Competence Profile OCPR

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This policy paper explains what the study of Organizational Communication & PR, at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, aims at. More detailed learning outcomes are defined in the curriculum, for bachelor's degree studies (on the basic and intermediate level), as well as master's degree studies. The curriculum also provides learning outcomes for each course, often further explained in the student guides per course.

Introduction

The aim of the academic discipline is to analyse communication within organizations and between organizations and stakeholder groups, creating new knowledge on communication for organizations. It provides students with knowledge to better understand the strategic functions that communication fulfils for organizations. It also helps to acquire the tools to be able to analyse communication processes, give advice from a communication perspective, write strategy plans for communication, set up communication campaigns and implement communication research.

The study prepares students for business and non-profit organizations as well. They become communication experts that work within **companies, public organizations and NGOs. Or they work in agencies, consultancies and research institutes.**
This includes management of communication, and various expert tasks in media relations and realization of media or events, consultation and advice. The need for experts in the information society and in its internationalising organizations increases continuously.

We study the exchange of information and co-creation of meaning among organizations and various stakeholder groups, including the public debate on issues relevant for organizations and internal change management. In communication management, external and internal communication are equally important. External communication includes specialist areas like issues management, crisis communication and marketing communication. Internal communication supports cooperation and involvement, as well as change management. The borderline between the inside and the outside of organizations is fluid these.

Our research projects investigate e.g. digital communication, organizational resilience and crisis communication, legitimacy and monitoring of public perception, and professionalization of communication in organizations.

Themes of the discipline

We consider the environment of organizations highly dynamic and consisting of multi-stakeholder networks (of organizations and public groups). Therefore, our focus is on **networked communication in a dynamic and digitalized organizational environment**.

In education and research, we focus on the following themes.

> 1) Dynamic stakeholder relations and crisis communication
>
> 2) Intangible assets and change communication in organizations
>
> 3) Innovations in the communication profession.

The emphasis is not on communication processes between individuals, but rather on the management of communication for an organization that needs to realise sustainable interaction in a complex network of publics in the internal and external environment.

Body of knowledge: the management of communication for an organization

Domain and specialisation areas
Communication for organizations, with emphasis on theory, strategy and communication research:
- external communication, including reputation/legitimacy and identity, CSR, crisis communication, and corporate branding;
- and internal communication to support the primary process, including enhancing engagement and resilience, as well as change management.

Related functional areas in organizational policies, other than communication
Marketing and human resources; and possibly financial policy, information systems.

Relevant scientific disciplines
Organizational and Business studies, including leadership and marketing.
Mass communication and interaction, communication technology.
Information Sciences: ict.
Social sciences: sociology and psychology.

Professional environment
Communication experts work within organizations (business, governmental and other non-profit organizations), in consultancies and research institutes. Communication experts may work in fields called Corporate Communication, Organizational Communication, Public Relations, etc., or in related fields and managerial functions.

Knowledge and skills of the expert area of OCPR
(to be explained further in the next section):

Vision
- a good understanding of the *strategic functions* that communication fulfils for organizations, the relationship with organizational policies and related functional areas such as HRM and marketing.
- a good understanding of stakeholder relations, networked inter-organizational communication and the *issue arenas* in which organizations operate, including offline and online media.

This vision builds on *knowledge* about the field and specialist areas such as corporate branding and crisis communication (also depending on choices of the student in special areas, thesis and minors). *Attitudes* are related to social interests, decision making, entrepreneurial spirit and ethics.

Toolkit
- being able to analyse the context, formulate objectives and strategies in agile planning for communication campaigns and policies, give advice from a communication perspective, and develop and apply communication research methods.

Other/ general knowledge and skills:

- Other relevant scientific disciplines (also as minors)
- Research methods
- Creative and language skills
- General skills, such as project management, etc.
- Interpersonal communication skills,
  is able to:
    - observe, present, negotiate and consult;
    - reflect on role and tasks, cooperate and stimulate others;
    - draft structured proposals, briefings and reports.

Some of these qualities and skills also need to grow while gaining experience in the first years after graduation.

Next, the competences are listed that we aim to achieve in the period of the bachelor's and master's degree programme.

Competences: Expert Strategic communication

after the bachelor's and master's degree programme

Strategic communication insight:
- Understands the added value of communication for organizational policies, and how communication is related to other functional areas like marketing and human resources.
- Knows the possibilities of achieving an integrated communication policy on an organizational/group level for business, government, and other non-profit organizations.
- Understands the dynamic field of forces and the networks in which an organization functions, including developments in media discourse and consequences of social developments for e.g. supply chain and sector.
- Can incorporate expert knowledge and communication theories as well as research results into own actions in complex situations.

Developing communication projects:
- Can analyse, plan, implement and evaluate communication projects.
- Is able to develop and deliver concepts for (multi-media) communication projects by offline and online communication means, including real-time media.
- Can develop media policies, and advise spokespeople.
- Understands communication processes and can develop advice, dialogue and intervention strategies (to support e.g. participative decision-making and change management).

Developing communication research:
- Is able to apply research methods in the communication area for analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation purposes.
- Can develop and interpret communication audits and monitoring of public discourse.
- Has a grasp of the scientific field and its current topics.
- Develops a vision on communication for organizations and promising areas to further develop.

Developing communication policies:
- Has an independent expert input in (parts of) organizational policies from a communication point of view, based on an understanding of stakeholder views.
- Understands the diversity of stakeholder needs and that this calls for interactive and multi-platform strategies.
- Develops a strategic vision on communication, including profiling of the organization, and is able to construct an integrated policy framework for communication on a corporate or unit level based on organizational objectives and analysis of developments in the social environment.
- Is able to develop objectives and strategies for specialisation areas, such as issues management, corporate branding and crisis communication.
- Is able to build, professionalize and innovate the communication function.