



MSIS GRADUATE  
STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2024-25



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, American Library Association-accredited Library and Information Science programs in the country, and the only ALA-accredited program in the state of Tennessee. The Master of Science in Information Sciences degree prepares students to become information professionals with roles in a variety of organizations including school, public, academic and special libraries as well as those outside the library world, including corporations, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and not-for-profit organizations. Our graduates are data managers, librarians, information technology specialists, data curators, and information architects.

As a student in our program, you will participate in a high-quality educational program delivered by award-winning faculty who will challenge and support you. This is true of our online program as well; we believe it's important for all students to have opportunities to develop strong relationships with faculty, and we work hard to facilitate that. 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.

You will have opportunities to connect with faculty beyond the classroom, too. Each MSIS student is assigned a faculty mentor advisor; your advisor will work closely with you to develop a course of study that will best match your professional goals. In fact, many students and faculty maintain contact long after graduation.

Speaking of our program—it is flexible and adaptable to many career paths. In addition to gaining knowledge and skills necessary for your first position post-graduation, the MSIS program will help you develop an orientation toward lifelong learning. This mindset will be tremendously helpful as your career, and the information landscape, grows and changes.

Try to take advantage of the many co-curricular opportunities SIS makes available to students, including attending guest lectures by world-renowned scholars, participating in student organizations, collaborating with faculty on research, networking with SIS alumni, and completing practica in your community. These practical learning experiences will sharpen your professional skills and give you the chance to help people, including those from underserved populations, with their information needs.

Every faculty member, staff member, and alumni of this School wants you to share in this profession and will help you 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,

Abebe Rorissa

Professor and Director

## **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, 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 School website](#).

### *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 MSIS program. The degree is administered by the School's Director in consultation with the [SIS Director of Graduate Studies, Faculty, and Staff](#).

SIS also offers an [Undergraduate Major and Minors](#) in Information Sciences, Data Science, Social Media Analytics, and User Experience. SIS also participates in the College of Communication and Information's (CCI) interdisciplinary [PhD in Communication and Information](#).

### *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 (ALA) since 1971, SIS has achieved regional, national, and international recognition by our peers: UT's School of Information Sciences is ranked in the top ten list of the 2020 U.S. News & World Report's survey of ALA-accredited library and information sciences graduate programs. Our diverse faculty has a prominent international profile and is highly productive in research while providing first-rate instruction for our students.

SIS is one of the four Schools of the [College of Communication and Information](#) (CCI). The others are [The Tombras School of Advertising and Public Relations](#), [Communication Studies](#), and [Journalism and Electronic Media](#).

## 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, equity, and inclusion, respect for all opinions and people, free exchange of ideas, and academic freedom.
- Intellectual curiosity, reflectiveness, and lifelong learning.
- Engagement with students, the community, and the information professions.
- Adaptability, flexibility, and accountability in all we do, using data-driven, transparent, and collaborative decision-making.

## **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](#), information related to the [Appeals Procedure](#), and, if appropriate, the SIS Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook and the UTK Policy for the [Administration of Graduate Assistantships](#).
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 is required for all students who enroll in the program.
3. Subscribe to the [School's discussion list](#) and MSIS Notes 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.

4. Follow course attendance policies outlined in course syllabi. If you do not attend the first meeting of a course after registering, you may be removed from the course.
5. Contact their advisor before each course registration period to ask questions and discuss course selection.
6. Check their academic status in [MyUTK](#) during and after each term to verify that they are meeting academic standards.
7. Alert their advisor and/or instructors when encountering challenges that are likely to affect academic success.
8. (As future information professionals) take initiative in finding answers to questions.

### MSIS 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:

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

All students should be familiar with the class technology prior to the beginning of their first semester. 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. Other digital communication methods may also be employed for specific courses.

### 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 [MyUTK](#) homepage.

### 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.

### 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, Innovation and Economic Division of Research and Assurance Integrity](#) for more information.

## **Admission Requirements & Application Procedure**

Applications are considered in two phases: first, applications are reviewed for completeness and adherence to the University of Tennessee [Graduate School's requirements](#). 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](#).

The School 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 [UTK Graduate Catalog](#).

SIS invites prospective students to [contact the School](#) 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.

### *Admission of International Students*

International students wishing to complete our program online from outside the United States may apply. However, due to the 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.

International students who seek admission to the MSIS degree program should consult the [International Application Guide](#), available from Graduate Admissions.

## **Tuition and Financial Assistance**

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

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

The Academic Common Market (ACM) is an inter-state agreement that allows legal residents of Arkansas, Delaware, and West Virginia who wish to enroll in the MSIS program as on-campus students to pay Tennessee resident (in-state) tuition.

Information for other discounts and waivers offered by the university, including benefits for veterans and UT employees, can be found on the [One Stop Student Services](#) website.

### *Graduate Teaching 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 two semesters' tuition for both DE and on-campus students (fall, spring) and summer tuition coverage requests may be considered upon funding availability. The awards also cover maintenance fees and health insurance benefits for on-campus students. Assistantships also offer a monthly stipend.

Most SIS GTA positions are thirty-five percent, meaning they require 14 hours' work per week, and that students be enrolled full time (nine hours per semester or more). Audited courses do not count toward minimum graduate hours required for SIS graduate assistantships or other financial assistance.

Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) serve for two (nine-month appointment: fall, spring) consecutive semesters of an academic year, during which they must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0. Typically, these appointments are for one year only; students may apply for assistantship positions 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.

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

Most assistantship positions begin in August and run through May 31. 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.

### Graduate Assistantships Elsewhere on Campus

UTK Graduate School maintains a listing of assistantships and other student jobs open to UTK graduate students. MSIS students are encouraged to [Graduate School's page](#) frequently, as new opportunities are added continuously.

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.

### *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 Research and Innovation Center (RIC), the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, [UTK Libraries](#), the [Office of Innovative Technology](#), and elsewhere.

### *SIS Scholarships*

SIS offers competitive [scholarships](#) to a limited number of incoming and continuing students each term. These are disbursed through the UTK Financial Aid Office.

### Scholarships for Incoming Students

Applicants are offered scholarship funds on the basis of application merit. Notifications of scholarship offers are typically made after admittance into the program.

### Scholarships for Incoming and Continuing Students

Named SIS scholarships for incoming and continuing students require a separate application, available in January each year, and due February 15. Several of the SIS scholarships have special criteria for recipients. The deadline for both applied and continuing SIS students to submit SIS scholarship applications is February 15.

### *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.

The College of Communication and Information also offers a limited number of special scholarships each year.

### *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. 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. It is possible for a student to combine an SIS, CCI and Graduate Student Senate award to support their travel.

### 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.

### 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 alum 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.

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.

### *Fees*

The Board of Trustees determines [University fees](#), which are subject to change. Contact the One Stop Office for current maintenance and tuition fees.

## **Registration and Advising**

### *Individual Focused Curriculum*

MSIS 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.

## *SIS Course Registration Policy*

SIS posts the upcoming semester's schedule 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.

Registration times for students are determined by the Registrar's Office. The number of completed credit hours and class level for all UT students are a couple of the factors used to determine what day and hour the system opens to each student.

### Course Sections

The course schedule lists section numbers and course reference numbers (CRN) to designate sections for campus and distance education students. These numbers are used to verify that the correct course section matches a student's location status in the university, and fees are charged accordingly during registration. For INSC courses, many classes are made up of two "combined" sections for both campus and distance education students taking the class together.

When registering for an online course section for campus students, the system will display an "online" descriptor to indicate the class is virtual with no physical classroom. Distance education students cannot register for this section, nor can campus students register for a distance education section.

Students should use the course schedule to ensure they are registering for their correct section (campus or DE) and avoid a "campus restriction" error message when adding a class in MyUTK.

### Registering for Thesis, Independent Study or Practicum

Students planning to register for thesis, independent project, graduate research participation, or practicum hours, must complete the appropriate paperwork before a section can be added to their schedules. Required forms can be found on the MSIS Student Resources Canvas site.

### *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. As a rule, both on-campus and distance MSIS courses meet synchronously. In the fall semester, only on-campus required courses (INSC 511, 512, and 514) 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. All students complete courses online after the completion of the required courses.

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. Nine credit hours is considered full-time study in any semester.

Students who have been awarded quarter-time (10 hours/week) or thirty-five percent time (14 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*

An SIS faculty member is assigned to each student to serve as academic advisor. 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.

### 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, found in the SIS Resources Canvas site, and submit it to their advisor for discussion and approval in person, by phone, or by e-mail prior to their assigned registration appointment.
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 completing the Change of Advisor Request form, also found in the SIS Resources Canvas site.

### *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.

## **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 Global Engagement](#) to determine the minimum enrollment necessary to satisfy all visa-related enrollment requirements.

### *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.

## **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 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.
- 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 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 MSIS degree program.

Students receiving a grade of D or F in one of the three required classes will be dismissed from the program.

### *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.

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 School website](#).

### *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.

## **Specialized Programs and Certificates**

SIS offers four specialized certificates in addition to the MSIS degree:

- [The Youth Informatics Certificate](#)
- [The Health Informatics Certificate](#)
- [The Research Data Management Certificate](#)
- [The School Librarianship Certificate](#)
- [Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science \(IGMCS\)](#)

### *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

### *Health Informatics Certificate:*

The online Healthcare Informatics Certificate (HIC) program prepares students for careers in connecting people, information, and technology in the healthcare sector. The program combines expertise from the College of Nursing, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, and the School of Information Sciences to examine and apply current health information management, analytics processing, security, and data mining techniques.

### *The Research Data Management Certificate:*

The graduate certificate in Research Data Management will enable students to develop knowledge and skills about working with researchers to help manage their research data. This

4-course, 12-hour graduate certificate is beneficial to students already in a graduate program who want to supplement their courses with this specialization or to those who already have a graduate degree and want to learn more about research data management to enhance their careers.

### *The School Librarianship Certificate:*

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 the School](#) for further information.

### *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](#).

## **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.

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
- Not have been used in satisfaction of another degree
- Have been taken within six calendar years of graduation from the SIS Master's degree program
- Be specifically related to the student's career objectives.

### *Transfer Credit from SIS Graduate Certificates, Minor, and Licensure*

UT graduate courses required for certificates, minors, or licensure within the School of Information Sciences may count as electives towards the MSIS degree and do not require a

request for transfer. Approved programs and courses include the following:

#### School Library Media Licensure Program

- EDPY 401 Applied Educational Psychology (3)
- SPED 503 Special Education and Diverse Learners(3)

#### Health Informatics Graduate Certificate (up to 6 credit hours)

- NURS 557 Introduction to Health Informatics (3)
- NURS 558 Healthcare Information Architecture & Security (3)
- IE 561 Decision Support & Electronic Health Records (3)

#### Youth Informatics Graduate Certificate

- CFS 515 Children in Contemporary Society (3)
- PSYC 511 Developmental Psychology (3)

#### Graduate Minor in Computation Sciences (up to 6 credit hours)

A course listing for this program is available at <http://igmcs.utk.edu/departments>.

Any course from the list above not used to complete the licensure, certificate, or minor requirements must be approved through the transfer request process to count toward the degree.

#### *Additional Credit Hour Information*

- Credits transferred from another institution 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.

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

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

MSIS students 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.

### *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 Assistant Director of Academic Programs 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 Request for Grade of Incomplete form, found in the SIS Resources Canvas site. 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.

### *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.

### *Academic Honesty and 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.”*

Students should abide by the Honor Statement described in the [Student Code of Conduct](#):

*“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.

*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.

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.

## **Resources Recommended by the Graduate School:**

### International students

- [International Students and Scholars Services](#)
- [International House](#)

### Professional development & training

- [Office of Inclusive Excellence and Professional Enhancement](#)
- [Evolving Practices in Teaching Program](#)
- [UT Libraries Information for Graduate Students](#)
- [Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration](#)
- [Teaching and Learning Innovation](#)
  - [UT CIRTL: Center for Integration of Research and Teaching](#)
- [Experience Learning](#)

### Funding

- [Costs and funding opportunities](#)
- [Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards](#)
- [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)

### Student resources

- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Graduate School](#)
- [Graduation Deadlines](#)
- [Graduate School Forms](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Student obligations and appeals process](#)
- [Graduate Student Senate](#)
- [Office of Graduate Admissions](#)
- [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#)
- [Office of Equal Opportunity & Accessibility](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking](#)
- [Office of Multicultural Student Life](#)



- [Office of Research Integrity](#)
- [Theses/Dissertations - Graduate School](#)
- [Office of Innovative Technology](#)