

Moody College of Communication

Student Handbook

Academic Year 2024-2025

STACKABLE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
STACKABLE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SPORTS COMMUNICATION
STACKABLE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP

Contact Information

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Option III Programs

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Strategic Communication Certificate Website: <https://moody.utexas.edu/graduate-programs/strategic-communication-certificate>

Sports Communication Certificate Website: <https://moody.utexas.edu/graduate-programs/sports-communication-certificate>

What is a stackable graduate certificate?

Stackable graduate certificate programs provide students with the opportunity to earn a transcript-recognized, non-degree credential for completing a structured sequence of courses. These programs are specifically designed to meet identified workforce needs and to provide students with skills and knowledge that will be useful for their lives and careers. Following a student's successful application and admission to a degree-seeking

program, certificate coursework may be used to satisfy the requirements of a Master’s degree, thus creating a stackable pathway towards degree.

Stackable graduate certificates are available to individuals who have been admitted to the University as either degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking graduate students. Students who are enrolled in a graduate degree program at UT Austin may apply for admission through the academic unit sponsoring the certificate. Some certificate programs are available to nondegree-seeking students; persons who have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher may apply for admission to those programs by submitting required materials to the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Each graduate certificate program is sponsored and administered by a Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). The GSC is responsible for determining the program curriculum, publishing a program description in the Graduate Catalog, processing applications for admission, tracking and evaluating student progress, and reporting program completion to the Graduate School.

More information on stackable graduate certificates can be found on the Grad School’s website: <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/content/stackable-graduate-certificate-programs>

Other considerations:

<https://utexas.box.com/shared/static/le26ctqgk244d3lwsuh5cs8mqxh41mo6.pdf>

Required Courses

To earn the Strategic Communication or Sports Communication graduate stackable certificate, students must complete 15 hours of graduate-level coursework that has been approved by the program faculty. Upper-division undergraduate courses may not be used to satisfy coursework requirements. All coursework used to satisfy program requirements must be completed within a 6-year period. A single course may not be used to satisfy the requirements of more than one stackable graduate certificate. Limitations on applying certificate credit to a future degree follows the University of Texas at Austin standard of a 6-year limit. Students are permitted to complete the program without consecutive enrollment, permitted they complete all courses within the 6-year limit for this certificate.

The specific courses required for the Communication Studies graduate stackable certificates are listed below:

Strategic Communication Graduate Stackable Certificate

Prefix and Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
CMS 395C.1	Persuasion, Advocacy, and Social Influence	3

CMS 395C.2	The Art and Science of Social Media	3
CMS 395C.3	Communicating for Careers	3
CMS 395C.4	Team Building	3
CMS 395C.5	Resisting Stereotyping and Prejudice	3
Total Hours		15

Sports Communication Graduate Stackable Certificate

Prefix and Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
CMS 395S.1	Sports Audio and Video Storytelling	3
CMS 395S.2	Political and Crisis Communication in Sports	3
CMS 395S.3	Negotiation in Sports	3
CMS 395C.6	Personal Identity Branding	3
CMS 395C.7	Social Media Strategies	3
Total Hours		15

Communication and Leadership Graduate Stackable Certificate

Prefix and Number	Course Title	Semester Credit Hours
CMS 395C.8	Managing Change through Communication	3
CMS 395C.9	Communication and Leadership	3
CMS 395C.10	Crisis Communication	3
CMS 395C.11	Conflict and Negotiation	3

CMS 395C.12	Leadership in the Social World	3
Total Hours		15

Course Sequence

The 5 required courses can be taken in any order, but many are only taught once per year. Semester offerings for the courses are listed below.

Strategic Communication Graduate Stackable Certificate

Fall Only	Spring Only	Fall and Spring
CMS 395C.1	CMS 395C.4	CMS 395C.3
CMS 395C.2	CMS 395C.5	

CMS 395C.1 and CMS 395C.2 will only be taught in the fall semester, while CMS 395C.4 and CMS 395C.5 will only be taught in the spring semester. CMS 395C.3 will be taught in both the fall and spring semesters. Courses that do not reach an enrollment of at least 6 students may be canceled.

Sports Communication Graduate Stackable Certificate

Fall Only	Spring Only	Fall and Spring
CMS 395C.7	CMS 395C.6	CMS 395S.1
CMS 395S.2	CMS 395S.3	

CMS 395C.7 and CMS 395S.2 will only be taught in the fall semester, while CMS 395C.6 and CMS 395S.3 will only be taught in the spring semester. CMS 395S.1 will be taught in both the fall and spring semesters. Courses that do not reach an enrollment of at least 6 students may be canceled.

Communication and Leadership Graduate Stackable Certificate

The course sequence for the Communication and Leadership Certificate has not yet been determined, but it will follow the same pattern as other stackable graduate certificates. Two courses will be offered only in the fall, two only in the spring, and one will be offered in both fall and spring. Courses that do not reach an enrollment of at least 6 students may be canceled.

PROCEDURES

Application & Admission

All applicants must meet the [University of Texas at Austin Graduate School admission requirements](#). Applicants must have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, or be on track to graduate before enrolling in the certificate.

- Bachelor's degree in any field
- GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale in upper-division work –junior- and senior-level courses—and in any graduate work already completed.
- Rarely, conditional admission may be possible for GPAs under 3.0 in extenuating circumstances
- For international applicants only, TOEFL score of at least 79 or IELTS score of at least 6.5
- Please note, the Communication Studies Stackable Graduate Certificate programs do not meet the U.S. government requirements for students to be eligible for an F-1 or J-1 student visa. However, international applicants on an eligible non-student VISA are welcome to apply.

Application process

- Applications are accepted through [the ApplyTexas website](#). After completing the data entry sections and paying the application fee, applicants must upload supporting documents on their [MyStatus page](#).
- Additional documents required:
 - Official transcripts, dated one year or less, from all four-year institutions attended
 - Resume
 - A statement of purpose (maximum of 1000 words) focused on the applicant's interest in the program, goals, what the applicant hopes to gain from the program, and what the applicant will contribute to the program
 - Letter of Recommendation: 1 required / 1 maximum
 - Official TOEFL scores taken within the past two years (for International Applicants only).

How to submit required documents

- All required documents must be submitted electronically to the [My Status Check](#). This page will become available to you approximately two days after you complete your online application at [ApplyTexas.org](#).

Application Deadlines

- To enroll in the fall semester
 - International applicants: March 1
 - Domestic applicants: April 15
- To enroll in the spring semester

- International applicants: September 1
- Domestic applicants: October 15

Acceptance

- The Admissions Committee for the Communication Studies stackable graduate certificates will review complete applications after the deadline. All additional documents must have been uploaded in order for the committee to consider the application. Partial applications will not be reviewed.
- Admitted applicants will be notified by email from the program. They will also receive official e-letters from the Office of Graduate Admissions with instructions on how to check your application Status Check page for your admission decision.
- Both the program and the Office of Graduate Studies must accept applicants before they can enroll.

Advising & Registration

Registration: In advance of each registration period, students will be contacted regarding course selection for the upcoming semester. Program staff will then register students for courses during prescribed registration access periods. Notices of program tuition and fee due dates will be sent to students. It is the student's responsibility to double-check their tuition notices to ensure they were registered appropriately.

Students are responsible for clearing bars that prevent registration.

Late registration

In the event the Graduate Coordinator is unable to register a student during the normal registration period due to a registration bar, for not indicating registration preferences, or for any other reason not due to staff error, the student will be charged a late registration fee in addition to normal tuition. The late fee schedule is published in the Course Schedule, but generally follows the days below:

\$25.00 through the fourth-class day

\$50.00 from the fifth through twelfth-class day

\$200.00 after the twelfth-class day

You must contact the program staff to initiate a drop or withdrawal. Non-payment of tuition in itself is not sufficient and will result in responsibility for full amount of tuition owed.

Certificate Completion

Following completion of certificate requirements, the certificate coordinator or director will report program completion to the Graduate School using a Stackable Graduate Certificate Completion Reporting Form. The Graduate School will then apply the credential to the

student's transcript.

PAYMENT

What is an Option III program?

Option III Programs offer the graduate degree curriculum tailored to special needs in modes of delivery, student clientele, course design, class meeting times and locations. Courses are not formula funded, which means that the full costs of the entire program are covered from fees charged to students. This includes the cost of instruction (including any additional compensation of instructional staff), facilities, equipment (purchase, maintenance, and use), computing costs, administrative costs (department, college, and University), and other support services.

Cost of the program

The table below provides full program cost information for cohorts entering the program in August 2024 or January 2025. Students may apply to begin the program in either the fall or spring. They may also choose in which semester they take 3 courses and when they take 2 courses.

Strategic Communication Graduate Certificate (entering fall 2024 or spring 2025)

Program Installments	Cost
3 courses	\$13,500
2 courses	\$9,000
Total	\$22,500

Option III Fees, payment schedule

Students have several options for helping to pay for their program fees, including partial or full reimbursement from their employers, private loans, and/or Veteran's Benefits. Program staff will work with you to devise a payment plan that best meets your needs. If a third party will be paying the program fees on the student's behalf and needs flexibility on the payment schedule, contact the Graduate Coordinator to discuss the payment options.

Payment	Due Date
Enrollment Deposit	Upon acceptance
Fall tuition and fees	3-4 weeks prior to semester (~August 1)
Spring tuition and fees	3-4 weeks prior to semester (~December 15)

Enrollment deposit

- A non-refundable \$1,000 deposit is required when applicants accept an offer of admission. This amount is credited toward the first semester's program costs.

International student fees

- Please note, the Communication Studies Stackable Graduate Certificate programs do not meet the U.S. government requirements for students to be eligible for an F-1 or J-1 student visa. However, international applicants on an eligible non-student VISA are welcome to apply.
- International students will be charged an additional \$1,500 in the fall semester and \$2,500 in the spring semester. These fee covers the cost of mandatory health insurance as well as support from the International Student and Scholars Services. [The ISSS website includes more details on services covered by those fees.](#)

Late fees

- Each semester's tuition and fees are due approximately 3-4 weeks before the semester starts. Students will receive an exact due date when they are billed. After that date, a \$100 late fee will be charged each week for non-payment.
- All late fees and tuition must be paid in full to enroll in classes.

Refund schedule

- The refund schedule follows the [Office of the Registrar's Fee Adjustments and Refunds Schedule](#).

Financial Aid

- Non-degree-seeking students in an Option III program are not eligible for federal financial aid. They may be eligible for some private sector loans. Questions about financial aid should be directed to [Texas One Stop](#).
- Option III students are not eligible for TA, AI, GRA, AA, or A(G) appointments or departmental fellowships or scholarships.
- Students in Option III programs are not eligible for Hinson-Hazlewood Act Exemptions (for Texas ex-servicemen and their children), but may be eligible for GI Bill benefits. Direct questions to the [Veterans Certification Team](#) in the Office of the Registrar.

RULES & POLICIES

As a graduate student at The University of Texas at Austin, it is important that you conduct yourself and your studies in a manner that aligns with the University's [Honor Code](#) and its standard of [academic integrity](#).

In addition, you must comply with university policy as defined here and in the Graduate and General Information [catalogs](#), the [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#), and elsewhere.

Academic Integrity

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin. More specifically, you and

other students are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University. This is a fundamental expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- Acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- Complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain Assistance in preparing them;
- Follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- Avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

For the official policies on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty, please refer to [Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities](#).

Why is Academic Integrity so important

One significant reason concerns the University's educational mission. Quite simply, educational objectives cannot be meaningfully fulfilled without strict adherence to the standard of academic integrity. Acts of academic dishonesty not only undermine the learning process and disadvantage students who earn credit honestly, but also subvert key responsibilities of the academic enterprise, such as the assessment and certification of students' scholastic progress and claimed educational achievements. Too costly to ignore, these and other consequences of academic dishonesty clearly underscore the importance of academic integrity.

Academic integrity is just too valuable for academic dishonesty to be tolerated at the University! Upholding this standard of conduct is also a minimal requirement for "a university of the first class," the honored distinction envisioned for our institution by the authors of the Texas Constitution of 1876. Many impressive accomplishments have earned that status over time and continue to do so, such as the University's distinguished efforts in developing and advancing knowledge. All participants – including students – must rigorously and consistently observe an exemplary standard of academic integrity in their contributions to this complex, interdependent process that cannot function effectively in the absence of honesty.

So, as vital members of the University community, you and other students share a vested interest in striving to achieve and maintain a prevailing norm of academic integrity on this campus.

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

You may see or hear of other students engaging in some form of academic dishonesty. If so, do not assume that this misconduct is tolerated. Such violations are, in fact, regarded very seriously, often resulting in severe consequences. Consequences for engaging in Academic Dishonesty include:

- A Grade Related Sanction
- A Punitive Sanction (Academic Integrity Probation, Deferred Suspension, Suspension etc.)
- An Educational Sanction (Complete reflective assignment, attend a workshop, mentoring opportunity etc.)
- Engaging in dishonest behavior is simply not worth the risks of jeopardizing your academic career and gambling with your future!

The value of a University of Texas degree is also inherently connected to the prestige of this institution and its academic units - colleges and schools, departments and individual degree programs. So the accrued costs of any damage to their earned reputations can adversely affect you and other students who someday will compete for jobs and/or admission into graduate programs or professional schools.

Altogether, these and other concerns reinforce and assure the University's serious interest in confronting academic dishonesty and holding students accountable for any such violations.

Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

This section provides important general tips to assist you in avoiding scholastic dishonesty. Seek clarification from your instructors regarding class policies; do not rely on other students for such information.

Carefully read your course syllabus and follow instructions for completing assignments and ask your instructors to clarify the guidelines. For example, to what extent is working together on an assignment allowed, if at all? Know exactly where the line is and do not cross over it.

Always assume that you are expected to complete assignments independently unless your instructors indicate otherwise.

Plan ahead so that you will be more adequately prepared. If you think that you may need tutoring in a particular course, arrange for that assistance early in the semester. Several helpful academic assistance programs on campus include the [Sanger Learning and Career Center](#), the [Graduate Student Writing Service](#), and the [Undergraduate Writing Center \(UWC\)](#).

Because desperation clouds judgment and often leads to poor decision making, avoid

waiting until the lastminute to study for exams or complete assignments. Allow sufficient time to review your drafted assignments before completing and submitting them, and be sure to credit the sources of any borrowed material properly, using the types of citations specified by your instructors.

Remember, perceived "shortcuts" can actually be forms of scholastic dishonesty!More info on the [website of the Office of the Dean of Students](#)

GPA and Grade Requirements

All coursework must be completed with a grade of "C" or higher. In addition, students must earn a grade point average of at least 3.00 in courses used to satisfy stackable certificate requirements.

Transfer of Graduate Credit

Non-degree-seeking students who are admitted to a graduate certificate program must complete all coursework for the certificate in residence at the University.

Adding & Dropping Courses

In Option III programs, all registration is handled by the program coordinator. If you wish to add or drop a course, you must contact the program coordinator.

Incomplete, or X grades

If a student does not complete all the assignments in a course before the end of the course, the instructor may report work incomplete (X) to the [Office of the Registrar](#) in place of a grade.

The student must then complete the course requirements by the last class day in his or her next long-session semester of enrollment.

The instructor must report a final grade by the end of the grade-reporting period in that semester. If these deadlines are not met, the X is converted to an I—permanent incomplete. If the student is not enrolled during a long-session semester for 24 months following the end of the semester in which the X is reported and the instructor does not report a final grade, then the symbol X is converted to the symbol I.

The symbol I cannot be converted to a grade. When the symbol I is recorded, the symbol X also remains on the student's record.

The period for completion of course requirements may be extended only under unusual circumstances beyond the student's control and only upon the recommendation of the instructor and the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Requests for an extension of X must be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies through submission by the instructor of record of a completed Update to Student Academic Record form. This request must provide reasons the student was unable to complete the coursework by the last class day in his or her next long-session semester of enrollment after receiving the X.

An X may properly be assigned for students who must miss the final due to illness or other imperative nonacademic reasons. You may require a medical excuse if the reason for the request for a postponed final is illness. If you would prefer to not deal with non-academic issues, you may refer the student to an academic advisor in the Dean's Office.

An X may also be given when the student has not been able to complete all the required assignments for reasons other than lack of diligence but only if the student has a passing grade on the work completed.

Finally, an X may be assigned if the student qualifies for a reexamination and the instructor chooses to give a reexamination.

In addition, an X should be assigned only if the student has been informed and the exact procedures by which the student will make up the work are agreed upon. The assignment of an X constitutes a contract between the student and the instructor. It is often helpful to have the arrangement in writing, specifying what the student is expected to do to complete the course, including due dates.

Leaves of Absence

Graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin may apply for a leave of absence of no more than two semesters.

A student on leave may not use any university facilities nor is the student entitled to

receive advice from any member of the faculty. A leave of absence does not alter the time limits for degrees or course work. More information [here](#).

Withdrawals

To withdraw from the Graduate School, the student must file a Withdrawal and Refund Request form, which may be obtained from the Graduate School in [Main](#) 101, with the Dean of Graduate Studies. The form explains refund policies.

When a student is unable to complete a withdrawal on campus, a signed request to withdraw may be faxed to the Graduate School at 512-475-8851. All requests for withdrawal must be accompanied by an acknowledgement from the student's graduate advisor.

A student may withdraw through the last class day of the semester

Warning Status and Academic Dismissal

As per the UT Graduate School <https://gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/warning-status-academic-dismissal> "a student whose graduate grade-point average falls below 3.0 at the end of any semester or summer session will be warned by the Graduate School that his or her continuance in the Graduate School is in jeopardy. During the next semester or summer session for which the student is registered, he or she must attain a grade-point average of at least 3.0 or be subject to dismissal. During this period, the student may not drop any course or withdraw from the university without the approval of the graduate adviser and the graduate dean".

Grievances

Graduate students at The University of Texas at Austin have the right to seek redress of any grievance related to academic or nonacademic matters.

Grade Disputes

Grade disputes are to be filed with the department offering the course in question, and the dean of the college or school offering the course makes the final decision on an appeal of the departmental ruling.

If your request to dispute a grade is denied by the instructor, you may prepare and submit a written appeal, within **30 calendar days** after the start of the following semester to the Graduate Adviser/Program Director of the graduate academic program in which the course originates. The academic programs will not accept any grade appeals, if not submitted within the 30 calendar days after the start of the following semester.

Every effort should be made to resolve grievances informally between the student and the faculty member involved or with the assistance of the graduate adviser, Graduate Studies Committee chair or department chair. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, students have recourse to formal grievance procedures. More information [here](#) and here: <https://policies.utexas.edu/policies/graduate-school>

STUDENT RESOURCES

MyUT Portal

[MyUT](#): All of UT's resources, all in one place. Download the official MyUT app from the App Store or Google Play.

[Student Resources](#) offers details and information about:

- Academic Tools and Support
- Course Registration and Grades
- Costs and Financial Aid
- Technology Tools
- Health and Safety
- Student Services
- Campus Resources
- Getting Involved
- Student Jobs

Emergency Information

www.Emergency.utexas.edu serves as a resource for communications about The University of Texas at Austin in the event that there is an emergency. It is part of the university's overall communications infrastructure for ensuring important information is available to the university community and the public in the event of a technical outage or emergency situation.

The website provides information on [emergency preparedness](#) at the university as well as [additional resources](#) for communications and information during a technical outage or university emergency. When the university's main website is unavailable, updated information will be provided here.

Help & Services – UT Police Department

From crime prevention and safety programs to providing security for special events, UTPD stands ready to assist our faculty, staff, students, and visitors. If we can't help, we probably know who can. Contact UTPD at 512-471-4441.

[More info.](#)

UT Counseling and Mental Health Center

Your CARE Counselor in the Moody College of Communication is Abby Simpson, LCSW.

The CARE counselor is available to help with a variety of issues, such as stress, test anxiety, racing thoughts, feeling unmotivated and anything else that might be getting in your way.

Contact info:

Abby Simpson. LCSW Phone: 512-471-7642

More info about CMHC, click [here](#).

Disability and Access

D&A ensures students with disabilities have equal access to their academic experiences at the University of Texas at Austin by determining eligibility and approving reasonable accommodations. They also engage in outreach across campus in order to make campus a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming environment for people with disabilities.

D&A is located on the fourth floor of the [Student Services Building](#). Take some time to browse [through their website](#) to find information on how to register with D&A, guidelines for documentation, and information about their accommodations and services.

Student Emergency Services

[The Student Emergency Services](#) office helps students and their families during difficult or emergency situations. Assistance includes outreach, advocacy, intervention, support, and referrals to relevant campus and community resources. Please note that this office does not provide counseling services.

Emergency situations include but are not limited to:

- Missing Student
- Family Emergency
- Fire or Natural Disaster
- Student Death (current or former)
- Medical or Mental Health Concern
- Academic difficulties due to crisis or emergency situations
- Interpersonal Violence (stalking, harassment, physical and/or sexual assault)

512-471-5017 (Mon.-Fri., 8-4:30)

512-232-5050 (24/7) – [Behavior Concerns Advice Line](#)

University Ombuds Office

[The University Ombuds Office](#) is available to students, faculty and staff to listen to your concerns in a safe setting about life at the university and confidentially discuss interpersonal difficulties, university policies, university bureaucracy, and conflict resolution techniques. They help you identify options so you can seek resolution.

The Office of the Student Ombuds is always available as a resource.

University Health Services

[University Health Services](#) is committed to providing high-quality care to all patients.

Title IX

[The Title IX Office](#) is committed to supporting the University's mission to create and maintain an educational and work environment free from all forms of sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, exploitation and intimidation in which all students, faculty and staff can learn, work and thrive.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (512-232-5050)

Are you worried about a student in your class, bothered that your roommate has been acting differently, or concerned about the behavior of a co-worker? If so, contact the Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL) at 512-232-5050 or submit your concerns using the [online form](#).

UTPD

[The UTPD website](#) lists many resources and services available at your fingertips.

LiveSafe App at UT Austin

Available in the App Store and Google Play. UTPD has launched a free mobile app called [LiveSafe](#) at UT Austin giving the UT community and guests immediate access to police dispatch via the communication tool most frequently used—text.