LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES, M.A.

The master’s degree in the Information School (iSchool) prepares graduates to develop and provide information services that create, collect, organize, store, analyze, find, distribute, and use information in a diverse, technological, and global society. At the master’s level, the school prepares information professionals to work in five broad overlapping areas of the information professions.

Librarianship: Graduates obtain employment in college and university librarianship, public librarianship, youth and young adult librarianship, electronic collections management, science and health librarianship, research data management, and school library media centers.

Archives in a Digital Age (on campus program only): Graduates obtain employment in digital asset management, digital preservation and curation, digital archives, corporate archives, government archives, special collections, and tribal libraries archives and museums.

Information Management: Graduates obtain employment in information analysis and visualization, knowledge management, prospect research, systems analysis, digital asset management, records management and compliance, research data management, information systems analysis and project management.

Organization of Information: Graduates obtain employment in metadata management, taxonomy and ontology development and implementation, digital asset management, cataloging, XML and linked data, and database management.

User-Centered Systems Design and Evaluation: Graduates obtain employment in user experience design, systems analysis and project management, IT training, educational technology support, digital asset management and curation, content management, and database development and management.

The master’s degree requires 39 credit hours. Students attending on a full-time basis generally complete the program in two academic years with summer work; part-time students complete it in three to four years. Students gain hands-on experience as part of their degree through the school’s required 3-credit field practicum. Students may choose practicum settings based on their career goals and combine real-life work with classroom sessions that provide support and encourage reflection and professional growth.

M.A. PROGRAM SPECIALIZATIONS

Some M.A. program specializations require specific coursework or other requirements.

Graduate/Professional Certificate in Strategic Innovation: Technology, Organizations, and Society: The Information School offers a specialization in information innovation and organizational change in conjunction with the School of Business graduate/professional certificate (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/management-human-resources/strategic-innovation-technology-organizations-society-graduate-professional-certificate) which can be completed as part of the school’s M.A. degree (on-campus program only).

Certificate in Leadership: iSchool students can earn the UW–Madison Certificate in Leadership (https://cfli.wisc.edu/leadership_certificate.htm) as part of their Information School M.A. degree (on campus and online programs).

Double degrees: The iSchool offers double degrees with the UW Law School, the School of Music, and the Department of Art History. These require separate admissions and additional coursework. (on campus program only)

School Library Media Services and Administration: A valid teaching license is required for school library media certification in the state of Wisconsin. The teaching license can be obtained before or after completing the School of Information MA; it is not required for admission. For licensed classroom teachers with master’s degrees, web-based school library media certification courses are available through the UW System School Library Education Consortium (UWSSLEC).

Online students (distance degree option) should note: Specialized courses in art, music and law, as well as courses offered outside the Information School that may be part of specializations or double degrees, are generally not available online. For a distance student with academic background in one of these areas, combining the general LIS degree with the specialized background may be the best preparation.

The master’s program is accredited by the American Library Association, recognized by the Wisconsin Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning for certification of public librarians, and recognized by the state’s Department of Public Instruction for licensing of school library media specialists.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.A., with available named options Campus Delivered Program, and Distance Delivered Program

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

39 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

33 credits after admission to the Information School

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

A minimum of 30 credits must be taken from graduate-level Information School M.A. coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

The remaining 9 credits of coursework must be 300 level or above and may not include iSchool undergraduate coursework.
PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS
Students may count up to 6 credits of approved graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE
With approval, UW–Madison undergraduates accepted into the Information School program may count up to 7 graduate iSchool credits (450 and above) toward their M.A. degree.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL
Students are allowed to count up to 9 approved credits of coursework numbered 450 or above taken as a UW–Madison Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED
M.A.–face-to-face option:
8 to 12 credits in a regular semester is considered full time at the graduate level by the Information School. Course load maximums are 12 credits in a regular semester, 8 credits in the summer term and 3 credits in the intersession.

M.A.–online option:
8 to 12 credits in a regular semester is considered full time at the graduate level. 6 credits is recommended for online students.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED
Required Courses:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIS 601</td>
<td>Information: Perspectives and Contexts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIS 602</td>
<td>Information: Organization and Search</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIS 603</td>
<td>Research and Assessment for Information Professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, 3 credits from a set of approved graduate level management courses and at least 3 credits from a set of approved graduate level technology courses. Students in school library media have additional required courses; for details, see the iSchool website.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT
3.0 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS
Within the student’s total program, one grade of BC or C is allowable in either a required or elective course if it is balanced by a grade of A or AB earned prior to or concurrently with the unsatisfactory grade. A second grade of BC or C or any grade of D or F will normally result in the student being dropped from the program.

PROBATION POLICY
A student may be placed on probation or suspended from the Graduate School for low grades or for failing to resolve incompletes in a timely fashion. In special cases the Graduate School permits students who do not meet these minimum standards to continue on probation upon recommendation and support of their advisor.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
All continuing students are required to meet with their advisor prior to registering for each semester. Failure to do so will result in a hold being placed on the student’s registration.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS
Candidates must complete a minimum of a 120-hour practicum, and must complete a portfolio.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
The maximum period for completion of the M.A. (under special circumstances) is seven calendar years. Contact the department for more information.

Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
No language requirements.

ADMISSIONS
The school admits students to its on campus and online master’s programs once a year, for fall semester. Applications are available in September and are due December 15. Note that the online program is called the “distance degree option” in all admissions forms, and students from any geographical location (including Madison, Wisconsin) are welcome to apply.

The Graduate School requires a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution, or a comparable degree from an international institution. A minimum undergraduate grade-point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in the last 60 earned credit hours is required.

Application evaluation criteria include academic abilities, professional promise, leadership and community engagement. An undergraduate program that includes breadth in liberal arts and sciences is required. Any major is acceptable. Prior work experience related to information professions is useful, but is not required. The GRE is not required.

International students: TOEFL or equivalent scores are required if English is not the native language, or if the undergraduate instruction was not in English. The Information School follows UW Graduate School rules regarding English proficiency exams. See the Graduate School website (http://grad.wisc.edu) for updated information. For more information about admission to the master’s program, see MA Application (http://www.slis.wisc.edu).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

• Students apply key concepts with respect to the relationship between power, knowledge, and information.
• Students apply key concepts with respect to theories and practices of literacies, reading, and information use.
• Students organize and describe print and digital information resources.
• Students select and evaluate print and digital information resources.
• Students analyze information needs of diverse individuals and communities.
• Students understand and use appropriate information technologies.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

• Students evaluate and debate information policy and ethics issues applicable in local, national or global contexts.
• Students apply core ethical principles to professional practice.
• Students evaluate, problem solve and think critically, both individually and in teams.
• Students demonstrate good oral and written communication skills.
• Students participate in extracurricular activities in the field.
• Students demonstrate innovation and skills necessary for leadership.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Eschenfelder (director), Downey, Kim, Whitmire; Associate Professors Smith; Assistant Professors Rubel, Senchyne, Willett