

# **UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications**

**Program Handbook**

**Developed by**



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Continuing Studies**

## Contact Us

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### **UBC Certificate in in Digital Content and Communications**

Continuing Studies  
Technology, Media and Professional Programs  
The University of British Columbia  
UBC Robson Square  
800 Robson Street  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6Z 3B7

### **Registration and Student Services**

Tel: 604-822-1420  
Fax: 604-822-1499  
Email: [client-services@cstudies.ubc.ca](mailto:client-services@cstudies.ubc.ca)  
Web: [cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert](http://cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert)

This program handbook is current as of November 2016. Note that future editions of this program handbook may contain changes to program requirements and policies.

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# Program Overview

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## Introduction

Digital technology plays an integral role in communications for organizations today, encompassing everything from tweets and press releases to web sites or blogs. Building engaging and persuasive content through storytelling and across multiple platforms is essential to reaching your employees, clients and community stakeholders.

The UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications is an applied part-time, industry-focused program that helps adult learners build their knowledge and skills to plan, create and execute comprehensive communications strategies that meet the demands of today's digital world.

Program participants learn to go beyond a traditional print and web communication strategy, and even beyond basic social media approaches, actively engaging across multiple platforms (web, social, mobile) and devices (desktop, tablet, smartphone). Selecting the right digital tools and techniques is key to creating effective content, creative assets, and community engagement that ensures optimal results. Topics include digital communications maturity models, content strategy, user experience, digital storytelling, IP and rights management, and project management specific to digital communications.

Throughout program design, the curriculum has been tailored to:

- Recognize prior knowledge of marketing, communications, PR, web design/development, writing, social media, and digital technologies
- Be relevant and directly applicable to learner's professional experience or future path
- Integrate critical thinking, analytical and problem solving skills

- Provide opportunity for learners to self-assess their knowledge and skills as digital communications specialists in their organization
- Provide opportunity for assessment (i.e. graded activities) and reinforcement of concepts so that learners can develop confidence in their knowledge and abilities
- Emphasize relevant best practices, practical application, and digital tools and techniques for future use
- Recognize the participant's desire to customize a program that fits his/her specific needs and career focus.

## **Program Benefits**

The new UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications provides a solid foundation and applied skills in the planning and execution of a comprehensive communications strategy that meets the demands of today's digital world. With the right tools, you can lead your team to create effective content, develop assets, and produce community engagement that ensures results.

This interdisciplinary program offers professionals in communications and marketing-related roles the opportunity to develop the competencies required to plan, manage and leverage digital content strategies in support of organizational goals and explore the field of digital communications. This includes understanding the roles of content strategy, digital narrative and user engagement, and how they reflect an organization's brand identity and goals. Being able to plan and deliver a digital communications plan also requires applied project management skills, an understanding of digital intellectual property and rights management, and the ability to engage multiple stakeholders in project and campaign initiatives.

By taking the UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications, participants acquire skills and knowledge to:

- lead, manage and communicate effectively on digital projects and align business outcomes with an organization's digital content and communications plan
- understand how a content strategy works in collaboration with a digital communications strategy
- evaluate the impact of digital communications on organization and brand identity
- define the lifecycle of content: creation, curation, distribution
- optimize content across platforms

- define effective user interface and user design principles
- measure and analyze audience engagement
- apply interactive storytelling and gamification principles to a communications plan
- understand the principles of rights management for digital content.

This program helps participants apply digital technology appropriately to their activities, projects and campaigns, across multiple platforms and devices. Participants learn to oversee a communications plan and integrate digital storytelling to convey the right messaging with content and goals, as well as design a digital communications campaign. In addition to digital content, participants are prepared with skills in project management, including stakeholder management and project planning, supervising communications support teams, and identifying specific issues and constraints particular to digital communications.

## **Who Should Take This Program?**

The UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications is designed for professionals engaged in communications, public relations, marketing, content creation, media curation and social media, and those who are responsible for creating, managing and/or distributing content through digital means. This program is suitable for emerging digital communications specialists and managers who are leading and coordinating communications for their organizations. This includes:

- managers or those moving into management from such fields as: web analytics, traditional marketing, digital/internet marketing, social media, web design, technical writing, public relations, human resources, IT, and product management
- independent freelancers taking on digital competencies
- those taking on the role of digital communications specialist in organizations.

Participants may come from a diverse range of industries and sectors including technology, entertainment, services, health, resource-based, government, and non-profit. The program will also benefit experienced digital practitioners who have worked in digital analytics or social media roles and may be moving into digital communication specialist roles, or finding themselves responsible for areas of digital communication for their organization.

## **About UBC Continuing Studies**

UBC Continuing Studies is one of the largest providers of continuing education and professional development for lifelong learners in Canada.

UBC Continuing Studies has won numerous educational awards, and is committed to providing leading-edge educational opportunities for local, national and international participants. In addition to the Certificate in Digital Content and Communications, UBC Continuing Studies offers other programs for professional and career development, including:

- UBC Award of Achievement in Digital Analytics (in partnership with the Digital Analytics Association [DAA])
- Certificate in Web Intelligence (in partnership with University of California – Irvine Extension)
- UBC Award of Achievement in Social Media
- UBC Certificate in Digital Strategy (in partnership with Sauder School of Business)
- UBC Certificate in Multimedia and Web Development
- UBC Certificate in Project Management (in partnership with Sauder School of Business and in collaboration with the UBC Faculty of Applied Science)
- UBC Certificate in Business Analysis (in partnership with Sauder School of Business)

For further information, view [cstudies.ubc.ca](http://cstudies.ubc.ca).

## Curriculum

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The curriculum provides an open, flexible structure that allows participants to choose core courses in any sequence. Upon completion of core courses, participants select electives to augment their professional skills. The program focuses on the planning and creation of digital communications strategies and application of digital technology, giving relatively less focus to the techniques for production of creative content. Through each course, participants are challenged to develop well-structured objectives, present persuasive ideas, and practice skills by delivering creative project plans.

To receive the UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications, all courses must be completed within two years.

### Core Courses

- Digital Communications and Planning
- User Experience and Content Strategy
- Digital Content and Storytelling
- Digital IP and Rights Management
- Project Management for Digital Communications

Elective options include courses in social media, digital analytics, mobile technology, multimedia and web development (subject to change).

For a complete course schedule, view [cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert](http://cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert).

### **Digital Communications and Planning**

Provides participants with skills to define their organization on the digital maturity scale and the steps required to create, plan and lead a digital communications campaign.

### **User Experience and Content Strategy**

Provides participants with an understanding of the path of engagement and skills in defining personas and user requirements to create a digital experience that integrates key principles and guidelines in user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) design.

### **Digital Content and Storytelling**

Provides participants with the necessary skills to identify their audience by channel preference, and to build a story that is both compelling and true to the organization's brand or goals using engaging narrative across multi digital platforms.

### **Digital IP and Rights Management**

Provides participants with an understanding of IP and copyright, attribution, patent law and creative commons, as well as principles and guidelines for curation and digital asset management.

### **Project Management for Digital Communications**

Provides participants with the skills to manage stakeholders, plan, execute and track a digital project on time and on budget, while managing expectations and an organization's digital capabilities.

## **Changes to Curriculum**

The learning objectives, subject areas, topics, activities and assignments that make up the UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications will change over time to reflect the needs of program participants, new best practices and technologies, and the best use of University resources. The program may also change in duration, number of instructional hours or requirements for completion. As the curriculum changes, the total cost of the program may also change to reflect the actual costs of program delivery.

To receive the UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications, participants must complete the required curriculum and the number of instructional hours that are compulsory at the date they are admitted to the program. The most current information on program requirements is posted on the program website [cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert](http://cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert).

## **Curriculum Developers and Instructors**

The program is taught and facilitated by experienced and practicing industry experts in digital communications and digital marketing professionals, as well as experts in the areas of content strategy, digital storytelling, user design/user experience, IP and rights management, and project management specific to digital communications.

## **Assessment Methods**

Program participants are assessed in individual courses according to University assessment guidelines to ensure successful acquisition of required skills and concepts. Assessment is based on participation and grading of assignments, presentations and projects.

## **Graduation Criteria**

To be granted the UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications, participants must successfully complete required courses and demonstrate competency in digital communications by earning a minimum passing grade of 60% on each course, or a "Pass" on portions of the program that are graded "Pass/Fail". Participants must complete all requirements for graduation within two years of admission to the program.

## **Program Details and Fees**

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### **Program Format and Length**

The required courses in this part-time program include five core courses delivered in class and a selection of in-class or online electives (a minimum of 150 total hours). In-class courses will range from three to five weeks in length, with online courses ranging from four to eight weeks.

Participants must complete all requirements for graduation within two years of admission into the program.

### **Program Delivery**

During each three to five week in class course, participants should be prepared to spend six to ten hours per week on additional readings, research, case studies, teamwork, assignments or independent study. Participants taking online elective courses should be prepared to spend six to ten hours per week reading case studies, lectures and white papers as well as completing online discussions and independent study (if applicable). Every course will incorporate a graded component and assessment strategy.

Participants choose their own course load for each term, but it is recommended that students do not enroll in more than one course at a time. Note that the program completion timelines are dependent on course scheduling and the availability of courses.

UBC Continuing Studies has three terms: fall, winter, and spring/summer. The fall term extends from September to December, the winter term from January to April, and the spring/summer term from May to August.

## **Program Fees**

A \$200 CAD non-refundable administration fee is payable once you are admitted to the program. This fee confirms your registration in the program. There is no fee to submit an application form. All fees are payable in Canadian dollars.

Course fees are paid on a course-by-course basis (from approx. \$500 to \$700 per course). The total certificate cost, including the administration fee is approximately \$7,000 CAD. (Tuition subject to change.)

Fees are due at the time of course registration and may be paid by Visa®, MasterCard®, debit card, cash or cheque. See the current course calendar or view [cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert](https://cstudies.ubc.ca/dcc-cert) for current course fees and timetable. Participants should be aware that texts, materials and software related to courses may constitute an additional cost in some cases. No deferral of the administration fee or course fees is allowed. Fees are subject to change.

## **Program Policies**

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### **Limited Enrolment**

A limited number of applicants are admitted to the UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications program. Admission may be limited by the availability of courses and online tutors. Meeting minimum requirements does not ensure admission to the program.

### **Availability of Courses**

Please be aware that early registration is advised for all courses.

### **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)**

The certificate is intended to be a professional development program that builds upon the existing knowledge and experience of learners. For exemption from required courses, requests for prior learning assessment (PLA) will be evaluated on an individual basis. Any exemption from particular requirements within the courses must be requested in writing with the application form submitted one month before the program or course begins. To apply for PLA, complete and submit a Prior Learning Assessment form online at [cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-pla](http://cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-pla). In cases where PLA is granted, participants are expected to complete the equivalent hours through substitute courses.

## **Withdrawal and Cancellation Policy**

### **Withdrawing from a Course**

UBC Continuing Studies requires notice of withdrawal from a course at least three business days before the course begins. Notification may be made in writing or by phoning the registration office at 604-822-1420. Be sure to include your name and student number, the course number and start date. After such notification, UBC Continuing Studies will issue a refund. An administration charge of \$50 and any non-refundable charges will be deducted for each course.

### **Withdrawing from the Program**

Participants may withdraw from the program at any time but should notify Client Services in writing of the reasons for withdrawal. Note: The administration fee of \$200, paid upon acceptance to the program, is non-refundable.

### **Course Cancellations**

UBC Continuing Studies is sometimes forced to cancel courses due to insufficient enrolment or other reasons. If this occurs, a full refund is processed (no administrative fees will be deducted) and sent to you automatically. UBC Continuing Studies does not guarantee that a particular course will be offered in a specific term.

## **Academic Integrity**

UBC Continuing Studies is committed to academic integrity and takes academic misconduct seriously. Penalties for cheating, plagiarizing or other academic misconduct may include dismissal from the program or course with a failing grade and no refund of fees. For information about UBC's policy on this matter, view [universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy85.pdf](http://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy85.pdf).

## **Professional Conduct**

UBC Continuing Studies fosters positive learning environments that respect the diversity of individuals and apply standards in keeping with appropriate conduct in professional workplaces. Students are expected to adhere to professional standards of behaviour. In particular, the ability to work respectfully in a team environment and with other students, instructors, online tutors and staff is essential. UBC Continuing Studies reserves the right to require a student to withdraw from a program at any time for unsatisfactory professional conduct. In such cases there will be no refund of tuition.

## **Use of Information Technology**

Participants must abide by the UBC Responsible Use of Information Technology guidelines. For details, view [it.ubc.ca/service\\_catalogue/information\\_security/security/security\\_policies.html](http://it.ubc.ca/service_catalogue/information_security/security/security_policies.html).

## **Admission Requirements**

The admissions process helps to ensure that the needs, qualifications, needs, intentions, and expectations of participants are adequately matched to the program's objectives and capabilities. Admission to the program may be limited by the availability of courses and instructors.

Applicants should have the following:

- post-secondary education
- a minimum of three years of experience in digital communications or a related field which may include marketing, public relations, content creation, web design/development, writing, web/digital analytics, and/or social media

## **Evaluation of Applications**

Applications are evaluated on the following criteria:

- compatibility of letter of intent with current program goals and objectives
- suitability of previous education and work experience.

Once applications have been reviewed, applicants will be notified as to whether they have been accepted into the program.

## **Application Process**

As part of the online application form, applicants will be asked to provide the following to support their application:

- a resume or curriculum vitae documenting education achievements, recent work and volunteer experience
- a detailed letter of intent that specifies goals, interests, program expectations, and comments on knowledge and experience (minimum 300 words, maximum 800 words)
- names, phone numbers and email addresses of three professional and/or educational references.

Also required:

- full Internet access either through home or work, including an email account

English language proficiency (i.e.: TOEFL, IELTS, etc.) test results may be required. For further information, view tests of English language proficiency at

[you.ubc.ca/ubc/vancouver/elastests.ezc](http://you.ubc.ca/ubc/vancouver/elastests.ezc).

## **How to Apply**

If you have read the program handbook and met the admission requirements you can apply to the program by filling out and submitting an online application form at [cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-app](http://cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-app).

An admissions committee reviews program applications, and individuals are advised by email as to whether they have been accepted into the program.

To apply, complete the online application at [cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-app](http://cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-app) and attach the required supporting documents. As space in the programs is limited, information on the application form and in supporting documents should be as thorough as possible so that the admissions committee will have sufficient information on which to base its decision.

## Contact Us

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For more information about the program or the application process, please contact us:

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Technology, Media and Professional Programs  
The University of British Columbia  
800 Robson Street  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6Z 3B7

Tel: 604.822.1420

Fax: 604.822.1499

Email: [client-services@cstudies.ubc.ca](mailto:client-services@cstudies.ubc.ca)

Online Application Form: [cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-app](http://cstudies.ubc.ca/tmap-app)

## **Administration**

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The UBC Certificate in Digital Content and Communications has been developed by a diverse group of academics and representatives from the private sector and continues to evolve, as new digital technologies, approaches and models emerge. An advisory committee consisting of university faculty and staff, and thought leaders from the private sector, guided the development of the curriculum. This collaboration has ensured the creation of an educational program that is academically and professionally world class.

### **Program Administration**

**Fiona McAuley**, Senior Program Leader, UBC Continuing Studies

**Diana McKenzie**, Program Leader, UBC Continuing Studies

### **Advisory Committee**

**Rahel Anne Bailie**, President/Senior Consultant, Intentional Design Inc.

**Tracy Bains**, Manager, Digital Marketing, ICBC

**Raquel Collins**, Associate Director, UBC Continuing Studies

**Scott Dodson**, COO at Bobber Interactive

**Rae Hull**, Strategic Advisor, Magnify Digital Inc. Creative Director, CODE (Cultural Olympiad Digital Edition) VANOC, former Senior Director of Programming, CBC

**George Johnson**, Instructor, Centre for Digital Media at Great Northern Way Campus

**Ramona Montagnes**, Director, Writing Centre, UBC Continuing Studies

**Peter Moroney**, Associate Executive Director, UBC Continuing Studies

**Lindsay Nahmiache**, CEO and Head of Brand Public Relations, Jive PR & Communications

**Niamh Redmond**, Interactive Marketing/User Experience Manager, Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia

**Darren Roberts** (Program Advisor), Vice President Marketing, getmojo; former Senior Vice President, Strategy & Client Service, Edelman