

: AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION, GCRT (ONLINE)

In Workflow

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2. 1342-ALEC Committee Chair (garyochs@illinois.edu)
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Approval Path

1. Wed, 08 Apr 2026 16:20:25 GMT
Brianna Vargas-Gonzalez (bv4): Approved for U Program Review
2. Wed, 08 Apr 2026 18:37:55 GMT
Gary Ochs (garyochs): Approved for 1342-ALEC Committee Chair
3. Wed, 08 Apr 2026 18:44:48 GMT
Anna Ball (aball): Approved for 1342-ALEC Head
4. Thu, 09 Apr 2026 17:15:07 GMT
Brianna Gregg (bjgray2): Approved for KL Committee Chair
5. Fri, 10 Apr 2026 17:32:10 GMT
Anna Ball (aball): Approved for KL Dean
6. Fri, 17 Apr 2026 16:54:44 GMT
Tom Teper (tteper): Approved for University Librarian
7. Thu, 11 Jun 2026 19:57:07 GMT
Allison McKinney (agrindly): Approved for Grad_College
8. Thu, 11 Jun 2026 22:04:37 GMT
Suzanne Lee (suzannel): Approved for COTE Programs
9. Mon, 17 Aug 2026 14:28:00 GMT
Brooke Newell (bsnewell): Approved for Provost

New Proposal

Date Submitted: Thu, 02 Apr 2026 15:57:16 GMT

Viewing: : Agricultural and Environmental Communication, GCRT (online)

Last edit: Wed, 26 Aug 2026 15:16:53 GMT

Changes proposed by: Debra Korte

Proposal Type

Proposal Type:

Major (ex. Special Education)

Administration Details

Official Program Name

Agricultural and Environmental Communication, GCRT (online)

Sponsor College

Agr, Consumer, & Env Sciences

Sponsor Department

Agricultural Leadership Education & Communication Program

Sponsor Name

Anna Ball, Associate Dean of Academic Programs

Sponsor Email

aball@illinois.edu

College Contact

Debra Korte

College Contact Email

dskorte@illinois.edu

College Budget Officer

Nick Unser

College Budget Officer Email

nicku@illinois.edu

If additional stakeholders other than the Sponsor and College Contacts listed above should be contacted if questions during the review process arise, please list them here.

Debra Korte, dskorte@illinois.edu; Brianna Gregg, bjgray2@illinois.edu; Gary Ochs, garyochs@illinois.edu; Pam Axtman-Barker (pamelaa2@illinois.edu)

Does this program have inter-departmental administration?

No

Catalog Term

Desired Effective Catalog Term

Fall 2027

Effective Catalog

2027-2028

Proposal Title

Proposal Title (either Establish/Revise/Eliminate the Degree Name in Program Name in the College of XXXX, i.e., Establish the Bachelor of Science in Entomology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, include the Graduate College for Grad Programs)

Establish the Graduate Certificate in Agricultural and Environmental Communication in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences and the Graduate College

Are there other related proposals that should be considered simultaneously with this one? If yes, please list the program keys and/or titles. Consider Majors, Minors, Concentrations & Joint Programs in your department. Please know that this information is used administratively to move related proposals through workflow efficiently and together as needed. Format your response like the following "This BS proposal (key 567) is related to the Concentration A proposal (key 145)"

Program Justification

Provide a brief justification of the program, including highlights of the program objectives, and the careers, occupations, or further educational opportunities for which the program will prepare graduates, when appropriate.

This proposal seeks the approval of a Graduate Certificate in Agricultural and Environmental Communication.

The Graduate Certificate in Agricultural and Environmental Communication aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills to translate complex scientific, technical, and specialized agricultural data into accessible narratives tailored for diverse stakeholder groups; design visual information materials—including data displays, infographics, and narrative graphics—that enhance understanding and support decision-making; apply principles of visual design to present information ethically, accurately, and with attention to diverse audiences; create clear, trustworthy messages that address misinformation and support informed responses in risk or crisis scenarios; develop strategic frameworks for situations involving risk, uncertainty, or high public concern using evidence-based approaches; produce professional outputs that demonstrate applied skill in information translation, visual design, and risk engagement across real-world contexts; incorporate appropriate digital and analytical tools to improve message development, scenario evaluation, and strategic planning; assess audience needs, perceptions, and information barriers to improve message clarity and engagement; and evaluate the effectiveness, credibility, and accessibility of written, verbal, and digital information products.

Professions with high demand for this Certificate include: extension personnel, technical specialists, environmental educators, conservation practitioners, government or industry communicators, and graduate students who wish to deepen their understanding of agricultural, environmental, and natural resource contexts.

The Graduate Certificate in Agricultural and Environmental Communication is designed for a non-traditional, adult learner audience of prospective students who do not have time or the ability to take coursework on-campus. This coursework will be offered 100% online through a combination of asynchronous (self-paced) and synchronous sessions that allow learners to learn at their own pace, earn academic credit, and complete a graduate certificate. All courses will be taught by existing faculty.

Students who complete the Certificate in Agricultural and Environmental Communication may apply the coursework as elective hours toward the Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communications, MS degree program.

Note: ALEC 571 and ALEC 572 have been approved, effective Fall 2027, and will show as course not found until the Academic Catalog rolls to the next Academic Year, in early 2027. See CIM Course approval documents in the Program of Study section.

Instructional Resources

Will there be any reduction in other course offerings, programs or concentrations by your department as a result of this new program/proposed change?

No

Does this new program/proposed change result in the replacement of another program?

No

Does the program include other courses/subjects outside of the sponsoring department impacted by the creation/revision of this program?

No

Program Features

Academic Level

Graduate

Does this major have transcribed concentrations?

No

What is the longest/maximum time to completion of this program?

72 weeks

What are the minimum Total Credit Hours required for this program?

12

What is the required GPA?

3.0

CIP Code

010802 - Agricultural Communication/Journalism.

SOC Code(s) (Should be completed only for Certificates:)

27-3023.00 News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists

Does this program prepare graduates for entry into a career or profession that is regulated by the State of Illinois?

No

Program of Study

Attach Program of Study related information here.

AGCM ALEC SbS.xlsx

ALEC 572_ Visual Comm for Social Impact.pdf

ALEC 571_ Comm Sci in Ag Food Env Sys.pdf

ALEC 573.pdf

Catalog Page Text - Overview Tab

Catalog Page Overview Text

The Graduate Certificate in Agricultural and Environmental Communication prepares students to translate scientific, technical, and industry#relevant information within agricultural and environmental systems into clear, credible, and engaging communication for diverse audiences. Through coursework in science communication, visual communication and advocacy, and AI#informed risk

communication, students develop practical skills in audience analysis, message framing, ethical visual design, and communicating under conditions of uncertainty or public concern. The program emphasizes evidence-based approaches to evaluating communication effectiveness, addressing misinformation, and producing professional communication products grounded in real-world practice. This certificate is well-suited for professionals and graduate students seeking practical communication expertise to support informed decision-making across agricultural, food, environmental, and risk-based settings.

Statement for Programs of Study Catalog

Graduation Requirements

Minimum Cumulative GPA: 3.0

Minimum hours required for certificate completion: 12 hours

Students who have successfully completed this certificate may use the certificate courses to satisfy the following degree requirements, provided they apply and are admitted to the degree program:

Elective hours toward the Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communications, MS degree program. Specifically, the graduate certificate (12 hours) can be applied as elective coursework (12 hours) for the **Practice Option** of the Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications, MS degree program. Students who are enrolled in the **Research Option** of the Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications, MS degree program may apply 8 of the 12 credit hours from the graduate certificate toward the Agricultural Leadership, Education, & Communications, MS degree program.

The required courses for this certificate are listed below.

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
ALEC 571	Course ALEC 571 Not Found	
ALEC 572	Course ALEC 572 Not Found	
ALEC 573	Course ALEC 573 Not Found	
Total Hours		12

Corresponding Degree

GCRT Graduate Certificate

Program Regulation and Assessment

Plan to Assess and Improve Student Learning

Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(b)(1)(D) Provision is made for guidance and counseling of students, evaluations of student performance, continuous monitoring of progress of students toward their degree objectives and appropriate academic record keeping.

Student Learning Outcomes

As a result of this program, students will be able to:

- translate complex scientific, technical, and specialized agricultural data into accessible narratives tailored for diverse stakeholder groups
- design visual information materials—including data displays, infographics, and narrative graphics—that enhance understanding and support decision-making
- apply principles of visual design to present information ethically, accurately, and with attention to diverse audiences
- create clear, trustworthy messages that address misinformation and support informed responses in risk or crisis scenarios
- develop strategic frameworks for situations involving risk, uncertainty, or high public concern using evidence-based approaches
- produce professional outputs that demonstrate applied skill in information translation, visual design, and risk engagement across real-world contexts
- incorporate appropriate digital and analytical tools to improve message development, scenario evaluation, and strategic planning
- assess audience needs, perceptions, and information barriers to improve message clarity and engagement
- evaluate the effectiveness, credibility, and accessibility of written, verbal, and digital information products.

Program Description and Requirements Attach Documents

Delivery Method

This program is available:

Online Only - The entire program is delivered online, students are not required to come to campus.

Describe the use of this delivery method:

Courses are delivered fully online through the Canvas and Coursera learning management systems. Each course is comprised of two structural components -- an asynchronous component on Coursera and a synchronous component through Canvas.

The asynchronous, self-directed component for each course will include pre-recorded lectures, panel discussions, complimentary readings, demonstration videos, and quizzes. The asynchronous portion provides learners with foundational content for the course.

The second structural component is the high engagement synchronous online session. This session will be offered each week. Students can interact with the instructor(s) and with one another to complete (high-level Bloom's taxonomy) in-depth projects and interactive exercises that build upon the foundational knowledge they previously learned through the asynchronous portion of the course.

Admission Requirements

Provide a brief narrative description of the admission requirements for this program. Where relevant, include information about licensure requirements, student background checks, GRE and TOEFL scores, and admission requirements for transfer students.

Prospective students must apply for admission to the Campus Graduate Certificate specifically through the Graduate College admissions process. Graduate and professional admissions minimum requirements will apply: <https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/requirements>

Enrollment

Number of Students in Program (estimate)

Year One Estimate

20

5th Year Estimate (or when fully implemented)

70

Estimated Annual Number of Degrees Awarded

Year One Estimate

10

5th Year Estimate (or when fully implemented)

55

What is the matriculation term for this program?

Fall ONLY

Budget

Will the program or revision require staffing (faculty, advisors, etc.) beyond what is currently available?

No

Additional Budget Information

No additional faculty, advisors, or staffing will be needed for implementation of this program.

Attach File(s)**Financial Resources**

What tuition rate do you expect to charge for this program? e.g, Undergraduate Base Tuition, or Engineering Differential, or Social Work Online (no dollar amounts necessary)

iMBA rate

Is this program requesting self-supporting status?

No

Attach letters and self-supporting documents as applicable

If this is a graduate program, please discuss the intended use of graduate tuition waivers. If the program is dependent on the availability of waivers, how will the unit compensate for lost tuition revenue?

Students who apply and are admitted to this graduate certificate program may use tuition waiver(s) to complete the coursework. The ALEC Program has a long history of providing tuition waiver eligible courses to internal and external stakeholders (e.g., Illinois Extension and teacher education partners). The courses that comprise this certificate program are also open to new audiences of learners who will pay tuition to enroll in the courses. The goal is to increase enrollment of tuition-paying students to compensate the loss of revenue from tuition-waiver students.

Institutional Context**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

Describe the historical and university context of the program's development. Include a short summary of any existing program(s) upon which this program will be built.

Explain the nature and degree of overlap with existing programs and, if such overlap exists, document consultation with the impacted program's home department(s).

The University of Illinois recently approved Campus Graduate Certificates to reach a new population of learners.

The priorities of the College of ACES are to expand our portfolio of online education programs to new audiences of learners who are interested in up-skilling or re-skilling to earn credentials. This certificate program also strives to fulfill the land-grant mission of providing accessible education to all.

Professions with high demand for this Certificate include: extension personnel, technical specialists, environmental educators, conservation practitioners, government or industry communicators, and graduate students who wish to deepen their understanding of agricultural, environmental, and natural resource contexts.

If letters of support are available attach them here:

Program Support

Provide a brief description of the support for this program, including the financial, faculty, space, advisors/staff. Discuss plans to acquire any additional support that will be needed. If new or additional facilities or significant improvements to already existing facilities is needed, describe the Facility Need, Year 1 and 5 cost, and any other applicable notes.

Financial:

The initial development of this certificate is funded by the College of ACES and the FY25 Investment for Growth Program from the Office of the Provost. The revenue generated from the courses will be re-invested into the certificate program, faculty, content revision, and student support services.

Faculty:

Current instructional staff and faculty will teach the courses as part of their regular appointments. No additional support is needed at this time. Should demand for the courses exceed expectations and more sessions of the courses need to be offered, one or two new faculty may need to be hired to maintain an appropriate teacher-student ratio.

Staff:

Current academic and administrative staff in the College of ACES Online Programs and the Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications Program will have the capacity to serve as advisors, maintain records, and support students with registration/enrollment for the Graduate Certificate and related coursework. Specifically, current administration in ACES Online Programs will provide student support in admissions and enrollment services, including support specifically designed for underrepresented and first gen populations of students to help foster a sense of belonging and community. Staff also provide technical support in navigating the admissions/enrollment processes. Furthermore, support will be provided for students to: 1. Connect with their learning community of fellow students who are enrolled in associated coursework and the certificate program; 2. Assist with answering questions related to admissions, enrollment, and registration; and 3. Provide them with resources/links to navigate questions related to tuition and student services. 4. Offer adult learning strategies and support resources/links to contribute to student success.

Facilities and Space:

Current facilities and space are adequate to support the program. Faculty have the necessary computer and video/audio equipment available to provide a high-quality online learning experience. Additionally, faculty have full access to use the ACES Media Studio, equipped with the latest technology, to host their live synchronous online sessions and record asynchronous content. Faculty also have full access to the suite of CITL media studios to record video content and create materials for the course. Physical address locations for the above mentioned facilities include: ACES Media Studio is located in Room 028, ACES Library, Information and Alumni Center, 1101 South Goodwin Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801 CITL Studios are located in Room 069, Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics Building, 707 S. Mathews Ave., Urbana, IL 61801

Attach any supporting documents as applicable.

Library Resources

Describe your proposal's impact on the University Library's resources, collections, and services. If necessary please consult with the appropriate disciplinary specialist within the University Library.

The courses for this program will be 100% online. Library collections, resources and services are adequate to meet needs.

HLC Section

Credit Hours

Existing or repackaged curricula (Courses from existing inventory of courses):

Number of Credit Hours:

0

Percent of Total:

0

Revised or redesigned curricula (Courses for which content has been revised for the new program):

Number of Credit Hours:

0

Percent of Total:

0

New curricula (Courses developed for the new program that have never been offered):

Number of Credit Hours:

12

Percent of Total:

100

Total Credit Hours of the Program:

Number of Credit Hours:

12

Percent of Total:

100

EP Documentation

EP Control Number

EP.27.026

Attach Rollback/Approval Notices

Non-EP Documentation

U Program Review Comments

Rollback Documentation and Attachment

DMI Documentation

Attach Final Approval Notices

Banner/Codebook Name

Program Code:

Minor Code

Conc Code

Degree Code

Major Code

Senate Approval Date

Senate Conference Approval Date

BOT Approval Date

IBHE Approval Date

HLC Approval Date

DOE Approval Date

Effective Date:

Program Reviewer Comments

Brianna Vargas-Gonzalez (bv4) (Wed, 08 Apr 2026 16:14:11 GMT): At this time, ALEC 571-573 are all new courses proposed for the 2027-2028 academic year. The red boxes will disappear once the course has been fully approved and we have rolled to the 2027-2028 academic catalog.

Key: 1405