



SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES

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Graduate Student Handbook

School of Information Sciences
College of Communication and Information
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1345 Circle Park Drive, Suite 451
Knoxville, TN 37996-0341
(865) 974-2148
sis@utk.edu
<http://www.sis.utk.edu>

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADEA institution.

This document contains interactive links to enable convenient reference to other resources. The subjects in the table of contents are clickable links to the information contained within this handbook.

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Welcome to the School of Information Sciences



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 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 Assistant Handbook](#) available on the Graduate School website.

Program Structure

SIS offers the American Library Association (ALA)-Accredited Master of Science (M.S.I.S.) degree in both on-campus program 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](#).

SIS also offers an Undergraduate Minor in Information Studies & Technology and a PhD in Communication and Information through the College of Communication and Information's (CCI) interdisciplinary doctoral program.

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 80 years later, the School of Information Sciences' mission has evolved to answer society's most complex information needs. Accredited by the American Library Association since 1971, the School has achieved regional, national, and international recognition. SIS scholarship and instruction covers topics both theoretical and practical, including information content and format, users and uses, and the interaction between information and quality of life. These issues are interwoven throughout the fabric of our organizations and communities.

Our excellence in instruction and research has been recognized by our peers: UT's School of Information Sciences is ranked 17th in the U.S. News & World Report's 2017 survey of library and information sciences graduate programs accredited by the American Library Association. We are proud of our diverse faculty that is internationally visible and highly productive in publishing scholarly articles and books while providing first-rate instruction.

SIS is one of the four Schools (with [Advertising and Public Relations](#), [Communication Studies](#), and [Journalism and Electronic Media](#)) that comprise the [College of Communication and Information](#).

Our Mission

Enriching our communities through outstanding research, education, and public service that advance the frontiers of Information.



Our Vision

SIS will:

- Create value through meaningful engagement for a diverse and pluralistic information ecology;
- Advance original ideas for an information society through inquiry, discovery, scholarship, and creative activity;
- Lead by preparing ethical, innovative, and reflective information professionals.

What We Value

As a land-grant institution committed to excellence, SIS values:

1. Diversity and inclusion, respect for all opinions and people, free exchange of ideas, and academic freedom;
2. Intellectual curiosity, reflectiveness, and lifelong learning;
3. Rigor in research, scholarship, teaching, and service;
4. Student, community and professional engagement;
5. Adaptability, agility, and flexibility in all we do, using data-driven and transparent 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 SIS graduate program is a rigorous program that requires full commitment from its students. Every graduate student is expected to:

1. Be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university all the requirements set forth in the current [UT Graduate Catalog](#), the SIS Graduate Student Handbook (this manual), Hilltopics (<http://hilltopics.utk.edu>), and information related to the [Appeals Procedure](#) and, as appropriate, the [Graduate Assistant Handbook](#) available on the Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.utk.edu>).
2. Possess the basic technology skill set found at <http://www.sis.utk.edu/computing/ict>. These competencies are required and assumed on the first day of class.
3. Attend compulsory student [orientation](#) in August of the calendar year of enrollment. Students who enter the program in the spring or summer terms must attend orientation in the first August after their enrollment. Students who enter the program in the fall must attend orientation in the August prior to their enrollment. 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.
4. Subscribe to the School's discussion list for the duration of their enrollment of the program. This list communicates official School announcements and university business, as well as providing a forum for library and information sciences topics. (UTKSIS-L@utk.edu - <http://www.sis.utk.edu/computing/listservs>)
5. Contact his/her advisor before each course registration period to ask questions and discuss course selection.
6. Check his/her academic status in [MyUTK](#) during and after each term to verify that s/he is meeting academic standards.
7. Alert the advisor and/or instructor when encountering challenges that are likely to affect academic success.
8. (As future information professionals) take initiative in finding answers to questions.

SIS Program Outcomes

Upon meeting the requirements of the SIS Master of Science in Information Science degree, students will have achieved these [outcomes](#):

1. The student can describe and discuss the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use, and preservation of information in society.
2. The student can describe and discuss the nature of leadership and management in the information professions and the importance of participation in the glob-

- al information society.
3. The student can apply the general principles, values, and ethical standards of providing information services in a variety of settings and for diverse populations.
 4. The student can comply with the changing responsibilities of the information professional in a culturally diverse and networked global society.
 5. The student can identify critical professional issues in a variety of organizational, cultural, societal, disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and historical contexts.
 6. The student can analyze and apply information policies, and information-related laws that influence the delivery of information resources throughout society.
 7. The student can explain the changing nature of information, information needs, and information behavior.
 8. The student can assess and implement information technologies, systems, sources and services that serve users effectively and efficiently.
 9. The student can analyze research in the profession.

Technology Requirements

To attend on-line 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.

For an updated list of technology requirements, visit <http://oit.utk.edu/teachingtools/liveonline/>. Other technology considerations can be found on at <http://www.sis.utk.edu/sis-technology>.

E-mail

University of Tennessee students will be assigned a UT e-mail address. The School and University will use this e-mail address 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. Joining and 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. A complete listing of SIS student organizations is available here, <http://www.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 Institutional Research](#) for more information.

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. Those that meet the criteria are forwarded to the School of Information Sciences for consideration.

Applicants must submit materials through the University of Tennessee Graduate School portal: <http://gradschool.utk.edu>

The School accepts applications year-round. SIS admits students in the fall, spring, and summer semesters, but most SIS Graduate Teaching Assistantships are awarded to students who begin in the fall semester.

Applicants with a final undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 will be considered for admission. If a student does not meet this criterion but feels he/she is a strong candidate for graduate school, there is an opportunity for additional review of qualifications by the admissions committee.

Information about application procedures and deadlines is available on the SIS website at <http://www.sis.utk.edu/admissions> and on the Graduate School website at <http://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/>. SIS invites prospective students to get in touch with the Director of Graduate Studies or the [Coordinator of Student Services](#) 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 is available on the [Graduate School website](#).

Admission of International Students

International students wishing to complete our program on-line from outside the United States may apply. However, 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 SIS degree program should consult the International Application Guide, available from Graduate Admissions, <http://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/applying-to-graduate-school/admissions-for-international-students/>, (865) 974-3251, or on the SIS website at <http://www.sis.utk.edu/admissions>.

Financial Assistance

Academic Common Market

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 SIS as on-campus or distance education students and pay in-state tuition.

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, maintenance fees, health insurance benefits (for on-campus students only), and a monthly stipend to full-time (at least nine hours) graduate students for part-time work while pursuing an advanced degree. Appointments typically require 10 - 20 hours of service per week when the University is in session for the period of the appointment in accordance with SIS and UTK policy.

Applicants who begin the program prior to the assistantship appointment must have a minimum of 18 semester hours remaining to complete the degree program at the effective date of the appointment. Assistantships are not renewable; however, recipients may reapply in a subsequent year.

Check the SIS website for information about application deadlines and other relevant dates.

Please see <http://www.sis.utk.edu/assistantships> for detailed information about requirements of assistantships and how to apply.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

[Graduate teaching assistants](#) normally assist faculty with instruction and other tasks as necessary. Graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) serve for two consecutive semesters beginning in the fall semester of an academic year (Fall, Spring), during which they must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0.

Distance Education Support Graduate Assistantships

[DE Support graduate assistants](#) are appointed primarily to perform duties associated with the School's distance education (DE) program. Our School awards DE support graduate assistantships to qualified students who are fully admitted as degree candidates with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 and who have completed at least one on-line course.

DE Support graduate teaching assistants are appointed for three consecutive semesters beginning the fall semester of an academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer).

Other Student Assistant Positions

Other positions available through SIS include hourly jobs that require 10-20 hours a week. These positions do not include tuition or fee waivers but provide beneficial experience to students looking to augment their studies and participate in research projects through the School, the Center for Information and Communication Studies, or the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Campus technology, information, and administration offices offer assistantships and several part-time positions. UT Libraries lists available positions on its website at <http://www.lib.utk.edu/employment>. Student positions may also be found at the Office of Information Technology at <http://oit.utk.edu/general/employment/> and the UT Graduate School at <http://gradschool.utk.edu/>. These positions do not require financial need or previous library experience.

SIS Scholarships

SIS scholarships are disbursed through the Financial Aid Office each fall term. To learn more about the scholarship criteria and to find applications visit <http://www.sis.utk.edu/scholarships>. The deadline for submitting SIS scholarship applications is March 1.

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. See <http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/> for more information.

The College of Communication and Information offers a limited number of special scholarships each year. These fellowships and scholarships are awarded on the basis of faculty nominations.

Travel Scholarships

We strongly encourage SIS students to submit their research for presentation at scholarly conferences. Whenever possible, the College of Communication and Information will provide some funding assistance to students who are presenting their work, especially at national conferences, if it meets two criteria: 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. For more information visit <http://www.sis.utk.edu/forms>.

The 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. See <http://gss.utk.edu/travel-awards/>.

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 the 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, [LINK] <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/>.

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 on-line several weeks prior to each semester at <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 on-line 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 on-campus students.

The School, working with individual instructors, sets caps or ceilings on enrollment in courses and sections to meet facilities and workload needs. Different course delivery methods require different resources.

Whatever courses they take, all students who complete the program receive the American Library Association (ALA) accredited Master of Science degree.

Course Load

Each course constitutes three 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. A full load in all semesters, including summer, is nine hours.

Students who have been awarded assistantships must maintain enrollment of at least nine hours.

Courses audited 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 s/he may 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. S/NC only.

Students completing the thesis in satisfaction of the Graduate School's Culminating Experience requirement must complete six 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 three INSC 500 hours in the semester in which they defend the thesis.

Academic Advising Policy

The Coordinator of Student Services assigns an academic advisor to each new student upon admission based on the student's professional interests and advisor availability. The information sharing that takes place between the student and advisor is important for the success of the student's curricular planning. Information about specific information professions and courses of study can be found in the [Pathways](#) created by SIS faculty.

Students may [change assigned advisors](#) by following the procedure outlined on the SIS website.

Because courses may fill quickly, and 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.

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.
2. Complete the Student Planning Form (see <http://www.sis.utk.edu/courses>) 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.

Addressing Concerns about Courses

Students who have a concern 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, s/he 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 the student's advisor and discuss the situation with them. They will be the best person to advise as to next steps.

Degree Requirements

SIS offers the Master of Science in Information Science degree.

The program for the Master of Science degree requires 36 semester hours of graduate courses, including three courses (nine hours) required of all students. [See the Required Courses section below for more details.] Students must take at least 27 hours of courses in the School of Information Sciences curriculum. Students may take up to nine hours of graduate courses outside the School; no more than six of these hours may be taken outside the college. No more than six hours may be taken from another university.

To graduate, students must take a written comprehensive examination, create an on-line portfolio, or write a thesis. See [Graduation Requirements](#) for more information.

The M.S.I.S. 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.

Students must complete the requirements for the MSIS within six years of the earliest course applied to the degree.

Required Courses

All Master's students are required to complete three courses:

- INSC 510: Information Environment
- INSC 520: Information Representation & Organization
- INSC 530: Information Access and Retrieval

These three courses—INSC 510, INSC 520, and INSC 530—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.

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

Specialized Programs and Certificates

Three specialized programs are available: The [Youth Informatics Certificate](#), the [Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Science](#) (IGMCS), and [School Library Media Licensure](#).

Youth Informatics Certificate (YIC)

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:

- INSC 583: Introduction to Youth Informatics (fall 2016)
- INSC 593: Seminar in Youth Informatics (spring 2017)
- INSC 542: Social Informatics (spring 2017)
- ALEC 510: Agricultural Leadership Development (can be substituted by CFS 515, or PSYC 511)

Interdisciplinary Graduate Minor in Computational Sciences (IGMCS)

Masters and doctoral students may pursue a nine-hour (Masters) 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. PhD students must take 15 hours to earn a Minor. For information about the benefits, requirements, and application process, visit <http://igmcs.utk.edu>.

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 Clinical Associate Professor Cindy Welch at cwelch11@utk.edu; (865) 974-7918 for further information.

Individually Focused Curriculum

Students develop an individualized program of study in consultation with their advisors. Students may want to align their course study with the following School strengths. More information about individualized programs is available also in our faculty-developed [Pathways](#):

- Academic libraries
- Applied information technology
- Corporate information
- International issues and experiences
- Public librarianship, community informatics, rural librarianship
- School library media
- Science and technology information, data and communication

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 six hours' credit for any combination of INSC 591 and INSC 594 is allowable in the 36-hour degree program, or each course may be repeated once. 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 nine credit hours.

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 flow 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 three-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 six hours practicum credit.

For information about the practicum, visit <http://www.sis.utk.edu/practicum>.

Transfer and Substitution of Credits

At least 27 hours must be taken within the School of Information Sciences curriculum. Up to nine hours can be taken outside of the School, including a maximum of six hours outside the college. For more information, see Transfer and Substitution of Credits (<http://www.sis.utk.edu/admissions#transfer>).

Students can transfer up to six 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.

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.

Please see for specific credit [transfer procedures and forms](#).

Graduation Requirements

SIS offers three options for fulfilling the "Culminating Experience" required by the Graduate School.

Students must complete graduation forms with advisor approval in the second-to-last semester and register their culminating experience selection (comprehensive exam/ePortfolio/thesis) with the Coordinator of Student Services.

Students must complete the culminating experience in the final semester of enrollment.

The Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is a four-hour, in-house exam that requires students to integrate and synthesize knowledge gained through the course of the program. A committee of SIS faculty members grades the exam on a pass/fail basis.

Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam may re-take the examination one time during a subsequent semester. Students who fail to pass the comprehensive examination twice are dismissed from the Master's program without the degree.

An orientation to the comprehensive exam is held prior to the examination to review the procedures for completing the examination, provides information concerning its evaluation, and consequences if the examination is not passed. Previous exam questions are posted on the [School's website](#).

The ePortfolio

The ePortfolio is an electronic presentation of its author's professional self. The ePortfolio culminating experience has two components: completion of the ePortfolio itself; and a review and defense with the student's primary advisor and two additional faculty members, selected by the student. The objectives of the ePortfolio

are for students to organize and synthesize knowledge in specific subject areas, demonstrate their ability to solve problems, and establish and defend their positions on current issues, trends, and problems in library and information studies.

The student's ePortfolio 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 ePortfolio sufficiently in time to meet SIS and Graduate School deadlines.

Students who wish to complete the ePortfolio must enroll in INSC 505 and follow detailed instructions available in the [ePortfolio Guidelines](#).

The Thesis

Students electing the thesis option conduct original, independent research and write a master's thesis under close supervision of a thesis committee.

Thesis option 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 <http://www.sis.utk.edu/programs/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](#).

Requirements for Admission to Candidacy and Graduation

The Admission to Candidacy

1. The student obtains a graduation packet from the Coordinator of Student Services when the student registers for their final semester.
2. The student is responsible for completing the Admission to Candidacy Master's Degree form and submitting the form to the Coordinator of Student Services who gathers the appropriate signatures and forwards it to the Graduate School.
3. The student must complete the Graduation Application for Diploma and submit on-line through [MyUTK](#).
4. If choosing either the comprehensive exam or the ePortfolio options, the student completes the appropriate registration form, which must be submitted with the Admission to Candidacy form to the Coordinator of Student Services.

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.

Request for Incomplete

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 incomplete for additional work to raise a deficient grade. A student must request an incomplete in writing from the instructor using a standard form available on-line at <http://www.sis.utk.edu/forms>. The request form must contain a persuasive

rationale, and may require supporting evidence, and the projected date for completion of the work. The instructor must approve and sign the form. The instructor's decision to accept or reject the petition is final.

Students must resolve an incomplete 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 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 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.

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 are deemed to justify continuation, and/or a recommendation to continue is granted by 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. Hilltopics is available on-line at <http://hilltopics.utk.edu/>.

Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence (LOA)

Continuous Enrollment

Students maintain [continuous enrollment](#) by registering for a minimum of graduate credit hour 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 (CIE) to determine the minimum enrollment necessary to satisfy all visa-related enrollment requirements.

Leave of Absence (LOA) and Reinstatement Following an LOA

If extenuating circumstances arise that make it necessary for students to interrupt their studies temporarily, a [Request for a Leave of Absence](#) (LOA) for a maximum of two 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.

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.

Resources Recommended by the Graduate School

- [Counseling Center](#) (counselingcenter.utk.edu)
- [Graduate School](#) (gradschool.utk.edu)
- [Graduation deadlines](#) (tiny.utk.edu/grad-deadlines)
- [Graduate School forms](#) (gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central)
- [Graduate Catalog](#) (tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog)
- [Student obligations and appeals process](#) (tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations)
- [Graduate Student Senate](#) (gss.utk.edu)
- [Office of Graduate Admissions](#) (gradschool.utk.edu/admissions)
- [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) (studentconduct.utk.edu)
- [Office of Equity and Diversity](#) (oed.utk.edu)
- [Sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking](#) (sexualassault.utk.edu)
- [Office of Multicultural Student Life](#) (multicultural.utk.edu)
- [Office of Research Integrity](#) (research.utk.edu/compliance)
- [Thesis/Dissertation Consultant](#) (gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations)
- [Office of Information Technology](#) (oit.utk.edu)