

DUAL DEGREE M.A. IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES AND DOCTOR OF MEDICINE (M.D.)

Dual Degree M.A. in Communication Studies and Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)

The interdisciplinary dual degree program between the M.A. in Communication Studies, Area of Emphasis in Health and Medical Communication, and the Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) is designed to:

- Equip future physicians with advanced training in patient-provider communication, cultural competence, health literacy, shared decision-making, persuasive health messaging, and advocacy.
- Provide students with the skills to navigate complex communication environments, including media relations, public health campaign messaging, and health policy advocacy.
- Prepare graduates to serve as leaders in clinical practice, academic medicine, public health organizations, non-governmental organizations, and governmental agencies.

The Dual M.D./M.A. in Communication Studies, Emphasis in Health and Medical Communication, is an integrated four-year academic pathway that allows School of Medicine students (SOM) to earn a M.A. in Communication Studies, Area of Emphasis in Health and Medical Communication concurrently with their Doctor of Medicine degree without extending the total time to completion.

Students will:

- Enroll in graduate-level communication courses strategically scheduled around the SOM academic calendar to avoid conflicts with clinical and classroom responsibilities.
- Engage in applied learning experiences that reinforce both medical and communication competencies.
- Satisfy the M.A. program's culminating requirement that demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of communication studies with a topic that integrates medical practice and health communication theory and research.

This structure enables SOM students to gain advanced skills in health communication within the standard M.D. timeline, preparing them for enhanced patient care, leadership roles, media, content creation, and contributions to healthcare policy and advocacy. No courses apply to both the M.D. and the M.A. in Communication Studies.

Admission Requirements

1. Applicants should first be admitted to the Doctor of Medicine Degree program through the standard SOM admission process. The SOM will establish a list of students eligible for admission to this dual-degree program.
2. Eligible SOM students may apply for admission to the M.A. in Communication Studies, emphasis Health and Medical Communication upon their commitment to the SOM.

3. The M.A. application process will include review by Communication Studies graduate faculty in consultation with SOM representatives.
4. Admission decisions will consider academic performance, professional goals, and the applicant's ability to manage the demands of a dual-degree program.

Graduation Requirements

To earn the M.A. in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Health and Medical Communication, the candidate must complete all of the requirements for the M.A. in Communication Studies, which include the following courses: CMM 606 Engaging Comm Theories and CMM 601 Quantitative Research in Comm OR CMM 605 Qualitative Research in Comm.

Additionally, the candidate must:

- Take CMM 606 Engaging Comm Theories, CMM 570 Health Communication, CMM 670 Patient-Provider Communication, and CMM 671 Health Comm Campaigns.
- Complete 15 hours of CMM electives or approved interdisciplinary electives in consultation with their advisor.
- Complete 6 hours of coursework that leads to the completion of a capstone project that is presented to the CMM graduate faculty, demonstrating comprehensive knowledge of health and medical communication. The 6 hours of Practicum courses include (CMM 599 Communication Practicum 1 and CMM 699 Communication Practicum 2).

Note: No courses apply to both the M.D. and the M.A. in Communication Studies.