Graduate Diploma (GDip) in Professional Communication and Management

(Edited from the Proposal Brief submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. The full Brief is available upon request.)

Professionally-oriented master's programs have been a feature of Canadian higher education for many years, preparing graduates to work in long standing and well understood areas of professional practice. Examples already found at Western include programs such as the Master of Business Administration, Master of Public Administration, Master of Engineering, Master of Library and Information Science, Master of Arts in Public History, Master of Arts in Journalism, Master of Physical Therapy, and the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. For the most part, the majority of students in these programs are interested in entering the workforce upon graduation and while some of them may continue into doctoral studies in their chosen fields, attracting doctoral applicants is not the primary thrust of professional master's programs.

Alongside these more traditional professional master's degrees, a "new" type of professional master's education has sprung up in the last decade or so, with the most growth in the United States, but also in Canada and the United Kingdom. These new professional master's programs are aimed at emerging areas of employment, which are not necessarily recognized as distinct professions, yet require highly educated and skilled personnel. In the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, these new degrees are generally called Professional Master's (or PMAs), while in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, they are widely referred to as Professional Science Master's (or PSMs). Such programs prepare graduates to work in rapidly evolving technological fields, such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, and environmental conservation, or in areas not well served by existing graduate education, such as arts management, conflict resolution, and community health promotion.

Despite the varied areas in which PMA/PSM programs are found, they share some commonalities. First, such programs are typically short, no more than two years in length, with many being one to one and a half years. Second, to better prepare well-rounded students who can meet employers' needs, programs are course-based, typically requiring that students take about half of their courses from the disciplinary area and half from a roster of more workplace-oriented courses such as communication, presentation and writing skills, team and project management, and understanding business contexts and operations. Third, many PMA and PSM programs require an internship of several months duration to give students a better grasp of the workplace context/expectations and/or a capstone project which demonstrates their understanding of the fields into which they will be entering.

This proposal presents an outline of a professional graduate diploma for students wanting to enhance their academic strengths with a professional perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Th document proposes the introduction of a new Graduate Diploma program in Management and Communication. This proposal has been developed in parallel with a proposal for a new professional master’s program. The courses included in the Graduate Diploma program will also be included in the professional master’s program. As such, consultation for the two programs has overlapped and resources to support the two programs are overlapping. Where overlap exists, it has been noted in this proposal.

Overview of the New Program

The proposed Master’s Level Graduate Diploma program is designed to prepare graduates to meet the needs of employers by providing graduates with workplace oriented skills and knowledge in communication, presentation, writing, team and project management, finance and business contexts and operations. In combination with the student’s undergraduate preparation and/or prior work experience, the Graduate Diploma will enable the graduate to apply his or her disciplinary knowledge and experience in the evolving and emerging professions of the contemporary workplace.

The program is an eight-month, course-based diploma program designed to enhance the professional skills of a bachelor’s graduate. The program objective is to address the reality that a bachelor’s degree alone often does not provide complete training for individuals intent on professional careers in government, non-government organizations, private industry or self-employment (e.g., consultancy). The

diploma will emphasize bridging the gap between specific disciplines and their application in the workplace, providing students with organizational and communication skills to enable them to build successful careers in these settings.

Description of the Diploma and the Nomenclature

The program is a Type 3 diploma program that will lead to a Graduate Diploma - Master's level (GDip). It is a stand-alone diploma program and students will be admitted directly to the diploma program. The program will be completed over two terms on a full-time basis. Students will complete 6 graduate level courses (0.5 FCE each).

The diploma is offered jointly by the Management and Organizational Studies Program in the Faculty of Social Science, the Department of English and Writing Studies in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, and by the Faculty of Information and Media Studies. The overall objectives of the program are to provide the professional skills and knowledge to prepare graduate for careers in government, non-government organizations, private industry or self-employment (e.g. consultancy).

The diploma program complements the professional master's programs currently in development and will share some common courses with these new professional master's programs. Students who successfully complete the Graduate Diploma program and opt to enroll subsequently in a professional master's program will be given credit for the courses completed in the diploma program. Consequently, it would be possible for a student who successfully completed the diploma program to subsequently complete a professional master's program within one to two terms of full-time enrolment.

Goals and Objectives of the program in Relation to the Graduate Degree Level Expectations

The objective of the program is to provide a pathway for students who choose not to pursue a master's degree to acquire further education and training, with an emphasis on developing workplace oriented professional skills. Through training in the basics of management and communications, students will gain a competitive advantage in the job market. Results from a survey of potential employers of bachelor's graduates in Southwestern Ontario indicated that these skills would be highly desirable in their companies.

a) Depth and Breadth of Knowledge
It is anticipated that students have acquired a working knowledge of the fundamentals of their discipline at the undergraduate level. Graduate-level expectations include:
- Ability to understand the functioning of business, management, and organizational structure to a level sufficient to commence on a path to leadership positions.
- Ability to understand the basics of accounting and finance, with the intent of being able to communicate and work effectively with financial managers and accountants, as opposed to performing accounting
- Ability to communicate, verbally and in writing, in a professional manner

b) Research and Scholarship
- Apply project management skills rather than the design of theoretical research

c) Level of Application of Knowledge
- Ability to undertake early-career leadership roles including supervision of staff and projects
- Ability to read, write, and speak at a professional level

d) Professional Capacity / Autonomy
- Demonstrate ethics in leadership
- Demonstrate basic management skills
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal relationships in the workplace
- Communicate in a style appropriate to the audience

e) Level of Communication Skills
- Demonstrate writing skills at a professional level, with appropriate style for technical and non-technical audiences
- Demonstrate verbal presentation skills at an appropriate level for a professional audience and for communication with non-technical personnel

f) Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

- Awareness of situations in which there is a need to seek additional expertise in pursuing management issues that go beyond the student's particular field of disciplinary knowledge
- Ability to communicate effectively with more senior management/finance personnel while recognizing their disciplinary knowledge and limitations

Degree Level Expectations	Learning Outcomes	Courses that Support the Outcomes	How the Outcome Will be Evaluated *
a. Depth & Breadth of Knowledge	a. Understand functioning of organizations b. Understand basics of accounting & finance c. Professional-level communication d. Understand of the characteristics of digital information and communication media	a. Organizational Behavior; Fundamentals of Marketing Management; Project Management b. Fundamentals of Managerial Finance c. Professional Writing, Oral Communication, Editing and Document Design; Project Management d. Foundational digital communication for professionals, Next Generation Web/Digital Imaging and Website Design	Assignments will integrate learning from specific courses with overall program where possible. Assignments will involve individual and group projects that a.examine principles of organizational behavior, project management, finance, etc; b.examine writing styles in order to investigate professional communication in various media – e.g., digital, print, broadcast (PM) Weekly assignments, major project
b. Research & Scholarship	a. Apply project management skills to research b. Understand and evaluate research literature related to communication development and skills	a. Project Management, Fundamentals of Marketing Management, Fundamentals of Managerial Finance, Organizational Behavior b. Knowledge Mobilization: Informing Policy, Professional Practice, and Public Engagement	a. assignments involving team-based projects that investigate, analyse and report on existing research, b. investigate professional literature on professional forms of communication and skills of public engagement, and provide reports
c. Level of Application of Knowledge	a. Undertake early career leadership roles b. Communicate at a professional level c. Select appropriate communication media and use them effectively	a. Leadership in Organizations; Project Management b. Professional Writing, Oral Communication, History of Professional Rhetoric c. Project Management, Foundational digital communication for professionals, Next Generation Web/Digital Imaging and Website Design	a. Establish teams in various courses, with students assuming and practicing various leadership roles b. Create and present audio-visual/ oral talks; guided discussions; develop and lead seminar series throughout entire program
d. Professional Capacity / Autonomy	a. Demonstrate ethical leadership b. Communicate in appropriate style to various professional and lay audiences	a. Leadership in Organizations, Organizational Behavior b. Professional Writing, Oral Communication, Project Management, Foundational digital communication for professionals	a. Consciousness of ethical treatment of all aspects of the program will be a required component and assessed throughout all assignments b. Students will develop a case study involving ethical business and communication issues and present visually and orally

e. Level of Communication Skills	a. Writing at a professional level for technical or non-technical audience b. Display verbal communication skills c. Demonstrate appropriate communication for multiple media	a. Professional Writing, Foundational digital communication for professionals, Knowledge Mobilization: Informing Policy, Professional Practice, and Public Engagement b. Oral Communication c. Project Management; Foundational digital communication for professionals, Next Generation Web/Digital Imaging and Website Design	Students will develop and present (digitally and orally)a management project, integrating learning from various courses, using principles of professional communication
f. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	a. Display situational awareness regarding need to seek additional expertise b. Ability to communicate with management and finance personnel c. Critically evaluate research evidence	a. Fundamentals of Marketing Management, Fundamentals of Managerial Finance, Leadership in Organizations, Project Management b. Knowledge Mobilization: Informing Policy, Professional Practice, and Public Engagement	Integrate professional knowledge across courses, relating courses from hub and spoke into promotional and implementation documents Demonstrate peer evaluation by critically analyzing and evaluating others' projects

* these are examples of only some of the kinds of authentic assessments to be used in this master's diploma program

Evidence to support the introduction of the program

The professional science master's degree has shown rapid growth in the USA, across a variety of institutions and subject areas. These programs combine graduate level study in disciplinary areas with professional skill development in management and communication. A total of 5,487 students were enrolled in PSM programs in the fall term of 2011. This indicates the demand for graduate level education that purposefully develops the skills needed for professional career success and early management leadership roles.

Growth in Western's undergraduate enrolment has resulted in an increasing number of students who are interested in further training beyond the bachelor's degree, but who are not seeking research training and are not necessarily interested in pursuing a master's degree. A Graduate Diploma is well suited to these students seeking a bridge between their undergraduate education, and its professional application in industry, government, and non-government organizations.

As part of our program development, we conducted an electronic survey (via Survey Monkey) of potential employers of science graduates. The survey was administered through the Stiller Centre at Western and the Faculty of Science Internship office, through their connections to industry and employers. The purpose of the survey was to obtain employer relevant information to guide the development of a professional master's program; because a significant portion of the survey focused on professional skills, the survey results are highly relevant to the development of this Graduate Diploma, as well as to the development of a professional master's program. The survey was divided into three parts, with the first part focusing on the value of a professional master's degree credential, the second part focusing on the professional skills needed in industry, and the third part focusing on potential courses that would be relevant to a professional master's program in Biological Sciences and Computer Science areas. The results relevant to professional skills are described here.

In total, 40 completed surveys were received from potential employers. The survey used a 7-point scale where 1 = not at all important, 4 = important, and 7 = absolutely important. The average ratings of importance for "professional writing", "oral communication", "managerial finance", "marketing", "management accounting", "organizational management", and "leadership development" exceeded 4 (important). The highest average ratings were for "oral communication" (5.63), "professional communication (5.48) and "leadership development" (5.30). In response to the opportunity to identify additional relevant skills for inclusion in the program respondents noted the importance of knowledge of intellectual property and effective use of social media. These survey results were used to guide the development of the courses for inclusion in the Graduate Diploma.

Special Matters and Innovative Features

The proposed program is unique in for its focus on the professional skills and knowledge that are relevant to career success across a range of disciplines. The combination of subject matter from several disciplines to create a transdisciplinary program that prepares graduates for professional careers across a range of disciplines is unique. The diploma program is based on a partnership between Faculty of Social Science, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and the Faculty of Information and Media Studies. The Graduate Diploma program provides an attractive alternative to disciplinary focused graduate studies. The knowledge and skills that students will develop in the program have been validated through employer consultation.

Delivery method of the Professional Program

Initially it is intended that the program will be primarily on campus. The future development of online courses is likely, particularly as this would create access for part-time study by students who are already employed and wishing to obtain additional qualifications.

PROGRAM REGULATIONS AND COURSES

The intellectual development and the educational experience of the student

Students are invited to participate in seminars hosted by the partnering Departments/Faculties, including, for example, faculty and student research presentations and discussions, invited speakers, workshops on research ethics, safety regulations, and grant and award application workshops.

Via participation in the courses, students will interact with students and from other disciplinary backgrounds, giving them the opportunity to learn to bridge disciplinary boundaries. Interdisciplinary exposure within each course (due to the diversity of student backgrounds) and across courses (due to the disciplinary diversity among courses and course instructors) will support the development of communications skills and professionalism.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must possess a four-year degree from an accredited university. The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies requires at least a 70% average across courses taken in the last two full-time years of the undergraduate degree. Equivalent qualifications may be considered based on the standards of the discipline or profession. Due to the unique nature of the program, it is expected that students will be drawn from a broad range of disciplines. Applicants from all disciplines will be considered.

English Language Proficiency

Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of their proficiency in the use of the English language by a satisfactory* achievement within the last two years in one of the following:

- The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The minimum acceptable score is 86, with no individual score below 20 for the internet based version; 213 for the standard electronic version; or 550 for the paper and pencil version, although some programs require a higher minimum score. [Western's TOEFL ID is **0984**].
- The International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) of the British Council. The minimum acceptable score is 6 out of 9. The IELTS is offered in 6 test centres in the US and 3 in Canada.
- The Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) of the University of Michigan. Students must have at least 80 on each of the sections and an overall score of at least 85. Arrangements to write MELAB may be made online.
- The Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL Assessment). The minimum acceptable score is 60. The CAEL Assessment is offered in several countries throughout the world as well as Canada.
- Fanshawe College's ESL Program. The requirement is graduation from Level 5, Advanced Academic Preparation, with a minimum 80% in all components.
- CultureWorks. The requirement is successful completion of the High-Advanced level. Click here for information regarding a conditional offer of admission, pending CultureWorks completion

Students who are required to present evidence of proficiency in English must make their own arrangements to write the TOEFL, IELTS, MELAB or CAEL and to have the official results sent directly to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies by the testing agency. Those graduates from Level 5 of the Fanshawe College ESL Program must provide official proof of graduation.

Exemptions

Other formal evidence of graduate level proficiency in English may be considered in lieu of these test scores. Students must contact the graduate program in order to determine if test scores will not be required. A decision will then be made at the discretion of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for exemption.

Degree Requirements

Successful completion of the Graduate Diploma program will require completion of 6 courses (.5 FCE each). All students will be required to complete a set of 3 core courses as well as choosing 3 electives from among the remaining courses offered in the program.

Core Required Courses:

- Professional Writing (.5)
- Organizational Behaviour (.5)
- Foundational Digital Communication for Professionals (.5)

Optional Electives:

- Editing and Document Design (.5)
- History of Professional Rhetoric (.5)
- Oral Communication (.5)
- Leadership in Organizations (.5)
- Fundamentals of Managerial Finance (.5)
- Fundamentals of Marketing Management (.5)
- Project Management (.5)
- Next Generation Web/Digital Imaging and Website Design (.5)
- Knowledge Mobilization: Informing Policy, Professional Practice, and Public Engagement (.5)

Progression requirements

Progress through the GDip requires the maintenance of a minimum cumulative average of 80%, with no course mark below 70%.

All Graduate Courses to be Offered in the Program

A significant strength of these courses is their interdisciplinary nature. All courses are designed to enhance professional development by providing education and training in areas relevant to professional careers by transcending disciplinary boundaries. In addition, enrolment in the courses will include students from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, creating an interdisciplinary environment and cohort that will enrich the experiences of students by exposing them to the perspectives of colleagues from a range of disciplinary perspectives. This interdisciplinary exposure will support students in acquiring the knowledge and skills to be successful in existing and emerging professional careers.

<u>Core Required courses</u>

Professional Writing

The objectives of this course are to develop skills applicable to writing in a professional context, including audience analysis, techniques of persuasion, knowledge of rhetorical conventions, working within short timelines, report writing, grant and proposal writing, document design, and editing.

On successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Develop and support sustained and original arguments
- Cultivate critical analysis skills through the practice of writing

Organizational Behaviour

The objectives of this course are (1) to provide an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of management to ensure organizational effectiveness and success, and (2) to prepare students to begin to assume these roles and responsibilities. Topics include how and why organizations are structured to be effective, what determines individual behaviour in an organization, understanding motivation in the workplace, effective teamwork, understanding power and politics in organizations, managing people effectively.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- understand the differences between the various management models/theories
- explain the differences between managers and leaders
- appreciate the individual differences which exist in people
- know when to apply which motivational model

- describe the similarities and differences between power and politics
- work effectively in an organizational context

Foundational digital communication for professionals

This course will enable students to understand how organizations can use digital communication tools to engage with their audiences, build community and further their larger communications strategies in online environments. Students will learn how to generate content for digital media and to create and implement robust digital communication strategies.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- understand the development of digital media in the context of social networks; be aware of the range and extent of digital media forms and platforms
- understand how organizations can use digital communication for their goals
- understand how users engage with digital media; understand and apply basic design principles
- understand legal and policy issues related to digital communication such as user privacy and intellectual property
- develop digital communication strategies by: identifying appropriate digital media platforms; evaluating how digital communication fits into an overarching communication strategy; identifying and working with key influencers/sub-groups; building and implementing effective digital media campaigns.
- generate content for digital media using the principles of professional writing and the conventions of digital genres
- use analytics to evaluate the effectiveness of digital communication strategies

<u>Optional Electives</u>

Editing and Document Design (on-line)

Students will cultivate basic document design skills by applying theories integrating verbal and visual elements in a variety of electronic and print media, including industry-standard software. Students will acquire copy-editing and proofreading skills through editing principles and practices in a variety of professional and technical fields, resulting in the ability to produce professionally-edited materials in a variety of media.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Apply document design principles in the creation of effective, impactful communications and presentations
- Prepare and/or edit clear, impactful communications

History of Professional Rhetoric (on-line)

The goal of this course is to acquire practical knowledge of professional communication from ancient to contemporary rhetorics, including ethical responsibilities, applying this knowledge to contemporary communication.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Understand the relationship of historical professional communication contexts to contemporary communication practices
- Acknowledge and practice an ethic of professional communication

Oral Communication

The objective of this course is to develop advocacy skills through the art of delivery, informative and persuasive speaking techniques, self-representation, various presentation modes including new media, and effective group work.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Communicate ideas, issues, and conclusions in a clear and audience-specific manner
- Prepare and deliver effective presentations
- Participate productively in group or committee work

Leadership in Organizations

The objectives of this course are (1) to provide an understanding of what constitutes leadership in an organizational context, and (2) to prepare students to undertake leadership roles in their careers. Topics include what are the roles and responsibilities of leadership in an organization (leadership of self, leadership roles in teams and with peers, leadership positions in an organization, ethics), leadership skills and how to develop them, developing followership (participative leadership, delegation and empowerment), using power versus influence, and leading change in an organization.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- understand the roles and responsibilities of leadership in an organization
- demonstrate self-awareness and manage themselves effectively in leadership roles
- engage in a development plan to enhance their leadership skills
- manage interpersonal and team relationships effectively
- adapt to and lead change in an organization

Fundamentals of Managerial Finance

This course introduces students to an in-depth analysis of financial planning and management with emphasis on capital budgeting, capital structure, risk and investment policies, cost of capital, dividend payout policies, and other special topics. The course serves as a framework for understanding a broad range of corporate financial decisions. Real time data and directed readings will be used to enhance learning.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- understand time value of money and broad areas of financial management
- prepare basic financial plans for an organization
- discuss how and why organizations raise capital and issue securities
- comprehend the relation between risk and return and its impact on managers' investment choices
- use and interpret financial data relating to financial plans and financial securities

Fundamentals of Marketing Management

The objectives of this course are to provide an understanding of (1) marketing concepts and their application to organizations, society, and individuals; (2) the need for a customer orientation in the competitive global environment; (3) how marketing integrates with other functional areas; and (4) how to successfully develop, execute, and manage marketing strategies. Topics include the buyer behavior of businesses and consumers; segmentation, targeting, and positioning; marketing research; product/service development and brand management, advertising and promotion, pricing, distribution and logistics; as well as theories drawing from the relevant social sciences of psychology, sociology, and economics. Working in groups, students will gain hands-on experience by critically analyzing case studies, by engaging in problem-solving, and by developing a marketing plan.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Understand marketing concepts and their application to profit and non-profit organizations
- Appreciate how marketing integrates with other functional areas of business
- Recognize how the global, natural, sociocultural, demographic, legal, economic, and competitive environments shape companies and customers alike
- Understand how marketing mix elements are developed, carefully blended and managed over time to achieve branding and other marketing objectives and to build long-term relationships with consumer and/or business customers
- Apply techniques gleaned from marketing research, case analyses, and developing marketing plans to real-world situations, in terms of identifying marketing opportunities and solving marketing problems by crafting creative marketing strategies
- Appreciate the ethical dimensions of the marketing function

Project Management

The objective of this course is to prepare students for a project management regime of organizing work and people either as the initiators of such a regime (i.e. project managers or team leads) or as workers within that regime. The course will be designed to follow the project life cycle where topics will be arranged to cover the stages of initiation, planning and execution. Topics include: scheduling, budgeting,

project control and workflow, resource allocation, the roles and responsibilities of the project manager, negotiation and conflict management. In addition to teaching these project management skills, the course will provide context through an historical and contemporary overview of project management in a range of employment relationships (i.e., employee, independent contractor, entrepreneur, small and medium sized enterprises).

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Understand the evolution of the project-based organizational structure vis a vis other managerial models
- Understand the framework of a project-based workplace and its implications for other components of management (i.e., recruitment and selection, compensation, motivation, leadership, employee development and career management, etc.)
- Understand the lexicon and professional standards of project management as per the globally recognized Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK)
- Apply the guidelines and procedures learned to a large term project
- Apply knowledge of PM principles to understand real world industries
- Work successfully in diverse project teams

Next Generation Web/Digital Imaging and Website Design

This course investigates the theoretical and practical implications of the evolution of the World Wide Web from a collection of static pages to a source of dynamic and aggregated content (e.g., social software, multimedia and mashups). It will introduce practical skills in the design, production, and evaluation of web resources.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Understand and apply more advanced principles to the design of web resources that integrate text, sound, and still and moving images.
- Understand issues of interface design such as graphical user interfaces, usability, and universal accessibility.
- understand how users engage with data on the Web
- understand and apply principles of information visualization.
- Understand theoretical and practical implications of the Web's growing use of sophisticated data mining and apply data mining strategies to meet organizational goals.

Knowledge mobilization: informing policy, professional practice, and public engagement

This course will introduce the theory and practice of knowledge mobilization. It will critically consider evidence-based decision-making, policy, and practice. Students will learn skills in literature searching and knowledge synthesis and apply the principles of professional writing to the communication of research evidence to policy-makers, practitioners, and the broader public.

Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to

- Understand the role of the knowledge broker and the roles of governmental and non-governmental organizations in knowledge mobilization
- Understand best practices and conditions for success for knowledge mobilization.
- identify and work with knowledge-users and stakeholders to facilitate the co-creation of knowledge
- use search skills to identify and retrieve appropriate forms of evidence, including scholarly research findings and best professional practice.
- evaluate and synthesize evidence.
- apply the principles of professional communication to create tailored evidence-based messages to inform the decision making of policy-makers and planners, professional practitioners, and the broader public.
- Create and evaluate knowledge mobilization initiatives.