The Information School

University of Wisconsin – Madison

Doctoral Program Student Handbook

2026-2027

Reference this handbook to learn about the unique policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for Doctoral students in The Information School.

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Navigating Policy and Resources at UW-Madison

This handbook is one of many sources to consult as you become familiar with the policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms of graduate education at UW-Madison:

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is intended for doctoral students who are pursuing Doctor of Philosophy degrees. The UW-Madison Graduate School is the ultimate authority for granting graduate degrees at the University. The Information School (iSchool) administers the doctoral program under the authority of the Graduate School. The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures provide essential information regarding general University requirements. Program authority to set degree requirements beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the iSchool program faculty. The policies described in this handbook have been approved by the program faculty as a whole. Degrees and course requirements may change over time. However, students must meet the degree and course requirements in effect when they entered the program. In addition, administrative procedures and processes can change over time. Students are required to follow the procedures and processes listed in the current handbook. The information in this handbook should also be supplemented by individual consultation with your advisor so that individual needs, interests and all degree requirements are met.

Who to Contact about Questions

Many of your questions about how to meet expectations and thrive as a graduate student will be answered by the various sources of policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms listed in the graphic above. Several key positions in this department and on campus are ready to answer your remaining questions:

Key Actors

iSchool Administrator
iSchool Student Data & Enrollment Coordinator
PhD Program Director
PhD Committee

The name and contact information of your PhD Program Director can be found on your program's page in the *Graduate Guide* (guide.wisc.edu/graduate). Simply navigate to the "Major/Degree" tab, click on your program's name, and look for the contact information box on the righthand side.

Responsibilities of Key Actors

iSchool Administrator assumes responsibility for:

- Funding/payroll/scholarships
- Benefits coordination

iSchool Student Data & Enrollment Coordinator assumes responsibility for:

- Creation and maintenance of PhD student records
- Requesting and issuing warrants

PhD Program Director assumes responsibility for:

- Administering the doctoral program
- Monitoring student progress and writing letters alerting students who are not making satisfactory progress
- Updating PhD student handbook
- Liaison with doctoral advisers and PhD Committee
- Serves as initial advisor for all PhD students
- Funding decisions (with iSchool Director) regarding TAs, PAs, and fellowships
- Liaison with Graduate School

PhD Committee assumes responsibility for:

- Considering policies, issues, and curriculum, with recommendations to faculty
- Recruiting applicants, providing initial contact with strong applicants or assigning this responsibility to faculty members with the most similar interests
- Evaluating applicant files
- Interviewing qualified applicants
- Recommending candidates for fellowships
- Reviewing MD papers

Graduate School Services

For general inquiries and graduate student services from the Graduate School, see the operations and front desk contact information on this contact page: grad.wisc.edu/contacts.

Department & Program Overview

The doctoral program in information is designed to meet two major professional needs: (a) the development of the body of principles and theory that will elaborate and make effective the field of information studies, and (b) the preparation of research-competent

scholars who will exercise their understanding and skills in a diversity of teaching and research functions in the field.

iSchool PhD Learning Outcomes

1. Add to existing bodies of theory, scholarship, or scientific knowledge through critique, testing or extension in scholarly output.
    1. By having papers accepted at recognized conferences and journals
    2. By passing mastery demonstration (MD) papers
    3. By completing a satisfactory dissertation
    4. By having papers accepted at recognized scholarly journals
2. Demonstrate mastery of statistical, computational, and digital data collection and analysis methodologies.
    1. By including a digital data collection and analysis methodologies statement in the portfolio
    2. By enrolling in an appropriate digital humanities and/or analytics course (e.g. LIS 768)
3. Employ scholarly methodologies and tools appropriate to areas of study to inform research.
    1. By completing breadth requirements
    2. By including a research methods statement in the portfolio
4. Demonstrate scholarly communication skills both orally and in writing.
    1. By having papers accepted at recognized conferences and journals
    2. By passing MD papers
    3. By completing teaching assistant placements
    4. By giving presentations in conferences or workshops
5. Engage in service contributions as appropriate to profession and field of study.
    1. By attending conferences
    2. By participating in university academic activities (e.g. STS, interdisciplinary programs)
6. Demonstrate teaching skills and experience including cultural competency training.
    1. By completing teaching assistant placements
    2. By completing the pedagogy class successfully
    3. By completing a teaching assistantship and/or lectureship successfully
    4. By completing the teaching practicum successfully

Program/faculty governance committees and descriptions

iSchool PhD Program Director and PhD Committee:
The iSchool PhD Program Director has responsibility for assuring the administration of the doctoral program. The faculty delegates primary responsibility for doctoral program administration and policy development to the PhD Program Director and members of the PhD Committee of the iSchool.

Progress Evaluation Committee:
The PhD Committee serves as the Progress Evaluation Committee for doctoral students.

Student's Preliminary Committee:
The student's prelim committee is formed for the purpose of examining the preliminary proposal. This committee should be composed of three iSchool faculty members who likely will be on the student's doctoral committee.

Student's Doctoral Committee:
The student's doctoral committee shall include four 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 iSchool. Within the guidelines developed by the iSchool faculty, the student's doctoral committee shall approve the dissertation proposal, evaluate and accept the dissertation and conduct the final oral examination/defense.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Information School is committed to the ideas reflected in the UW's statement on diversity: "Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world."

How to Get Involved

As a graduate student at UW-Madison, you have a multitude of opportunities to become involved on campus and in your academic discipline. This involvement often enhances your academic, professional, and personal growth through developing advanced leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. It also provides opportunity for professional networking.

On Campus & In the Community

The Wisconsin Idea is the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom. For more than 100 years, this idea has guided the university's work. You will find a list of ways to engage in campus and local community life at:

The Graduate School's Current Student Page
grad.wisc.edu/current-students

The Wisconsin Involvement Network Page
https://win.wisc.edu/

Student Organizations Page
https://win.wisc.edu/organizations

If you are a student actively involved in leadership and service activities, consider nominating yourself for membership in the following honor society:

Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society
grad.wisc.edu/diversity/bouchet

Getting Started as a Graduate Student

This section guides you through important steps to take as you begin your journey as a graduate student at UW-Madison.

New Graduate Student Checklist

Be sure to review all steps listed on this webpage for new graduate students:

The Graduate School's New Student Page
grad.wisc.edu/new-students

In addition to a checklist for all new graduate students, that webpage includes sections with additional steps to take if you are a new international student, student with a disability, student veteran, student with children, or student with funding.

Doctoral Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains a list of steps to complete your degree, including deadlines and important things to know as you progress toward graduation: grad.wisc.edu/current-students/doctoral-guide.

In addition to what is posted on this webpage from the Graduate School, you must meet all required steps in the iSchool Doctoral Program Requirements. Please see Appendix 1: Timeline for Completing your PhD.

Advising & Mentoring

Advising relationships are a central part of academia, important to both the experience and development of students and faculty members alike.

The Graduate School's definition of an advisor can be found here: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232.

Your advisor has two main roles: 1) To assist you in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field, and 2) to chair the committee that will determine whether you have performed at an acceptable level in each of your degree milestones (see "Degree Requirements" section below for further information on building your committee). Other roles of your advisor may include tracking your progress in completing your degree (note: this may include use of the Graduate Student Tracking System at gsts.grad.wisc.edu), assisting with course selection and planning

your academic path, and helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and research opportunities.

The advisor advises the student on selecting courses, deciding upon and developing a minor and preparing the dissertation proposal. When the student finishes coursework, the student, after consulting the advisor, will submit to the iSchool PhD program director the names of three other faculty members who agree to serve on the student's doctoral committee. If the student subsequently changes the focus of the dissertation research, a change of advisor or a reconstitution of the committee may be requested. Both the student and advisor are responsible for making their expectations clear to each other. Be sure to discuss this with your advisor.

Finding & Selecting an Advisor

Upon admission, the PhD program director appoints each student to a faculty advisor whose expertise and project/research interests match closely with those that the student intends to acquire. Your faculty advisor(s) will be a key source of guidance for your academic development. Further definition can be found here: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232.

The name and contact information of your faculty advisor can be found on your Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under “Academic Progress” and then “Advisors.”

What to Expect from Your Advisor

Graduate students may learn about the characteristics of functional and dysfunctional relationships with advisors, strategies for communicating effectively and aligning expectations, and grievance processes through the following guide hosted by the University of Wisconsin Libraries. Completion of the micro-course is optional but is encouraged for all graduate students. The course takes about 20 minutes to complete. https://learn.library.wisc.edu/gradstudent-advisors/#/

The Information School follows the Graduate School’s policies and processes for managing hostile and intimidating behavior, sexual misconduct, and research misconduct (see https://grad.wisc.edu/academic-policies/). The Information School also has policies and a process for academic appeals (e.g., appeal of failing a qualifying exam) as outlined in Guide.

Changing Your Advisor

As the advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement, it may be terminated by either party. Students wishing to change advisors should first discuss the possible change with the PhD Director, current advisor and potential advisor. If the PhD Director, current advisor and new advisor agree to the change, then the student notifies the student records manager who will update the student record in the UW system. No faculty member is obliged to accept a student's request to serve as advisor; however, faculty members will assist students in finding an advisor who best serves the student's needs.

If a student finds themselves without an advisor for any reason, the PhD Committee appoints a default advisor. The role of the default advisor is not to advise on the student's area of research. Rather, the advisor can ensure eligibility to register for classes, check to see if the student is on track with PhD requirements, and facilitate networking for the student to find an advisor and/or switch programs. The student then has one full semester in which to find a new advisor, following the process outlined above. If an advisor is identified and commits to advising the student, a further one semester of default advising can be provided in order for the new advising relationship to be established. If a mutually agreed upon advisor is not found, the default advisor will be removed from the advisor role, and the Graduate School will block further enrollment for the student until an advisor is identified. No extensions for deadlines (e.g., MD1, MD2, preproposal) will be granted based on change of advisor.

Every graduate student must have an advisor or else they may be suspended from graduate study at UW-Madison by the Graduate School. Be sure to follow procedures to re-select a new advisor (described above) prior to finalizing the termination of your current advising relationship. You can confirm that the name of your advisor has been updated in the official record by looking in your Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under "Academic Progress" and then "Advisors."

Your advisor should be a faculty member in the program whose expertise and project/research interests match closely with those that you intend to acquire. To learn more about the faculty in your program, review the Faculty Directory on the iSchool website (https://ischool.wisc.edu/faculty-staff-directory/) and consider consulting the following sources:

- Courses and seminars you attend
- Our program website (https://ischool.wisc.edu/)
- Faculty publications

- Students currently in a prospective advisor's group/lab

Additionally, you may wish to have a discussion with a prospective advisor. Below are some questions to consider asking in this discussion, though it is not a complete list. You should spend some time identifying what is most important to you in your graduate training and ask questions accordingly.

Questions to Ask of Prospective Advisors (Adapted from IPiB handbook)

- What thesis projects would be available to me if I were to join your group?
- Would these projects expose me to a variety of different approaches?
- In general, how available will you be to answer questions I might have?
- What is your philosophy regarding the amount of guidance the advisor should provide to a student during preparation of the thesis proposal, literature seminars, thesis writing, etc.?
- What are your expectations for the amount of time I should spend each day/week in your group/lab?
- What regularly scheduled activities (e.g., group meetings, joint group meetings, research clubs) does your group participate in that provide an opportunity to get outside input on my research project and to hear about the work of other students and postdocs?
- Do you encourage your students to attend seminars and journal clubs, including those that may be outside of their narrow field of interest/research?
- Do students in your group/lab have the opportunity to attend professional meetings where they can interact with colleagues/researchers from other institutions?
- Do you include your graduate students in professional activities that will familiarize them with their field of interest/research, such as reviewing manuscripts and meeting with visiting speakers?
- How long do you think it should take me to get my degree?
- What are your former graduate students (if any) doing now?
- What is your general philosophy of graduate training and what goals do you have for your graduate students?

Mentoring Networks

In addition to a formal advisor, you are encouraged to develop a broad network of individuals who can provide academic and professional mentorship during and beyond your time as a graduate student.

Doctoral Degree Requirements

All students in the School of Information Doctoral Program are responsible for keeping aware of the following requirements to complete the degree.

For all current requirements to complete your degree (e.g., credits, courses, milestones, and learning outcomes/goals) see your Information PhD program page in the *Graduate Guide: https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/information/information-phd/*

Similarly, see "Policies" from the navigation bar of the program's page to learn about policies affecting these requirements (e.g., prior coursework, probation, credits per term allowed, time constraints, grievances and appeals, etc.). Note that when you look at the *Guide* to learn about program requirements, you will be viewing the current year's version. To find past versions of program requirements, see the Guide Archive and search for your program and the year you would like to reference.

Please see this document for an overview of the requirements for the iSchool's doctoral degree: Information School Doctoral Program Requirements.

Course Requirements

The doctoral program is designed to give the student (1) a broad general knowledge of the field of information studies, (2) an in-depth knowledge of an area of specialty and (3) research skills necessary to conduct research in the student's area of special interest.

Credit requirements

The Graduate School requires a minimum of 32 graduate-level credits taken at the University of Wisconsin – Madison after admission to the doctoral program before achieving dissertator status. The minimum credit requirement for an Information School PhD degree is a total of 51 credits before submitting a dissertation, including 990s (Research and Thesis) and 999s (Independent Reading and Research). **Students do not need to acquire 51 credits before submitting their portfolio and preliminary proposal.** For information on counting prior coursework toward credit requirements (similar to transferring credits) or waiving courses see the section 'Academic Exception Petitions' below.

Course distributions and content areas

Coursework, as a whole, must contribute to a rationally unified program of study and research. In addition to work in the iSchool, PhD students must also complete a minor. Through coursework, PhD students are expected to gain (1) a broad background in information studies research and scholarship and (2) develop an in-depth knowledge in an area of specialty. This is a summary of the iSchool course requirements, which are detailed below:

- Core Information Science Courses (13 credits)
- Breadth Courses (9 credits)
- Specialization (12 credits)
- Doctoral Minor (9 credits)
- Independent studies

Core Information Science Courses (13 credits)

Students show development of a broad background knowledge of the LIS field through completion of content area coursework. All students must take

- LIS 910 Ways of Knowing in Information Studies (3 credits)
- 4 credits of LIS 925 a 1-credit departmental seminar course
- Two 900-level iSchool seminars (6 credits). iSchool PhD seminars are preferred; however, if no PhD iSchool seminar is available, an alternative iSchool course may be recommended by the PhD program director and the student's advisor.

Breadth Courses (9 credits)

Must take at least one 3-credit course in each of the following areas: 1) Intro to Research Design, Thinking, Methods; 2) Statistics/Numerical Literacy OR Working with Digital Data; and 3) Pedagogy. Suggested and pre-approved lists of courses for each of these areas are available from advisors. Breadth courses can be counted toward a distributed minor (option B) if a student's advisor agrees.

Specialization (12 credits)

Students must complete a minimum 12 credits in their area of specialization. Courses must be relevant to the student's program of study. Courses should be chosen in consultation with their advisor. Independent study credits (999s) can toward 'specialization' courses, if a student's advisor agrees.

Doctoral Minor for iSchool PhD students (9 credits)

Students must complete a minimum of 9 credits in their PhD minor. Students may complete a concentrated minor or a distributed minor or a concentrated minor. If the minor is located within a single department (concentrated; Option A), the requirements of that department must be met (which might be more than 9 credits). The distributed minor (Option B), a minor in which courses are selected from among two or more departments, must consist of at least 9 credits. Option B can be appropriate for iSchool PhD students because information studies theories build upon research and principles from a diversity of other academic disciplines and professional fields. Additionally, information studies research frequently involves not only the theories and techniques from information studies, but also the substantive materials in diverse fields of knowledge and the greatly varied community and institutional contexts (e.g. school. Research institute, general community) within which information services are provided. The intent of the minor is not met with basic courses taken to meet the research skills requirement.

Additional Program Requirements

Theoretical Approaches

Students should develop expertise in the theoretical frameworks they select for their dissertation as approved by their advisor. Knowledge of theoretical approaches will be obtained through LIS 910 and other coursework, both inside and outside the iSchool, and may include:

- Critical theory: gender, race, culture, able-ness, power, public spheres
- Historiography and geography: social construction and production of time and space, temporal/spatial processes, theories of place, politics of canon formation, public history
- Organizational theories: theories of organizational change, leadership, management, work practices, professions
- Paradigms: different traditions within philosophy of science (e.g. pragmatism, positivism, post-positivism), epistemology, ontology
- Psychology theories: cognitive psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, perception, etc.
- Socio-political theories: political science, sociology, policy, economics, ethics, jurisprudence
- Socio-technical theories: activity theory, systems theory, social network theory

IRB Training

IRB approval is required for all studies written up as MD papers, unless the MD paper does not involve human subjects. Regardless of whether an MD paper requires IRB approval, each student must successfully complete the Human Subjects tutorial by the time she or he submits the first MD paper.

Publishing and Conference Presentations

Prior to the PhD student's portfolio defense, the student must have completed at least two submissions to a refereed journal, conference, or book chapter. Please see the section below on Funding for Conference/Research Travel for information about departmental and Graduate School funds to support conference attendance or research-related travel.

Research Practicum

Each student is required to gain research experience under the mentorship of a faculty member before becoming a PhD candidate. Students may fulfill this requirement by completing a research practicum (see description below) or by holding a Project or Research Assistant position with their advisor or another UW-Madison faculty member. Students completing a Project or Research Assistant position in the iSchool or in another department do not need to complete a Research Practicum, however, they may choose to do a practicum to expand their research experience. Students' Annual Progress Evaluation Forms must indicate Project or Research Assistant positions, if applicable.

The purpose of the research practicum is to ensure that each PhD student has basic experience in several areas of research (e.g. study design, data collection, data analysis, report writing), to familiarize students with faculty research and to promote collaboration between PhD students and iSchool faculty. Each practicum may be taken for credit, or may be taken for no credit. If the practicum is taken for credit, the student should register for 2-credit practicum. The practicum must include at least 90 hours' worth of work. The maximum number of research practicum that may be taken for credit is two.

To fulfill a practicum requirement, the PhD Committee recommends that students approach a faculty whose research area interests the student. Faculty are encouraged to periodically announce practicum opportunities to make students aware of research practicum possibilities. If doing two practica, students are encouraged to do their practica with two different faculty to gain experience with different research areas. Students are also encouraged to design each practicum to focus on a different research

skill (e.g. practicum one could focus on study design, while the second could involve data collection). Each practicum may also involve more than one skill.

A practicum may be taken with faculty outside the iSchool as long as the outside faculty ensures that the practicum meets the iSchool research practicum requirements and provides required feedback on the iSchool practicum form.

A research practicum cannot be fulfilled as part of a course; however, a course project could be extended into a research practicum if the student can find a faculty sponsor. The student and faculty sponsor should prepare a research practicum contract. A template can be found on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site This contract defines the tasks, priorities, deliverables, due dates and number of hours to spend on each task. As part of the contract, the faculty sponsor must write a brief explanation of how the student's work contributes to the overall research and the student's personal research interests.

At the end of the practicum the faculty sponsor signs the contract, indicating that all tasks have been satisfactorily completed. This contract should be maintained in the student's portfolio and is proof that the student has fulfilled the practicum requirement. Students may also wish to maintain samples of research practicum outputs in their portfolio as evidence of experience or mastery of particular research methods or particular theoretical areas.

Teaching Experience

All students must demonstrate teaching skills and experience including cultural competency training. Students may meet the teaching skills requirement by teaching a course, through a Teaching Assistant position, or through a teaching practicum.

A cultural competency training statement must be included in the portfolio. This statement only needs to indicate the training the student undertook. Cultural competency training is often included in pedagogy courses such as LIS639, or students can take a dedicated cultural competency workshop or seminar. An indicative list of cultural competency training opportunities is available from students' advisors.

Option: Instructors and Teaching Assistants

For students who are instructors or teaching assistants, teaching skills and experience are documented through course evaluations from students. In addition, when PhD students teach a course, a faculty member provides them with an evaluation of their

teaching as part of the departmental course evaluation process. These are all optional documents for the teaching section of the portfolio.

Option: Teaching practicum

Students who do not teach a course must satisfactorily complete a teaching practicum under the supervision of a faculty member. The faculty supervisor assesses the practicum experience against student's stated goals using a rubric which is included in the portfolio. The purpose of the teaching practicum is to ensure that each PhD student has basic experience in LIS teaching, including the skills of course planning, materials development, presentation of materials, leading discussions and evaluating student work. Practicum outputs also provide evidence of teaching ability. The practicum may be taken for credit or may be taken for no credit. The maximum number of teaching practicum that may be taken for credit is one. Any additional teaching practicum may not be taken for credit.

To fulfill a teaching practicum requirement, the PhD Committee recommends that students approach the faculty who teaches the course with which they would like to gain experience. The student and faculty will prepare a "contract" describing the student's obligations. A template can be found on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site

Because the purpose of the practicum is to gain LIS teaching experience, the teaching practicum should be taken with an iSchool faculty member. Students may fulfill their practicum by working as a TA for an iSchool class, but they must provide evidence that their TA experience fulfilled all the practicum requirements (see below). Students who have taught LIS courses at other institutions may petition the PhD Committee to allow their previous experience to fulfill their teaching practicum requirement. This petition should also be accompanied by evidence of teaching as outlined below. Students cannot fulfill their practicum requirement by presenting in a class they are currently taking, or by giving presentations at colloquia.

The teaching practicum should be equivalent to one week's worth of teaching work for a course or approximately 45 hours' worth of effort. It must include the following elements: course planning, preparation of materials (e.g. course readings, handouts, slides, lecture, presentation), leading discussion and evaluation of students' comprehension of material.

Evidence demonstrating fulfillment of the teaching practicum requirements may include (but is not limited to):

- Description of the goals of the practicum and how the material covered helped students meet broader course objectives
- A reading list
- Examples of the students' work or completed assignments
- Lecture outline
- Contract signed by faculty sponsor at the end of the practicum indicating completion of agreed upon responsibilities and obligations (signed contract serves as proof that the student completed the practicum)
- Written feedback provided by the faculty sponsor indicating elements of classroom student evaluation of the PhD student's teaching

All evidence of practica should be maintained in the student's portfolio. A copy of the contract signed by the faculty sponsor is a proof document and should also be maintained in the student's portfolio. Faculty who agree to sponsor a practicum are responsible for providing a half-page of written feedback; a practicum should only be conducted when the faculty sponsor is available to observe and provide feedback.

Program Milestone Requirements and Deadlines

The following sections outline key milestones in student progress toward the PhD. Also see Appendix 1: Timeline for Completing your PhD.

Annual Progress Evaluation

Students will provide documentation of their progress through the program and other academic activities by submitting materials on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site. Required submission materials include the PhD Student Annual Progress Evaluation Form (pre-dissertators), statement of progress (dissertators), CV, and teaching evaluations (if applicable). The purpose of the annual progress evaluation is to provide feedback and counseling for the student. Students submit materials mid-April and meet with their advisors to discuss their materials before the end of classes in May. All faculty who advise (or intend to advise) PhD students meet during finals week to discuss each student. The discussion includes input from the advisor, teaching/research supervisor, and any other relevant faculty members. A letter which summarizes the discussion is sent to the student and kept by the Student Records Manager.

Mastery Demonstration (MD) Papers

iSchool PhD students will demonstrate mastery of the required subject areas and research skills through two mastery demonstration (MD) papers. The MD paper represents scholarly work conducted by the student as part of a UW-Madison course, project, or for MD2, an independent study. The purpose of the MD paper requirement is to ensure that iSchool PhD students have the skills required to conduct and report on independent scholarly research. It is hoped that all iSchool PhD students will publish their MD papers at conferences or journals. Both papers require an oral defense for the purpose of gaining skills in articulating ideas verbally and having a dialogue with faculty members about ideas in the papers. MD papers are submitted and assessed via the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site.

MD papers must be examined by the end of the students' third semester (MD1) and 6th semester (MD2), although examinations can occur earlier. Advisors should work out a timeline with each student which includes accountability structures (e.g., submit rough draft to advisor by a particular date). After their examinations, students have one additional semester in which to revise and resubmit MD papers. Failure to have papers accepted during this additional semester results in the student being put on probationary status. While on probation, the student has one additional semester (excluding summer) to change their status (see Appendix 2). Students may have difficulties completing the program in five years if they are submitting MD papers during a probationary semester. See Appendix 2 for detailed example timelines.

All students must complete the MD1 *proposal* during their first year of the program. Proposals are due at the end of semester 2. The iSchool PhD Committee strongly encourages students to do a literature review for their first MD paper. The literature review is more than a summary of related studies in the field. It is a piece of writing that expresses critical engagement with existing research and theories in the chosen topic area. The PhD Committee is looking for a paper that describes a well-defined area of research, that makes a clear point, and that explains how a substantial and representative amount literature relates to the area of research. The review should efficiently and accurately convey key elements of the literature and should provide critical comments on and extensions to that literature. A rubric for grading MD papers is available on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site.

MD1 proposals and papers are read by 3 members of the iSchool graduate faculty who constitute the student's MD1 Committee. One member of the MD1 Committee will be the student's advisor (who will act as chair), and other members of the MD1 are selected by the PhD Program Committee. Where there is disagreement on the committee (between non-chair members), a 4th person will be called in (appointed by PhD Program Director).

The MD1 paper is examined by the student's MD1 Committee at a formal defense meeting. The student should assume that the paper has been read carefully by the examiners, therefore, the purpose of the examination is to have an in-depth discussion about the paper. Optional **five-minute** presentations are allowed at MD examinations at the advisor's discretion. This should present a very brief synthesis of your project and should be delivered orally per the norms of your field for conference presentations. Please talk to your advisor about expectations for oral presentations. At the MD1 defense meeting, the student will be asked questions and speak to the work reflected in the paper. In addition, the discussion can cover the student's general progress, their thoughts about a minor field, their schedule for completion of the degree and other topics relevant to the student's performance and progress. The MD1 Committee's role is to assess whether the student has the potential to complete the requirements for the degree and whether the program is capable of offering the resources needed by the student. The meeting is not a public occasion. On the basis of the discussion, the Committee develops observations and recommendations for the student. The chair of the MD1 Committee reports these to the student and notifies the PhD Director of the completion of the process. Evaluation may result in a recommendation that the student not continue with the iSchool PhD program.

The second MD paper must be submitted by the end of the student's 6th semester, although examinations can occur earlier. Students should agree on a topic for the MD2 paper with their advisor. A committee of three faculty members will evaluate the MD2 paper, including the student's advisor who acts as MD2 Committee chair. Students should consult with their advisors about other potential MD2 Committee members (examiners). The MD2 Committee may include one faculty member outside the iSchool as part of the committee of three; however, the non-iSchool faculty member must be a member of the UW Graduate faculty. The student is responsible for contacting that faculty member and getting agreement after PhD Committee approval. In addition, if a student would like to include a non-UW faculty member, the MD2 committee can be increased to four members. Following the Graduate School requirements, the fourth member and any additional members may be from any of the following categories, as approved by the iSchool's PhD Committee: graduate faculty, faculty from a department without a graduate program, academic staff (including emeritus faculty), visiting faculty, faculty from other institutions, scientists, research associates, and other individuals deemed qualified by the PhD committee

Advisors will share desired selections of MD2 Committee members with the PhD Chair who will assess if the proposed committee fits with the rules of the program (as described here) and communicate a decision with the advisor. The advisor must ask

proposed committee members if they are willing and able to serve. If a replacement member to the proposed committee needs to be identified, the advisor should consult with the PhD chair with a suggestion. After the advisor has secured agreement from all committee members, the advisor notifies the student of their MD2 Committee, and the student arranges an MD2 defense meeting. This meeting will be similar to the MD1 defense meeting. A list of evaluation criteria for use by the MD2 Committee can be found on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site. The evaluation criteria include a required literature review component, as well as making a novel contribution to relevant scholarly conversations.

The two MD papers should ideally address a student's research focus. Students may revise papers prepared for classes and submit them for the MD requirements. Before submission, students must get feedback on the paper from their advisor, and the paper should be revised on the basis of that feedback. The revision may be done in the context of a particular journal in which the paper may appear. The PhD Committee encourages students to make an appointment with the Writing Center to review their MD papers. MD papers may be turned in at any time before the deadlines, excluding summers.

MD paper extensions: Students may make requests for extensions due to major life events and/or unforeseen delays in MD paper progress, see 'Academic Exception Petitions' section below. If there is a minor delay in submitting a paper, the late submission will be recorded on the students' annual progress evaluation form, which is kept by the student records officer as part of the students' iSchool permanent file.

Authorship: The student must be the sole author of MD1. The purpose of MD1 is for the department to assess the student's ability to research and write independently. MD1 may be developed into a co-authored project after the MD1 exam. For MD2, the student must be the sole or lead author. As a lead author, the student is responsible for the development and articulation of a concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, conducting research and analysis, writing major portions of a manuscript, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), and interpreting results. Students should discuss the Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRediT) with their advisor and co-authors: https://credit.niso.org/. Descriptions of the contributions of co-authors must be presented in an appendix. Co-authors should be informed of the student's intention to use co-authored work in their MD2 and the co-authors should agree to permit it.

Evaluation Expectations: Evaluation expectations increase from the 1st to the 2nd paper. The first paper should be at least suitable for a conference poster session or

modest conference presentation. Reviewers should also have lower expectations for quantity of data included and sophistication of research question for the first paper. The paper should however present a compelling question or problem, begin or propose a reasonable exploration of that problem, present a logical research design to produce data that inform the research question, and meet all the style and format expectations for a scholarly paper. Expectations should rise for the second paper – it should be of the same quality as a peer reviewed conference presentation. The 2nd paper should be of publishable quality in a respectable peer reviewed journal. See the assessment rubrics on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site for exact evaluation criteria.

MD Paper Scoring will be in the form of one of four scores: accept, revise with minor revisions, revise with major revisions, or reject. See the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site for the description of these scores. Both MD papers must be submitted and "accepted" before the student can petition for the portfolio presentation and defense meeting.

Revisions: If MD paper revisions are required, a due date is set, and the revisions are reviewed by one or all reviewers. The outcome is communicated to the student by the student's advisor. The advisor will provide a memo/email to the student outlining which revisions are required in order for the paper to be considered acceptable. The student must submit on Canvas a revised copy of the paper and a cover memo outlining how the student has accommodated the required changes (with references to specific areas of text). Minor revisions should be things that can be completed within 1-2 months (although students have a full semester to have the paper 'accepted'). Major revisions require significant rewriting, and students have one semester to rewrite and have the paper 'accepted'. See Appendix 2 for a detailed indication of revision timelines.

Advancement to Candidacy

Students must complete their advancement to candidacy within four years of entering the program (by the end of the 8th semester). Students who miss this deadline will not be in good standing with the Information School and funding will be reconsidered. There are two parts of students' advancement to candidacy: 1) submission of a program portfolio, and 2) presentation and defense of a preliminary proposal.

Committees

At this stage, a Preliminary Committee is formed for the purpose of examining the preliminary proposal. The Prelim Committee consists of three faculty members, including the student's advisor who acts as the Committee chair. The Preliminary Committee may include one faculty member outside the iSchool as part of the committee of three; however, the non-iSchool faculty member must be a member of the UW Graduate faculty. The student is responsible for contacting that faculty member and getting agreement. In addition, if a student would like to include a non-UW faculty member, the Prelim Committee can be increased to four members. Following the Graduate School requirements, the fourth member and any additional members may be from any of the following categories, as approved by the iSchool's PhD Committee: graduate faculty, faculty from a department without a graduate program, academic staff (including emeritus faculty), visiting faculty, faculty from other institutions, scientists, research associates, and other individuals deemed qualified by the PhD committee.

The student's Dissertation Committee must be comprised of at least four members representing more than one UW-Madison graduate program. Three of the committee members must be UW–Madison graduate faculty or former UW–Madison graduate faculty within one year of resignation or retirement. The fourth member and any additional members may be from any of the following categories: graduate faculty, faculty from a department without a graduate program, academic staff (including emeritus faculty), visiting faculty, faculty from other institutions, scientists, research associates, and other individuals deemed qualified by the iSchool PhD committee.

At least three Dissertation Committee members *must be* designated as readers; all four members *can be* designated as readers. Readers are Committee members who commit themselves to closely reading and reviewing the entire dissertation. The Committee may include faculty who are designated as *non-readers*. The rationale for specifically designating non-reader status is to facilitate faculty participation in dissertations without automatically expecting the level of commitment associated with deeply engaging a PhD thesis. Given faculty workloads, designating a non-reader in some cases may permit faculty participation where engagement would otherwise be impossible (from Graduate School KnowledgeBase).

These committees advise and evaluate satisfactory progress, administer preliminary and final oral examinations, evaluate a thesis or dissertation, and/or sign a degree warrant. For general guidance from The Graduate School on the role and composition of committees as well as an online tool to determine if your committee meets minimum requirements, see this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201.

Program Portfolio

The portfolio is a way for students to demonstrate that they have met all program requirements, and that they have obtained the expertise necessary to undertake their dissertation project. Students are eligible to present a program portfolio when they have satisfied the program requirements, including completing all required coursework, clearing their records of all incomplete grades, acquiring the required graduate credits, and completing all teaching and research practica. The program portfolio should consist of a well-organized electronic folder maintained by the student throughout their doctoral career (any accessible online space is acceptable including Box or Google drive). A list of materials to include can be found on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site. Portfolios may be submitted at any time but must be submitted for examination at least 35 days before the end of the students' 8th semester.

Before the portfolio examination, the student will submit the portfolio to the advisor for approval. Advisors should ensure portfolios are accessible and complete. At this time, the student should contact Dennis Choi <dhchoi@wisc.edu> who will request a warrant for advancement to candidacy. The request for the warrant must occur at least **30 days before the end of the students' 8th semester.** Students wishing to request a warrant to change their status from 'student' to 'candidate' for time sensitive schedules (such as applying for grants) must consult with Dennis Choi about timing of this process.

Three members of the iSchool faculty must evaluate the portfolio – one must be the students' advisor, and one must be an associate or full professor. The portfolio is evaluated using a checklist which can be found on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site. Students are responsible for arranging examiners and ensuring the portfolio is accessible. Faculty should direct questions to the student's advisor who will consult with the PhD Chair and student if necessary. Portfolios must be examined and accepted before the end of the students' 8th semester.

Preliminary Proposal and Proposal Defense

After the portfolio is submitted, the student can proceed to the presentation and defense of the Preliminary Proposal with their Preliminary Committee. The examination of the Preliminary Proposal (the proposal defense) must occur by the end of the students' 8th semester (see the UW Academic Calendar for the date of the end of semester). The Preliminary Proposal defense may occur during the 30-day portfolio review period. Students are responsible for arranging the examination date (proposal defense) with

their Preliminary Committee. Preliminary Proposals must be submitted for examination via the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site.

The Preliminary Proposal is a forward-looking plan for the student's doctoral research. The proposal should be 8-10 pages (not including references). Students should work with the advisor to decide the content areas of the proposal, as this will vary according to discipline. The proposal might cover the following areas:

- Statement of the problem
- Description of the scope and nature of the related literature
- Description of planned theoretical framework(s)
- Discussion of the expected methodologies
- Delineation of the potential contributions of such an investigation

There will be an oral defense of the Preliminary Proposal. In the defense meeting, the student will give an 8 to10-minute presentation of the Proposal. *Please avoid repeating material verbatim from your Preliminary Proposal.* Content will vary – the following are some questions you might address in your presentation:

1. What is the problem? (in the theoretical debate, the world
2. Who particularly cares? (an argument about its importance)
3. What have others done? (the lit review, but pointed as an argument)
4. What is your approach? (your general approach, the new idea)
5. What are you going to do explicitly? (your operationalization, investigation)
6. What will happen? (or did happen, if you have results)
7. What does this mean? (in terms of solving the problem)
8. Who cares? (in what way is this important?)
9. Where will you publish these results? (who is going to be interested in hearing this stuff?)
10. What will you be doing in 5 years? (where is this going?)

Source: https://judithsolson.com/

Following the presentation, the Preliminary Committee will ask the student questions and discuss suggestions for the student's dissertation research. In the event that the student is deficient in demonstrating appropriate mastery of research skills, theory or subject area knowledge, the Committee will recommend additional requirements that may include, but not be limited to additional course work and readings. The student's advisor, in consultation with the Committee, will determine when the student should fulfill these additional requirements.

Preliminary defenses are not open for everyone to observe, although students can invite observers. The iSchool would like all students to have the chance to observe one

preliminary defense before their own prelim. Therefore, each preliminary defense will include a PhD student notetaker. Students are responsible for organizing their notetaker (must be an iSchool PhD student who has not completed their preliminary examination). We advise all students to be a notetaker for someone before their own prelim defense; however, this is not required.

Protocol and Timeline

Students must have their program portfolio and Preliminary Proposal examined by the end of their 8th semester in the program (see the UW Academic Calendar for the date of the end of semester). Revisions may extend beyond the end of the semester. Four weeks prior to the Preliminary Proposal defense, the student should meet with the iSchool Student Data & Enrollment Coordinator to review coursework and request a preliminary warrant. After a successful submission of the portfolio and defense of the preliminary proposal, the Graduate School Office issues a warrant authorizing the Information School to receive the student's program portfolio and preliminary proposal. The warrant constitutes a formal acceptance into candidacy for the PhD degree. Please see Appendix 1: Timeline for Completing your PhD.

Dissertation Proposal, Dissertation, and Oral Defense

The Dissertation Proposal is a formal document that the student prepares and that the student's Dissertation Committee evaluates and approves. Students must work with advisors to decide an appropriate timeline and format for the Dissertation Proposal. For many students, the Dissertation Proposal is the first three chapters of the dissertation: introductory chapter, literature review, and methods. In any case, the proposal must contain at a minimum the following sections:

- Statement of the problem including:
  - an indication of the relevance of the topic to information studies
  - review of the literature and related research
  - an indication of the theoretical and conceptual framework within which the problem fits
- Specific research question(s) or hypothesis including:
  - an indication of the variables to be related or phenomena to be analyzed
  - assumptions underlying the study and definitions of major terms in the question(s) or hypothesis
- Data collection discussion, including:
  - an indication of the nature of the data
  - the probable sources of the data

    - general description of any instruments to be used to collect and record data
    - procedures to be followed in data collection
- Analysis and interpretation discussion, including:
    - an indication of the method to be used in interpreting data
    - statistical tests (if applicable) to be used
    - method for grouping or interpreting non-quantitative data

In the Dissertation Proposal, the student must demonstrate the ability for independent investigation. The dissertation proposal evaluation process involves an oral defense that is not open to the public, although students may invite observers and a notetaker.
The student's Dissertation Committee shall supervise the dissertation, with the student's advisor serving as chair. Students shall arrange with their Committee the procedures for consultation and advice during the period of research and writing.

Dissertations

The Information School accepts a range of dissertation formats including monograph-style and article-based. Each discipline has expectations about format and content of dissertations, therefore, it is essential for students to consult closely with their advisor and Dissertation Committee when deciding their dissertation format. The following descriptions provide guidance to help you understand the range of possible formats.

Monograph-style Dissertation: In this style of dissertation/thesis, early chapters typically provide an extensive literature review and/or theoretical framework which is the basis of and rationale for a research problem that is analyzed in subsequent chapters. A final chapter summarizes the work and explores its broader meanings and interpretations. The elements of a monograph-style dissertation cohere because the content of each chapter exists expressly to provide the background and basis of later chapters.

Article-Based Dissertation: The article-based dissertation contains chapters of completed manuscripts which may be under review, in press, or published. The original purpose for writing these manuscripts may have been to satisfy current doctoral degree requirements (e.g., MD2 paper). Articles submitted as part of a dissertation must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the PhD program and be approved by the student's preliminary proposal committee at the time of the student's preliminary proposal defense. To ensure input is able to be incorporated into published work, **the internal committee must have the opportunity to provide substantive guidance and feedback for at least 2 of the 3 articles/chapters before they are published.** Guidance and feedback can be done at any point and do not have to be provided via a formal examination. Preliminary proposals must indicate which articles will be part of the final dissertation (if the articles are already published). Manuscripts

must demonstrate the author's capacity for independent scholarship and contribution to knowledge.

There must be coherence between the manuscripts (articles) that make up the dissertation, and the rationale for grouping the three articles together must be clear. Careful selection of manuscripts and convincing, incisive introductory and concluding chapters are required in order to show readers how the articles relate to each other and contribute to the central theme of the dissertation. The common theme or problem that the manuscripts address is identified and discussed in an introductory chapter. A final concluding chapter discusses the theme or problem in light of the information contained in the manuscripts and provides an opportunity for the writer to explore the broader implications of the work. The organization of chapters generally takes this form, with the expectation that chapters 1, 2, and 6 are independently authored by the dissertator:
Chapter 1: General Introduction
Chapter 2: Literature review
Chapter 3: Paper 1
Chapter 4: Paper 2
Chapter 5: Paper 3
Chapter 6: General Discussion/Conclusions

Authorship: The author of the dissertation must be the sole or lead author of any articles included in the dissertation. As lead authors, students are responsible for the development and articulation of a concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, conducting research and analysis, writing major portions of a manuscript, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), and interpreting results. Dissertators should discuss the Contributor Role Taxonomy (CRediT) with their advisor and co-authors: https://credit.niso.org/.

Co-authored papers may be included (if the dissertation author is the lead author). However, the contributions of co-authors to the paper must be clearly stated in the dissertation. Descriptions of the contributions of co-authors must be presented in a subsection of the introductory chapter of the document. Co-authors should be informed of the dissertation writer's intention to use co-authored work in their dissertation and the co-authors should agree to permit it.

Copyright: Students should ensure that their right to include the final author version of their paper in their dissertation is explicitly permitted in any publication agreements. For an example of such an agreement, see the section on Reuse: ACM Author Rights.

Format: students must select a prominent style guide appropriate to their field of study and whose provisions must be applied to the manuscript as a whole. When individual articles have been prepared for or accepted by journals for publication, and the articles have been prepared using the author and style guide issued by the journal(s), the articles must be revised as appropriate to conform with the overall style as required by the Graduate School before submission as a dissertation.

Oral Defense

When the student completes the dissertation and meets all other requirements, the student's Dissertation Committee will hold a final oral examination/defense open to the general public. A student may request that the final defense be limited to particular audiences (e.g., iSchool faculty and students), for example, if the dissertation topic is a particularly sensitive subject. Students are expected to announce the date, time and location of their final oral examination/defense via email, posters, and digital displays following a process outlined on the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site (the page called 'Announcing your dissertation defense').

While all faculty may participate in the oral examination, the decision on acceptance of the research rests with the student's Dissertation Committee. In order to participate in the university's May commencement exercises, the oral examination must be successfully completed by March. Students who have a scheduled oral examination, and who plan to complete all requirements for the degree by December, may participate in the iSchool graduation ceremony in May of that year.

The dissertation must conform to the requirements of the Graduate School. iSchool students no longer need to deposit a copy of their dissertation in the Information School. Students should follow the Graduate School requirements for submitting copies of dissertations.

Time Constraints

Students must take their final oral examination and deposit their dissertation within five years after passing their program portfolio and Preliminary Proposal. Timelines for completing a dissertation vary, and students should plan a timeline in consultation with their advisor and Dissertation Committee. A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to meet the five-year deadline may be required to take additional coursework, redefend their program portfolio and Preliminary Proposal, 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.

Transferring to a Master's Program

The Information School offers an MS Information Research Option, only for enrolled PhD students who wish to leave the program. This MS does not require an exam or MD paper and will be granted to enrolled students who have successfully completed 30 credits from a list of courses. See the current UW Guide for further requirements (under Information School MS Information: Research).

Students might also consider transferring to the iSchool's MA or MS Information program, but funding is not guaranteed. Transferrable coursework will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Enrollment Requirements

In the iSchool, after finishing coursework, students can change to part-time status. Under exceptional circumstances, students can apply to the PhD Committee to change to part-time status before finishing coursework. Students are responsible for following Graduate School policies related to course enrollment requirements and limitations:

Adding / Dropping Courses
grad.wisc.edu/documents/add-drop

Auditing Courses
policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1224

Canceling Enrollment
grad.wisc.edu/documents/canceling-enrollment

Continuous Enrollment Requirement for Dissertators
policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1204

Enrollment Accountability
grad.wisc.edu/documents/enrollment-accountability

Leave of Absence and Readmission

The Information School follows the UW's policies on Leaves of Absence and Readmission. Note that all dissertators must maintain continuous enrollment by enrolling each fall and spring semester for three graded graduate credits (and the summer semester if defending their dissertation during the summer). See UW Policies:
https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1227
https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1230
https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1204

Minimum Enrollment Requirements
policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Your continuation as a graduate student at UW-Madison is at the discretion of your program, the Graduate School, and your faculty advisor. Any student may be placed on probation or dismissed from the Graduate School for not maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and this can impact your academic standing (detailed below), financial aid (see this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1040), or funding (consult your sources of funding, as applicable). Our program has its own definition of satisfactory academic progress and related procedures that supplement Graduate School policy, as described in this section.

Information about how the Graduate School determines satisfactory academic progress can be found at this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1218. In addition to the Graduate School's monitoring of satisfactory academic progress, this program regularly reviews the satisfactory academic progress of its students.

Good Academic Standing

To remain in good academic standing within the iSchool PhD program, a student must maintain a 3.5 overall GPA, not carry any incomplete grades in courses (other than 999s) for more than one semester, and they must pass both Mastery Demonstration papers by appointed deadlines.

A student who fails to meet any of the above criteria will receive a letter of warning from the PhD program director placing them on probationary status. The student will have

one additional semester (excluding summer) to change their status. If they do not successfully change their status, the student will be asked to leave the program. If the student does not expect to successfully change their status within the probationary semester, they can request that the PhD Committee grant a probation extension. An extension will only be granted if the student can prove the likelihood of success in the upcoming semester. The student should send a letter asking for an extension and providing likelihood of success to the PhD program director. Continuation in the Graduate School is at the discretion of the Graduate School, the iSchool and the PhD program director.

Personal Conduct Expectations

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards maintains detailed guidance on student rights and responsibilities related to learning in a community that is safe and fosters integrity and accountability. You are responsible for keeping aware of their policies and procedures, found at the following page: conduct.students.wisc.edu

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student (UWS 14.03(1)):

1. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
2. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
5. engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
6. assists other students in any of these acts.

Academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapter 14. For further information on this law, what constitutes academic misconduct, and procedures related to academic misconduct, see:

The Graduate School

> Academic Policies & Procedures: Misconduct, Academic
> grad.wisc.edu/documents/misconduct-academic

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

Academic Misconduct Website
conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct

Academic Misconduct Flowchart
conduct.students.wisc.edu/documents/academic-misconduct-flow-chart

Non-Academic Misconduct

The university may discipline a student in non-academic matters in the following situations:

1. for conduct which constitutes a serious danger to the personal safety of a member of the university community or guest;
2. for stalking or harassment;
3. for conduct that seriously damages or destroys university property or attempts to damage or destroy university property, or the property of a member of the university community or guest;
4. for conduct that obstructs or seriously impairs university-run or university-authorized activities, or that interferes with or impedes the ability of a member of the university community, or guest, to participate in university-run or university-authorized activities;
5. for unauthorized possession of university property or property of another member of the university community or guest;
6. for acts which violate the provisions of UWS 18, Conduct on University Lands;
7. for knowingly making a false statement to any university employee or agent on a university-related matter, or for refusing to identify oneself to such employee or agent;
8. for violating a standard of conduct, or other requirement or restriction imposed in connection with disciplinary action.

Non-academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapters 17 and 18. For further information on these laws, what constitutes non-academic misconduct, and procedures related to non-academic misconduct, see:

The Graduate School

Academic Policies & Procedures: Misconduct, Non-Academic
grad.wisc.edu/documents/misconduct-nonacademic

Office for Student Conduct and Community Standards

Non-Academic Misconduct Website
conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct

University of Wisconsin System (UWS)

Chapter 17: Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures
docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17

Chapter 18: Conduct on University Lands
docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18

Research Misconduct

Much of graduate education is carried out not in classrooms, but in laboratories and other research venues, often supported by federal or other external funding sources. Indeed, it is often difficult to distinguish between academic misconduct and cases of research misconduct. Graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff. The Graduate School is responsible for investigating allegations of research misconduct. This is often done in consultation with the Division of Student Life as well as with federal and state agencies to monitor, investigate, determine sanctions, and train about the responsible conduct of research. For more information, contact the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Policy, 333 Bascom Hall, (608) 262-1044.

Graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff. Further information about these standards and related policies and procedures can be found at:

The Graduate School

Academic Policies & Procedures: Responsible Conduct of Research
grad.wisc.edu/documents/responsible-conduct-of-research

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

Research Policies

research.wisc.edu/compliance-policy

Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (Bullying)

Hostile and intimidating behavior (HIB), sometimes referred to as “bullying,” is prohibited by university policy applicable to faculty, academic staff, and university staff. For further definition, policy, and procedures related to HIB see: hr.wisc.edu/hib. Students who feel they have been subject to HIB are encouraged to review the informal and formal options on the “Addressing HIB” tab of this website.

Probation

Students who fail to meet any of the assessment criteria as described in the Doctoral Program Student Handbook will receive a letter of warning from the PhD 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 PhD 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 PhD Program Director.

Academic Exception Petitions

Prior Coursework credits

The Graduate School does not transfer credits for previous coursework. However, the Information School accepts coursework completed outside of a student’s graduate career at UW–Madison. Generally, the iSchool will consider up to 10 credits of prior coursework; however, the credits may not be more than 10 years old, and the courses must be advanced level (Masters or PhD). The credits will not appear on a UW–Madison transcript, and the credits do not count toward the Graduate School’s minimum graduate residence credit or graduate coursework (50%) requirements. iSchool PhD students may count prior coursework toward their iSchool breadth or specialization courses or a distributed doctoral minor (see below). For a minor in another department, students must check with the department to see if they would count prior coursework toward the minor. Prior coursework cannot count toward the Core Information Science

courses (LIS910, 925, 931, 940, 950, 975) except for students who have completed these courses as part of their Masters Degree at the UW's iSchool. In exceptional cases, the iSchool will allow more than 10 credits of prior coursework, for example, if a student is joining the iSchool part-way through their doctoral studies.

Students must have their prior coursework credits approved by the iSchool PhD Committee. Requests are submitted via the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site and must include a description of how each prior course fulfills an iSchool requirement (breadth courses or doctoral minor) and a syllabus for each prior course in the request. Students must email the PhD Program Director when materials are submitted on Canvas in order to get on the PhD Committee agenda. See the Graduate School policy here: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216. Students should be aware of the credit residence requirement as detailed in the UW policy library: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1246 (see section IIC).

Waivers

The student may petition the PhD Committee for a waiver of any required course. The basis for such a waiver shall be evidence of previous work of the same level and content to be determined by the Committee. For the iSchool pedagogy breadth requirement, students may apply for a waiver based on previous teaching experience. Among the factors the committee will consider are experience/training in the following: teaching as the primary instructor for a class (i.e. not a teaching assistant), planning a syllabus, delivering over 75% of course content, and/or training in pedagogical theory. A requirement which is completed by waiver carries no credit toward the Graduate School's credit requirements nor toward the program's credit requirement for the degree. Requests for waivers are submitted via the iSchool PhD Program Canvas site and must include a description of how each prior course fulfills an iSchool requirement (breadth courses or doctoral minor) and a syllabus. Waivers will not be given for Core Information Science courses (LIS910, 925, 931, 940, 950, 975) except for students who have completed these courses as part of their Masters Degree at the UW's iSchool. Students must email the PhD Program Director when materials are submitted on Canvas in order to get on the PhD Committee agenda.

Extension Requests

A student may request an extension of submission dates for Mastery Demonstration papers and Program Portfolio / Preliminary Proposal. An example of grounds for a request is difficulties getting IRB approval that are beyond the student's control. Extensions may be requested due to important family and life events (for example birth or adoption of a child, major illness) and will be presumptively granted. Requests will consist of a letter to the PhD Committee outlining and documenting the reasons for the

delay, a description of work completed on the project to date, and a detailed plan for completion including a proposed date of submission, and a letter/email of support from the student's advisor. The extension cannot exceed four months (one semester) from the date originally due, and a missed deadline will *normally* result in the student being placed on academic probation. One extension will automatically move the deadlines for all future work (MD2, portfolio and preliminary proposal) back by one semester. The Committee will make a decision about granting extensions on a case by case basis.

Appeal Process

An appeal of an academic decision related to a PhD student's progress is a serious matter. Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Failure to pass an MD paper or the preliminary examination (prelim proposal and portfolio)
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress (assessed by the PhD annual progress evaluation committee)
- Dismissal from the PhD program
- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standard

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior, or discrimination (Title IX, Office of Compliance). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).
- Assistantship disputes related to job responsibilities. These should be handled by the Office of Human Resources (https://hr.wisc.edu/).
- Grades for LIS classes. See the L&S Policy and Procedures for Grade Appeal: https://kb.wisc.edu/ls/22258

Process and timing

1. The student must first seek an informal resolution by discussing the matter with their advisor and/or the PhD program chair, who may in turn consult with the decision-making body. This should be done no later than two weeks after the academic decision under discussion has been made.
2. If, after this discussion, the student wishes to appeal the matter further, they should submit an appeal in writing to the iSchool Director and the PhD program

chair. This should be done within two weeks of the student's discussion with their advisor.

3. The written appeal will be considered by an appeal committee of at least three faculty members: the iSchool Director, the PhD program chair, and at least one other tenured or tenure-track faculty member selected by the PhD program chair. In the case of an appeal related to an examination (MD paper or prelim), the examiners will not be on the committee. If the examiners are the iSchool Director or PhD program chair, appropriate senior faculty members will be selected in their places. The examiners will be informed that such an appeal has been submitted. The appeal committee will gather such information and documentation as it deems appropriate. The committee will generally defer to the disciplinary expertise of the examiners on issues regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge and evaluation of the quality of work or similar judgments, except in cases of clear error.
4. If the committee finds adequate basis for doing so, it will ask the decision making body to reconsider the academic decision and to report the results of the reconsideration to the student. Alternatively, the appeal committee may decide that the appeal lacks sufficient basis for action. In either case, the student will be notified of the committee's decision and the student's right to appeal to the Graduate School (see L&S Policy and Procedures for Graduate Academic Appeals). Decision should happen in a timely matter, and in no case should it extend beyond the end of the semester following the original decision.

Grievance Process

Each college or program on campus has a grievance process that students can use to address other concerns regarding their experience in the program. This program's grievance process can be found detailed at:

https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/information/information-phd/#policiestext

Additionally, these resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures
    - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs
- Dean of Students Office (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)

- Employee Assistance (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances.

Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards

The PhD Committee administers the regulations established by the faculty. It makes sure students are meeting the program expectations, imposes sanctions when appropriate, and determines whether the student is satisfying the academic requirements in a timely fashion and meeting program conduct expectations. Students who are falling behind academically or not meeting conduct expectations are first warned, then put on probation, and then dropped from the program if they cannot complete the requirements or remedy their conduct. Within boundaries set by the faculty, the PhD Committee is authorized to take account of individual circumstances and problems, and to grant extensions of deadlines and waivers of requirements.

Possible disciplinary actions might include but are not limited to:

- Written reprimand
- Denial of specified privilege(s)
- Imposition of specific terms and conditions on continued student status
- Removal of funding
- Probation
- Restitution
- Removal of the student from the course(s) in progress
- Failure to promote
- Withdrawal of an offer of admission

- Placement on leave of absence for a determined amount of time
- Suspension from the program for up to one year with the stipulation that remedial activities may be prescribed as a condition of later readmission. Students who meet the readmission condition must apply for readmission and the student will be admitted only on a space-available basis. See the Graduate School policy on readmission: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1230.
- Suspension from the program, ranging from one semester to four years
- Dismissal from the program
- Denial of a degree

Incident Reporting (Hate, Bias, Sexual Assault, Hazing, Students of Concern, Bullying)

The Dean of Students Office maintains a portal to report incidents of hate, bias, sexual assault, hazing, dating/domestic violence, stalking, missing students, and students displaying other concerning behaviors at UW-Madison:

Dean of Students Incident Reporting
doso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue

As noted above in "Personal Conduct Expectations," students who feel they have been subject to hostile and/or intimidating behavior (i.e., bullying) are encouraged to review the informal and formal options for addressing this behavior (including filing complaints when desired) at:

Human Resources Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Website
hr.wisc.edu/hib

Funding, Employment, and Finances

"Funding" is a term used to describe university employment or support to cover some or all of your costs of graduate education. It varies in kind, amount, and level of guarantee.

The Graduate School maintains policies related to graduate student funding/employment:

Maximum Levels of Appointments

grad.wisc.edu/documents/maximum-levels-of-appointments

Concurrent Appointments for Fellows/Trainees
grad.wisc.edu/documents/concurrent-appointments

Enrollment Requirements for Graduate Assistants
policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208

Eligibility for Summer RA, TA, PA, and LSA Appointments
policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-5089

Guaranteed Funding

Upon admission into the Information School PhD program, all students are guaranteed funding for the first five years at 50% FTE. Funding most commonly takes the form of a departmental TA, PA or RA position.

Graduate Assistantships (TAs, PAs, RAs, and Lecturer positions)

Stipend rates for graduate assistantships are set by the University. Current rates for TAs, PAs, RAs and LSAs can be found on the website for the Office of Human Resources.

Graduate assistants are paid on a bi-monthly basis and stipends are usually deposited directly into student's bank accounts. You can authorize direct deposit by filling out the Authorization for Direct Deposit of Payroll form and returning it to the Graduate Coordinator.

Remote Work

The Information School will not provide remote work agreements for PhD students or candidates. The iSchool is required to follow the UW's Remote Work Policy https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-5087, which includes the following statements:

Criteria and Conditions for Remote Work: The option to work remotely is provided at the discretion of School/College/Division (S/C/D) leadership, divisional HR, and the employee's supervisor. An arrangement should be based on operational needs and be in the best interests of the university and the employee. Remote work should not cause significant legal, reputational, physical, or other risks for the university, S/C/D, or employee.

Out-of-State Remote Work: Out-of-state remote work is complex and involves increased costs and legal risks due to employment laws, taxation rules, data privacy and cybersecurity risks, and compliance requirements in other states.

International Remote Work: S/C/Ds may employ individuals who live and work outside the United States only if there is a documented and approved business necessity. The business necessity justification must be approved by the S/C/D leadership and filed with OHR.

International remote work introduces significant complexities, costs and legal risks due to employment laws, taxation rules, data privacy and cybersecurity risks, and other compliance requirements.

iSchool's assessment of English language proficiency for TAs

1. students who received a Bachelor's and/or Master's degree from an institution in which English is the exclusive language of instruction are considered proficient for the purpose of entrance to the Graduate School. Students in the iSchool PhD program may be required to take the SPEAK test if concerns arise about their English proficiency (e.g., through their TA role or through the PhD annual progress evaluation process).
2. Our program follows the Graduate School's policy and definitions regarding English language proficiency for admissions: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241, and the L&S policy regarding English language proficiency for teaching assistants: https://kb.wisc.edu/ls/25268

Students will be allowed to TA their first semester even if they do not meet the proficiency requirement. In this case, they will be assigned TA roles that do not involve classroom duties requiring spoken English. Students not passing the proficiency requirements during their first semester in the PhD program will be required to take a 1 credit ESL class (e.g. ESL370) followed by other ESL courses until scoring 50 or higher on the SPEAK test. Students must pass the SPEAK test by the end of the summer of their first year of the program in order to retain their funding commitment. The SPEAK test request form requires students to list a department contact and email. Please list Dennis Choi <dhchoi@wisc.edu>. Dennis will ensure successful test scores are deposited in students' records.

Tuition remission and payment of segregated fees

TAs, PAs, RAs and Lecturers (Students Assistants) with appointments of 33.3% or higher (approximately 13 hrs/week) receive remission of their full tuition (in- and out-of-

state, as applicable). Students with these appointments are still responsible for paying segregated fees.

Health insurance benefits

TAs, PAs, RAs and Lecturers (Student Assistants) with appointments of 33.3% or higher (approximately 13 hrs/week) for at least the length of a semester are eligible to enroll in a health insurance program.

Maximum appointment levels

The Graduate School sets the maximum levels of graduate assistantship appointments. International students should be especially aware of maximum levels of employment.

Finding Funding Without a Guaranteed Appointment

While all PhD students are guaranteed funding for the first five years, additional, non-guaranteed funding may be available in the form of departmental TA, PA, RA, lecturer or instructor positions. If you are looking for funding to support your graduate studies, the Graduate School provides a list of steps to follow, at grad.wisc.edu/studentfunding/steps

Campus-Wide and External Sources

To help you find resources to pay for costs related to graduate education, the Graduate School provides a comprehensive overview of the funding process on campus as well as descriptions of the types of funding available, sources of funding, minimum stipend rates and benefits, and links to applicable human resources policies (e.g. GAPP) at:

Graduate School: Funding and Financial Aid
grad.wisc.edu/funding

External Fellowship Database
grad.wisc.edu/funding/external-fellowship-database

UW-Madison Libraries Grants Information Collection
library.wisc.edu/memorial/collections/grants-information-collection

Fellowships

There are many different kinds of fellowships on campus. Some are awarded by the program, some are awarded by the school/college and others are awarded by the Graduate School. In addition, a number of students have applied for and won fellowships from federal agencies, professional organizations and private foundations.

The terms and conditions of fellowships across campus vary widely. If you have a fellowship, make sure you understand the obligations and benefits of that fellowship, including stipend, health insurance eligibility, eligibility for tuition remission, pay schedule, etc.

Graduate School fellowships

The Graduate School administers a number of different fellowships on campus, including: University Fellowships, Chancellor's Fellowships, Mellon-Wisconsin Fellowships, the Dickie Fellowships and a variety of external fellowships.

External fellowships

We encourage all students to seek out and apply for funding from sources external to the university (e.g., federal agencies, professional organizations, private foundations).

The Graduate School supports selected federal/private fellowships through the provision of tuition support and health insurance.

The Graduate School also provides remission of the non-resident portion of students' tuition (if applicable) to students who win external fellowships that are payrolled through the university and provide an academic year (9-month) or an annual year (12-month) stipend.

Students should be aware that fellowships and awards from external sources will each have unique terms and conditions that you should take time to understand.

Funding for Conference/Research Travel

During their time in the program, iSchool PhD students are eligible for up to $2,000 in departmental funding to support conference and/or research expenses. Students wishing to apply for departmental funding should follow instructions posted on our website.

In addition to iSchool funding, the Graduate School offers a **Conference Presentation Award** to students whose research has been accepted for presentation at a conference. The Graduate School also has a **Research Travel Award** competition, which provides support for travel related to your dissertation/thesis research (priority is given to dissertators). For more information about these two awards, visit the Student Research Grants Competition website.

Professional Development and Career Planning

When you participate in professional development, you build skills needed to succeed academically and thrive in your career. The following are professional development activities that we recommend for your consideration. Required professional development will be detailed in "Degree Requirements" above.

On Campus

The Graduate School develops and curates a wide variety of resources for professional development, including a tool to assess your skills, set goals, and create a plan with recommended activities on campus (e.g., the popular DiscoverPD and the "Individual Development Plan" or IDP, discussed below) as well as programming to help you explore careers, prepare for a job search, build your network and learn from alumni, manage projects, communicate about your research, and much more.

Professional Development from the Graduate School
grad.wisc.edu/professional-development

The Graduate School communicates professional development opportunities through an e-newsletter, *GradConnections*, that all graduate students receive at their wisc.edu email. Graduate students in traditional graduate degree programs receive the newsletter weekly during the academic year and every other week in the summer. Graduate students in online degree programs receive the newsletter every other week during the academic year and monthly during the summer.

In addition to opportunities at the local level, the Graduate School Office of Professional Development provides direct programming in the areas of career development and skill building, and also serves as a clearing house for professional development resources across campus. Be sure to keep a pulse on programs offered by the following campus services as well:

- Writing Center writing.wisc.edu/
- Grants Information Collection grants.library.wisc.edu/
- Delta Program delta.wisc.edu
- UW Center for the Humanities humanities.wisc.edu

Individual Development Plans

The Graduate School webpage offers a collection of IDP resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/professional-development/individual-development-plan/) to support graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, mentors, PIs, grants administrators, and graduate program coordinators.

As you begin your Graduate School career, an IDP is an essential tool to help you:
1) Assess your current skills and strengths
2) Make a plan for developing skills that will help you meet your academic and professional goals
3) Communicate with your advisors and mentors about your evolving goals and related skills.

The IDP you create is a document you will want to revisit again and again, to update and refine as your goals change and/or come into focus, and to record your progress and accomplishments. It also serves to start – and maintain – the conversation with your faculty advisor about your career goals and professional development needs. The onus to engage in the IDP process is on you, although your advisor may encourage and support you in doing so. The IDP itself remains private to you, and you choose which parts to share. Through the IDP process, you may decide to identify various mentors to whom you can go for expertise and advice.

In Our Program/Department

Tanya Hendricks Cobb: Student and Alumni Services Coordinator
tcobb@wisc.edu
(608) 263-2909

Appendix 1: Timeline for Completing your PhD in the iSchool

The deadlines for program milestones are as follows,

- MD1 - end of semester 3
- MD2 - end of semester 6
- Preliminary proposal (8-10 pages) and portfolio - end of semester 8

These deadlines are the dates by which the milestone materials must be submitted and examined. Required revisions may extend milestone deadlines. See Appendix 2 for details about MD revision timelines. **Students may submit work earlier than these deadlines.** Students will progress through the program at different rates, depending on a range of factors; therefore, **timelines should be worked out with advisors** (see example timeline for MD papers in Appendix 2)**.** However, missing these deadlines means that students will no longer be in good standing with the PhD program and will be placed on probationary status [see 'Good Academic Standing' in the PhD Student Handbook].

Below is a **sample program timeline**. This is a **possible** pathway through the program, but be aware that students will be on different pathways. Funding for a 6th year is not guaranteed.

Timeline: 5 years

	Courses and Credits	**Writing & research**
Semesters 1-3	Required coursework	MD1 (literature review related to dissertation topic)
Semesters 4-6	Finish required coursework including minor	MD2 (pilot study for dissertation research) Portfolio and preliminary proposal (revisions to pilot study)
Semesters 7-10	Final credits - 990 independent study (3 credits each semester)	Dissertation proposal (3 chapters for dissertation drawn from coursework and MD papers) Fieldwork Complete dissertation

Appendix 2: Mastery Demonstration Paper timelines

Overview: MD papers must be examined by the end of the students' third semester (MD1) and 6th semester (MD2), although examinations can occur earlier. Advisors should work out a timeline with each student which includes accountability structures (e.g., submit rough draft to advisor by a particular date). After their examinations, students have one additional semester in which to revise and resubmit MD papers. Failure to have papers accepted during this additional semester results in the student being put on probationary status. While on probation, the student has one additional semester (excluding summer) to change their status (see scenarios 2-5 below). Students may have difficulties completing the program in five years if they are submitting MD papers during a probationary semester.

Example timeline for Mastery Demonstration Papers

MD1: Literature review or other paper relevant for student progress	
Semester 2	• Develop the focus of the paper, decide what type of literature review to pursue (if relevant) • Select committee members; Submit MD1 proposal by the end of April • Committee feedback on proposal in May • Develop outline for work during the summer
Summer	Set deadlines for each month, complete rough draft by the first week of classes in the Fall for advisor feedback.
Semester 3	• Revise rough draft based on advisor feedback. Potentially ask committee members to take one quick read to ensure the draft is going in the right direction. • Set date for submission and exam (last possible date for exam is during finals week). Committee members need at least 2 weeks to read papers. • Continue revising with input from advisor until submission.
Semester 4	Revise if necessary
MD2 Topic to be decided with advisor - should be relevant for student progress (e.g., pilot study, theoretical framework for dissertation)	
Semester 4	• Develop the focus of the paper

	● Apply for IRB if relevant ● Develop outline for work during the summer
Summer	Set deadlines for each month (this could include empirical work)
Semesters 5 & 6	● Develop outline of work for the two semesters (empirical work, analysis, deep reading, etc) ● Semester 6 - rough draft complete by start of classes ● Revise rough draft based on advisor feedback. Potentially ask committee members to take ONE quick read to ensure the draft is going in the right direction. ● Set date for submission and exam (last possible date for exam is during finals week semester 6). ● Continue revising with input from advisor until submission.

Revision Timelines for Mastery Demonstration Papers

Revise (minor / major): Resubmission and acceptance are required within the following semester

For examination of revised papers, the committee decides whether the paper seems salvageable. If the revised version is close to acceptable, the committee can allow a 2nd round of revisions before or during the probationary semester. If the revised version indicates the student is unlikely to be able to produce an acceptable paper, then the committee can allow a new paper topic or suggest a transition to exit the program. Papers must be accepted during the probationary semester or funding will be withdrawn. Students may consider a Master's program, including the MS Information Research Option, which only for enrolled PhD students who wish to leave the program (see 'Transferring to a Master's Program') in this Handbook.

SCENARIO 1

- Paper is 'Revise (minor revisions)' OR 'Revise (major revisions)'
- For minor revisions - students revise within two months
- For major revisions, students revise within one semester (e.g., 4th semester for MD1, 7th semester for MD2)
- Committee 'accepts' - no further work is required

SCENARIO 2

- Paper is 'Revise (major revisions)'

- Students have one semester to revise (e.g., 4th semester for MD1, 7th semester for MD2)
- Revised version is not accepted by the end of semester (e.g., 4th or 7th). Student is put on probation.

Reject: If the paper is rejected, the student is put on iSchool academic probation and must resubmit the paper to the MD Committee members within the following semester.

SCENARIO 3

- Paper is rejected = Student is put on probation.
- Submits new paper within one semester (4th semester for MD1, 7th semester for MD2)
- New defense resulting in Revise (with major OR minor revisions)
- Revisions are accepted within the same semester = off probation

SCENARIO 4

- Paper is rejected = Student is put on probation.
- Submits new paper within one semester (4th semester for MD1, 7th semester for MD2)
- New defense resulting in Revise (with major OR minor revisions)
- Revised version is not accepted by the end of the same semester = asked to leave the program (as they are on probation and have not changed their status)

SCENARIO 5

- Paper is rejected = Student is put on probation.
- Submits new paper within one semester (4th semester for MD1, 7th semester for MD2)
- New version is rejected = asked to leave the program (as they are on probation and have not changed their status)

Appendix 3: Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs) in PhD Milestone Products

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy governs the use of Generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Deepseek, Gemini, Grok) and Large Language Models (LLMs) in the preparation of all doctoral milestone products, including but not limited to **MD1**, **MD2**, **Dissertation Pre-proposal**, **Dissertation Proposal**, and the **Dissertation** in the Information School. The Department affirms that original scholarly contribution, intellectual leadership, and independent research training are core objectives of the PhD program. The goal of this policy is to integrate emerging technologies into the research workflow while ensuring that the doctoral degree remains a certification of the student's independent ability to think, research, and write as a scholar. This policy provides guidelines that will be discussed and applied to students' work when relevant by advisors and student research committees.

2. Core Principle: Intellectual Ownership

For all milestone products, PhD students are expected to:

- Formulate the central research questions, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches;
- Design and conduct the research;
- Interpret results and develop original arguments and conclusions; and
- Take full responsibility for the scholarly content, accuracy, and integrity of all submitted work.

AI tools may be used as assistants, but the use of AI tools does not alter these expectations. AI systems may not replace or substitute for the student's own intellectual labor in conceptualization, analysis, interpretation, or scholarly judgment. An AI tool can not be employed or listed as an author or co-author.

3. Guidelines on Usage

As a general guideline, Generative AI and LLM-based tools can be used in ways that do not contribute to the development of ideas, but should not be used in ways that substitute for the student's own scholarly reasoning or impede the student's intellectual or scholarly development.

3.1. Permissible Uses (Non-Essential Tasks)

AI and LLM-based tools may be used in a **supporting** and **non-essential capacity**, provided that such use does not compromise the student's role as the primary intellectual contributor. Unless otherwise restricted by an advisor, the following uses are generally permitted:

- **Language and Style:** Using AI for copy-editing, grammar checking, and improving the flow or clarity of text written by the student.
- **Coding Assistance:** Using AI to debug code, generate syntax for visualization, or script routine data processing tasks (provided the student understands and verifies the code).
- **Formatting:** Using AI to format citations, references, or layout.

In all cases, students remain responsible for verifying the accuracy, originality, and appropriateness of the final content.

3.2. Restricted or Prohibited Uses (Essential Tasks)

AI and LLMs should **not** be used to perform the following tasks, which represent the "critical intellectual contribution" of the degree:

- Generate original research questions, hypotheses, or theoretical contributions without substantial student-driven development;
- Perform core design and analytical tasks (e.g., data curation, data analysis, model interpretation, qualitative coding decisions) without the student's direct intellectual control and understanding;
- Utilize AI-generated code or automated workflows for data analysis without the ability to explain and justify the underlying logic;
- Draft substantive sections of milestone documents (e.g., theory, methods, results, discussion) in a way that substitutes for the student's own scholarly reasoning;
- Make evaluative or interpretive judgments central to the research contribution.
- Synthesize or generate literature reviews, bibliographies, or summaries of scholarly works without independent, student-driven engagement with primary sources;
- Input or analyze data containing personally identifiable information, student records protected under FERPA, or any sensitive information of privacy concern into AI platforms without proper protections and considerations;
- Include citations, bibliographies, or reference lists generated by AI without verifying each source against original primary documents;
- Present AI-generated claims, historical accounts, or technical descriptions as factual without independent verification of their accuracy and provenance;

- Delegate any additional tasks or procedures not explicitly listed here that constitute a critical intellectual contribution to the research or the degree requirements.

4. Advisor Consultation and Disciplinary Context

Acceptable AI usage can vary significantly depending on the specific research methods and disciplinary sub-fields involved in the student's work.

- **Mandatory Consultation:** Students must explicitly discuss their intended use of AI and/or LLMs with their primary advisor **throughout** the entire phase of any milestone product;
- **Scope Definition:** The advisor and student must agree on the extent of AI involvement to ensure it aligns with the norms and rigor expected in their specific field of study.

Advisors and committees retain discretion to determine whether AI use in a given milestone product is appropriate and consistent with doctoral training goals.

5. Transparency and Disclosure

Academic integrity requires transparency. If a student uses Generative AI beyond simple spell-checking, they must provide a disclosure statement in the milestone document. The disclosure statement must be precise and include the following components**:**

- The specific name and version of the model used;
- A clear description of the tasks delegated to the tool (e.g., structural outlining, code debugging, or stylistic refinement);
- The methods used to verify the accuracy and logical consistency of the AI output;
- A brief rationale for why AI assistance was employed for this specific task;
- An explanation of how the AI output was synthesized into your final work.

6. Accountability and Policy Scope

Students are held to the following standards of responsibility and oversight regarding the use of AI and LLMs in their scholarly work:

- Assume full intellectual and ethical responsibility for the entirety of the submitted work, acknowledging that "AI error" or "hallucination" does not constitute a valid defense for factual inaccuracies, fabricated citations, or instances of plagiarism;

- Maintain and provide original AI prompts and raw outputs upon request to demonstrate the nature and extent of the tool's contribution to the research process and support reproducibility;
- Exercise awareness of AI features integrated into existing technologies (e.g., automated summarization in bibliographic software or code assistants in IDEs), as all such tools remain subject to the constraints of this policy regardless of whether the prompting is explicit;
- Recognize that failure to adhere to these guidelines may constitute a violation of academic integrity standards and will be treated as Academic Misconduct under university policy;
- Apply these constraints to the use of AI as a tool for the production and dissemination of knowledge, while allowing for the unrestricted use of Generative AI or LLMs when they serve as the primary subject or data source of research.