

Handbook of the Information Science Doctoral Program Department of Information Science

**Graduate School of Education
University at Buffalo
State University of New York**

2025

While this handbook has been developed to assist you throughout this academic program, it does not constitute the whole of UB or GSE policies concerning students. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with all policies, procedures and deadlines.

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Introduction

The Graduate School of Education and the Department of Information Science supports and are committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength. Further, we wish to affirm our commitment to creating and maintaining a positive, welcoming, and inclusive environment that embraces diversity and strives to eliminate barriers to access, advancement, and full participation on the basis of race, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or veteran status for student, faculty, and staff.

Established in 1966, the Department of Information Science programs invite learners to explore the nature of information and its use, the conceptual foundations of information organization, the information needs of diverse people in a range of contexts, sources of information to meet these requirements, and the cutting edge technology to store and retrieve information, all in the context of the traditional values of librarianship, including intellectual freedom and equity of information access.

Overview of Graduate Program

Department Acronyms and Abbreviations

- IS: Information Science
- GSE: Graduate School of Education

Faculty Members

Samuel Abramovich (PhD, University of Pittsburgh), Associate Professor

Abramovich's research includes finding and understanding the learning opportunities presented by the intersection of the learning sciences and emerging technology, especially assessment for learning. This includes research on micro-credentials and digital badges, online rating systems, makerspaces and open education resources — all to help guide education improvement and reform. He is the director of the Open Education Research Lab, whose mission is to create a better understanding and improvement of open education in all its forms.

Dan Albertson (PhD, Indiana University); Department Chair and Professor

Albertson studies and writes about interactive information retrieval (IIR), with specific interests intersecting areas of interface design, human-centered computing and information management. A considerable amount of his work focuses specifically on visual and video information retrieval, including the users, information needs and tasks, and designs of retrieval systems. Albertson also engages rural and other disadvantaged communities in order to help find solutions for digital information sharing, access and learning.

Samuel Dodson (PhD, University of British Columbia); Assistant Professor

Dodson specializes in human-computer interaction and information retrieval to study how individuals learn and collaborate in online information environments. In his work so far, he has enjoyed investigating a range of issues in these areas, from the ethics of search engines to the information practices of engineers. His research focuses on the implications of how people make sense of information, as well as the design of systems that support learners' needs and potential.

Africa Hands (PhD, Queensland University, Brisbane, Australia); Assistant Professor

Hand's research centers on higher education and information access. Her current research agenda examines public libraries as an information resource to college bound patrons based on experiences working in both higher education (admissions and academic advising) and public libraries. Her work also explores the experiences of first-generation students - both as users of academic libraries and students and professionals in the LIS field.

Heidi Julien (PhD, University of Western Ontario); Professor

Julien's research focuses on information behavior and digital/information literacy. She has also conducted research on acceptance of altmetrics in the discipline of information science, and multiple analyses of methodological practices in information behavior research. Her work in digital literacy has focused on examining students' experiences of information literacy, librarians' experiences of the instructional role, and information literacy instruction practices in academic and public libraries in Canada, the United States and elsewhere. Her work in information behavior focuses on daily life contexts and on people's affective experiences.

Xi Lu (PhD, University of California, Irvine); Assistant Professor

Lu's research lies at the intersection of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Personal Health Informatics, and Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW). Her research explores how data-driven ecosystems can support complex and often-changing health needs from individual, interpersonal, and socio-cultural levels. She is particularly interested in stigmatized health domains where individuals may be marginalized by the healthcare system and technology industry, such as women's health and public health crises.

Saguna Shankar (PhD, University of British Columbia); Assistant Professor

Shankar studies information practices and ethics in contexts of care. She investigates how a network of stakeholders in the domain of immigration enact care for newcomers' data in the course of service provision, systems design, academic research, advocacy, and government policymaking. She is also involved in inquiries into the role of communities and libraries in climate and environmental justice initiatives. She develops a care lens on information practice by working to understand groups' efforts to coordinate responsibilities, negotiate difference, and strengthen interdependence.

Ying Sun (PhD, Rutgers University); Associate Professor

Sun's research spans several related fields, including information seeking, information retrieval and data mining. Her work in information seeking and information retrieval focuses on developing information systems to support task-specific and data-intensive information applications, such as legal e-discovery, intelligence analysis and medical information retrieval. Her work in data mining has focused on scientific information presentation in public media, automatic scoring system for STEM education and academic information on the web. She has also conducted research on systematic evaluation of interactive information systems.

Amy VanScoy (PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Associate Professor

VanScoy studies the professional thinking of information professionals and how professionals' use of formal and informal theory affects practice. She is interested in how practice is affected by professionals' beliefs, values and attitudes and by their conceptualizations of their work. Using primarily qualitative methods, Dr. VanScoy investigates professional thinking in both national and international contexts. Her interest in diversity and inclusion inspired her to explore the topic within the context of racial and ethnic identity, as well, leading to a research paper award and a research grant sponsored by divisions of the American Library Association.

VanScoy is interested in improving research and its application to practice. In addition to methodological papers and presentations, she investigates how various research methods are used to study practice.

Jianqiang Wang (PhD, University of Maryland); Associate Professor

Wang's research focuses on information retrieval in a multilingual and multimodal environment. He is particularly interested in developing retrieval models and techniques and evaluating them to support users' access to digital information. He has done extensive research in several areas, including cross-language information retrieval, spoken document retrieval and e-discovery. Recently, he has extended his work to the study of short text conversation in open social media domains.

Brenda Battleson White (PhD, University at Buffalo); Clinical Associate Professor

White teaches a range of courses, and serves as the Portfolio Manager for the MS in Information and Library Science program. She is also the program coordinator for the Undergraduate Minor in Information Studies.

Department Student Organizations

IS's Graduate Student Association (IS GSA)

The primary purpose of the Department of Information Science Graduate Student Association (IS GSA) is to:

1. Advocate IS student interests to the IS Department, Graduate School of Education, GSA Senate, and ad-hoc University committees to voice students' questions, comments, and concerns on Departmental and University operations.
2. Provide funding for student events, Department events, and conference reimbursement. Conference reimbursement is a mechanism to allow students to gain valuable conference experience without burdening the entire cost.
3. Host social events for its members, either through their own initiative or by supporting other organizations within the field of library science. This is achieved through parties, service activities and other sponsored events which provide the chance to network with those who will be their professional peers.

IS GSA homepage: <https://ed.buffalo.edu/current-students/is-students/associations.html>

Alumni Association

Alumni of the GSE are automatically lifetime members of the GSEAA (Graduate School of Education Alumni Association). As President John McKenna (EdD '08, Educational

Administration) writes, “Whether you graduate this year or your commencement was 10 years ago, we know that today’s professional market is difficult to navigate. It is during times like these that we, the Graduate School of Education alumni, can turn to one another for support.” The Department of Information Science engages regularly with IS alumni, hosting alumni events, and sharing news online through the IS alumni listserv, IS Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and the annual Department of Information Science newsletter, *The Informed*.

Professional Associations

Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE)

The Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) is the global leader in education for the information professions. ALISE promotes innovative, high-quality education for the information professions internationally through engagement, advocacy and research.

ALISE is a non-profit organization that serves as the intellectual home of faculty, staff, and students in library and information science, and allied disciplines. They promote innovation and excellence internationally through leadership, collaboration, advocacy, and dissemination of scholarship.

<https://www.alise.org>

For more information, contact Dr. Heidi Julien (heidijul@buffalo.edu)

Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T)

The Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) is the only professional association that bridges the gap between information science practice and research. For nearly 80 years, ASIS&T has been leading the search for new and better theories, techniques, and technologies to improve access to information.

Thousands of researchers, developers, practitioners, students, and professors in the field of information science and technology from 50 countries around the world have made ASIS&T an important part of their professional development.

Members share a common interest in improving the ways society stores, retrieves, analyzes, manages, archives and disseminates information.

<https://www.asist.org/>

For more information, contact Dr. Dan Albertson (dalbert@buffalo.edu).

The Doctoral (PhD) Degree

General Introduction and Information

IS has one doctoral program:

PhD in Information Science: Our doctoral program in information science is an online program for students who hold a master's degree in information science, librarianship, communications, or other cognate disciplines, who seek advanced study in this specialized field. Our asynchronous, online program has an annual residency week on campus. The program increases access to doctoral level education for those unable to suspend employment to attend an on-campus program.

IS PhD Program Academic Regulations

Overview

These are the current academic policies and regulations of the Department of Information Science (IS) PhD Program as approved by the IS Faculty. The IS Faculty has charged the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee with carrying out the academic policies of the Department and applying these regulations.

Students may appeal any decision related to academic regulations to the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee. If the initial decision is upheld, the student may then appeal to the IS Chair. The student may file further appeals following GSE and UB (<https://grad.buffalo.edu/succeed/current-students/policy-library.html>) procedures.

Planning the Student's Program

Advisement

New students are assigned a faculty advisor by the Doctoral Program Director. Advisors will be assigned based on student and faculty interests and faculty availability. Dissertation committee chairs for students seeking the PhD degree must be members of the Graduate School faculty.

Students will consult with their faculty advisors for guidance related to their program of study, course selection, and all other academic matters. If the student's faculty advisor is not available, the Chair or Chair's designee will act as faculty advisor.

Students may change their advisor during their program by submitting the Change of Advisor form. Faculty who have served as a student's advisor but believe that they should withdraw from the advisory relationship are expected to communicate their reasons to the Chair in a letter with copies going to the student and the student's file.

For all non-academic questions, such as fee waivers, financial aid, and housing, students should first consult with UB 1Capen (<https://www.buffalo.edu/1capen.html>).

Plan of Study

Each student must, in the first semester, develop a Plan of Study with their faculty advisor and submit it to the Doctoral Program Director. This plan of study should be guided by the program objectives, the student's own learning objectives, and the anticipated course rotation. In general, the student can register only for courses listed in their most recent plan. Exceptions are made to accommodate contingencies at registration.

Job Preparedness

Students are encouraged to take initiative in seeking career-related opportunities and discussing their plans with their faculty advisors to ensure they are well-prepared for their desired career trajectory. Faculty advisors provide guidance tailored to students' career goals, whether in academia, industry, or other professional paths. This includes mentoring on research development, publishing, and conference presentations, as well as offering feedback on job talks, applications, and interviews. The department and the Graduate School of Education support students by organizing mock interviews and job talk rehearsals, connecting them with scholars and professionals in relevant fields, and encouraging participation in workshops on academic and non-academic job markets.

Grades and Grade Point Average (GPA)

Grade Point Average (GPA) computation

Only letter grades of “A,” “A-,” “B+,” “B,” “B-,” “C+,” “C,” “C-,” “D,” and “F” received in UB courses are considered in computing the GPA.

UB policy provides for two GPAs: UB GPA and Overall GPA, which are computed by different rules. The student's status in the program and eligibility for graduation are determined based on the PhD GPA.

- **UB GPA.** The UB GPA is computed based on the grades in all graduate courses taken at UB. If a student repeats a course one or more times, all grades are used in computing the UB GPA.
- **Overall (PhD) GPA.** The Overall GPA is computed based on: (1) courses taken at UB while matriculated in the PhD program and taken with intent to apply the course to the PhD (all IS courses and outside courses included in the student's plan of study at the time of registration) and, (2) Transferred courses. If a student repeats a course one or more times, only the best grade is used in computing the GPA.

Letter grades (weighted grades)

UB assigns quality points to grades as follows: A (4.0), A- (3.67), B+ (3.33), B (3.0), B- (2.67), C+ (2.33), C (2.0), C- (1.67), D (1.0), and F (0.0).

Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory

Grades of S/U are not included in grade point average but are used to evaluate the student's academic progress, with a grade of S considered equivalent to B (3.0) and a U that is directly assigned by the instructor (as opposed to a U resulting from an I/U) equivalent to F.

Incomplete (I/U)

An incomplete grade (I/U) will be given upon agreement between the student and instructor. Incomplete (I/U) grades may be given only when the student is unable to complete assigned required course work due to illness or other unforeseeable and compelling circumstances but work the student has completed indicates that the student is on their way to a passing grade (at least B(3.0) for a core course and C (2.0) for an elective course). Students must fill out a “Request for Grade of Incomplete” form – a contractual agreement between student and instructor outlining the conditions and deadlines for removing the incomplete grade. The instructor, at his/her sole discretion, may approve the request and defer giving the final grade or disapprove the request and submit a grade; the student may appeal the grade (see <https://grad.buffalo.edu/succeed/current-students/policy-library.html> Grade). An “I/U” is not calculated into a student's GPA. Students who accumulate 9 or more credit hours of outstanding Incompletes will be placed on academic probation. According to UB policy, if an instructor does not change the incomplete grade to a regular letter grade by the agreed-upon deadline, the grade automatically becomes a “U” (Unsatisfactory) after one year. A course with a U grade resulting from an I/U is treated as if it was never taken.

Non-IS Credits Applied to the PhD Degree

All non-IS courses must be approved by the faculty advisor.

Transfer Courses

Each incoming student is required to have completed a master degree program in Information Science or a related field, 30-36 credit hours of which are expected to be transferred toward the PhD program. The student and the faculty advisor shall work together to identify courses to be transferred. Only courses with a grade of B or better or S may be transferred.

Transfer of a course is by no means automatic; it must be recommended by the student's advisor and approved by the Doctoral Program Director and the Graduate School. The possibility of transfer courses should be discussed between student and advisor by the end of his or her first semester. In order to transfer credits, the student must submit to his or her faculty advisor a Request for Transfer of Credit form

(<https://ed.buffalo.edu/content/dam/ed/main/docs/current-students/forms-checklists/TransferofCredit.pdf>). If the credits to be transferred are more than 10 years old,

the student must submit a Petition to Use Historical Coursework form (<https://www.buffalo.edu/content/dam/grad/forms/historical.pdf>) along with a CV and letter explaining how they have kept their skills and knowledge current since their master's degree. If an official transcript was not submitted as part of the student's application, then an official transcript must also be submitted. The faculty advisor will sign and forward these documents with a recommendation to the Doctoral Program Director, who will forward them to the Graduate School for a final decision. If the credits to be transferred are more than 10 years old, the Doctoral Program Director will also include a letter of support from the department.

Courses shared with another UB graduate degree (limit 6 credits)

Up to six credits earned while matriculated in the PhD program may be shared with other UB degrees (10% of the sum of the credits needed for both programs) (<https://www.buffalo.edu/grad/succeed/current-students/policy-library/degree-requirements.html> - General Graduate Degree Requirements). These credits may be any combination of IS credits applied to the other degree or other degree credits applied to the PhD. Shared courses must be approved by the "receiving" program. The programs involved will communicate as needed to make sure that the total of shared credits does not exceed the maximum. Non-IS shared credits taken before matriculating into the PhD program are considered transfer credits but non-IS shared credits taken while matriculated in the PhD program are not transfer credits.

Program Requirements

Credit-hours required for the degree

The PhD degree requires 72 credits completed with a grade of B or better or with a grade of S. To count towards the degree, a course must have been taken with intent to apply to the PhD (all IS courses and outside courses included in the student's plan of study at the time of registration as well as transfer courses). Courses with grades other than A, B, or S do not count toward the 72 credits. If such courses were taken with intent to apply to the PhD, they are included in the computation of the PhD GPA. All such courses are included in the computation of the UB GPA. See Grades and Grades and Grade Point Average, (p. 9) for information on the UB grading system and definition of UB GPA and PhD GPA.

Grade requirements for graduation

A 3.0 or better PhD cumulative Grade Point Average (PhD GPA) is required for graduation (See Grades and Grades and Grade Point Average).

Course load

During the coursework period, students carrying 12 credit hours (9 credit hours for Graduate Assistants) in a semester are considered full-time. A student may take no more than 12 credit

hours a semester, 8 credit hours in any single 6-week summer session or 12 credit hours in the entire summer. Students working full-time on doctoral research or dissertation writing must be registered for at least one credit to be certified as full-time or as half-time. Students who had previously been enrolled as full-time students will be certified as full-time; those who had previously been enrolled as half-time students will be certified as half-time.

Seven-year time limit

All coursework within the program must be completed within *seven* years or 14 semesters from the beginning of the student's first semester in the program. A student may petition for an extension of the time limit.

Required courses for graduation

For the PhD in Information Science the following core courses are required:

LIS 601 Qualitative Methods in Information Studies

(or the equivalent course LAI 669)

LIS 602 Quantitative Methods in Information Studies

LIS 603 Theoretical Foundations of Information Studies

LIS 604 Statistics I

(or the equivalent course CEP 522)

An advanced methods course (either advanced qualitative, advanced quantitative, or advanced statistics)

To fulfill the PhD requirements, a student must complete all required core courses successfully. Successful completion of a required core course is defined as completion with a grade of B (3.0) or better.

Waiver of a required course

If the student has knowledge and skills that fulfill the objectives of a required course; the course may be waived. The student must discuss the possibility of a waiver with their advisor and submit a waiver request (https://ed.buffalo.edu/content/dam/ed/main/docs/current-students/forms-checklists/LISPetitionCourseWaiver_2014May.pdf) with supporting documentation to the lead faculty for the course during the student's first semester. An examination may be required before a decision is made. The lead faculty will communicate his or her decision to the student in writing (print or email) with copy to the IS office. The decision document will be placed in the student's file. A course waiver does not imply credit for the course (exception being transfer credit courses).

Individual Study Courses (Directed Study and Dissertation Credits)

Independent Study (LIS 611)

An independent study is a 1-3 credit elective. The course allows exploration of a topic for which no IS course is available or for the pursuit of research. Students can take LIS 611 multiple times.

To register for LIS 611, students must find a faculty supervisor. The form to be submitted includes the title of the directed study and an abstract.

To register for LIS 611 the student must submit the appropriate form to the IS office with all applicable signatures.

Dissertation Credits (LIS 699)

Once the student has filed for Candidacy, they should register for LIS 699. A student may register for as little as one credit of LIS 699 to be considered full-time (if pursuing the program full-time) or half-time (if pursuing the program part-time) for financial aid or loan deferment purposes.

Residency Week

Doctoral students will attend an annual meeting on campus as a core component of the program. This meeting provides opportunities for information sharing, community building, research presentations and discussions, and meetings with advisors and faculty. Residency Week generally occurs the week before courses begin in the fall. Specific dates will be shared with students by 1 May of the previous semester.

Qualification Requirements

The PhD qualifying milestone requires students to demonstrate expertise in their research area by writing a comprehensive review of a subject within the field of Information Science. This review should present a critical synthesis of relevant literature, identify key gaps, and outline potential research directions that align with the student's intended dissertation work.

An oral defense of the review may be required by the faculty advisor and dissertation committee to assess the student's depth of understanding and ability to synthesize and articulate key themes.

This milestone should normally be completed by the end of the fourth semester in the program for full-time students and by the end of the ninth semester for part-time students. Students may register for LIS 611 credits while working on this requirement.

Process

1. Students complete all core (required) courses in the program.

2. Students select their faculty advisor, identify their research focus and discuss potential topics with their faculty advisor.
3. Students submit a one-page **Qualifying Proposal** outlining the selected topic and attach an initial reading list. The proposal must be approved by the faculty advisor (or dissertation committee, if already formed).
4. Students assemble a dissertation Committee with at least three members (including the faculty advisor). One member may be external to the Department of Information Science.
5. Within **one year** of the Qualifying Proposal approval: Students submit the comprehensive review paper to the dissertation committee for evaluation. The paper should be **8,000–12,000 words**, following APA citation format.
6. **Oral Defense (If Required):** The committee may require the student to participate in an oral defense of the review. This session provides an opportunity to discuss the review paper, clarify arguments, and demonstrate integration across themes.
7. **Within Two Months of Submission:** The dissertation committee evaluates the paper (and, if applicable, the oral defense) and provides feedback. If revisions are needed, students must resubmit within a designated period.

Topic Selection

The review paper should focus on a well-defined subject area within Information Science that is relevant to the student's intended dissertation research. The topic should be:

- Broad enough to encompass major themes, theories, and developments in the field.
- Narrow enough to provide depth and focus, rather than a general overview.
- Approved by the student's advisor or the committee.

Evaluation Procedure

The review paper and (if applicable) oral defense will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Literature Review:

1. **Depth and Breadth of Literature Coverage:** Comprehensive understanding of foundational and current research.
2. **Critical Analysis and Synthesis:** Identification of major debates, trends, and knowledge gaps; integration across studies.
3. **Connection to Research:** Clear links between existing literature and the student's intended research direction.
4. **Organization and Clarity:** Logical structure, coherent arguments, and effective communication.

5. **Writing Quality and Formatting:** Academic tone, grammar, and proper APA citation formatting.

Oral Defense (if required):

- Clarity and confidence in presenting ideas.
- Ability to respond thoughtfully to questions.
- Integration of concepts across related areas.

Outcome

- **Pass:** The student demonstrates sufficient knowledge and research capability to proceed with dissertation work.
- **Conditional Pass:** The student must address minor concerns and resubmit within a designated timeframe.
- **Major Revision:** The student must undertake significant revisions or select a new topic. A second major revision may lead to dismissal from the program.

Students are encouraged to meet regularly with their advisor and committee for guidance throughout the process.

Dissertation

PhD students must complete 12–18 dissertation credits, during which they are expected to:

- Develop and receive approval for a dissertation proposal,
- Conduct original research (data collection and analysis), and
- Produce a complete, publication-ready dissertation.

Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal must demonstrate readiness for independent research and should include:

- Clearly defined research questions,
- A critical and comprehensive literature review,
- Relevant theoretical or conceptual frameworks, and
- A detailed methods section outlining the research design, data sources, and analysis plan.

Timeline

Students are encouraged to complete and defend their dissertation proposal by:

- **The end of the sixth semester** (for full-time students), or
- **The end of the eleventh semester** (for part-time students).

Recognizing that research progress varies, students may propose an alternative timeline in consultation with their faculty advisor and Committee. Any significant deviation from the recommended schedule must be approved by the Committee.

Oral Defense of the Proposal

An oral defense of the proposal is required. This defense must demonstrate the student's thorough knowledge of the research area, the soundness of the proposed methodology, and the feasibility of completing the work.

The committee may request revisions before final approval.

Advancement to Candidacy

After the proposal is approved, students are eligible to formally file for candidacy.

Final Dissertation and Public Defense

Upon completing the research, the candidate must produce a final, publication-ready dissertation, and defend their work in an oral examination.

Final Dissertation

The dissertation will be an original contribution to the field of Information Science as determined by the candidate's dissertation committee. In addition to ensuring the originality of the work, the dissertation committee will ensure that the canons of organization, presentation, and documentation usually prescribed for publications in the field of Information Studies are followed. Likewise, the candidate and the committee will certify that the dissertation is substantially free of errors and ready for publication upon submission to the Graduate School.

Final Oral Defense

The defense consists of two parts:

1. **Public Presentation:** The candidate delivers a formal presentation of their dissertation research. This portion is open to all members of the academic community, including faculty, students, and invited guests.
2. **Examination:** Immediately following the public presentation, the Committee conducts a question-and-answer session with the candidate. This session allows the Committee to evaluate the dissertation in depth and assess the candidate's mastery of the subject matter.

The defense may be conducted online or in hybrid format, based on mutual agreement between the Committee and the candidate.

A unanimous or majority vote of the Committee is required to approve the dissertation and pass the defense.

Course Work

Time on task

As a general rule, time on task per credit hour, including class time and out-of-class readings and assignments, is 3-4 hours per week for 15 weeks, or 45-60 hours total. For a 3-credit course this means 9-12 hours per week, so a course load of 4 courses per semester corresponds to a demanding full-time job.

Repeating courses

A student may repeat a course only once (for a total of two attempts). A student may want to repeat a course in order to remove a grade below B (3.0) in a core course, a grade of Unsatisfactory, or to improve their record. All course registrations will appear on the student's transcript. The best grade in each course will be used for computing the MS GPA; **all grades will be used for the UB GPA.**

Required core courses: Course resignations

Students may resign from required courses only once. Upon resignation, the student will be placed on academic probation and the course must be taken in the next available semester of registration.

Student Status in the Program

Good academic standing

A student is in good academic standing if he or she:

- maintains a PhD GPA 3.0 or above (see Grades and Grade Point Average (GPA))
- has a grade of B (3.0) or better in each required core course taken
- has fewer than 9 credits of incomplete grades
- complies with UB regulations (<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentlife/life-on-campus/community/rules.html>)

A student in Good Academic Standing is eligible to register for courses unless there are problems with outstanding bills or other UB administrative requirements.

Note: A failing grade in an elective course does not make the student lose Good Academic Standing as long as the student's UB GPA remains 3.0 or above.

Annual Review

Each student's academic progress will be evaluated annually by the student's advisor and the Director of the Doctoral Program. This annual review process begins in April with online GSE

annual review form. The process will be completed during the summer with checking of students' final spring semester grades.

Additionally, each PhD student's academic progress will be reviewed after their first semester of enrollment, in order to identify any academic problems early in the program. The Director of the PhD program will be required to communicate the academic evaluation to the student in writing.

These elements will be included in the Department's annual evaluations:

1. Review of the student's academic record, including:
 - checking the overall GPA
 - addressing any incomplete and/or resigned courses
 - monitoring overall progress toward completing the coursework phase of the program
2. Review of the student's extracurricular record, including:
 - engagement in program activities, such as the residency week and research talks
 - engagement in disciplinary activities, such as conferences and workshops
2. Checking on progress in completing or preparing for the preliminary or qualifying exam(s) or paper(s).
3. Planning a timely defense of the dissertation research proposal or prospectus.
4. Monitoring adequate progress in research, including timeliness of degree completion.

If the student is not making adequate academic progress, his or her entire record will be reviewed by the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee. The Committee will recommend to the IS Chair one of two actions:

1. Place the student on academic probation.
2. Dismiss the student from the program

Students on academic probation will be reviewed at the end of each semester by the faculty advisor and the Doctoral Program Director. At the time of review, if a student meets all conditions of Good Academic Standing, the academic probation will be lifted. Otherwise, the academic probation will remain. Students who repeatedly fail to meet the conditions of good academic standing may be dismissed from the PhD program.

Continuous registration requirement

Graduate students must register (and pay all tuition and fees not covered by a tuition scholarship) for a minimum of one credit hour each fall and spring term until all requirements for the degree are completed. If continuous registration is impossible or inappropriate at any time, students must secure a leave of absence from the department in which they are enrolled

and obtain approval from the GSE Graduate Degrees Committee. Students may not be on a leave of absence during the semester in which a degree will be conferred.

Leave of absence

Students unable to enroll in any fall or spring semester must submit a Graduate Student Petition Form (<https://registrar.buffalo.edu/pdfs/gradleaveofAbsence.pdf>) requesting a leave of absence from UB, explaining reasons for the leave and expected date of return. All requests must be made in advance and be supported with adequate documentation. The phrase "personal reasons" alone is not sufficient explanation for requesting a leave. Valid reasons include but are not limited to: health problems, caring for a family member, change in job responsibilities, relocation. Leaves of absence do not extend the seven-year time limit for completing the PhD degree.

Normally, leaves are granted for one semester with a maximum of one year, but it may be possible to extend the leave if circumstances warrant.

The leave of absence petition requires the approval of the advisor, and the Department Chair or Program Director.

Recipients of GEOP (Graduate Educational Opportunity Program) funding or of Schomburg or Presidential Fellowships must submit a copy of the *approved* Leave of Absence to the Graduate School, Office of Student Services.

Withdrawal from the program

Students can withdraw (resign) from the program by withdrawing from their current courses, alerting current instructors, and alerting the IS office or Chair. A student wishing to re-enter the program after withdrawing must re-apply.

Withdrawal from a course

Students planning to withdraw from a course during a semester may do so through the HUB registration portal. The Department asks that out of courtesy the student inform the course instructor.

Dismissal from the program

A student **may** be dismissed from the program for any of the following reasons:

1. On the determination in a review of academic probation. Such dismissals are based on recommendations from the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee to the IS Chair. If the committee cannot meet in a timely fashion and action is deemed urgent, the IS Chair may make the decision.
2. The student fails to meet the continuous registration requirement and has not been granted a leave of absence.

3. The student does not fulfill the degree or certificate requirements within the time limit considering any time limit extension(s) granted.
4. The student is convicted of a crime or his or her behavior disrupts course activities and/or presents a danger to other students, faculty, or staff. In such cases, applicable GSE and UB procedures will be followed.

After receipt of the dismissal letter, the student has two weeks to present to the chair of Admissions and Academic Standards Committee and the IS Chair the reasons or extenuating circumstances why he or she should not be dismissed. This may be done either in writing or in person. The dismissal will then be reviewed.

Reinstatement to the PhD Program

Requests for reinstatement should be sent to the PhD Program Director. They will be reviewed by the Admissions and Academic Standards Committee and in accordance with UB and GSE policy.

Reapplication to the PhD Program

Students who have attended the program within the past 5 years and have withdrawn before completion may request re-admittance (<https://www.buffalo.edu/grad/succeed/current-students/policy-library.html> - Returning Student Semester Record Activation and Associated Fee). If the student is accepted, the number of credits earned previously in the program that can be applied to the new program will be determined on the merits of the individual case in accordance with UB and GSE policy. Students who have not been registered in the program for over 5 years must reapply through the GSE's regular application process.

Academic Integrity

IS follows the UB policy on academic integrity.

Academic integrity is a fundamental university value. Through the honest completion of academic work, students sustain the integrity of the university while facilitating the university's imperative for the transmission of knowledge and culture based upon the generation of new and innovative ideas. See UB's Office of Academic Integrity (<https://www.buffalo.edu/academic-integrity.html>) for more information.

When an instance of suspected or alleged academic dishonesty by a student arises, it shall be resolved according to the procedures set forth herein. These procedures assume that many questions of academic dishonesty will be resolved through consultative resolution between the student and the instructor.

It is recommended that the instructor and student each consult with the Department Chair, School or College dean, or the Graduate School if there are any questions regarding these procedures.

For the process see: <https://www.buffalo.edu/grad/succeed/current-students/policy-library.html> - Academic Dismissal; Academic Integrity and Grievance Policies; Other Related University Policies.

The department does not yet have a formal policy about use of generative AI in courses or in dissertation research. Students should consider with their individual course instructors or their advisor (in the case of dissertation work) to ask what uses (if any) of generative AI are acceptable.

Research Opportunities & Internships

Students are encouraged to work with faculty on research projects to gain insider knowledge of the research and publication process. Faculty may have funding for part-time assistance on projects through grant or foundation funds. Faculty and students may also engage in extracurricular collaboratative research or in collaborative research as part of an independent study course. Students may work with their advisor or another faculty member. If the student plans to work with another faculty member, they should seek approval from their advisor.

Students interested in collaborative research opportunities should familiarize themselves with current faculty research and approach potential collaborators during residency week or through email.

Faculty Research Profiles: <https://ed.buffalo.edu/information/research/centers.html>

International Students Information

Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

<https://www.buffalo.edu/international-student-services.html>

English Language Institute (ELI)

<https://www.buffalo.edu/english-language-institute.html>

Immigration and Visas

<https://www.buffalo.edu/grad/succeed/start/immigration.html>

Campus Resources and Services

a. UB Graduate School

<https://www.buffalo.edu/grad>

b. UB Libraries:

<https://library.buffalo.edu>

Molly Poremski, UB Librarian, for the Department of Information Science.

poremski@buffalo.edu

c. UB Information Technology:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit.html>

d. UB Student Services – 1 Capen:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/1capen.html>

e. UB Office of Financial Aid:

<https://financialaid.buffalo.edu/>

f. UB Office of Student Accounts:

<https://www.buffalo.edu/studentaccounts.html>

University Policy and Procedures

UB Graduate School Policy Library:

<https://grad.buffalo.edu/succeed/current-students/policy-library.html>

GSE Bylaws

<https://ed.buffalo.edu/content/dam/ed/main/docs/policies/GSE-Bylaws-2021-02.pdf>

The IS Department reserves the right to amend, alter, and update the policies, procedures, or other information provided in this handbook as needed. Changes, revisions, and amendments to the material in this handbook will be published on the IS Department website and in future editions of the handbook.