of substantial memos to your superiors successfully arguing for a particular position, or an academic paper for a college or university course. The writing sample should 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?

Valid GRE scores are required. In addition, international student applicants must submit valid TOEFL or IELTS scores based on where the bachelor's degree was completed.

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

Based on demonstrated English language proficiency, some international applicants may be required to complete a USC International Academy Intensive English Program before admission to the M.A. in Strategic Public Relations. Visit <http://www.international.usc.edu> for more information.

What financial support is available?

Departmental merit scholarships and fellowships are competitively awarded and all completed applications are considered for admission and departmental awards. The M.A. in Strategic Public Relations is a Yellow Ribbon designated degree program.

For further information about financing your USC graduate education, domestic and permanent resident applicants may visit USC Financial Aid at <http://www.usc.edu/admission/fa>.

International applicants will find critical information at <http://gradadm.usc.edu/international-students-financial-documentation>.

What are the opportunities to meet faculty, current students, and admissions officers?

Annenberg Admissions provides multiple opportunities to visit campus, participate in webinars, or meet admissions officers in various cities around the US. Please visit our website to learn about available options: <http://annenberg.usc.edu/admissions/visit-us-graduate>

Recommendations

Create online profiles in the Program Materials section of the application by providing names and email addresses of your recommenders. Your recommenders will be sent instructions on how to submit a recommendation. USC Annenberg only accepts online recommendations.

Testing Requirements

Valid test scores must be reported electronically from the testing agency to USC (code 4852 for GRE and TOEFL. For IELTS, select University of Southern California Graduate Programs).

- GRE scores are valid if taken August 2012 or later.
- International applicants must submit valid TOEFL or IELTS scores; scores are valid if taken August 2015 or later.
- International applicants who completed their *entire* undergraduate degree in the United States or another Anglophone country where English is both the language of instruction and the only official language of the country are exempt from submitting TOEFL or IELTS scores. Completing a graduate degree in an Anglophone county does not exempt you from submitting TOEFL or IELTS scores.
- Complete all admission testing as early as possible, and no later than one month prior to the application deadline.

Application Fee

Pay the **\$90** non-refundable application fee with a credit card or request an application fee waiver prior to submitting an application. Fee waiver requirements may be found at USC Graduate Admission website <http://gradadm.usc.edu/lightboxes/us-students-fee-waivers/>.