The Communications Associate in Arts degree program is designed to prepare students to pursue their interests in the print and electronic media. Most students in the Communications Concentration continue their studies towards a bachelor’s degree. This program qualifies for MassTransfer, which guarantees credit transfer to Massachusetts state colleges and universities.

This advising guide includes information that will help you to explore your academic and career interests and determine whether the Communications major will support your long-term goals.

### Exploring Your Options

Before deciding upon a major, you should take some time to explore your interests and develop your long-term academic, career, and personal goals. Periodically throughout each semester, meet with your advisor so that he/she can guide you through a self exploration process that will help you identify your academic and career interests. These activities are for your first year or during your first 30 credits at MCC.

___ During the first few weeks of your first semester at Middlesex, schedule an appointment to meet with your advisor and discuss your future plans and how the Communications degree can help you to achieve your goals. You and your advisor will work together to build an academic plan in DegreeWorks (an online educational planning tool that can be accessed through MiddleNet (https://middlenet.middlesex.mass.edu) that will include:

- Your major and degree requirements
- A map of the courses you will take each semester
- Your academic, career and personal goals, as well as, plans to achieve them

___ Complete the FOCUS2 online career assessment tool which is located on our website at www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/FOCUS2.htm. After completing FOCUS2, schedule a meeting to discuss your results with a career counselor. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career and Transfer Centers in Lowell and Bedford to schedule your career counseling appointment.

___ Review the career biographies which are located on the career services website at: www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/bios.asp

___ Mid-Semester; schedule an appointment with your advisor to review your academic progress. Also, use this time to discuss your progress toward meeting your academic and career goals.

___ Before the semester ends, schedule an appointment to meet with your advisor to discuss the classes you will take the following semester. (Early November to plan for Spring Classes, Early April to plan Fall and Summer classes)

### Is the Communications Major the Right Fit for Me?

To decide if the Communications major is right for you, answer the following questions.

- Do you like to work with a team of people? ___Yes ___No

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Strategies for Success
Advising Guide: Communications Major

- Are you self motivated and enjoy working independently?  ___Yes ___No
- Do you like writing and have good spoken communications?  ___Yes ___No
- Do you have good presentation skills  ___Yes ___No
- Do you take direction well?  ___Yes ___No
- Do you have good research skills?  ___Yes ___No
- Can you meet deadlines and work well under pressure?  ___Yes ___No
- Can you multi-task?  ___Yes ___No
- Do you like to read?  ___Yes ___No
- Are you curious about the news?  ___Yes ___No
- Do you have good computer & typing skills?  ___Yes ___No

If you responded YES to 6 or more questions, Communications may be a good major choice for you.

Communications Program Outcomes

Graduates of the program are prepared to:
- Write a news story and a feature story of some consequence;
- Edit and layout the pages of a newspaper;
- Produce a radio program practicing the vocabulary used in the field;
- Produce videos;
- Write news releases, documentaries, public service announcements, promotions, commercials and dramatic scripts;
- Deliver a formal speech and interact in informal discussions
- AND-
- Use knowledge acquired at MCC as a foundation for continued study and/or practical application;
- Interpret and analyze information in order to engage in critical thinking and problem solving;
- Communicate, use information, and employ technology effectively;
- Communicate an understanding of the world from a global perspective;
- Demonstrate social responsibility within the college community;
- Demonstrate the capacity for on-going personal and professional development

Advising Notes

The communications major provides a broad introduction to mass media-television, print, film, photography and music -and their connection to American culture. The course work includes study of the history, theory, technology and effects of communications media. Internships are available and are recommended to students who wish to pursue a career in communications.

The major has three areas of specialization-Print Journalism (newspapers, magazines, photojournalism), Television/Film, and Radio/Audio Recording. As a communications major, you will select courses from one of these areas. Schedule a meeting with your advisor to learn more about the specialized interest courses.

The Career Path

There are many and varied options to consider within the Communications world. Below are common ones.
- Journalism: Broadcast journalism, print and multimedia journalism

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Photography: Black and white photography print, digital photography

Visual and Media Arts: Animation and motion media; cinematography/videography; directing narrative fiction; media production and film; producing; radio production; studio television production; writing for film and television

Interactive Media: Creating projects such as websites, DVD's, interactive narratives and games, digital training; interactive design software such as Photoshop, Flash and Dreamweaver.

Film/Video Productions: Team approach to production and editing equipment

Speech and Performance: Public Relations, speech writing, technical documentation, electronic media communications, political speech writing

Marketing Communications: Advertising, cooperate illustrations and design, public relations

Career Planning Activities:
___ Work with your advisor to create a Career Plan. As a student who is on the Career Path, your focus should be on building your skill-set and marketing yourself for a job.
___ Work with an MCC career counselor who can help you create a resume and cover letter. Consider looking for an internship to enhance your skills and establish some work experience. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career and Transfer Centers in Lowell and Bedford to schedule your career counseling appointment.
___ Continue to work with an MCC career counselor who can help you with interview skills and job search techniques. Schedule an appointment with your advisor to follow up on your career plan.

The Transfer Path

The transfer path process can be complex. A transfer counselor can help you with the process. This program qualifies for the MassTransfer, which guarantees credit transfer to Massachusetts state universities. Students should check the requirements of the transfer institution and schedule a transfer counseling appointment with an advisor in the Academic, Career and Transfer Center to discuss specific program planning.

Below are the schools that are linked to the Communication major through MassTransfer:
Fitchburg State University Framingham State University
UMass Amherst Salem State University

Below are private schools to consider for transfer:
Assumption College Emerson College Endicott College
Hampshire College Northeastern University

Transfer Planning Activities:
___ Work with your advisor to create a Transfer Plan. Identifying and applying to a Bachelor's Degree program will be your focus. You’ll need to research academic programs of interests, colleges that offer these programs and be aware of deadlines for admissions, financial aid, and housing deposits (if you are interested on living on campus). The transfer process can be complex. Your advisor and transfer counselor can help you with this process.
___ Schedule an appointment to meet with an advisor to learn about the transfer programs that are available to you as an MCC student, such as Mass Transfer, transfer/articulation agreements with other colleges, and other programs. Also, ask about the Common Application and the benefits of using this
form. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career, and Transfer Centers in Lowell or Bedford to schedule your transfer counseling appointment.

___ If the transfer institution that you are applying to requires that you write a college essay, make an appointment with a tutor in the writing center to help you edit and review your essay. Remember the essay reflects who you are as a student and is also a sample of your writing ability.

___ Look for transfer scholarships that may be available. Consider applying to the MCC Foundation Scholarships. The deadlines for these MCC scholarships are typically at the end of the fall semester.

___ Whenever possible plan to visit your choices in person. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo... but you can get a better feel for the school when you visit. Your transfer counselor can help you prepare to get the most from this visit.

**MCC Advising Resources:**

- Career Services: www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices
- Transfer Services: www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer
- MassTransfer: www.mass.edu/masstransfer
- Financial Aid: /www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid
- Foundation Scholarships: www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships
- College Board Match Maker: http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp