Library and Information Studies, Ph.D.

The doctoral degree is a research degree designed to prepare academics to research and teach in information schools. The program emphasizes scholarly writing, interdisciplinary and boundary-spanning inquiry, employment of theory to frame and guide inquiry and analysis, expertise with cutting edge scholarship techniques (including those using new technologies), and preparation in undergraduate and graduate teaching. For more information, see the Ph.D. program description and the Ph.D. program planning guide on the Information School website.

The Information School or “the iSchool at UW–Madison” is a professional school offering M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and an undergraduate digital studies certificate.

School faculty are known for scholarly work in the areas of information policy and ethics, user behaviors and literacies, print culture, library and information technology history, electronic publishing, and the social aspects of information and communications systems. They have made valuable scholarly contributions in the areas of medical information retrieval systems, online search behavior and search effectiveness, publisher e-journal licensing practices, information technology history, print culture and library history, information ethics and policy, and youth and new media. Faculty are widely involved in different research areas on campus. For example, the iSchool hosts the Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture, a research center focused on authorship, reading, publication and distribution of print and digital materials. Faculty members are involved with the Holz Center for Science and Technology Studies, the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery, the Center for Financial Security, and the Games Learning & Society group.

The iSchool is well known for its public-good, community engagement orientation. The school is home to several student organizations that shepherd long-term, information-justice projects including the Jail Library Group, the Tribal Library Archives and Museums Group, and the Allied Drive Literacy Project.

Funding

Prospective students should see the program website for funding information.

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.

Doctoral Degrees

Ph.D.

Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement

51 credits including dissertator credits, 990s and 999s

Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement

32 credits after admission to the Information School

Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement

The majority of a Ph.D. student’s coursework must be completed in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle). Courses at the 300–600 level should be taken sparingly and must be approved by the student’s advisor.

Prior Coursework Requirements: Graduate Work from Other Institutions

Students may count up to 9 credits of approved graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Prior Coursework Requirements: UW–Madison Undergraduate

No credits counted toward a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the PhD 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 ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Prior Coursework Requirements: UW–Madison I-School M.A.

M.A. graduates who are accepted into the Information School Ph.D. program may count up to 10 qualified credits from their iSchool M.A. degree toward their Ph.D. Qualified courses include iSchool Ph.D. seminars (900 level) and research methods courses (e.g. LIS 603 Research and Assessment for Information Professionals).

Credits Per Term Allowed

8 to 12 credits in a regular semester is considered full time at the graduate level. Course load maximums are 12 credits in a regular semester, 8 credits in the summer term and 3 credits in the intersession.

Program-Specific Courses Required

A general research methods course is required of all students. This must be a graduate-level course, and if not taken at the iSchool (LIS 603 Research and Assessment for Information Professionals) the student must present a transcript and, if possible, a syllabus to the course. In addition, students must take Ph.D. research seminar LIS 910 Smr-Research Design & Methodology for Library & Information Studies and are required to take a minimum of two semesters of statistics and one semester of qualitative research. Each student must take at least one course in each of three (out of four) designated areas to develop a breadth of knowledge about the field.
DOCTORAL MINOR/BREADTH REQUIREMENTS
All doctoral students are required to complete a minor.

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT
3.5 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS
To remain in good academic standing within the iSchool Ph.D. program, a student must maintain a 3.5 overall GPA, not carry any incomplete grades in courses (other than 999s) for more than 1 semester, and pass all mastery demonstration paper deadlines by appointed deadlines.

PROBATION POLICY
Students who fail to meet any of the above criteria will receive a letter of warning from the Ph.D. program director placing them on probationary status. They will have one additional semester (not including summer) to change their status. If they do not successfully change their status, they will be asked to leave the program. If students do not expect to successfully change their status within the probationary semester, they can request that the Ph.D. committee grant a probation extension; however, an extension will be granted only if the student can prove likelihood of success in the upcoming semester. The student should send a letter asking for an extension and providing evidence of likelihood of success to the Ph.D. program director.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
The Information School Ph.D. Committee serves as the Progress Evaluation Committee for doctoral students. Upon admission, the Ph.D. committee chair serves as the default advisor for all students. At any point, the student may switch to a major professor/advisor based on similarities in research interests. The student's doctoral committee shall be five members of the graduate faculty; no fewer than three are to be from the iSchool faculty and at least one shall be from outside the school.

ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS
Each student is required to fulfill at least one teaching practicum and at least two different research practica. Students will demonstrate mastery of the required subject areas and research skills through three mastery demonstration papers and a program portfolio. Presentation and successful defense of a program portfolio and statement of intent constitutes the preliminary examination. Successful defense of the program portfolio and statement of intent constitutes formal acceptance into candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Completion of the degree should be within a three- to four-year period beyond earning the master's degree.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing their program portfolio and statement of intent may be required to take additional coursework, redefine their program portfolio and statement of intent, and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

DOCTORAL degree students who have been absent for ten 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; however, coursework in a foreign language may be required if necessary for completing research activities.

ADMISSIONS
Ph.D. admissions at the Information School require GRE scores, a GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or better in the last 60 hours of academic credit earned; a master's degree in an appropriate field; a detailed written statement of the area of research interest, fit with current faculty and the purpose for pursuing doctoral study; and an interview with the school's Ph.D. committee or other faculty members serving on the committee's behalf. International students must meet the Graduate School's language and degree requirements.

Applicants whose GPA falls below the required level must provide other evidence of academic ability. (Advice on the type of evidence appropriate to the applicant should be requested from the administrator of the doctoral program.) Applicant qualifications for admission will be reviewed by the school's Ph.D. committee, which will make an admissions recommendation to the director who, in turn, makes a recommendation to the Graduate School. The criteria used in this review include academic promise, the probability that the school's doctoral program will meet the goals and research interests of the applicant, and that the applicant will be able to complete the program successfully. Under certain circumstances, admission may be approved on a probationary basis or with deficiencies. Students will not normally be permitted to continue longer than the first year on probation. For more information see the Ph.D. program admissions page.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
• Students will be able to employ specific methodologies appropriate to areas of study.
• Students will be able to demonstrate basic capacities to employ new digital data collection and analysis methodologies.
• Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of a range of theories in research areas as well as core LIS theories.
• Students will be able to add to existing bodies of theory, scholarship or scientific knowledge through critique, testing or extension in scholarly output.
• Students will be able to demonstrate scholarly excellence.
• Students will be able to demonstrate skills and experience in teaching.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
• Students will be able to demonstrate mastery of scholarly writing genre.
• Students will be able to demonstrate strong oral communication skills.
• Students will be able to demonstrate involvement in the LIS academic community.
Faculty: Professors Eschenfelder (director), Downey, Kim, Whitmire; Associate Professors Smith; Assistant Professors Rubel, Senchyne, Willett