Program: Mass Communications Ph.D. and Journalism M.A.
Rating: Good

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication offers three degrees: a PhD in Mass Communication, an MA with Thesis (MAT) in Journalism, and an MA in Professional Journalism (MAP) degree. A new dynamic director, who is well aware of the challenges to these programs, has been appointed.

The PhD in Mass Communications is viewed as a program struggling to find its footing. The applicant pool is modest; selectivity is minimally acceptable and needs improvement. Diversity of the student cohort is quite strong. TTD (4.2 yrs for 1996-2000) and completion (86%) are strengths and are surprising findings considering that funding for doctoral students is modest with only 3 yrs support offered. There is concern that TA support is offered to MAP students while long-term support is not offered for doctoral students. Placement of doctoral students occurs amongst a breadth of academic institutions.

The MAP program appears strong, but likely will need to evolve and redirect its curriculum as the professional journalism field is undergoing rapid changes. The decline in MAT applications in favor of the MAP and PhD suggests that the MAT should be de-emphasized.

The self-awareness and action plan offer a positive look to the future. Similar to the MAP, the field is undergoing considerable change and the program needs to respond. JMC needs stronger connections to related fields on campus, such as Communications Studies. Overall, the program is fairly stable but substantial restructuring is encouraged to foster improvements.