



**MSIS GRADUATE  
STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2019-20**

**School of Information Sciences**  
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## **Welcome to the School of Information Sciences**

Dear Students,

Congratulations! If you are reading this message you've taken steps to join one of the best, and most affordable, information and library science programs in the country! We train information professionals who assume positions in a range of different types of organizations including libraries, universities, businesses, government and non-profits. Our graduates take positions as data managers, librarians, information technology specialists, data curators, and information architects. Our program is the only one in the state of Tennessee accredited by the American Library Association.

As a student in our program, you will experience a high-quality educational program delivered by award-winning faculty, who will both challenge and support you. One thing that sets our online program apart from others is that our program is designed to facilitate the development of relationships between students and faculty. We believe it is important to give you opportunities to form close relationships with faculty and each other as part of your online learning experience. You will be assigned a faculty mentor, who will help you develop a specialized program of study based on your professional goals. This relationship is not only important while you are enrolled in the program, but also long after you complete the program. Many graduates maintain relationships with their faculty mentors well beyond the time they spend in the program.

Our program is flexible and can be tailored to your career goals and interests. Not only will we prepare you for your first position in the information professions, we will also prepare you to be agile and flexible throughout your career, as you and the information landscape grow and change. As one of the first programs in the nation to provide online education options, we have had extensive experience perfecting our real-time, online classes. In fact, we often hear from students that our virtual classroom feels like a close-knit community because of the level of interaction among faculty and students.

As a student in our program, you will have opportunities to collaborate with faculty on innovative research projects, many of which are focused on improving communities. You will have opportunities to engage in practical learning experiences where you can sharpen your professional skills, solve real-world problems and help people with their information-seeking tasks, including those from underserved populations. You will have opportunities to participate in professional organizations, attend lectures given by world-renown scholars, network with alumni and prepare for the job market.

As a first-generation college graduate, I know the value of a quality educational program. I want that for you. We all do. Every faculty member, staff member and alumni of this School wants you to share in this profession and to have the very best educational experience possible. Whether you will join us on Rocky Top virtually or in-person, we look forward to welcoming you and helping you reach your intellectual and professional goals!

Sincerely,

Diane Kelly, PhD

Director and Professor

## **Introduction**

### *Graduate School Introduction*

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students.

Based on Best Practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department/program be disseminated.

The SIS Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies noted in the Graduate Catalog, ([https://tiny.utk.edu/grad\\_policies](https://tiny.utk.edu/grad_policies)) but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

### *Purpose of The Graduate Student Handbook*

Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university. More information is available in this Handbook, the Graduate Catalog, Hilltopics, and the Graduate Assistant Handbook available on the Graduate School website. (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/understanding-your-rights-and-obligations/>)

### *Program Structure*

SIS offers the American Library Association (ALA)-Accredited Master of Science (MSIS) degree in both on-campus and fully web-based programs. SIS full-time faculty, in conjunction with several well-qualified lecturers, deliver the master's program. The degree is administered by the School's Director in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, Faculty, and Staff. (<https://sis.utk.edu/people>)

SIS also offers an Undergraduate Major and Minor in Information Sciences and participates in the College of Communication and Information's (CCI) interdisciplinary PhD in Communication and Information. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms>)

### Individually Focused Curriculum

Students develop an individualized program of study in consultation with their advisors, and with the assistance of faculty-developed Pathways for specific areas of study and professional expertise. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/msis/pathway-faqs>)

### *About UT'S School of Information Sciences*

The study of Library and Information Science at the University of Tennessee began in 1928 when the College of Liberal Arts launched an undergraduate major in library education to prepare school librarians. Over 90 years later, the School of Information Sciences' mission has evolved to answer society's most complex information needs. SIS scholarship and instruction covers both theoretical and practical topics that are interwoven throughout the fabric of our organizations and communities, including information content and format, users and uses, and the interaction between information and quality of life.

Accredited by the American Library Association since 1971, SIS has achieved regional, national, and international recognition, by our peers: UT's School of Information Sciences is ranked 17th in the U.S. News & World Report's 2017 survey of ALA-accredited library and information sciences graduate programs. Our diverse faculty has a high international profile and is highly productive in research, while providing first-rate instruction for our students.

SIS is one of the four Schools that comprise the College of Communication and Information (<https://www.cci.utk.edu/>). The others are Advertising and Public Relations (<http://adpr.cci.utk.edu/>), Communication Studies (<http://cmst.cci.utk.edu/>), and Journalism and Electronic Media (<http://jem.cci.utk.edu/>).

### Our Mission

The School of Information Sciences creates value through meaningful engagement for a diverse and pluralistic information ecology; advances original ideas for an information society through inquiry, discovery, scholarship, and creative activity; and leads by preparing ethical, innovative, and reflective information professionals.

### Our Vision

The School of Information Sciences seeks to enrich, elevate, and transform communities and the information professions through excellence in research, education, and service.

### What We Value

As a land-grant institution committed to excellence in research, scholarship, teaching, and service, the School of Information Sciences values:

- Diversity and inclusion, respect for all opinions and people, free exchange of ideas, and academic freedom.
- Intellectual curiosity, reflectiveness, and lifelong learning.
- Engagement with student, the community, and the information professions.
- Adaptability, flexibility, and accountability in all we do, using data-driven, transparent, and collaborative decision-making. (<https://sis.utk.edu/about>)

## **Responsibilities of Faculty and Graduate Students**

### *Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty*

SIS faculty teach courses, conduct research to further the profession and the discipline, participate in school events, and advise students on their curriculum plans and professional development.

### *Duties and Responsibilities of Graduate Students*

The MSIS program is rigorous, requiring full commitment from its students. Every SIS graduate student is expected to:

1. Be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study the university all the requirements set forth in the current UT Graduate Catalog, the SIS Graduate Student Manual (this manual), Hilltopics, (<http://hilltopics.utk.edu>) information related to the Appeals Procedure, (<https://tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations>) and, if appropriate, the SIS Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook (<https://www.sis.utk.edu/gta>) and the UTK Policy for the Administration of Graduate Assistantships. ([https://tiny.utk.edu/grad\\_ga](https://tiny.utk.edu/grad_ga))
2. Attend compulsory Student Orientation in August or January depending on enrollment term. Those who start the program in August should attend the August orientation. Those who start in January should attend the January orientation. Attendance at this day-long on-campus event is required; students who fail to participate in Orientation will not be allowed to continue their course of study.

3. Subscribe to the School's discussion list and weekly e-newsletter for the duration of their enrollment of the program. The list and newsletter communicate official School announcements and university business, as well as providing a forum for library and information sciences topics. (<http://listserv.utk.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=utksis-l&A=1>)
4. Contact their advisor before each course registration period to ask questions and discuss course selection.
5. Check their academic status in MyUTK during and after each term to verify that they are meeting academic standards. (<https://myutk.utk.edu/>)
6. Alert the advisor and/or instructor when encountering challenges that are likely to affect academic success.
7. (As future information professionals) take initiative in finding answers to questions.

### SIS Program Outcomes

It is our vision to provide a quality educational program, and for students to have the very best educational experience possible. By the end of their time in the MSIS program, each student should be able to (<https://www.sis.utk.edu/program/outcomes/>):

1. Describe and discuss the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use, and preservation of information.
2. Describe and discuss the nature of leadership and management in the information professions and the importance of participation in the global information society.
3. Apply the general principles, values, and ethical standards of providing information services in a variety of settings and for diverse populations.
4. Comply with the changing responsibilities of the information professional in a culturally diverse and networked global society.
5. Identify critical professional issues in a variety of organizational, cultural, societal, disciplinary, transdisciplinary, and historical contexts.
6. Analyze and apply standards or policies related to the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use or preservation of information.
7. Explain the changing nature of information, information needs, and information behavior.
8. Assess and implement information technologies, systems, sources and services that serve users effectively and efficiently.
9. Analyze research and apply it to information practice.

### Technology Requirements

To attend online courses students must meet the current system requirements (hardware, software, RAM, processor, Internet connectivity etc.) recommended by the University of Tennessee Office of Information Technology.

(<https://oit.utk.edu/teachingtools/liveonline/system-requirements/>)

Other digital communication methods may also be employed for specific courses.

(<https://sis.utk.edu/techintro/>)

## **E-mail**

University of Tennessee students are assigned a UT e-mail address, which the School and University will use for all official correspondence, including course login information. Email addresses are available in the UTK Directory. (<http://directory.utk.edu/>)

## **Professional Activities**

SIS students are encouraged to participate widely in professional activities. Participating in student chapters of national organizations is an excellent way of obtaining leadership skills, learning about the organizations, staying apprised of trends, and beginning professional networking. (<https://sis.utk.edu/organizations>)

## **Research-related Conduct**

Students are expected to comply with UTK and legal requirements for research (departmental and university Institutional Review Boards (IRB). Please see the Office of Research and Engagement Office of Research Integrity for more information. (<https://research.utk.edu/compliance/>)

## **Admission Requirements & Application Procedure**

Applications are considered in two phases: first, applicants are reviewed for completeness and the University of Tennessee Graduate School's requirements. (<http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog>) Those that meet UTK Graduate School criteria are forwarded to the School of Information Sciences for consideration.

Applicants must submit materials through the University of Tennessee Graduate School portal. (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/new-applicants/>)

The School accepts applications year-round, but only reviews applications during the fall (for spring admission) and spring (for fall admission) semesters. MSIS students may enroll in the fall or spring semester, but applicants should be aware that most of the available SIS graduate teaching assistantships (GTA's) are awarded to students who enroll in the fall semester.

Although an undergraduate GPA of 3.25 is the stated requirement for consideration, the SIS faculty understands that an applicant who does not meet this threshold may have an otherwise impressive application packet and elect to review their materials.

Information about application procedures and deadlines is available on the SIS website and in the Graduate Catalog. (<https://sis.utk.edu/admissions> , <http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog>)

SIS invites prospective students to contact the Director of Graduate Studies ([rfm@utk.edu](mailto:rfm@utk.edu)) or the Student Services Coordinator ([tnarnold@utk.edu](mailto:tnarnold@utk.edu)) to schedule a visit or ask questions about the application and admissions processes.

Students may also complete a limited number of credits in the SIS program prior to applying for degree-seeking status. Information about Non-Degree Seeking (NDS) status is available on the Graduate School's website. (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/admission-types/>)

## ***Admission of International Students***

International students wishing to complete our program online from outside the United States may apply. However, due to United States Department of Homeland Security policy, we are unable to accept international students wishing to study on campus unless they are already in the United States on another non-student type of visa. There are also restrictions on which types



of specializations are possible within the program for those studying outside the United States. Potential students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies ([rfm@utk.edu](mailto:rfm@utk.edu)) or the Student Services Coordinator ([tnarnold@utk.edu](mailto:tnarnold@utk.edu)) to find out which specializations are restricted.

International students who seek admission to the MSIS degree program should consult the International Application Guide, available from Graduate Admissions. (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/admissions-for-international-students/>)

## **Financial Assistance**

### *Out of State and Academic Common Market Students*

UTK Distance Education Students' tuition is set by the UTK Board of Trustees each year, and is not dependent on state of residence.

The Academic Common Market is an agreement for sharing graduate programs, and allows legal residents of Arkansas, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia to enroll in the MSIS program as on-campus students and pay in-state tuition. (<https://onestop.utk.edu/discounts/>)

### *Assistantships*

The School of Information Sciences offers a limited number of assistantship positions on a competitive basis to qualified on-campus and distance students. These awards provide three semesters' tuition for both DE and on-campus students (fall, spring, summer), and also cover maintenance fees and health insurance benefits for on-campus students. Assistantships also offer a monthly stipend. Most SIS GTA positions are quarter-time, meaning they require 10 hours' work per week, and that students be enrolled full time (nine hours per semester or more). Those with half-time (20 hours/week) positions must maintain enrollment of at least six hours. Audited courses do not count toward minimum graduate hours required for SIS graduate assistantships or other financial assistance. Audited courses do not appear on transcripts.

Positions elsewhere on campus may require 10 – 20 hours of service per week the University is in session for the period of the appointment in accordance with SIS and UTK policy.

Most assistantship positions begin in August and run through the following July. Although many of the SIS positions are offered to incoming students, continuing students may apply for a position in subsequent years of study regardless having previously been awarded a GTA position. Continuing students must have a minimum of 18 semester hours remaining to satisfy degree requirements at the effective date of the appointment.

Check the SIS website for information for detailed information about requirements of assistantships and how to apply. (<https://sis.utk.edu/admissions/assistantships>)

### *Graduate Teaching Assistantships*

Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) serve for two (nine-month appointment: fall, spring) or three (twelve-month appointment: fall, spring, summer) consecutive semesters of an academic year, during which they must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0. Typically, these positions are not automatically renewed; continuing students may apply for a GTA position in subsequent years of study, but should be aware that incoming students' GTA applications may be prioritized.

Graduate teaching assistants typically assist faculty and staff with instruction and other tasks as necessary. (<https://sis.utk.edu/admissions/assistantships>)

### Graduate Assistantships Elsewhere on Campus

The UTK Graduate School maintains a listing of assistantships open to most or all on-campus UTK graduate students. SIS students seeking an assistantship position are encouraged to visit this page frequently, as new opportunities are added continuously.

(<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-assistantships/>)

The UTK Libraries offer a limited number of assistantships that provide tuition remission and stipend. These are advertised, filled, and administered by library faculty and staff.

(<http://www.lib.utk.edu/employment>)

### *Other Student Assistant Positions (Hourly)*

There are additional opportunities for 10-20 hour-per-week positions in SIS and elsewhere on campus. These positions do not include tuition or fee waivers but provide beneficial experience to students looking to augment their studies and gain practical experience in research and other areas through the School, the Center for Information and Communication Studies, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, UTK Libraries (<http://www.lib.utk.edu/employment>), the Office of Information Technology (<http://oit.utk.edu/general/employment/>), and elsewhere.

### *SIS Scholarships*

SIS offers competitive scholarships to a limited number of incoming and continuing students each term. Some of the SIS scholarships require an application and/or have special criteria for recipients. These are disbursed through the Financial Aid Office each term. The deadline for continuing SIS students to submit SIS scholarship applications is February 15.

((<https://sis.utk.edu/admissions/scholarships>)

### *University Fellowships & Other Funding Sources*

The University of Tennessee Graduate School offers a limited number of Fellowships, typically awarded to students beginning study in the fall semester. Faculty submit nominations for these opportunities early in the spring semester prior to the academic year for which the award is made; applicants who wish to be considered for a nomination should make sure their application materials are complete and have been submitted by December 1.

(<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/>)

The College of Communication and Information also offers a limited number of special scholarships each year. (<https://www.cci.utk.edu/graduate-studies-financial-aid/fellowships-scholarships>)

### *Travel Support*

SIS offers numerous types of travel support for students wishing to attend information sciences-related conferences. We strongly encourage SIS students to submit their research for presentation at scholarly conferences. Whenever possible, the School of Information Sciences will provide some financial assistance (typically up to \$500) to students who are presenting their work, especially at national conferences, if two criteria are met: the presentation is based on peer-reviewed research authored or co-authored by the student; and the Director of the School indicates that the conference is a worthwhile scholarly endeavor

(<https://sis.utk.edu/current-students/graduate-student-resources#travel>). In addition, the College of Communication and Information will provide some funding assistance (typically \$200 each) to students if the student's travel request has first been approved by SIS.

The UT Graduate Student Senate also awards funding for graduate students to travel, present work, and participate at scholarly conferences and events. Three travel award announcements are made throughout the year, designed to roughly coincide with the academic term periods. (<https://gss.utk.edu/travel-awards/information/>). It is possible for a student to combine an SIS, CCI and Graduate Student Senate award to support their travels.

### SIS Conference Ambassador Travel (CAT) Award

The SIS Conference Ambassador Travel (CAT) Award is a new awards program that provides support for MSIS students to attend professional conferences in the information sciences. Four awards in the amount of \$500 each will be made across two funding periods (two awards per period). This award is to support students who are not presenting work at the conference. Students who are presenting work at the conference should apply for an SIS Student Travel Award. All MSIS students are eligible for this award, including full and part-time students, as well as on-campus and distance education students. A student may only receive this award once. (<https://sis.utk.edu/sis-conference-ambassador-travel-cat-award>)

### Marcellus Turner Student Travel Scholarship

This award is to enable students to attend professional information and library science conferences and meetings. Marcellus Turner ('88) is an SIS alumni who established this award specifically for students to have the opportunity to travel to conferences related to information sciences, even if they are not presenting at the conference. All students enrolled in the MSIS program in the UTK School of Information Sciences may apply for this award. A person must be a student at the time of application, but can be a graduate at the time the award is made as long as the travel occurs within two semesters following graduation. (<https://sis.utk.edu/marcellus-turner-student-travel-scholarship-info>)

SIS CAT award and Marcellus Turner Student Travel Scholarship recipients will be expected to work with the SIS Communication Specialist to share their experiences at the conference with the SIS community.

### *Loans*

To apply for a student loan, a student must be enrolled and complete the FAFSA form. Loan programs administered by the UT Financial Aid Office include:

Federal Stafford Loans—Subsidized and Unsubsidized and Federal Perkins Loans. Processing time varies from one loan program to another. Students apply through the Financial Aid Office. Loans are limited to U.S. Citizens and certain permanent residents. Information on standards, applications, and additional information are available from the One Stop Office, University of Tennessee, 105 Volunteer Boulevard, (865) 974-1111. (<http://onestop.utk.edu/financial-aid>)

### *Fees*

The Board of Trustees determines University fees, which are subject to change. Contact the One Stop Office for current maintenance and tuition fees. (<http://onestop.utk.edu/financial-aid>)

## **Registration and Advising**

### *SIS Course Registration Policy*

SIS posts the upcoming semester's schedule several weeks prior to registration. The Timetable of Classes is the official notification of courses offered by the University of Tennessee for a specific semester and is available online several weeks prior to each semester. (<http://registrar.utk.edu>).

### *Types of Course Delivery*

The School of Information Sciences offers a “blended” curriculum designed to provide flexibility and breadth of experience to students enrolled locally and at a distance. All courses—distance and on-campus—meet synchronously. On-campus courses typically meet during the day in a traditional classroom for students on the Knoxville campus, while students and instructors use virtual meeting software to participate in online classes.

University policies and procedures distinguish between students who attend classes in Knoxville using campus facilities and those who attend via distance education. For example, the fees paid by students vary according to whether they are registered as an on-campus or distance student.

The School, working with individual instructors, sets caps or ceilings on enrollment in courses and sections to meet facilities and workload needs, and to maintain pedagogical standards.

Different course delivery methods require different resources.

It is important that students pay close attention to registering for the course section appropriate for their (on-campus or distance) status.

All students who complete the MSIS program receive the American Library Association (ALA) accredited Master of Science degree.

### *Course Load*

A typical SIS graduate course constitutes 3 hours’ credit. The maximum course load for a graduate student is 15 hours in the fall and spring semesters and 12 hours in the summer. In the fall and spring terms, 9 hours is considered full-time study. In summer, 6 credit hours constitutes full-time status.

Students who have been awarded quarter-time (10 hours/week) assistantships must maintain enrollment of at least nine hours. Those with half-time (20 hours/week) positions must maintain enrollment of at least six hours.

Audited courses do not count toward minimum graduate hours required for SIS graduate assistantships or other financial assistance. Audited courses do not appear on transcripts.

In order to maintain active status during semesters in which they are not be enrolled in classes, students are required to register for INSC 502: Registration for Use of Facilities. These credits may not be used toward degree requirements, and may be repeated. Students experiencing medical or other emergencies may request a Leave of Absence from the university of up to two years. It is important to note that the Graduate School will not approve requested Leaves of Absence for financial reasons. Please contact your advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible if you need to pause enrollment.

Students who wish to write a thesis must complete 6 pass/fail INSC 500 THESIS hours. These must be taken as two separate three-hour credit blocks, each of which must be taken in a separate semester. Students completing the thesis are required to register for 3 hours of INSC 500 in the semester in which they defend the thesis.

### *Academic Advising Policy*

The Coordinator of Student Services assigns a SIS faculty member to serve as academic advisor for each new student upon enrollment. Assignments are based on a number of factors, including the student’s professional interests. Communication between the student and advisor is important for successful curricular planning and for building a lasting connection to the school.

While information about specific information professions and courses of study can be found in the Pathways created by SIS faculty, the Pathways should not be considered a substitute for advising. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/msis/pathway-faqs>)

### The Student's Responsibility

Graduate students are expected to ask questions and partner with their academic advisor in selecting courses and preparing for placement. Students are responsible for understanding graduation and other University policies and procedures.

Students should:

1. Contact their advisor before each course registration period or when help is needed. Because some courses such as independent studies require additional preparation and permissions, students are encouraged to contact their advisor as soon as enrollment dates are announced.
2. Complete the Student Planning Form and submit it to their advisor for discussion and approval in person, by phone, or by e-mail prior to their assigned registration appointment. (<https://sis.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/StudentPlanningForm.docx>)
3. Communicate regularly with their advisors.
4. Register for courses in a timely manner. Courses with insufficient enrollment will be canceled, and other courses will reach capacity quickly.

Students may change assigned advisors by following the procedure outlined on the SIS website. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/msis/faculty-mentors>)

### *Addressing Concerns about Courses*

Students with concerns about a specific course in which they are enrolled should use one of the following options to bring their concerns to the School's attention. These are presented in sequential order, however, if the student is not comfortable with one of the options, they should proceed to the next option. Students may request anonymity at any point in the process.

Students should:

1. Get in touch with the course instructor and ask for clarifications or explanations.
2. Get in touch with their academic advisor and discuss the situation with them. They will be the best person to advise you regarding next steps.
3. Get in touch with the Director of Graduate Studies.
4. Get in touch with the School of Information Sciences Director.

## **Degree Requirements**

SIS offers the American Library Association-accredited Master of Science in Information Sciences degree.

Its requirements are as follows:

- The Master of Science degree with a major in Information Sciences (MSIS) requires 36 graduate course credit hours.
- All MSIS students are required to complete and earn a grade of C or better in three graduate courses: INSC 511, INSC 512, and INSC 514.
- These courses are prerequisites to all courses for students enrolled in the MSIS program.

- Students must take at least 27 credit hours in the School of Information Sciences curriculum (i.e., courses designated “INSC”).
- Students may take up to 9 credit hours outside of the School.
- Up to 6 of these credits may be graduate credits from outside the College of Communication and Information and/or the University of Tennessee.
- Students who have earned graduate credits (at the University of Tennessee or another institution) but not applied them to the requirements of another degree at UTK or elsewhere, may submit a request to have up to 6 of those credits applied to the MSIS 36 credit hour requirement.
- Students may take no more than a total of 12 credit hours from INSC 591, INSC 594, INSC 599. Students can only take 6 credit hours of INSC 599.
- The number of satisfactory/no credit courses/grades in a student’s program is limited to one-fourth of the total credit hours required (9 of 36).
- Students seeking School Librarian licensure have additional requirements. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/certificate-licensure/licensure>)
- Students must complete the requirements for the MSIS within 6 years of enrolling in the earliest course applied to the degree.
- The MSIS does not require that students demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English.
- SIS does not have a residency requirement for Master’s students.
- With the exception of School Library Media, SIS students are not subject to licensure requirements.

### *Required Courses*

All Master’s students are required to complete one of two sets of three courses:

- INSC 510: Information Environment
- INSC 520: Information Representation & Organization
- INSC 530: Information Access and Retrieval<sub>1</sub>

Or

- INSC 511: Information Concepts and Foundations
- INSC 512: Information Organization and Retrieval
- INSC 514: Information Technology Foundations

The required courses are prerequisite to many elective courses in the M.S. degree program.

Students receiving a grade of D or F in one of the three required classes will be dismissed from the program. MSIS students may not repeat any course to improve their grade.

<sub>1</sub> INSC 510, 520, and 530 are being phased out of the MSIS curriculum and replaced with INSC 511, 512, and 514. Admission to Candidacy forms will be reviewed to verify each student has completed one of the two sets of required courses.

### *Highly Recommended Courses*

These courses address the creation and use of research, management, and leadership in information organizations, and the development and management of collections.

- INSC 504: Research Methods for Information Professionals
- INSC 550: Management of Information Organizations
- INSC 560: Development and Management of Collections

### *Independent Project or Research*

Students are encouraged to develop research competencies through INSC 591, Independent Project or Research, which offers in-depth collaboration with a faculty member with the subject knowledge and interest to direct the study, or INSC 594: Graduate Research Participation, to assist a faculty member with a research project for credit.

A total of 6 hours of credit for any combination of INSC 591 and INSC 594 is allowed in the 36-hour degree program, or each course may be repeated once.

### *The Thesis*

While not required, students with an interest in designing and conducting an original, independent research project are encouraged to consider writing a thesis.

Students who write a master's thesis do so under close supervision of an advisor and thesis committee. Students must complete INSC 504: Research Methods for Information Professionals prior to collecting research data, and complete six hours of Thesis, INSC 500, within the 36 hours required for graduation, three of which must be taken in the semester they complete and defend their thesis. For more information and to review the full Thesis Guidelines visit (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/msis/components/thesis>)

The student's thesis committee may determine that a student has passed the defense without needing to make changes, that the student must make significant changes prior to passing the defense, or that the student cannot correct the thesis sufficiently in time to meet SIS and Graduate School deadlines.

Complete policy and procedural information regarding the termination and appeal process is available in the University of Tennessee Graduate Catalog.

(<https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/understanding-your-rights-and-obligations/>)

### *Practicum Program*

The Practicum Program is an essential way for students to gain relevant, professional work experience in preparation for launching their careers. Practicum Students apply their classroom understanding of tasks and responsibilities to the daily work in their chosen information agency under the supervision of a seasoned information professional. The Practicum (INSC 599), also known by its course number – INSC 599, is available every semester to all students.

A 3-hour credit Practicum requires on-site work experience of 150 hours (an average of 10 hours per week in a 15-week semester). Students may take a maximum of 6 hours Practicum credit.

Practicum is a pass/fail course and will have no impact on the student's GPA.

(<https://sis.utk.edu/practicum-overview>)

## *Specialized Programs and Certificates*

SIS offers three specialized programs in addition to the MSIS degree:

- The Youth Informatics Certificate (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/certificate-licensure/youth-informatics>)
- The Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science (IGMCS) (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/msis/graduate-minor-in-computational-science>)
- School Library Media Licensure. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/certificate-licensure/licensure>)

### Youth Informatics Certificate:

The YIC is a valuable program for professionals who engage youth through information technology, and is open to all Master's/PhD students, as well as non-degree seeking students who wish to earn professional development credits (CWS).

The YIC requires successful completion of 12 credit hours. Students earning the MSIS concurrently with the YIC must earn at least 39 credit hours for both credentials.

- The YIC requires the following courses: INSC 583: Introduction to Youth Informatics
- INSC 593: Seminar in Youth Informatics
- INSC 542: Social Informatics
- CFS 515 or PSYC 511 (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/certificate-licensure/youth-informatics>)

### The Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Sciences (IGMCS):

Masters and doctoral students may pursue an Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Sciences, which requires coursework in three areas: Computer and Information Sciences, Applied Mathematics, and a selected discipline outside of Information Sciences. Ph.D. students must take 15 hours to earn the Minor, while Masters students take 9 hours. For information about the benefits, requirements, and application process, visit the IGCMS website. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/msis/graduate-minor-in-computational-science>)

### School Library Media Specialist Licensure:

The Tennessee State Department of Education requires School Library Media Specialists to hold the master's degree. SIS's School Library Media Specialist Program is accredited by CAEP, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, through the College of Education and is available to non-licensed teachers with no master's degree in library or information sciences, licensed teachers without a master's degree in library or information sciences, non-licensed teachers with a master's degree in library or information sciences, and licensed teachers not seeking a master's degree in library or information sciences. Upon completion of the requirements, students will earn a Tennessee State Department of Education license as a School Library Information Specialist, transferable to over 30 states across the country.

Applicants who seek licensure and who hold a current Tennessee teaching license should contact Dr. Cindy Welch at [cwelch11@utk.edu](mailto:cwelch11@utk.edu); (865) 974-7918 for further information.

(<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/certificate-licensure/licensure>)



### *Transfer and Substitution of Credits*

At least 27 hours must be taken within the School of Information Sciences curriculum. Up to 9 hours can be taken outside of the School, including a maximum of 6 hours outside the College. Students can transfer up to 6 hours from another university under the following conditions:

To be transferred into a Master's program at the University of Tennessee, a course must:

- have been taken for graduate credit.
- carry a grade of B or better.
- have been a part of a graduate program in which the student had a B average or better
- have been approved by the SIS advisor
- have not been used in satisfaction of another degree
- have been taken within six calendar years of graduation from the SIS Master's degree program.

### Additional Information

- Credits transferred will not be counted in the student's UT grade point average.
- Graduate hours in library and information science from programs not accredited by the American Library Association may not be accepted for transfer credit.
- Students may take no more than a total of 12 hours of 591, 594, and 599. The number of satisfactory/no credit hour courses cannot exceed 9 credit hours.  
(<https://sis.utk.edu/transfer-and-substitution-of-credits>)

## **Requirements for Admission to Candidacy and Graduation**

### *The Student Learning Collection and Exit Survey*

MSIS students graduating in fall 2019 or later must complete the following two requirements during the semester in which they plan to graduate: (1) Student Learning Collection (SLC) and (2) Exit Survey. The Student Learning Collection (SLC) is a collection of work, selected by the student, which they have completed during their time in the MSIS program.

### SLC: Contents

Each student will select three or more unique course assignments to include in their SLC that address five (of nine) MSIS Program Outcomes. Note that one assignment might address more than one program outcome. It is assumed that students will include their best work in their SLCs. Students will also be required to write brief descriptions of how each submitted assignment reflects the intended program outcome.

Each MSIS course syllabus identifies at least one assignment that is connected to at least one of the nine MSIS Program Outcomes. SIS will provide students with a reference list that maps assignments to program outcomes for courses offered since 2016. Students are encouraged to speak with their academic advisors if an MSIS course which they completed during their time in the program is not on the reference list.

### SLC: Submission

Students will submit the SLC during the semester in which they intend to graduate.

## Exit Survey

After the SLC submission period ends, a link will be made available to students to an online exit survey which asks them to evaluate their experiences in the MSIS program.

Students will be provided with specific deadlines and procedures for both the SLC and Exit Survey in the graduation semester.

Please note: students who wish to complete an ePortfolio or Thesis may still do so; however, they will also be required to complete the SLC and Exit Survey to graduate.

(<https://sis.utk.edu/exit-requirements-msis-degree>)

## Admission to Candidacy and Graduation Application

Students in good standing must submit their Admission to Candidacy form in the semester prior to the term in which they plan to graduate. The Admission to Candidacy form, completed by the student and submitted to the SIS Student Services Coordinator by the stated deadline, lists the courses they plan to apply to the MSIS degree requirements. After the student submits the form it is reviewed by SIS administrators and the Graduate School to ensure the student has met all requirements and the listing is an accurate representation of the student's academic history.

Students must also complete the graduation application during the semester prior to the term in which they plan to graduate.

It is essential that students pay attention to the deadlines for completing graduation paperwork and submit their materials in a timely manner.

## **Standards, Problems, and Appeals**

### *Academic Standards*

Graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 in all graduate courses taken for a letter grade of A–F. Grades of S (Satisfactory), NC (No Credit), P (Pass), or NP (No Pass), and I (Incomplete), which have no numerical equivalent, are excluded from this computation. A course for which a graduate student receives a grade below C cannot be used towards the student's degree.

Graduate education requires continuous student evaluation. This includes not only periodic objective evaluation, such as the cumulative grade point average, but also judgment by the faculty of the student's progress and potential. Students should review their academic status during and after each term to verify that they are meeting academic standards.

### *Incompletes*

An incomplete (I) is a temporary grade indicating that a student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances of a serious nature, has been unable to finish all requirements. Students should not request an I for additional work to raise a deficient grade. A student must request an incomplete in writing from the instructor using the standard form.

([https://sis.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/incomplete\\_request.pdf](https://sis.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/incomplete_request.pdf)) The request form must contain a rationale, and may require supporting evidence, and the projected date for completion of the work. The instructor will decide if an incomplete can be assigned based on the information provided by the student. The instructor's decision to accept or reject the petition is final.

Students must resolve incompletes within one year, or receive a failing grade in the course.

Incomplete courses will not be counted in the cumulative grade point average until a final grade is assigned. (<https://sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/msis/policies>)

### *Academic Probation*

A graduate student is placed on academic probation when his or her cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 on completion of nine hours of graduate coursework. In the subsequent semester(s), these provisions apply:

1. If the GPA in the probationary semester is below 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the program;
2. If the GPA in the probationary semester is 3.0 or above, but the cumulative GPA is still below 3.0, the student will be granted a second probationary semester;
3. If the GPA in the second probationary semester is below 3.0, or if the cumulative GPA is still below 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the program;
4. If the cumulative GPA after the first or second probationary semester is 3.0 or above, the student returns to regular, non-probationary status;
5. No student is granted more than two probationary semesters. A student who has been cleared of probation after one probationary semester and falls below 3.0 in later semesters will be considered in his or her second probationary semester. A student who has been cleared of probation after two semesters and falls below 3.0 in any later semester will be dismissed from the program.
6. A student who receives a grade of D or F in a required class will be dismissed from the program.

([https://catalog.utk.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=3506#acad\\_standing](https://catalog.utk.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=3506#acad_standing))

### *Academic Integrity*

Students should be familiar and maintain their *Academic Integrity* described in Hilltopics as: “*Study, preparation, and presentation should involve at all times the student’s own work, unless it has been clearly specified that work is to be a team effort. Academic honesty requires that the student present their own work in all academic projects, including tests, papers, homework, and class presentation. When incorporating the work of other scholars and writers into a project, the student must accurately cite the source of that work.*”

(<http://hilltopics.utk.edu/academics/>)

Students should abide by the *Honor Statement* described in the same Hilltopics “*As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity. “The Honor Statement prohibits cheating, plagiarism, and any other type of academic dishonesty.”*” (<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>)

*Plagiarism* is using the intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit. The undocumented use of someone else’s words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge) is a serious offense, subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in a course and/or dismissal from the university.

### *Conditions Resulting in Termination from the Program*

If a student is on academic probation, degree status will be terminated by the UT Graduate School if the student’s semester GPA falls below a 3.0 in a subsequent semester. When the particular circumstances may be deemed to justify continuation, and or recommendation of the SIS director and approval of the UT Graduate School, a student on probation may be allowed to

continue on a semester-by-semester basis. Dismissal of a graduate student is accomplished by written notice to the student and to the UT Graduate School. Registration for SIS courses will not be permitted except by written authorization from the SIS director.

Academic grievances are handled within the School through the student's advisor, the faculty member involved, and then the Director. Further appeal may be made as outlined in the Appeals Procedure from the UT Graduate School office.

(<http://gradschool.utdev1.wpengine.com/documents/2016/02/student-appeals-procedures.pdf>)

The student handbook, Hilltopics, published and distributed annually by the Office of the Dean of Students, contains the University of Tennessee standards of conduct and disciplinary regulations and procedures. (<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>).

### *Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence (LOA)*

#### **Continuous Enrollment**

Students maintain continuous enrollment by registering for a minimum number of graduate credit hours per semester (excluding summer).

The minimum enrollment for international students may be different, and international students always need to check with the Center for International Education to determine the minimum enrollment necessary to satisfy all visa-related enrollment requirements. (CIE-<https://cie.utk.edu/>)

#### **Leave of Absence (LOA) and Reinstatement Following a LOA**

If extenuating circumstances arise that make it necessary for students to pause their studies temporarily, a Request for a Leave of Absence (LOA) for a maximum of 2 years may be granted by the Graduate School upon approval by the School of Information Sciences. All Graduate Student Leave of Absence Requests are reviewed and granted on a case by case basis, and may not be requested for strictly financial reasons.

To return to an active student status, graduate students on an approved Leave of Absence (LOA) need to establish Reinstatement into their graduate degree program by the end of the leave period stipulated on their approved LOA. Students must initiate Reinstatement Requests, which must be processed by the School director and submitted to the Graduate School no later than on the last day of classes of the semester prior to the semester for which they seek reinstatement. Please review the UTK Graduate Catalog for specific policies and procedures. Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment or secure an approved Leave of Absence must re-apply to the program and pay the application fee. (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/graduate-student-leave-of-absence/>)

## Resources Recommended by the Graduate School:

- International students
  - Center for International Education ([international.utk.edu](http://international.utk.edu))
  - International House ([ihouse.utk.edu](http://ihouse.utk.edu))
  - ITA Testing Program ([tiny.utk.edu/ita-testing](http://tiny.utk.edu/ita-testing))
- Professional development & training
  - Office of Graduate Training and Mentoring ([gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship](http://gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship))
  - Best Practices in Teaching Program ([tiny.utk.edu/bpit](http://tiny.utk.edu/bpit))
  - UT Libraries Information for Graduate Students ([libguides.utk.edu/graduate](http://libguides.utk.edu/graduate))
  - Center for Career Development ([career.utk.edu](http://career.utk.edu))
  - Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center ([tenntlc.utk.edu](http://tenntlc.utk.edu))
    - UT CIRTL: Center for Integration of Research and Teaching ([tlc.utk.edu/cirtl-program-center-for-integration-of-research-and-teaching/](http://tlc.utk.edu/cirtl-program-center-for-integration-of-research-and-teaching/))
  - Experience Learning ([experiencelearning.utk.edu](http://experiencelearning.utk.edu))
- Funding
  - Costs and funding opportunities ([tiny.utk.edu/grad-funding](http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-funding))
  - Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards ([gss.utk.edu/travel-awards](http://gss.utk.edu/travel-awards))
  - Financial Aid and Scholarships ([onestop.utk.edu/financial-aid](http://onestop.utk.edu/financial-aid))
- Student resources
  - Counseling Center ([counselingcenter.utk.edu](http://counselingcenter.utk.edu))
  - Graduate School ([gradschool.utk.edu](http://gradschool.utk.edu))
  - Graduation Deadlines ([tiny.utk.edu/grad-deadlines](http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-deadlines))
  - Graduate School Forms ([gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central](http://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central))
  - Graduate Catalog ([tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog](http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog))
  - Student obligations and appeals process ([tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations](http://tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations))
  - Graduate Student Senate ([gss.utk.edu](http://gss.utk.edu))
  - Office of Graduate Admissions ([gradschool.utk.edu/admissions](http://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions))
  - Student Conduct and Community Standards ([studentconduct.utk.edu](http://studentconduct.utk.edu))
  - Office of Equity and Diversity ([oed.utk.edu](http://oed.utk.edu))

- Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking ([sexualassault.utk.edu](http://sexualassault.utk.edu))
- Office of Multicultural Student Life ([multicultural.utk.edu](http://multicultural.utk.edu))
- Office of Research Integrity ([research.utk.edu/compliance](http://research.utk.edu/compliance))
- Thesis/Dissertation Consultant ([gradschool.utk.edu/thesedissertations](http://gradschool.utk.edu/thesedissertations))
- Office of Information Technology ([oit.utk.edu](http://oit.utk.edu))