



University of Houston-Downtown®
**College of Humanities
& Social Sciences**

**Graduate Studies Handbook
2025 - 2026**

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Introduction and Contact Information

Welcome to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) at the University of Houston – Downtown (UHD)!

CHSS is home to four graduate degree programs:

- (1) the Master of Science in Technical Communication (MSTC)
- (2) the Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Composition (MARC)
- (3) the Master of Arts in Nonprofit Management (MANPM)
- (4) the Master of Arts in Strategic Communication (MASC)

CHSS also offers four graduate certificate programs in:

- (1) Leadership and Strategic Planning
- (2) Composition Studies
- (3) Plain Language
- (4) Medical and Applied Health Communication

This CHSS Graduate Studies Handbook is intended to serve as a resource for all enrolled graduate students in CHSS by clarifying important university, college, and program-specific policies and procedures.

CHSS Administration:	Contact Information:
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Policy Overview

All University of Houston (UH) campuses follow the UH system Board policies and System Administrative Memoranda (SAM) as described here: <https://uhsystem.edu/compliance-ethics/uhs-policies/>.

Additionally, a set of policies are pertaining specifically to the UHD campus. All UHD Policy Statements can be found here: [Index of Terms and Related Policies \(uhd.edu\)](#)

Many of the policies pertaining to the academic life of faculty and students are laid out in the Academic Affairs section (03), and the Policy Statements found in section 03.B are specific to Graduate Studies. These policies are listed/linked below:

B - Graduate Policies		
Policy Statement Number	Policy Title	Effective Date
03.B.01	Graduate Policies and Program Documentation	03/21/25
03.B.04	Grading System for Graduate-Level Courses	05/15/23
03.B.06	Graduation and Commencement of Graduate Students	03/21/25
03.B.07	Graduate Academic Probation, Suspension, and Dismissal	05/01/23
03.B.24	Admission of Graduate Students	06/28/24

Admissions Policies and Procedures

General

Prospective Graduate students will apply to their program of interest and receive admissions communication primarily through the Office of Graduate Admissions, though they may be in touch with the CHSS Associate Director of Graduate Studies and/or their Program Director as needed with specific questions/needs. Once an application is complete, The Admissions Committee for each program will evaluate candidates using a matrix based on required application materials to determine if the applicant will be “admitted,” “conditionally admitted,” or “denied admission” to the program. The committee may also ask for further information from the candidate before making a final admission decision. The Program Director of the respective graduate program or the Associate Director of Graduate Studies will notify prospective students, in writing (via email), of the committee’s decision. This written notification will contain pertinent information and next steps for students, as applicable. Specifically, for conditionally admitted students: this written notification will detail the stipulations of the “conditional” status and the necessary steps/actions required to receive full admission to the program.

Post-Baccalaureate (Non-degree-seeking) Student Admissions

Prospective students who have completed a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited university can apply to take CHSS graduate courses as a post-baccalaureate student. Post-bacc students can take up to 6 hours of graduate semester credit hours in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. To be considered for post-bacc student admission, an applicant must submit an application, the non-refundable application fee, and official transcripts from the institution where they completed their bachelor’s degree (as well as any other prior credit attempted/completed since receiving their bachelor’s degree). Approval to enroll in courses must then be given by the relevant Program Director.

International Graduate Student Admissions

Prospective graduate students who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States, have not applied for permanent residency, or have not qualified for Texas residency based on SB 1528, should apply as an International Graduate Student and follow the application guidelines provided by the [UHD Office of International Admissions](#).

Please note that we are unable to accept F1 visa international students into any of our CHSS graduate programs due to the majority of classes being taught online. Other types of international applicants may be eligible to apply. These students should contact the [UHD Office of International Admissions](#) and/or the CHSS Associate Director of Graduate Studies before applying.

Transferring Graduate Credit

All transferred coursework must be at the graduate level, from a regionally accredited university, and awarded a "B" grade or above. Students who would like to apply previously earned graduate credits to a CHSS graduate program will need to complete the [Graduate Transfer Credit Petition form](#). A syllabus and description of the course as well as an explanation as to why the course qualifies for transfer in the particular program must accompany the form and be submitted to the relevant Program Director before the end of the student's first full semester in the program.

- Students enrolled in a master's degree program may transfer up to 6 graduate semester credit hours (SCHs) of coursework from another university.
- Students enrolled in a certificate program may transfer up to 3 semester credit hours from another university.

If a student wishes to take coursework at another university *after* matriculating into a UHD CHSS graduate program, s/he must get approval *before* registering for the intended coursework at another university. Applying for transfer credit approval will require the submission of a syllabus and description of the course as well as an explanation as to why the course qualifies for transfer into the program.

Admissions Appeals

Students wishing to appeal an admissions decision must do so by submitting a [CHSS Graduate Admissions Decision Appeal Form](#), along with any relevant supporting documentation, within 30 days of receiving their admissions decision. Students are encouraged to appeal if A) the applicant's academic credentials have changed significantly OR B) the applicant wishes to provide additional information that further explains personal circumstances that may have affected their ability to meet program admission requirements ([03.B.24](#) §3.1.6.1). Students will receive an official response to their appeal from their Program Director within 14 days of submitting the CHSS Graduate Admissions Decision Appeal Form.

Orientation

Applicants admitted to a graduate program will be invited to and should attend a new student orientation prior to the start of the program. Orientations will be provided by the Associate Director of Graduate Studies and the relevant Program Director(s). Depending on timing of admission, orientation, and the start of the term, new graduate students may be advised to register for courses before attending orientation.

Enrolled Graduate Student Advising and Resources

Advising and Registering for Classes

Upon admission, students are expected to enroll in at least one course in their first semester in the program. If a student does not enroll in their first semester, the student will be required to submit a new application for the semester in which they are intending to enroll.

CHSS graduate students are encouraged to meet with their Program Director or the Associate Director of Graduate Studies before registering for classes each semester. The Program Director will be available to help discuss academic goals, give permissions to enroll in courses, and complete a degree plan.

It is recommended that all graduate students meet with the Program Director or the Associate Director of Graduate Studies at least once per academic year to review program progress.

Students register for courses online through the [myUHD portal](#). Please see the information below on how to access the portal, register for classes, and access other information online.

myUHD

Graduate students have access to their student record, biographical/contact information, course information, financials, and a number of resources through the myUHD student portal. Students are strongly advised to take advantage of this access to information throughout their studies. Please see [this set of slides](#) for more information about the myUHD portal and [this guide](#) on using myUHD to register for courses.

Costs, Financial Aid, and Scholarships

Estimated Costs

The university posts tuition and fees information for graduate programs in the “GRADUATE” link on [this page](#). Additionally, this [CHSS Graduate Costs and Financial Aid](#) page on the CHSS Graduate Studies website contains summarized information on costs, the financial aid process, and scholarships.

Residency Information

Residency status is determined in accordance with the Rules and Regulations for Determining Residence Status, published by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and pursuant to Title 3, Texas Education Code. Please see [this page](#) for more information about residency status.

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

The [Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid](#) (OSFA) assists students with the financial planning and financing for their education. Financial aid consists of grants, scholarships, loans, and work study. Most aid is based upon individual financial need and eligibility. Aid is available to students who are enrolled at least on a 1/2-time basis, maintain [satisfactory academic progress](#), and demonstrate financial need. Financial aid is generally awarded based on the fall and spring semesters, but [this page](#) has more information about receiving aid in the summer. Students not enrolled in a graduate degree or certificate program are not eligible for financial aid.

Please see the [UHD Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid site](#) as well as [the Graduate Student Financial Aid page](#), and the [CHSS Graduate Costs and Financial Aid page](#) for more information about the process and awarding of financial aid and scholarships.

Emergency Tuition Deferment and Book Loans

In the event of unexpected inability to pay for tuition or books, UHD graduate students can apply for an [emergency tuition deferment plan](#) (Texas residents), [short term tuition deferment plan](#) (not Texas resident), and/or [book loan](#).

Scholarships

CHSS and individual graduate programs/departments offer scholarships for new and continuing students. These scholarship offerings depend on the available budget each year. Information on availability, eligibility requirements, and the application process for all CHSS Graduate Studies scholarships can be found on the [CHSS Graduate Costs and Financial Aid page](#).

Graduate Student Academic Policies and Program Documentation

Enrollment Status

Graduate students can be enrolled on a full-time or part-time (1/2-time or 3/4-time) basis throughout their studies. Whether a student is considered part-time or full-time is determined by the number of courses and semester credit hours (SCHs) they are enrolled in for a given term. Enrollment status also determines financial aid eligibility and the total time it will take to complete a program.

Graduate Student Enrollment Status	SCHs
Full-time	8+ hours
3/4-time	6-7 hours
1/2-time	4-5 hours

In general, students must be enrolled at least 1/2-time (4 SCHs) in order to be eligible for financial aid and/or work-study options. Since almost all CHSS graduate courses are 3 SCHs, students will usually need to be enrolled in at least two courses in order to be eligible for financial aid.

Good Academic Standing

According to University policy ([PS 03.B.04](#)) and conventional wisdom, "Graduate programs are professional degrees/certificates that require a sustained level of high-quality academic achievement. Consequently, students who matriculate in graduate programs are held to higher standards than students in undergraduate programs." Thus, while enrolled in any CHSS graduate program, **students must maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 to remain in good standing.**

Grading System

The summarized grading system (described in more detail in [PS 03.B.04](#)) is provided below:

Grade	Definition	Grade Points per Semester Credit Hour
A		4.0
B		3.0
C		2.0
D		1.0
F		0.0
AUD	Audit	---
IP	In Progress	---
S	Satisfactory (Passed)	---
U	Unsatisfactory (Failed)	---
I	Incomplete	---
I/F	Incomplete/Failed	---
W	Drop	---
CA	Credit Awarded	---
WM	Withdrawn-Military	---

For CHSS graduate programs:

- Students **must receive a grade of “A” or “B” in order to count the course/SCHs** toward completing their degree/certificate.
- In the case of grades of “C” or lower, the grade(s) **will not** be counted towards degree/certificate graduation/completion, but the grade(s) **will be** used in determining the student’s GPA.
- SCHs for courses in which a “W” is assigned **will not** be included in calculating a GPA.

Dropping Courses and “W” Grades

A student is advised to notify their Program Director prior to dropping any courses ([PS 03.B.04](#) §2.3). This will ensure that the student’s graduation plan remains accurate.

Withdrawal/Stop-Out

If a student is withdrawing from all registered courses, the following procedures will need to be completed:

- Communicate your intent to withdraw to the Program Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies.
- Login to myUHD and select the “Student Records & Enrollment” tile/portal.

- Select the “Enrollment: Drop Classes” tab on the left-hand menu. Use this page to drop all but one of your courses. **Leave yourself enrolled in one course.**
- Go back to the “Student Records & Enrollment portal and select the “Request Term Withdrawal” tab on the left-hand menu. Fill out the form and click submit.

Your request to withdraw from the remaining course will be processed the following business day. For further assistance, please contact the Registrar’s Office at 713-221-8999.

Any student who withdraws will need to contact the CHSS Associate Director of Graduate Studies before returning to their program to discuss academic standing. Upon return, students will not need to submit a new application unless the student has been out 14 months or longer.

Students who withdraw from a graduate program in good academic standing may re-apply to the same program or apply to another graduate program at CHSS or UHD. Grades conferred from the previous graduate program will not be counted in the GPA of the program from which the student is graduating, but these grades do remain on the UHD transcript.

Military Leave

For military deployment or reserved duty, standard rules and Federal regulations for readmission apply. Contact the registrar for the appropriate procedures and forms.

Incomplete (I) and In Progress (IP) Grades

Incomplete (I) Grades

An incomplete course grade ("I") is given only when a documented, unforeseen emergency prevents a student from completing the course work and only with the instructor’s approval. According to the Grading System policy ([PS 03.B.04](#) §3.4), "I" grades are given when a significant portion of the coursework is already completed. A grade of “I” will be changed to a passing grade if the missing work is completed satisfactorily by the deadline set by the instructor, but no later than the end of the long semester immediately following the term in which the “I” grade was received. An incomplete grade that is not removed by this deadline becomes an “F,” thereby constituting immediate grounds for expulsion from the program. More details on the process, work completion deadlines, and types of “I” grades can be found in [PS 03.B.04](#) §3.4.

In Progress (IP) Grades

In graduate programs, in-progress grades ("IP") may be assigned to thesis, capstone, or selected research courses in which a student is registered in order to use university resources. More information on IP grades can be found in [PS 03.B.04](#) §3.5).

Probation

An enrolled student whose graduate program GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. This will be noted on the student's official transcript. The student will be notified of academic probation by their Program Director and required to meet with the Program Director to discuss plans for academic progress and GPA repair. A student may remain in a program on academic probation as long they are making satisfactory academic progress (as deemed by the Program Director) and achieving a term GPA of 3.0 or higher. A student's probationary status can be removed once they have achieved an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher. ([PS 03.B.07](#) §3.1)

Suspension

Any graduate student who is on academic probation and who does not achieve a term GPA of 3.0 or higher may be suspended. A graduate student who is suspended may apply for reinstatement after one year of non-enrollment. Reinstatement is not automatic and will be considered in light of evidence presented by the student attesting to their commitment to successfully completing the program. The Program Director, in consultation with the admissions committee, will determine whether the student is readmitted into the program. Any reinstated student will return with the same academic probation status that resulted in the original suspension and be subject to the same rules for maintaining a GPA. ([PS 03.B.07](#) §3.2)

Dismissal

Two course grades of "C" or lower are grounds for dismissal from any CHSS graduate program. Any single grade of a "D" or "F" is not acceptable as graduate-level work and constitutes grounds for dismissal from any CHSS graduate program. ([PS 03.B.07](#) §3.3)

Appeals

Appealing a Grade

If a student believes a course grade to be in error (i.e., if it appears to be a miscalculation, or if it appears that grade was not calculated and/or evaluated according to the course instructor's stated procedure) they may file an appeal according to the process described in [PS 03.B.04](#) §4.5.

Appealing Probation, Suspension, or Dismissal

If a student or applicant wishes to appeal decisions regarding their probation, suspension, or dismissal they can do so according to the process described in [PS 03.B.07](#) §3.3.2 by submitting this [CHSS Graduate Probation, Suspension, Dismissal Appeal Form](#). Successful appeals must be paired with a reasonable path to degree completion and must provide a clear, compelling case demonstrating their potential for academic success. Appeals must be made within one calendar year. The Program Director's decision will be sent to the college dean who will issue the final decision in writing to the student and Program Director.

Other Appeals

Appeals or complaints on matters *other* than grades or probation status should be directed to the Program Director. In cases that involve a complaint about the Program Director, the complaint should be directed to the relevant Department Chair. A student submitting an appeal should provide a written request for an appeal that identifies (1) the specific decision that is being appealed, (2) the details of the situation (as concise as possible), and (3) a proposed rectification. Appeals should be filed within the semester of the incident.

Academic Honesty

The Academic Honesty Code is embraced by all members of the UHD community and is an essential element of the institution's academic credibility. It states: "We will be honest in all our academic activities and will not tolerate dishonesty."

The purpose of the Academic Honesty Policy is to deal with alleged violations (most commonly cheating and plagiarism) of the Honesty Code in a fair and consistent manner. Students who violate the standards set forth in the Academic Honesty Policy in any academic work - including zero-credit courses such as a thesis, comprehensive exam, etc. - will fail the course at a minimum and may be suspended or dismissed from the program. It is each student's responsibility to read and understand the Academic Honesty Policy ([PS 03.A.19](#)).

Applying for Graduation

In order to graduate with a master's degree or complete a certificate from CHSS, students must meet all catalog requirements of their program and attain at least a 3.0 GPA.

Students intending to graduate in a particular semester must be sure to

- (1) inform the relevant Program Director and/or Associate Director of Graduate Studies of their intention to graduate
- (2) follow the instructions listed on ["Apply to Graduate" page](#) on the UHD Registrar's website
- (3) adhere to all deadlines.

Graduate Assistants

The information detailed in this section is based on the procedures laid out in [UHD Policy Statement 10.A.20](#). §3.5.8

Graduate Assistants are non-tenure and non-tenure track registered graduate students in good academic standing who work up to 20 hours per week during the academic year in support of the educational mission of the University. All Graduate Assistants in CHSS are normally appointed for the full academic year (Fall and Spring semesters, ~9 months), although a one-semester appointment is possible. Summer appointments are not guaranteed and will be based on departmental needs. Graduate Assistants are compensated for their work at a minimum gross amount of \$1,067 per month.

Eligibility

CHSS endeavors to conform to the guidelines set forth for the UHS campuses, when awarding Graduate Assistants. Please note that a Graduate Assistant in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences requires employment eligibility with the university. To be eligible for any CHSS graduate appointment, students must have an undergraduate degree or its equivalent, be admitted to a graduate program in CHSS, and be prepared to devote full-time efforts toward the degree. Additional requirements may include:

1. Receipt of official transcripts from all institutions of higher education attended. (If official transcripts have already been submitted, please disregard.)
2. Successful completion of a series of background checks.
3. Satisfaction of University of Houston System debt obligations.
4. Proof of eligibility to work in the United States. Documentation of eligibility must be provided to Employment Services and Operations (ESO) by the first day of employment to comply with the Immigration Control and Reform Act.
5. All graduate assistants who are engaged in “student contact” must have minimum English Language Proficiency as required by the university. Any individual who teaches a course for academic credit is engaged in “student contact.” In addition, any individual who carries out the following within a formal instructional setting – talks extensively with students about class, course, or lab materials, helps explain course material, leads discussion sections, or holds office hours as part of his/her assigned job duties – is engaged in student contact.

Qualified students who are interested in a graduate assistant position should contact their Program Director for more information. Any conditions of appointment beyond those stipulated above will be specified by the appropriate departmental office.

Types of Graduate Assistant Positions

CHSS identifies four types of graduate assistant positions available to the individual programs:

- **Graduate Administrative Assistant:** Graduate administrative assistants participate in the instructional process for a department or program under the supervision of an appointed supervisor. They may engage in course preparation, undertake program-related assignments, or engage in other instructional related duties as specified by the department or program.
- **Graduate Research Assistant:** Graduate research assistants (RA) assist in the research function under the supervision of a faculty member. They may conduct experiments, organize or analyze data, present findings in a publication, collaborate with faculty in preparing publications, oversee the work of other graduate research assistants, or engage in other activities as assigned.
- **Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Graduate teaching assistants (TA) at UHD are graduate students who have direct student contact in a formal instructional setting but who do not have primary responsibility for teaching a course for credit; they perform under the instructor's direct supervision and provide general assistance to the instructional process. Graduate teaching assistants attend classes, may be required to teach laboratory or studio sections of a course, grade papers or examinations, hold office hours, tutor students, act as a student mentor, or conduct other activities that support the instructional mission of the University.
- **Graduate Teaching Fellow:** A Graduate teaching fellow is a UHD graduate student whose responsibilities include formal instruction and may be instructor of record for a course. Teaching Fellows (TF) should possess at least a master's degree in the teaching discipline or 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline, direct supervision by a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, regular in-service training, and planned and periodic evaluations. Graduate students employed as TFs are not allowed to be instructors of record for courses that carry graduate credit.

Reappointment

Priority for reappointment will be given to those graduate assistants making satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree and is based on the quality of performance of assigned duties. The criteria to be used in making reappointments are to include, but not be limited to:

1. A 3.0 minimum cumulative grade point average.
2. The report of the graduate advisor or coordinator.
3. The length of time in an assistantship position.
4. The length of time in the degree program. Reappointments are not automatic for graduate assistants; final decisions will be based on departmental needs and availability.

Mandatory Training

As a University of Houston System employee, Graduate Assistants will be required to complete Mandatory Training each fiscal year either through New Hire Mandatory Training or through Annual Mandatory Training depending on your dates of service. Failure to complete this training within the required timeframe will make you ineligible for any available merit increases and could result in disciplinary action, as per SAM 02.A.26.

CHSS Graduate Degree and Certificate Programs

Master of Arts in Strategic Communication (Online)

Toni Hoang, Ph.D. – Program Director

Office: S1009F OMB

Email: hoangt@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-222-5373

The Master of Arts in Strategic Communication (MASC) is a 30-credit hour, 100% online program that equips students with the cutting-edge strategic communication skills, research knowledge, technology competencies, and theories needed to create effective community engagement and messaging with culturally, ethnically, and racially diverse public audiences and stakeholders. With a special emphasis on community engagement, the MASC program promotes community advancement through collaboration and relationship-building by developing students' abilities to engage diverse communities in organizational, public, corporate, and interpersonal contexts. In recent years, community engagement has become more integral to strategic communication as a way of building credibility with the public, creating more authentic experiences, and facilitating inclusive decision-making with various constituents.

The program will build on students' strengths and prepare them to be advocates in their communities by focusing on several major strategic communication areas: (1) strategic public engagement, (2) stakeholder management and conflict resolution, and (3) crisis communication.

Program Learning Outcomes

- Analyze and critique communication issues, concepts, and theories as they apply to community engagement
- Develop research analyzing emergent communication practices in local and global community engagement contexts
- Design tailored responses to community engagement issues by using appropriate technology
- Create robust community engagement strategies with stakeholders in groups and teams

Degree Curriculum and Requirements

The Master of Arts in Strategic Communication degree requires a minimum of **30 semester hours** that includes:

- **3 required courses (6 hours)**
- **8 elective courses (24 hours)**

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Admission Eligibility

The Admissions Committee will consider several factors when determining admission eligibility into the Master of Arts in Strategic Communication program, including the candidate's:

- Experience and interest in the field
- Proven academic ability
- Demonstration of skills necessary to complete the program successfully
- Ability to contribute to the nonprofit sector upon completion of the program

Applicants to the program must meet the following criteria:

- Completion of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in prior undergraduate and graduate coursework. (Applicants who do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement may be granted conditional admission when the combined strength of their application and supporting documents provides compelling evidence that they will be successful in the program).
- Proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by an adequate TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) minimum score of 81 and 6.5 for the IELTS exam.

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission. Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**
- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).
- Provide a **personal statement** of approximately 500 words that addresses some or all of the following questions in detail. Support your views with reasons and examples drawn from areas as your reading, experience, observations, or academic studies. Be sure to develop your ideas fully and organize them coherently:
 - Why do you want to study strategic communication?
 - What topics or issues in the field might you want to study further and why?
 - What qualifies you to embark upon this field of study?
 - What experience do you have in this field?
 - How do you plan to use your degree?
- Provide the names and email contact information for **two recommenders** in the application for admission.
 - Your recommenders/references should be individuals with knowledge of your work and who are able to address your academic potential such as former professors, work supervisors, or professional colleagues.

- Your recommenders will be contacted and provide their recommendations directly into the application system. Please make sure you have accurate email addresses for both recommenders.
- Provide **TOEFL/IELTS scores** as outlined above (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language).

Master of Arts in Nonprofit Management (Online)

Hanjin Mao, Ph.D. – Program Director

Office: N1056

Email: MaoH@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-222-5379

The Master of Arts in Nonprofit Management is a highly multidisciplinary program, designed to prepare recent college graduates as well as mid- and senior level administrators for the management and leadership of nonprofit organizations of all types. The program focuses on strategic planning, entrepreneurship, leadership, team building, evaluation and assessment, management, fundraising and revenue generation, and budgeting. Elective courses are also available that focus on grant writing, human resources, technology, social media and marketing, board development, negotiation, and ethics. This program was designed by the leadership of Houston area's most prominent nonprofit organizations and by faculty from multiple UHD programs, including Social Sciences, English, Arts and Humanities, Management, Marketing and Business Administration, Finance, Accounting, and Computer Information Systems.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates who earn a MA in Nonprofit Management will be able to:

- Evaluate a nonprofit organization's status on leadership and teambuilding, report their findings, and initiate effective interventions to alleviate shortcomings in those areas.
- Organize and articulate ways to improve productivity from that assessment.
- Articulate expected outcomes for an organization, create a strategic plan to assess those outcomes, implement the assessment, draw conclusions from the analysis, and make effective analysis-based adjustments to significantly enhance efficiency in the organization.
- Create, implement, and plan data and research driven strategies for recruiting and fund raising.
- Apply and implement employment law, recruiting and hiring practices, diversity in the workplace goals, compensation and benefits, performance appraisal, and discipline.
- Analyze budgeting and accounting documents and make organizational decisions based on said documents.
- Effectively manage within a nonprofit organization.

Degree Curriculum and Requirements

The Master of Arts in Nonprofit Management degree requires a minimum of **36 semester hours** that includes:

- **7 required courses (21 hours)**
- **3 elective courses (9 hours)**
- **2 Internship experiences or 1 Internship experience and a Special Project (6 hours).**
 - Internship sites must be approved by the director/faculty advisor
 - Internship experiences may be partially completed at a place of nonprofit employment, so long as the Program Director grants permission and the organization agrees to comply with program requirements.

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Admission Eligibility

The Admissions Committee will consider several factors when determining admission eligibility into the Master of Arts in Nonprofit Management program, including the candidate's:

- Experience and interest in the nonprofit sector (Five years of full-time experience in the nonprofit sector is preferred but not required)
- Proven academic ability
- Demonstration of skills necessary to complete the program successfully
- Ability to contribute to the nonprofit sector upon completion of the program

Applicants to the program must meet the following criteria:

- Completion of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0** from prior undergraduate and graduate coursework.
- Proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by an adequate TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) minimum score of 550 with section scores of 50 or higher

** Applicants who do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement may be granted conditional admission when the combined strength of their application and supporting documents provides compelling evidence that they will be successful in the program. These applicants are also encouraged to apply for the Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Strategic Planning instead. Once enrolled in the graduate certificate, students in good standing will have the option to apply to the MANPM program at any point after receiving passing grades in their first two courses in the certificate.

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission. Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**
- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).
- Provide a **professional/personal resume**

- Provide a **personal statement** of 1,000 words or less in response to this prompt: Describe your experiences and/or interest in the nonprofit sector. Explain your career plans and how you might contribute to the field of nonprofit management.
- Provide the names and email contact information for **two recommenders** in the application for admission.
 - Your recommenders/references should be individuals with knowledge of your work and who are able to address your academic potential such as former professors, work supervisors, or professional colleagues.
 - Your recommenders will be contacted and provide their recommendations directly into the application system. Please make sure you have accurate email addresses for both recommenders.
- Provide **TOEFL scores** of 550 with section scores of 50 or higher (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language).

The Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Strategic Planning **(Online)**

Hanjin Mao, Ph.D. – Program Director

Office: N1056

Email: MaoH@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-222-5379

The Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Strategic Planning is designed for nonprofit professionals who want to offer their nonprofit organizations the 21st century leadership and strategic planning skills that are needed to survive in today's nonprofit economy. These skills will give certificate recipients the ability to positively transform their organizations and provide students with the knowledge and qualifications necessary to effectively lead and manage nonprofit organizations. All courses are taught by accomplished faculty and industry experts. The program provides core level training in leadership and strategic planning and gives students the flexibility to focus on the area of nonprofit management that will best fit their future plans.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students who earn a certificate in Leadership and Strategic Planning in the Nonprofit Sector will be able to:

- Evaluate a non-profit organization's status on leadership and teambuilding, report their findings, and initiate effective interventions to alleviate shortcomings in those areas.
- Create, implement, and plan data and research-driven strategies for recruiting and fundraising.
- Assess the environment of an organization and articulate ways to improve productivity from that assessment.

Program Curriculum and Requirements

The Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Strategic Planning consists of **6 courses (18 semester credit hours)**.

- **9 hours of core classes (3 courses)**
- **9 hours of elective courses (3 courses)**

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Admission Eligibility

Applicants must hold a BA, BS, or an equivalent degree from an accredited college or university in the US or overseas and have proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by adequate TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores. The recommended/preferred GPA for applicants is 2.5 or higher.

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission. Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**
- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).
- Provide a **professional/personal resume**
- Provide a **personal statement** of 750 words or less in response to this prompt: Describe your experiences in the nonprofit sector and explain how those experiences have prepared you to succeed in nonprofit management.
- Provide **TOEFL scores** of 550 with section scores of 50 or higher (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language).

Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Composition

Ashleigh Petts, Ph.D. - Department of English Graduate Program Director

Office: S1073 OMB

Email: pettsa@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-221-8076

The Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Composition (MARC) program is designed to train scholars, teachers, and future teachers how to teach writing/composition and English studies at the college-level. Students in the program receive advanced training in rhetorical theory, composition pedagogy, rhetorical history, composition theory, argumentative strategy, and textual analysis. The program is also proud to be the only program in Texas that places a special emphasis on preparing teachers for the multicultural setting of the 21st century college classroom and teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) students.

The program is valuable for a range of candidates:

- Future teachers of college English courses at community colleges or four-year universities nationwide.
- Local teachers seeking credentials to teach dual credit/enrollment English courses in Houston area high schools.
- Students pursuing an academic career by seeking a foundation for a doctorate in rhetoric, composition, or English studies.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates who earn a M.A. in Rhetoric and Composition will be able to:

- Use rhetorical theory in the analysis and production of written communication.
- Identify and prepare strategies for teaching writing in a variety of environments: for example, online classes, large groups, and tutoring sessions.
- Identify and prepare strategies that are essential for teaching writing to today's students: people with different cultural orientations, varying degrees of English language competence, and different levels of preparedness.
- Analyze discrete elements of written communication.
- Design and execute their own research projects in the fields of rhetoric and/or composition.

Program Curriculum and Requirements

The Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Composition requires a minimum of **33 semester credit hours** that includes:

- **4 required courses (12 hours)**
- **5 elective courses (15 hours)**
 - At least 9 hours in Rhetoric and Composition courses
 - Up to 6 hours in Technical Communication courses
 - Up to 6 hours in Literature courses
- **A graduate portfolio (0 hours - ENG 6098)**
- **A final experience (6 hours)**

- **Thesis** - After having completed at least 15 semester credit hours in the MARC program, candidates opting for the thesis must complete 3 hours of thesis (ENG 6394), 3 hours of directed research (ENG 6393), and oral defense of the thesis.
- **Seminar Papers/Additional Coursework** - After receiving prior approval from a graduate advisor, complete six semester credit hours of additional electives from the list of courses enumerated under the Electives area. Students must enroll in ENG 6097, a zero-credit corequisite, during each semester they are taking a course that will serve as a replacement for the thesis.

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Admission Eligibility

The Admissions Committee will consider several factors when determining admission eligibility into the Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Composition program, including the candidate's:

- Experience and interest in the field
- Proven academic ability
- Demonstration of skills necessary to complete the program successfully
- Ability to contribute to the fields of rhetoric and composition pedagogy upon completion of the program

Applicants to the program must meet the following criteria:

- Completion of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in prior undergraduate and graduate coursework. (Applicants who do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement may be granted conditional admission when the combined strength of their application and supporting documents provides compelling evidence that they will be successful in the program).
- Proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by an adequate TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) minimum score of 550 with section scores of 50 or higher

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission: Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**

- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).
- Provide a **personal statement** of approximately 500 words that addresses the following questions in detail. Support your views with reasons and examples drawn from such areas as your reading, experience, observations, or academic studies. Be sure to develop your ideas fully and organize them coherently:
 - Why do you want to study rhetoric and composition?
 - What topics or issues in our field might you want to study further and why?
 - What qualifies you to embark upon this field of study?
 - What experience do you have in this field?
 - How do you plan to use your degree?
- Provide a **10–15-page academic writing sample**. (We ask that you compose a researched, argument-driven academic essay on a topic of general interest using a generally recognized academic style sheet for references (MLA, APA, or Chicago))
- Provide the names and email contact information for **two recommenders** in the application for admission.
 - Your recommenders/references should be individuals with knowledge of your work and who are able to address your academic potential such as former professors, work supervisors, or professional colleagues.
 - Your recommenders will be contacted and provide their recommendations directly into the application system. Please make sure you have accurate email addresses for both recommenders.
- Provide **TOEFL scores** of 550 with section scores of 50 or higher (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language)

Funded Professionalization opportunities:

The MARC Program provides multiple opportunities for graduate students to gain practical experience in the teaching of composition at the college level: the Writing Associate (WA) position and the Teaching Fellow (TF) position. As a Writing Associate, graduate students will have the opportunity to observe and participate in the management of a First Year Composition course. As a Teaching Fellow, graduate students have the opportunity to teach their own First Year Composition class in consultation with the Director of First Year Composition.

Students can search for and apply to these opportunities through the [UHD job posting site](#).

Writing Associate:

Graduate students awarded a Writing Associate (WA) position can expect to serve as a WA in two sections of First Year Composition (English 1301 and/or English 1302, generally with two different faculty members in the MARC program). In these courses, the WA will work cooperatively with professors in First Year Composition classrooms: this requires regular attendance in the classes, some supervised teaching, substantive commenting on student writing, holding regular office hours, and frequent interaction with students during class and office hours. Writing Associates must have wide daytime availability. The Writing Associate position is designed to prepare graduate students to independently teach a section of English 1301 as a Teaching Fellow. A student may reapply for a position as a Writing Associate or may go on to apply for a position as a Teaching Fellow. Though not required, graduate students are strongly encouraged to have taken English 5327 (the MARC Practicum) before or during their time serving as a WA. Writing Associates are paid at a rate of \$15 an hour, are expected to work 20 hours per week, and may earn up to \$4,800 a semester.

To be selected as a Writing Associate, one must meet the following requirements. The best candidates will have qualifications that exceed the minimum standards, enumerated below:

1. Completion of baccalaureate degree requirements at a regionally accredited U.S. institution or an institution in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, or the United Kingdom at which English is the medium of instruction.
2. Regular enrollment in at least two courses per semester that count toward the MARC degree.
3. A cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.5 after the completion of at least one semester of the MARC program.

Graduate Teaching Fellow:

A Graduate Teaching Fellow (TF) is a UHD graduate student whose responsibilities include formal instruction and who may be the “instructor of record” for an undergraduate course. TFs are not allowed to be instructors of record for courses that carry graduate credit. TFs will utilize a syllabus, assignments, and texts that will be determined and provided by the English department’s Director of First Year Composition and will work under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline. They will also receive regular in-service training and planned/periodic evaluations. TFs are expected to work 20 hours per week and must have wide daytime availability. A TF is provided a \$4,800 stipend over the course of the semester.

To be selected as a Teaching Fellow, one must meet the following requirements. The best candidates will have qualifications that exceed the minimum standards, enumerated below:

1. Completion of baccalaureate degree requirements at a regionally accredited U.S. institution or an institution in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, or the United Kingdom at which English is the medium of instruction.
2. Completion of 18 semester credit hours toward the MARC degree (or a full master's degree in the discipline) prior to holding a Graduate Teaching Fellow.
3. Successful completion of English 5327 (MARC Practicum) prior to holding a Graduate Teaching Fellow.
4. Previous experience as a Writing Associate
5. Regular enrollment in at least two courses per semester that count toward the MARC degree.
6. A cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.5.

The MARC program offers paid Graduate Teaching Assistantships each academic year as allowed by the departmental budget and staffing/teaching needs. When available, these paid positions are awarded on a competitive basis to advanced graduate students who are in good academic standing. Once selected, Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) will perform duties such as classroom instruction, commenting on student papers and examinations, holding regular office hours, and course planning and supervision. Typically, the English department will provide GTAs with a syllabus for each course taught.

Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies

Ashleigh Petts, Ph.D. - Department of English Graduate Program Director

Office: S1073 OMB

Email: pettsa@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-221-8076

The Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies is an 18-hour program designed to provide English and Writing/Composition instructors with the credentials needed to teach dual-credit/enrollment courses in Texas high schools or lower-division writing courses at local universities and community colleges.* The program provides courses relevant to the challenges of teaching college writing in Texas – teaching that must negotiate different levels of academic preparation, language differences, and cultural differences by incorporating diverse pedagogical strategies.

Courses are taught online by faculty with extensive experience teaching composition and writing courses. Courses are offered during the fall and spring semesters and occasionally over the summer term(s). Students may enroll part-time or full-time (3-9 SCHs).

* Each institution establishes its own interpretations for Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) credentials for its faculty; we encourage you to check with your institution before choosing courses in the program in consultation with the Program Director.

Program Curriculum and Requirements

The Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies consists of **6 courses (18 semester credit hours)** as outlined below:

- **4 required courses (12 hours)**
- **2 elective courses (6 hours)**

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Note: Students should regularly consult with the Program Director and current/future employers to determine which electives to take.

Admission Eligibility

Applicants must hold a BA, BS, or an equivalent degree from an accredited college or university in the US or overseas and have proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by adequate TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores. The recommended/preferred GPA for applicants is 2.5 or higher.

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must

complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission. Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**
- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).
- Provide a **10-15 page academic writing sample**. (We ask that you compose a researched, argument-driven academic essay on a topic of general interest using a generally recognized academic style sheet for references (MLA, APA, or Chicago))
- Provide a **personal statement** of approximately 500 words that addresses the following questions in detail. Support your views with reasons and examples drawn from such areas as your reading, experience, observations, or academic studies. Be sure to develop your ideas fully and organize them coherently:
 - Why do you want to study rhetoric and composition?
 - What topics or issues in our field might you want to study further and why?
 - What qualifies you to embark upon this field of study?
 - What experience do you have in this field?
 - How do you plan to use your degree?
- Provide **TOEFL scores** of 550 with section scores of 50 or higher (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language).

Master of Science in Technical Communication

Michael Duncan, Ph.D. - Department of English Graduate Program Director

Office: S1035 OMB

Email: duncanm@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-226-5576

The Master of Science in Technical Communication (MSTC) degree program is dedicated to the advancement of the theory and practice of technical communication, understood as the process of crafting, presenting, and disseminating specialized knowledge. We provide our graduates with writing, design, and management skills based on rhetorical principles. Students will gain publication and production skills, study project management and the ethical and global implications of professional communication, participate in research, conduct audience analyses and usability tests, and create web sites and online help.

We believe that by providing students with a rigorous foundation in our discipline, they are empowered to recognize and respond to social justice issues and affect positive change in both their workplaces and their communities.

This program is valuable for:

- Professional writers, public relations and communications specialists, or corporate training professionals seeking promotion to managerial positions or interested in teaching technical writing in community colleges or high schools
- Practitioners in science, technology, energy, public health, and other specialized fields with the goal of expanding employment options
- Undergraduates interested in an applied master's level degree, either to increase their employability or to pursue a doctoral degree in technical communication

Program Learning Outcomes

Students graduating with an MS in Technical Communication will demonstrate professional level skills or knowledge in the following areas:

- **Document production:** Write, design, and edit effective and ethical documents in print and electronic genres.
- **Rhetorical literacy:** Apply rhetorical literacy principles to evaluate and produce documents.
- **Global and social awareness:** Analyze and respond to multicultural and social justice implications of technical communication.
- **Research methodologies:** Conduct and report research using appropriate methods and critical theories.
- **Technological aptitude:** Use current technology to produce effective documents.

Program Curriculum and Requirements

The Master of Science in Technical Communication degree requires a minimum of **33 semester credit hours** that includes:

- **2 required courses (6 hours)**

- **3 skills courses (9 hours)**
 - 1 Theory course (3 hours)
 - 1 Application course (3 hours)
 - 1 Research course (3 hours)
- **4 elective courses (12 hours)**
- **A graduate portfolio (0 hours – TCOM 6099)**
- **A final experience (6 hours)**
 - **Thesis** - After completing at least 15 semester credit hours in the MSTC program, candidates opting for the thesis must complete 3 hours of directed research (TCOM 6390) in order to propose/develop their thesis. After approval from the Graduate Advisory Committee, candidates must then complete the thesis through 3 hours of thesis (TCOM 6391) and sit for an oral defense of the thesis.
 - **Capstone Project** - After completing at least 15 semester credit hours in the MSTC program, candidates opting for the capstone project must choose either 3 hours of directed research (TCOM 6390) or an internship/field experience (TCOM 6380) in order to propose/develop their project. After approval from the Graduate Advisory Committee, candidates must complete the project through 3 hours of capstone project (TCOM 6392) and sit for an oral defense of the project.
 - **Exam** - After completing at least 18 semester credit hours in the MSTC program, candidates opting for the final exam must complete an additional 3 hours of an elective from the list of courses enumerated under “Electives” in the degree curriculum, 3 hours of directed research (TCOM 6390), and 3 hours of final comprehensive examination (TCOM 6094).
 - **Seminar Papers/Additional Coursework** - After completing at least 18 semester credit hours in the MSTC program, Students may fulfill the final experience by registering for TCOM 6095 and taking two additional elective courses.

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Admission Eligibility

The Admissions Committee will consider several factors when determining admission eligibility into the Master of Science in Technical Communication program, including the candidate's:

- Experience and interest in the field
- Proven academic ability
- Demonstration of skills necessary to complete the program successfully
- Ability to contribute to the fields of professional writing or technical communication

Applicants to the program must meet the following criteria:

- Completion of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university
- A grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in prior undergraduate and graduate coursework. (Applicants who do not meet the 3.0 GPA requirement may be granted conditional admission when the combined strength of their application and supporting documents provides compelling evidence that they will be successful in the program).
- Proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by an adequate TOEFL. Preferred TOEFL scores are as follows:
 - internet-based score of 86

- computer-based score of 250
- paper-based score of 600

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission. Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**
- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).
- Provide a personal statement **of approximately 500-1,000 words** that addresses the following questions in detail:
 - Why do you want to study professional writing and technical communication?
 - What topics or issues in the field might you want to study further and why?
 - What qualifies you to embark upon this field of study?
 - What experience do you have in this field?
 - How do you plan to use your degree?
- Provide a **professional/personal resume** detailing your work experience and education
- Provide the names and email contact information for **two recommenders** in the application for admission.
 - Your recommenders/references should be individuals with knowledge of your work and who are able to address your academic potential such as former professors, work supervisors, or professional colleagues.
 - Your recommenders will be contacted and provide their recommendations directly into the application system. Please make sure you have accurate email addresses for both recommenders.
- Provide **TOEFL scores** as outlined above (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language)

Medical and Applied Health Communication Certificate (Online)

Michael Duncan, Ph.D. - Department of English Graduate Program Director

Office: S1035 OMB

Email: duncanm@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-226-5576

The Graduate Certificate in Medical and Applied Health Communication is a 9-hour program designed to provide skills, practice, and knowledge for communication professionals, medical writers and editors, and working professionals (including those in the sciences, health, non-profit, and high-end technology) who want to advance their careers in the medical writing and health communication fields.

Program Curriculum and Requirements

The Graduate Certificate in Medical and Applied Health Communication consists of **4 courses (12 semester credit hours)** which are outlined below.

- **2 required courses (6 hours)**
- **2 elective course (6 hours)**

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Admission Eligibility

Applicants must hold a BA, BS, or an equivalent degree from an accredited college or university in the US or overseas and have proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by adequate TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores. The recommended/preferred GPA for applicants is 2.5 or higher.

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission. Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**
- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).

- Provide a **professional/personal resume** detailing your work experience and education
- Provide a **personal statement** of approximately 300 words explaining your experience and/or interest in studying in this field.
- Provide adequate **TOEFL scores** (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language). Preferred TOEFL scores are:
 - internet-based score of 86
 - computer-based score of 250
 - paper-based score of 600

Graduate Certificate in Plain Language (Online)

Michael Duncan, Ph.D. - Department of English Graduate Program Director

Office: S1035 OMB

Email: duncanm@uhd.edu

Phone: 713-226-5576

The Graduate Certificate in Plain Language is the first and only program of its kind in an institution of higher education in the nation and was developed in response to the Plain Writing Act of 2010 and the Executive Order 13263 in 2011 which mandated clear communication in plain writing from all federal government agencies. Plain language is a set of guidelines used to simplify and clarify communications addressed to the general public. The guidelines include the use of simpler vocabulary, shorter sentences, lists, active voice, and shorter paragraphs, to name a few. Although developed in response to the mandate for federal government agencies, plain language is an approach that is effectively used in many other areas, fields, and sectors besides federal government including:

- Medical and health communication
- Web design and web writing
- Public relations and marketing
- Nonprofits
- Business communication
- Science and engineering
- Law
- State and local government offices, in addition to federal government

This graduate certificate is designed to enhance students' writing, design, and organization skills which can increase employability and/or help students reach new heights in their careers. Any professional working for an organization that distributes information to the general public can benefit from developing and implementing skills in using plain language.

Program Curriculum and Requirements

The Graduate Certificate in Plain Language consists of **4 courses (12 semester credit hours)** which are outlined below.

- **2 required courses (6 hours)**
- **2 elective course (6 hours)**

Please visit the [UHD Catalog](https://catalog.uhd.edu) (<https://catalog.uhd.edu>) for more detailed information on degree requirements, course offerings, and course descriptions.

Admission Eligibility

Applicants must hold a BA, BS, or an equivalent degree from an accredited college or university in the US or overseas and have proficiency in English (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language) provided by adequate TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores. The recommended/preferred GPA for applicants is 2.5 or higher.

Application Instructions

To apply to a graduate program at UHD, students must use the [application portal](#). Applicants must complete and submit all of the following items in order to be considered for admission. Resumes, personal statements, and writing samples can be uploaded through the applicant portal, emailed to gradadmissions@uhd.edu, or mailed to:

Office of Admissions – Graduate Admissions
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite GSB 308
Houston, TX 77002-1001

- Submit an **application**
- Pay the **application fee**
- Request/submit **official transcripts** from all colleges and universities previously attended to the email or mailing address above (including community college work and prior graduate work).
- Provide a **professional/personal resume** detailing your work experience and education
- Provide a **personal statement** of approximately 300 words explaining your experience and/or interest in studying in this field.
- Provide adequate **TOEFL scores** (if a graduate of a university in which English is not the native language). Preferred TOEFL scores are:
 - internet-based score of 86
 - computer-based score of 250
 - paper-based score of 600

