

ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS, B.A.

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

This major is designed to provide a balance of theory, research, and practice. The course sequence provides professional skills courses in conjunction with applied theory and critical evaluative courses. Students develop an understanding of the role and effect of advertising and public relations within the business, social, and political arenas. Students develop abilities and skills that prepare them for a wide range of professional opportunities that include: media planning and relations, research, and client services. Analytical abilities are equally stressed throughout the curriculum. Critical thinking skills, creative problem-solving, and the need to justify decisions are developed. Theory and practice from a wide range of disciplines including business, behavioral sciences, and applied statistics are used to equip the students to make informed decisions in a dynamic environment.

An important aspect of the program is the examination of the ethical implications of strategic communication practices used in the marketing, advertising and public relations arena. Students will develop a framework that will help them to understand and evaluate supporters and critics of strategic communications practices.

Advertising Option

Available at the following campuses: University Park

All courses in the advertising option emphasize the critical importance of integrated communication. The objective of the curriculum is to prepare students for entry-level opportunities in the advertising profession and to prepare for eventual managerial roles where an understanding of integrated communication concepts is essential.

The program reflects an integrated marketing communications approach to the design implementation and evaluation of advertising messages. In addition to mastering the core professional courses, students are expected to have an understanding of the convergence of mass communication theory and practice and are encouraged to select from courses in communication theory, communication law, mass media history, ethics, and the impact of advertising and public relations on society.

Public Relations Option

Available at the following campuses: University Park

The public relations curriculum prepares students for the challenges of public relations practice in a highly competitive, technological, multicultural, and global environment. In their course of study, students study the role and function of public relations in building cooperative mutually beneficial relations between organizations and their constituent publics through understanding, credibility, and trust.

Students complete a core set of courses that includes news writing, introduction to public relations, public relations methods, mass communication research, and public relations problems (campaigns).

Because of the critical importance of journalistic writing skills and an understanding of news media ethics, public relations majors are encouraged to take additional journalism courses to fulfill their communication electives.

Advertising and public relations students are encouraged to choose a minor from outside the Bellisario College of Communications. The majority of majors select minors in business, English, sociology, psychology, political science, information systems and statistical analysis, world language, and speech communication.

What is Advertising and Public Relations?

In general, advertising and public relations are similar because the goal is sharing a message with an audience. At its simplest, advertising typically relies on paid messages to sell a product and public relations typically uses unpaid channels to sell an idea. Students who major in advertising/public relations at Penn State have a wealth of opportunities thanks to a degree that allows them to build on many of the same core skills before focusing on the advertising or public relations track. In each area, students can combine classroom instruction with hands-on work through partnerships or real-life client projects. Advertising students learn the art of persuasive storytelling via multiple mediums and how advertising affects mass media and how consumers are influenced by ads. Public relations students gain an understanding of brand building, research, and strategic planning to position a message to make an impact through various channels.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You're creative, curious and like sharing ideas and information with others.
- You like to write and talk, or if you're comfortable with social media, advertising/public relations will play to your strengths.

Design, digital storytelling, and video skills are also valuable in the field as professionals regularly utilize a variety of tools to do their jobs. In addition, the field thrives on collaboration but also allows room for self-directed workers to succeed.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS
(<https://bellisario.psu.edu/academics/advertising-public-relations>)