

College of Information Studies | University of Maryland, College Park

The Handbook of the Ph.D. in Information Studies Program

Academic Year 2023-2024



COLLEGE OF
INFORMATION
STUDIES

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I Introduction

This handbook serves the doctoral students, faculty, and staff at the College of Information Studies (iSchool) at the University of Maryland, College Park. The handbook contains an overview of policies and procedures and specific suggestions to help guide students through each stage of the Ph.D. in Information Studies program. This handbook covers the most important and common issues that doctoral students encounter, but it is not meant to be exhaustive. For any issues not covered in the handbook, students should consult their advisors, the Doctoral Program Director, the Graduate Student Services Office, and/or university policies, as appropriate.

Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and strength to the generations before them, around the world, who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy into making the history that led to this moment.

Truth and acknowledgement are critical in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference. So, we acknowledge the truth that is often buried: We are on the ancestral lands of the Piscataway People, who are the ancestral stewards of this sacred land. It is their historical responsibility to advocate for the four-legged, the winged, those that crawl, and those that swim. They remind us that clean air and pristine waterways are essential to all life.

This Land Acknowledgement is a vocal reminder for each of us as two-leggeds to ensure our physical environment is in better condition than what we inherited, for the health and prosperity of future generations. [Source: [UMD Office of Diversity & Inclusion](#)]

Relationship between the Handbook and the University's Graduate Catalog

This Doctoral Program Handbook is an iSchool-specific application of the policies established in the [University of Maryland Graduate Catalog](#). All regulations enforced by the Graduate School are updated in this handbook on an annual basis. However, in cases where there is a discrepancy between the handbook and the Graduate Catalog in the wording of a policy enforced by the Graduate School, the Graduate Catalog supersedes this handbook.

Application of the Different Versions of the Doctoral Program Handbook

When students enter the doctoral program, they are required to follow the current version of the iSchool Doctoral Program Handbook of the year that they enter. Students have the option of choosing to follow a newer version of the iSchool Doctoral Program Handbook, with three stipulations: 1) students must follow all aspects of the selected version of the handbook—it is not possible to pick and choose policies from different versions of the handbook; 2) following a selected handbook also includes following the accompanying version of the University of Maryland Graduate Catalog (the same year for the Graduate Catalog as the handbook); and 3) students changing to a newer version of the handbook cannot change back to any earlier version of the handbook. If you choose to follow a newer version of the handbook, you must let your advisor and the Doctoral Program staff know.

Process for Updating the Doctoral Program Handbook

The Doctoral Program Handbook is updated annually by the iSchool Doctoral Program staff. Requests for changes to the handbook can be sent to the Doctoral Program Director at any time, but the handbook is only updated on an annual basis.

II Program Overview

The Ph.D. program at Maryland's iSchool offers an interdisciplinary approach to research and teaching provided by leading faculty at this highly respected public research university. Small classes and wide-ranging research projects enable students to work closely with faculty mentors to gain experience in identifying knowledge gaps, investigating both theoretical and practical solutions, evaluating results, and creating and disseminating new knowledge. A range of required research courses, doctoral seminars, and electives chosen by the students and their faculty mentors provide both the structure necessary for individuals to become successful researchers and the flexibility that allows them to pursue the research areas about which they are most passionate.

Maryland's iSchool is at the center of groundbreaking research in the fast-moving field of Information Studies. With a multidisciplinary faculty studying such diverse topics as Information Policy, Public and School Libraries, Digital Curation, Human-Computer Interaction, Social Computing, Citizen Science, Information Technology Innovations, and Health Informatics, the iSchool cultivates doctoral students from a wide range of backgrounds. The PhD program offered at the iSchool is an interdisciplinary program that provides students with training in theory, research, and pedagogy as preparation for original research in the field of Information Studies.

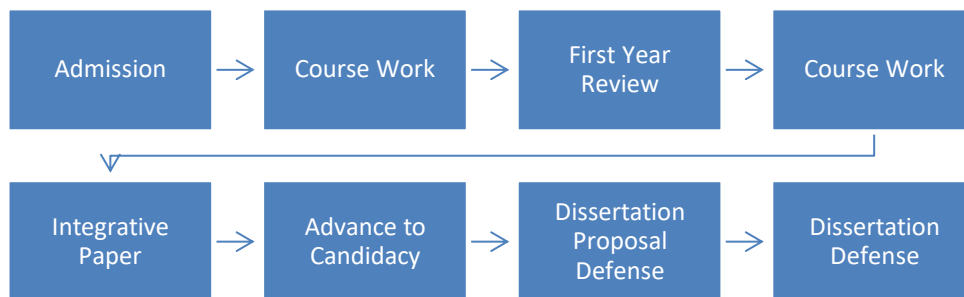
The iSchool's location near Washington, DC offers unparalleled opportunities for students to pursue research and employment opportunities. Students have opportunities to work on research projects that lead to published papers, as well as benefit from one-on-one mentoring relationships with faculty members. Graduates of the program have accepted positions at leading universities and research institutions around the world.

Goals of the Doctoral Program

The Ph.D. degree is an academic degree, providing a background in pedagogy, theory, and research that will prepare graduates for careers in conducting research and teaching in Information Studies. In order to complete the program, students must demonstrate high attainment in scholarship and critical thinking, as well as the ability to carry out independent scholarly research. Learning outcomes for the doctoral program include:

- Synthesize concepts, ideas, and literatures foundational to the study of information.
- Describe the diversity of methodological frameworks in information studies.
- Develop a collection of methodological approaches, heuristics, and practices to produce high quality research in information studies.
- Apply best practices in scholarly communication, including clear and succinct synthesis of prior literature, critical commentary, and compelling presentation of the student's own ideas.
- Articulate an epistemological stance by recognizing what counts as data, evidence, and knowledge in the student's own work.
- Develop a personal philosophy about professional life, which includes trajectories in research, teaching, service, and/or public engagement.
- Plan and propose novel research and scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.
- Conduct and disseminate novel research and scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.

Milestones of the Doctoral Study



Students must complete a minimum of 27 graduate credit hours while matriculated at the University of Maryland. Course work is taken in three areas: Information Studies (9 credit hours), Research Methods and Design (9 credit hours), and specialized area(s) (9 credit hours).

All students have a First Year Review at the close of their first full year in the program. Students prepare a portfolio that self-evaluates progress. The portfolio may include papers written for course work or research, a presentation on a research topic, and/or reviews by previous course instructors. A committee comprised of at least three full-time faculty members, a majority of whom must be members of the iSchool faculty, reviews the work and informs the student of the results.

Students do not take comprehensive exams, but instead write an Integrative Paper that synthesizes and applies knowledge from broad areas of the information field. A committee comprised of 3-5 faculty members, a majority of whom must be members of the iSchool faculty, approves the topic and prospectus, assesses the final paper, and certifies its successful acceptance according to professional standards. Please refer to page 27 for more information about the eligibility of committee members. The paper is written after the completion of course work and must be completed and accepted before advancing to candidacy.

Upon successful completion of the Integrative Paper, the student must identify a faculty member who will serve as the chair of their dissertation committee. Typically, this person is the student's pre-candidacy advisor; however, a new faculty member may be designated. The student, in consultation with their committee chair, selects a dissertation committee, which must be approved by the Doctoral Committee. The student must submit a dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee. This proposal includes a literature review, research plan, research methods to be used, research goals and objectives, timeline for the work, potential limitations, and any other elements deemed appropriate by the committee. The chair and the committee work with the student to determine the format and content of the proposal. Before the student can move past the proposal stage, a written proposal must be unanimously approved by the committee and the student must pass their dissertation proposal defense. Any changes to the goals, objectives, methods, plan, or other major element of the dissertation work must be approved by the chair in consultation with the other members of the committee.

The final milestone is the completion and defense of the dissertation. The purpose of the dissertation is to demonstrate the ability to successfully conduct original and meaningful research that contributes to the scholarly discourse. It must be finished and defended in no more than four years from advancing to candidacy.

During any academic year when the student does not achieve a formal milestone (First Year Review,

Integrative Paper, Dissertation Proposal, or Dissertation Defense), the student will have an Annual Review. This is a formal check-in during which the student’s progress in the program, identify any problem areas (and develop strategies for moving forward), and establish a timeline of milestones to ensure continued progress. At the advisor’s discretion, one or more faculty members may be included in the Annual Review. At the conclusion of the review, an Outcomes Assessment report is filled out and submitted to the student and to the Doctoral Program staff.

Sample Program of Study

Below is a **sample** schedule for a full-time Ph.D. student completing the program in five years. This is meant purely as an example and is not a replacement for advising. Program content varies according to each student’s previous educational experiences, areas of interest, and goals in the Ph.D. program. An individual program of study is usually designed with the student’s faculty advisor in accordance with program guidelines. Therefore, students must work closely with their faculty advisors to develop a course program that best addresses their needs and interests.

Fall Semester, Year I:	
(INST800) The Engaged Intellectual: An Introduction to Research and Academic Work	3 credit hours
(INST801) Theoretical and Epistemological Foundations in Information Studies	3 credit hours
Relevant graduate course for specialized area OR methods course	3 credit hours
Spring Semester, Year I:	
(INST802) Pragmatic and Methodological Foundations for Information Studies	3 credit hours
Methods course	3 credit hours
Relevant graduate course for specialized area	3 credit hours
FIRST YEAR REVIEW	
Fall Semester, Year II:	
(INST818) Individual Research Experience (specialized area)	3 credit hours
Methods course	3 credit hours
Relevant graduate course for specialized area	3 credit hours
Spring Semester, Year II:	
(INST898) Pre-Candidacy Research	3 credit hours
INTEGRATIVE PAPER & ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY	
Fall Semester, Year III:	
(INST899) Doctoral Dissertation Research	6 credit hours
Spring Semester, Year III:	
(INST899) Doctoral Dissertation Research	6 credit hours
Fall Semester, Year IV:	
(INST899) Doctoral Dissertation Research	6 credit hours
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE	

Spring Semester, Year IV: (INST899) Doctoral Dissertation Research	6 credit hours
Fall Semester, Year V: (INST899) Doctoral Dissertation Research	6 credit hours
Spring Semester, Year V: (INST899) Doctoral Dissertation Research	6 credit hours
DISSERTATION DEFENSE	

Timelines

While individual educational goals and experiences shape the timeline of the program, students should plan to complete their Ph.D. in a period of four to six years as full-time students (see designation of full-time and part-time status in Section VI: “Course Work”). Students must successfully complete their course work and successfully pass their Integrative Paper requirement in order to advance to candidacy. All students, regardless of full-time or part-time status, must advance to candidacy five years from the time they began the doctoral program. After admission to candidacy, the Graduate School requires that every student seeking the Ph.D. degree satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 semester hours of dissertation credits (INST899) before the dissertation defense. Additionally, the dissertation must be finished and defended in no more than four years after advancing to candidacy.

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessments

There are four milestones during the doctoral program: (1) First Year Review, (2) Integrative Paper, (3) Dissertation Proposal, and (4) Dissertation. There will also be an annual review at the end of any academic year during which the student has not achieved one of the four milestones. The college has adopted a policy to assess each student’s achievement of designated learning outcomes at each of these milestones. The details, including assessment schedule, procedures, and rubrics, are in Appendix A of this handbook. A committee is formed to conduct each review for each student. The Doctoral Program staff collects and retains the outcomes of these reviews.

Residency

The University System of Maryland Board of Regents has developed policies and procedures that define a Maryland resident for tuition and charge-differential purposes. As part of the admissions process, the university determines whether the applicant is an in-state or out-of-state resident. If a student feels that their residency status has been mis-classified, they can submit a petition to the Office of the Registrar. This information and more can be found at [Residency Reclassification Services](#).

Regardless of a student’s residency classification, all students enrolled in the doctoral program are required to be available on campus during the period when they are taking courses in the program. Students with a Teaching Assistantship (TA) are also required to remain on campus. Students with a Research Assistant (RA) may also be required to remain on campus.

Program Administration

The doctoral program is administered according to standards and regulations established by the Graduate School under the jurisdiction of the Graduate Council of the University of Maryland.

Within the college, the doctoral program is led by the Doctoral Program staff in consultation with the Doctoral Committee, which is comprised of faculty representatives, one representative of the doctoral students, the Director of Graduate Operations as a non-voting ex officio member, and the college's Associate Dean for Academic Affairs as a non-voting ex officio member. The meetings of the Doctoral Committee are open to anyone interested in participating. However, due to legal requirements related to privacy, meetings or portions of meetings where the Doctoral Committee addresses issues pertaining to individual students or applicants to the college are not open to students.

The Doctoral Program Director leads the Doctoral Committee to perform the following tasks:

- Oversee administration of the program;
- Define, evaluate, and modify principles on which the program is based;
- Make admission and funding decisions about applicants to the program;
- Review and vote on doctoral student travel requests and other support when relevant; and
- Review and vote on committees for individual doctoral students.

III Applying to the Program

Requirements and Deadlines

New doctoral students enter the program at the beginning of the fall semester. Those seeking admission to the doctoral program must submit an online application to the [University of Maryland Graduate School](#). The application and all accompanying documents must be submitted by the deadline. The Graduate School publishes specific application information about the Ph.D. in Information Studies program, including the deadline, in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Each application must include the following items:

1. A completed [UMD Graduate School application](#), including the \$75 application fee.
 - The Graduate School [waives the application fee](#) for applicants from selected organizations and/or preparatory programs.
2. Transcripts for all undergraduate and graduate courses at each institution you have attended.
 - In the online application, upload a copy of your unofficial transcript(s) in the Previous Education section. Unofficial transcripts are sufficient for the purposes of the review process of your application. However, if you are offered admission and choose to enroll in the University of Maryland, you will need to submit official sealed transcripts directly from each institution. More information about delivery/submission of official transcripts can be found on the [Graduate School](#) website.
 - Applicants must have earned a four-year baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or an equivalent degree from a non-U.S. institution.
 - Applicants must have earned a minimum 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) in all prior undergraduate and graduate coursework. If you do not meet this requirement, please provide more information and context about your GPA within the Statement of Purpose.
3. A [Statement of Purpose](#) describing your experiences and interests that will help you succeed in the program. In the Statement of Purpose, applicants must respond to the below questions, in addition to the questions linked from the Graduate School:
 - What is the specific area of your research interest? How have you developed your interest in this area?
 - What skills and/or prior experience will help you pursue your research interest?
 - Which faculty members (please name between 2-4) at Maryland's iSchool would you be interested in working closely with, and why?
 - What are the goals you would like to achieve in your doctoral study at Maryland's iSchool? What is your plan to achieve your goals?
 - What kind of career would you like to develop after earning your Ph.D.?
 - To help us understand your background and skills, feel free to optionally include:
 - Descriptions of challenging professional or academic projects that you have successfully completed;
 - Notes about coursework that demonstrates your quantitative skills or writing and argumentation skills;
 - Links to, as appropriate: relevant projects you have completed, papers or articles that you have published, code you have written, or visualizations you have created.
4. Contact information for three references.
 - It is preferable to request at least one letter from a former professor who is able to give an in-depth evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of your academic work.

- Letters of recommendation are due on the application deadline. Applicants have the ability to send recommendation requests before submitting the application. There is a “Save and Send Request” button for each recommender.
- 5. Current resumé or curriculum vitae (CV).
- 6. One academic writing sample.
 - A second academic writing sample is optional.
- 7. Exam scores.
 - GRE/GMAT (optional for all applicants): iSchool faculty use the GRE scores in widely diverging ways. Some find standardized tests to be less useful indicators than essays and grades; others find the GRE to be a useful measure of quantitative reasoning and/or perseverance when facing a difficult challenge. If you choose not to submit GRE scores, we highly encourage you to include other potential indicators of your skills and experience in your Statement of Purpose (see #3 above).
 - TOEFL/IELTS/PTE (required for most international applicants)
 - See the Graduate School’s [English Language Proficiency Requirements](#) for instructions on submitting scores, minimum score requirements, and exemptions.

Admitted students must also submit the required immunization records in accordance with university policy prior to enrollment. Inquiries concerning admission should be directed to the Graduate Student Services Office.

Review of Applications

Applications for the doctoral program are reviewed by the Graduate Student Services Office, the Doctoral Program staff, the Doctoral Committee, and members of the faculty whose expertise is most relevant to each candidate. Final admissions decisions based on these reviews are made by the Doctoral Committee.

For international students, applications can only be reviewed after being cleared by the university’s [International Student & Scholar Services](#) (ISSS). After all application materials have been received, international applications are sent to ISSS for evaluation. ISSS reviews international academic credentials, financial certification, and English proficiency certification. The College of Information Studies cannot make an admission decision on an international application unless it has been first evaluated by ISSS. Thus, it is important for international applicants to complete their applications before the published application deadline. Additionally, the Graduate School offers admission to international students based on academic information; however, it is not a guarantee of attendance. After receiving an admission decision from the Graduate School, admitted international students will receive instructions about obtaining the appropriate visa to study at the University of Maryland, which will require the submission of additional documents. The [UMD Graduate Admissions Process](#) for international applicants has more information.

Financial Support

The College provides the most promising applicants with financial support, either in the form of assistantships or fellowships or a combination of both. While both types of awards include a stipend, benefits, and tuition remission, an assistantship includes work responsibilities for the student, while a fellowship does not. All awards are made on an annual basis, and consideration for future awards will be based on evaluations of the student’s work in the program. Students should indicate on their application the desire to be considered for these awards. More information about financial support is in Section XII:

“Financial Assistance,” in the [Graduate Catalog under Policies for Graduate Assistantships](#), and in the [Graduate Catalog under Graduate Student Fellowships](#).

Admission Decisions

Admitted applicants will be promptly notified, including any decisions regarding financial support. Formal admission to the University of Maryland is offered only by the Graduate School. Applicants admitted to the Graduate School will receive a written offer of admission from the Dean of the Graduate School as well as funding information from the iSchool. To accept or decline the offer, applicants must complete the form sent by the Graduate School and notify the program no later than the [April 15 deadline](#), or the offer becomes void. Applicants who are unsuccessful in gaining admission are also notified in writing by the Graduate School. Letters of funding offers specify the deadline for acceptance, and notifications of acceptance must be received by the specified deadline. Funding offers cannot be guaranteed past the specified deadline in the letter.

The offer of admission is extended to the applicant only for a specified semester. If an admitted student wishes to change the semester of entry, they must petition the Graduate School in writing. Students are allowed a one-time deferral of admission up to one year, subject to approval by the program and the Graduate School. Any further changes will require a new application.

Dual Degrees

Graduate students who are enrolled in a doctoral program in one department/program may enroll concurrently for a master’s degree in a related area. More information about dual degrees can be found in the [Graduate School Catalog](#).

The iSchool doctoral program does not accept applications the other way around (i.e., a student in a master’s program applying to enroll concurrently in the PhD program).

Transfer Students & Coursework

All prospective students seeking to transfer into the doctoral program will complete the same application process as other students, submitting the same application and going through the same review process.

Coursework from a prior master’s degree cannot be transferred to the doctoral program. At the university level, students cannot count coursework used for one degree toward another degree. Additionally, coursework taken at the doctoral level should have a different breadth, depth, and scope than coursework taken at the master’s level.

IV Academic Integrity

The university is an intellectual community. Its fundamental purpose is the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Like all other communities, the university can function properly only if its members adhere to clearly established goals and values. Essential to the fundamental purpose of the university is the commitment to the principles of truth and academic honesty. The [Code of Academic Integrity](#) is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. While all members of the university community share this responsibility, the Code of Academic Integrity is designed so that special responsibility for upholding the principle of academic honesty lies with students. The Graduate School also provides a statement on academic integrity in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

The college takes issues of academic integrity extremely seriously and has a *zero tolerance* policy for academic dishonesty. As part of their preparation to be scholars and educators, doctoral students must be extremely conscious about adhering to principles of academic integrity, as they will need to follow these principles throughout their entire careers and model the principles to their own students and colleagues.

Code of Academic Integrity

The university's Code of Academic Integrity states that any of the following acts, when committed by a student, shall constitute academic dishonesty:

- CHEATING: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- FABRICATION: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this Code.
- PLAGIARISM: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.
- SELF-PLAGIARISM: the reuse of substantial identical or nearly identical portions of one's own work in multiple courses without prior permission from the current instructor or from each of the instructors if the work is being submitted for multiple courses in the same semester.

The college encourages faculty and students to explore useful strategies and resources about academic integrity. For example, some advice on how to avoid plagiarism is available from the [University Libraries](#).

Honor Pledge

On each examination, paper, or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, a student may be requested to write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assessment.

Failure to sign the pledge is not an honors offense, but neither is it a defense in case of violation of this Code. Refusal to sign must be explained to the instructor. Signing or non-signing of the pledge will not be considered in grading or judicial procedures. Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge – submission implies signing the pledge.

On exams, no assistance is authorized unless given by or expressly allowed by the instructor. On other

assignments, the pledge means that the assignment has been completed without academic dishonesty, as defined in the Code of Academic Integrity.

The pledge is a reminder that at the University of Maryland, students carry primary responsibility for academic integrity because the meaningfulness of their degrees depends on it. Faculty members are urged to emphasize the importance of academic honesty and of the pledge as its symbol.

Penalties for Violations of Academic Integrity

Engaging in any academic dishonesty will result in consequences in line with university policies. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, buying work, multiple submissions of the same paper, forging signatures, submitting fraudulent documents, and facilitating the academic dishonesty of others.

Students who are found to have falsified, fabricated, or plagiarized in any context, such as course work, laboratory research, archival research, or thesis/dissertation writing, are referred to the [Office of Student Conduct](#). The Office of Student Conduct determines the penalties for violations of the university's standards of academic integrity, but the normal sanction for a graduate student found responsible for a violation of academic integrity is dismissal (suspension or expulsion) from the university. The College pursues the maximum penalties applicable in cases where a doctoral student engages in academic dishonesty.

Students in Academic Difficulty

All graduate students in the iSchool must maintain a minimum cumulative 3.0 GPA and must earn a B or higher in all core/required courses. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on academic probation, and they must bring their GPA above a 3.0 by the end of the following term. If, after that subsequent term, the student still has not surpassed a 3.0 cumulative GPA, they will be referred to the College's Students in Academic Difficulty (SAD) committee for review and possible dismissal from their program.

Students who earn a B- or lower on core/required courses need to retake the course the next time it's offered and earn a B or better. If, after the second attempt, the student still does not earn a B or better, the student will be referred to the College's Students in Academic Difficulty (SAD) committee for review and possible dismissal from their program.

Students will be notified if they are being placed on academic probation and/or if they must retake a core/required course. If the student's case is taken to the Students in Academic Difficulty (SAD) committee, the student will have the option to submit a letter of explanation and an action plan, which will be reviewed by the committee as they decide on possible dismissal. Any decisions of dismissal by the College are final on the part of the College, but students will have the option to appeal the decision with the Graduate School. Instructions on how to appeal will be sent out with the official notification of dismissal from the Graduate School.

V Advising

Advisor

Upon admission to the program, each student is assigned a provisional advisor based on their interests and faculty availability. All efforts are made to assign the student the advisor who is best equipped to provide guidance in the planned area of study as indicated on the application materials.

The advisor works with the student to develop their plan of study from the beginning of the doctoral program, and reassess this plan at the beginning of each academic year. The advisor plays a key role in helping the student select classes, plan research and teaching activities, refine areas of interest, and prepare for the Integrative Paper and candidacy. In many cases, the advisor involves the student directly in their research projects or helps the student to find ways to become engaged with the research life of the College.

Should a student's advisor take a sabbatical or leave of absence, the student and the advisor must establish in advance the ways in which the student will receive continued guidance. For example, they may identify another faculty member who will serve as a primary source of guidance on campus while the advisor is away.

Advising after Candidacy

Once a student has advanced to candidacy, the student must identify the chair of their dissertation committee. This chair advises the student through the process of researching, writing, and defending the dissertation proposal and the dissertation. Typically, the chair is the student's pre-candidacy advisor. However, a new faculty member may be designated. The chair must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the iSchool faculty, unless special permission is granted by the Doctoral Program Director and the Dean and approved by the Graduate School.

The student and the chair work together to identify the members of the dissertation examining committee (see the requirements for committee membership in Section X: "Dissertation Proposal"). Working with other faculty members on collaborative research projects and taking a range of courses from different faculty members are good ways to identify potential committee members. Once the committee is established, members of the committee will also serve in a mentoring role to the student, particularly regarding issues within their areas of expertise related to the dissertation.

Resolving Tensions in Advising

In cases where tensions are present between advisors/committee chairs and students, committee members and students, or advisors/committee chairs and committee members, the first step should typically be to try to resolve the tension between the concerned parties directly. Advisors should have an open-door policy of willingly and professionally listening to student concerns, ensuring that students understand it is safe and appropriate to approach them directly with any concerns they might have.

In the unusual circumstance where there is compelling evidence that it is not feasible to fully achieve the resolution of tensions internally, any concerned party may contact the Doctoral Program Director or any member of the Doctoral Committee with its concerns. The Doctoral Program Director and the Doctoral Committee have an open-door policy of willingly and professionally listening to any concerns, and—where necessary and when approved by the concerned party—they may take the concern to the Doctoral Committee as a whole. The ultimate authority within the College on such matters is the Dean

or the Dean's designee. All members of the College ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and justly. Finally, on the rare occasion that such tensions might have legal implications, concerned parties should bring their concerns to the relevant campus or other authorities.

Changing Advisors and Feedback on Advising

Over the course of a student's studies, circumstances of many types might warrant a change in advisor. There are some natural times to consider changing advisors, such as after the First Year Review or the Integrative Paper. Advisor changes can be made at any time, and there is no limit on the number of times a student might change advisors, although changes should be carefully considered and some continuity should be sought. Before changing advisors, the student should receive confirmation that the new advisor is willing to enter this relationship, and the previous advisor should be notified of the change. The student is also responsible for notifying the Doctoral Program staff, in writing, of any advisor change. Students may not spend more than six months in the program without an advisor. If they do, their case will be referred to the Doctoral Committee for possible dismissal from the program. If students do not have an advisor and they need to complete an Annual Review for the year, members of the Doctoral Committee will complete the review for them in place of an advisor. If a student's advisor leaves the College and the student does not follow them, the advisor is expected to help the student secure a new advisor in their place. However, it is ultimately up to the student to secure a new advisor.

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring may be another effective way to gain useful advice when used as a supplement to and in consultation with a student's faculty advisor/committee chair. Peer mentoring may be organized (e.g., by advisors, lab, or by the doctoral program's student representative) or informal, and may be provided on an ongoing or as-needed basis. Peer mentoring is a useful source of advice, but it is important to understand that each student's situation is different and the most important advising is expected to be the advising provided by a student's faculty advisor/committee chair. While often useful, peer mentoring should not serve as a substitute for advising from a faculty advisor/chair.

Expectations for Doctoral Student Mentorship

More information about doctoral student mentorship in the iSchool can be found in this [Statement of Expectations](#).

VI Course Work

The courses in the doctoral program are designed to both introduce students to the research and scholarship in Information Studies and prepare students to pursue their own research.

Students must complete a minimum of 27 graduate credit hours of course work while matriculated at the University of Maryland before moving onto the next milestone. Course work is taken in three areas: Information Studies Core Courses (9 credit hours); Research Methods and Design (9 credit hours); and Specialized Area(s) (9 credit hours). Students should work with their advisors to select quantitative, qualitative, and/or mixed research methods courses, and specialized area(s) courses.

Core Courses

Three doctoral courses are required and should be completed in the early phase of a student's doctoral study. These courses include:

- **INST800: The Engaged Intellectual: An Introduction to Research and Academic Work** (3 credit hours)
Students will explore a series of issues and topics that confront academic and professional life during and after the Ph.D. process, including (but not limited to) research, teaching, service, and public engagement. Students will also learn the process of acquiring knowledge and experiences to navigate various topics including mentoring, collaborating, networking, and building relationships with scholars, practitioners, and policy makers. One premise of the course is that academic and professional life is much more than a recipe for undertaking rote analytical procedures. Instead, academic pursuit is intimately linked to one's beliefs about knowledge, scholarly community, and the impact one wants to make on the world. By the end of the semester, students will have a better understanding on what paths are available after Ph.D. and what opportunities and challenges are associated with these paths. Students will also be able to reflect on their own interests and construct a future map of their professional trajectory. The course will ask students to reflect on their identities as individuals, colleagues, researchers, teachers, and public intellectuals, both now and in the future.
- **INST801: Theoretical and Epistemological Foundations in Information Studies** (3 credit hours)
Pursuing a doctorate in information studies involves the scholarly examination of the interaction between people, information, technology, and society. There are, however, as many ways to examine the interaction of people, information, technology and society as there are researchers, and many ways of understanding what counts as evidence and knowledge about information in society. INST801 will introduce you to the diverse scholarly traditions that comprise information studies, and will introduce you to how scholarly evidence and knowledge differ between them. It will examine why there are so many ways of knowing and methods of discovery within our field, and help you identify the social theory and methods that will support your path through information scholarship.
- **INST802: Pragmatic and Methodological Foundations for Information Studies** (3 credit hours)
Information Studies' eclectic interdisciplinarity is both its greatest strength and its most significant weakness. As an increasingly multi/inter/trans/non-disciplinary intellectual community, Information Studies embraces a wide variety of conceptual frameworks, theories, methodological approaches, and intellectual traditions. As such, it is able to bring many different intellectual perspectives to bear on the complex, nuanced phenomena that are its focus. The variety in the intellectual toolbox of Information Studies is central to its ability to avoid

reduction of its focal topics to trite, simplistic characterizations. However, Information Studies' paradigmatic richness places particular burdens on the individual researcher. Framing research agendas, motivating research questions, conducting literature reviews, selecting methods, and even arguing for particular conclusions is complicated by the number of alternative approaches available to the Information Studies scholar. Faced with this complexity, it is tempting to select a single paradigm and "be done with it" – and in doing so forego a primary strength of the interdisciplinary field. The purpose of this seminar is to help you develop a reflective practice that you can rely on to turn your interests into valuable new insights in an interdisciplinary domain like Information Studies.

Research Method & Design Courses

To fulfill the Research Methods and Design requirement, students must take one quantitative methods course, one qualitative methods course, and an additional methods course of their choosing. A mixed-methods course may be substituted for either or both of the required quantitative or qualitative requirements. Students may take qualitative or quantitative sections of INST808 (Research Methods) or take a variety of courses offered at the graduate level elsewhere on campus. The content of INST808 varies by section and semester, and students are allowed to take the course multiple times. Some example courses in recent years include (but are not limited to):

- ANTH606 Qualitative Methods in Applied Anthropology
- ANTH630 Quantification and Statistics in Applied Anthropology
- COMM600 Empirical Research in Communication
- COMM701 Quantitative Methods in Communications Research
- COMM711 Historical/Critical Methods in Communication Research
- COMM715 Advanced Qualitative Methods in Communication Research
- CMSC723 Natural Language Processing
- CMSC828J Advanced Topics in Information Processing; Common-sense Reasoning and Natural Language Understanding
- EDMS626 Instrumentation
- EDMS645 Quantitative Research Methods I
- EDMS646 General Linear Models I
- EDMS651 General Linear Models II
- ENGL601 Literary Research and Critical Contexts
- GVPT622 Quantitative Methods for Political Science
- HLTH625 Community Assessment through Qualitative Methods
- HLTH652 Quantitative Research Methods I in Public Health
- HLTH710 Methods and Techniques of Research
- HLSA775 Health Services and Policy Research Methods
- INST627 Data Analytics for Information Professionals
- INST633 Analyzing Social Networks and Social Media
- INST735 Computational Linguistics I
- INST736 Computational Linguistics II
- INST737 Introduction to Data Science
- MITH628C Special Topics in Digital Humanities; Digital Publishing with Minimal Computing: Humanities at a Global Scale
- PLCY610 Quantitative Aspects of Public Policy
- PLCY611 Quantitative Analysis of Policy Issues
- PSYC601 Quantitative Methods I
- PSYC602 Quantitative Methods II

- SOCY601 Statistics for Sociological Research I
- SOCY602 Statistics for Sociological Research II
- SOCY610 Logic of Social Inquiry
- SOCY611 Introduction to Demographic Methods
- SURV611 Review of Statistical Concepts
- SURV615 Statistical Modeling I
- SURV616 Statistical Modeling II
- SURV621 Fundamentals of Data Collection I Fundamentals of Data
- SURV630 Questionnaire Design and Evaluation
- TLPL762 Phenomenological Inquiry I
- TLPL788B Special Topics in Education; Critical Perspectives in Ethnographic Research Methods
- TLPL791 Qualitative Research I: Design and Fieldwork
- TLPL793 Methods of Discourse Analysis

Other courses may also count towards the methods requirement as long as they include substantial assignment(s) and/or learning outcomes that explicitly target the proper *execution* of an appropriate research method. Most courses that count toward methods requirements for other programs on campus should satisfy this requirement. If you have a question about whether a specific course will satisfy the methods requirement, please reach out the Doctoral Program staff.

Specialized Courses

Specialized area(s) courses serve several important functions, including exposing students to new perspectives, introducing students to faculty with whom they may later conduct research, and enabling acquisition of foundational knowledge. To support these goals, students are required to take 9 total credit hours that support them in their chosen area(s) of specialization. A maximum of 3 credit hours of INST818 (Individualized Research Experience) can count toward the specialized area coursework. Depending on the area of specialization, the specialized courses can be in the iSchool or in other units on campus.

Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area

The University of Maryland is a member of the [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#). Other institutions currently associated with the consortium include American University, The Catholic University of America, Gallaudet University, George Mason University, Georgetown University, The George Washington University, Howard University, Marymount University, the National Defense University, National Intelligence University, Trinity University, and Uniformed Services University, and the University of the District of Columbia. Students enrolled in any of these institutions are able to attend certain classes at other member institutions and have the credit considered “residence” credits at their own institution. Grades in these courses are included in the calculation of the student's GPA. Tuition remission awarded to graduate assistants and fellows may not be used to pay for courses at other consortium universities. Graduate assistants and fellows must pay for any courses that they take under the consortium arrangement. Students from schools in the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area may register for University of Maryland courses on a space-available basis beginning with the first day of classes.

Grades

The grade of A+ or A is calculated at 4 quality points, A- at 3.7 quality points, B+ at 3.3 quality points, B at 3.0 quality points, B- at 2.7 quality points, C+ at 2.3 quality points, C at 2.0 quality points, and C- at 1.7 quality points. Students do not earn credit toward degree for courses in which they receive a grade of D

or F. For graduate students, all courses taken that are numbered 400 and above (except 500-level courses, those numbered 799, 898, or 899, and those graded with an S) are used in the calculation of the grade point average.

In order to maintain good academic standing, every graduate student must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 for all courses taken at the university. A student may repeat a course in an effort to earn a better grade. Whether higher or lower, the most recent grade is used in computing GPA. Grades for graduate students remain a part of the student's permanent record. Changes in previously recorded grades may be made if timely (within one semester) and if the original instructor certifies that an actual mistake was made in determining or recording the grade. The change must be approved by the Dean of the iSchool and the Dean of the Graduate School. Graduate credit transferred from another institution is not included in the calculation of GPA.

An incomplete grade is an unusual mark that an instructor may give to a student whose work in a course has been qualitatively satisfactory, but who is unable to complete some portion of the work required because of illness or other circumstance beyond the student's control. In awarding the mark of "I" for graduate courses other than 899, instructors must complete a Graduate School Incomplete Contract [form](#). The contract specifies the work remaining to be completed. It must be signed by the instructor and the student and then maintained by the program offering the course. The student is responsible for providing a copy of the contract to the Director of Graduate Operations.

The mark of incomplete in 500-, 600-, 700-, and 800-level courses does not automatically roll-over to a letter grade. Normally, students are expected to complete courses in which they have received an "I" by a date no more than twelve months from the beginning of the semester in which the course was taken. The mark of incomplete in 400-level courses is governed by the rules for awarding incompletes to undergraduate students, including the provision of automatically converting an "I" to a letter grade.

Advisors should stay current with their students in urging completion of incomplete grades, and programs should review the status of incompletes in their reviews of students' progress toward their degrees. Students remain in good standing despite marks of incomplete if the courses are not required for their degrees. For courses required for graduation, students are considered to be making satisfactory progress only if they fulfill the conditions of any outstanding incomplete contracts in a timely manner.

A student whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. Permission of the advisor and the Doctoral Program Director are required for a student on probation to register for courses. Probation will be lifted when the student achieves a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.0. A student on probation who has completed fewer than 15 credits must raise their GPA to 3.0 or above by the end of the semester in which the student completes 15 credit hours or they will be dismissed by the Graduate School. A student who has completed 16 or more hours of course work and whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation and will have one semester in which to raise their cumulative GPA to a 3.0 or they will be dismissed by the Graduate School.

A graduate student's academic record (transcript) is intended to serve as a complete history of the student's academic progress at the University of Maryland. Under no circumstances will academic records be altered because of student dissatisfaction with a grade or other academic accomplishment.

Designation of Full-Time and Part-Time Status

The Graduate School uses a unit system in making calculations to determine full-time or part-time

student status. Please note that graduate units are different from credit hours. The number of graduate units per credit hour is calculated in the following manner:

- Courses in the series: 400-499 carry 4 units per credit hour.
- Courses in the series: 500-599 carry 5 units per credit hour.
- Courses in the series: 600-897 carry 6 units per credit hour.
- Pre-candidacy Doctoral Research courses: INST898 carries 18 units per credit hour.
- Doctoral Dissertation Research: INST899 carries 18 units per credit hour.

To be certified as full-time, a graduate student must be registered for a combination of courses equivalent to 48 units per semester. Graduate assistants holding regular appointments have full-time status if they are registered for at least 24 units in addition to the assistantship. Holders of half-time assistantships are considered full-time if registered for 36 units. Audited courses do not generate graduate units and cannot be used in calculating full-time or part-time status. All doctoral candidates must pay the flat candidacy tuition for semesters during which they are registered for six credit hours of INST899. This registration defines all currently registered doctoral candidates as full-time.

VII First Year Review and Annual Review

Each student (full-time and part-time) undergoes a First Year Review at the end of their first year. For most students, this means that their First Year Review occurs at the end of their first spring semester in the program. After the first year, each student needs to complete an Annual Review if they do not reach any new milestone of the program (Integrative Paper, Dissertation Proposal, and Dissertation) during a given academic year.

Timing of First Year Review

The review must occur **no later than the last day of the semester** (last day of final exams), while the materials must be available for faculty viewing no later than **two weeks before the review**. However, a review cannot be conducted before the mid-point of the semester to ensure that sufficient work has been completed during the second semester.

The First Year Review should occur with all members of the committee and the student present. Under extraordinary circumstances (i.e., faculty sabbatical, extreme illness, family emergency, and other circumstances detailed in the Leave of Absence section of the [Graduate School Registration Policies](#)), the timing of the First Year Review can be altered. Otherwise, the First Year Review must be completed on time for the student to remain in the doctoral program. The advisor and the student will coordinate the time and location of the review, as well as identify the appropriate faculty members to participate in the review.

First Year Review Committee

A committee comprised of at least three and no more than five full-time faculty members, a majority of whom must be members of the iSchool faculty, conduct the review. The student's advisor and the other faculty members on the student's committee review the student's work, meet with the student to discuss their portfolio, and are highly encouraged to write a report of the discussion and any recommendations made. In certain circumstances, a faculty member from another unit at the university may be included in the review. The reviewers may also solicit input from other faculty members who have taught or worked with the student.

In addition, each First Year Review Committee must ensure that the student is meeting all university requirements in terms of academic performance (e.g., sufficient GPA), course selection for completion of program requirements, and any other issues of administrative or academic standing.

Portfolio for the Review

During the Spring semester, the student prepares a portfolio for the review. The materials assembled for the review are meant to represent a self-evaluation of the student's progress made during the first year. The portfolio materials must be made available to the advisor and other committee members either through email, a website created by the student, or other means agreed upon by the advisor and the student.

The review materials may include papers written for course work or research, other course materials, a PowerPoint presentation on a research topic, reviews by previous course instructors, and/or any publications from the first year in the doctoral program. The student and the committee determine which materials are most appropriate to include.

The materials in the review are not intended to include everything a student has done during the year. The materials in the portfolio should represent what the student believes to be their best work in the program. The student should also include a list of courses taken in the doctoral program and the grades received in each course.

In order to ensure sufficient meaningful work for the committee to consider, students in their first year should work with their advisors to select a number of courses with requirements that include writing substantive papers. As the goal of this review is to ascertain the abilities of the student to successfully complete the doctoral program, work demonstrating potential as a scholar is essential to the review.

Process and Outcome of the Review

The first part of the review involves a discussion of the student's progress to date, including the student and all members of the First Year Review Committee. The goal of this portion is to ask questions that help the committee evaluate the student's progress in the program, including the student's course work, research direction, and ability to successfully complete the doctoral program. Once the committee feels that it has enough information to deliberate, the student is excused from the room and the committee discusses the student's progress in the program. Following this discussion, the committee votes. While it is ideal for the committee to reach a consensus, in cases where there is a disagreement about the outcome, the student passes if no or only one member of the committee votes to fail the student, and fails if two or more committee members vote to fail the student. The student is then invited back into the room and informed of the outcome of the review.

In cases where the student passes the review, the review committee should also discuss future committee membership and any concerns or questions regarding advising. This discussion should include both a retrospective analysis of the past year and possible next steps for future advising and committee membership. This discussion should be constructive and professional. The goal of this discussion should be to ensure that the student has access to advising from an advisor and committee members who can effectively advise the student. After the review meeting, the committee is highly encouraged to produce a report based on the review and send it to the PhD Program Coordinator for placement in the student's file. In addition, the committee will complete the First Year Review assessment form for Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessments (see Appendix A) and submit it to the Doctoral Program staff.

If two or more members of the review committee vote to fail the student, the review committee will choose one of the following two outcomes:

1. (default) The review committee can schedule a second meeting to occur no later than the end of the next semester (not including Summer). Two weeks before the second meeting, the student will submit a revised portfolio to all review committee members. The review committee's report from the original meeting should specify expectations for the revised portfolio (e.g., revising specific pieces in the original portfolio, adding new content for the portfolio, expectations for quality level of new material). If two or more members of the review committee vote to fail the student at the second meeting, the Doctoral Committee will discuss at its next meeting whether the student should be dismissed from the program.
2. If the review committee feels that the student should not continue in the program, they can ask the Doctoral Committee to discuss at its next meeting whether the student should be dismissed from the program.

At the end of the semester in which the review occurs, the Graduate Student Services Office reviews the

student's grades (including the grades for that semester) and other materials to ensure that the student is meeting all university requirements in terms of academic performance (e.g., sufficient GPA), course selection for completion of program requirements, and any other issues of administrative or academic standing. Upon completion of this administrative review, the student and the committee members will receive a letter summarizing the results of the First Year Review and the subsequent administrative review.

Annual Review

After the first year, if a student does not pass a new milestone of the program during an academic year, they must complete an Annual Review. The timing, committee, and format of the Annual Review should be decided by the student and their advisor, but the portfolio for review needs to reflect the student's most current work and accomplishments. If the student's advisor believes that the student is making good progress, the advisor may meet with the student without other committee members to do the Annual Review. After each review, the Annual Review assessment form for Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessments (see Appendix A) needs to be completed and submitted to the PhD Program Coordinator.

If the review committee determines that the student has not made satisfactory progress since the last milestone, the review committee will choose one of the following two outcomes:

1. (default) The review committee will provide a report to the student detailing its expectations for the student's progress in the near future. The review committee and the student will schedule a follow-up meeting to occur no later than the end of the next semester (not including Summer). At least two weeks before the second meeting, the student will submit work to the review committee that accomplishes the expectations that were provided at the prior Annual Review. If two or more members of the review committee vote to fail the student at the follow-up meeting, at its next meeting, the Doctoral Committee will discuss whether the student should be dismissed from the program.
2. If the review committee feels that the student should not continue in the program, they can ask the Doctoral Committee to discuss at its next meeting whether the student should be dismissed from the program.

VIII Integrative Paper

Upon completion of their course work, students will complete an Integrative Paper before advancing to candidacy. The Integrative Paper requirement of the doctoral program has two objectives: (1) to provide an early assessment of the student's ability to successfully complete a doctoral dissertation, and (2) to improve the research capabilities that the doctoral student brings to their dissertation.

In an Integrative Paper, a student synthesizes and applies knowledge from three broad areas within the information field: (1) a "core" area, with focal topics chosen from the gateway doctoral seminars; (2) a "research methods" area, with focal topics chosen from quantitative and/or qualitative research methods; and (3) a "specialization" area, with focal topics chosen from the courses taken and the topics researched through the projects in which the student has been engaged.

Academic Standing before Beginning the Integrative Paper

At the end of the semester prior to the one in which the student intends to complete the Integrative Paper requirement (excluding summer), they should contact the PhD Program Coordinator to verify completion of all course work requirements and confirm whether they are in good academic standing. The PhD Program Coordinator will convey the results of this review to the Doctoral Committee.

Timeline for Completion of the Integrative Paper

The Integrative Paper should be completed in one or two semesters after the student has completed the required course work (for full-time and part-time students, respectively), and the semester preceding the Integrative Paper must not be comprised entirely of independent study hours. Under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., extreme illness, family emergency), the timing of the Integrative Paper can be altered. Otherwise, the Integrative Paper must be accepted: 1) during the semester in which the student registers for INST898 to do the Integrative Paper; and 2) within the timeframe in the program as noted above for the student to remain in the doctoral program. The advisor and the student coordinate the timing of the review and the availability of the materials.

Preparing for the Integrative Paper

The first step before registering for the Integrative Paper credits is to draft a prospectus (1-2 pages) for the Integrative Paper. This prospectus should articulate the core research question(s) to be addressed in the paper, a proposed approach or method for addressing the question(s), and a brief argument for how the proposed work maps to the three areas stated earlier: (1) a "core" area, with focal topics chosen from the gateway doctoral seminars; (2) a "research methods" area, with focal topics chosen from quantitative and/or qualitative research methods; and (3) a "specialization" area, with focal topics chosen from the courses taken and the topics researched through the projects in which the student has been engaged. In the prospectus, the student should reveal if any part of the work will be done with (e.g., analyzing qualitative data with others) or by someone else (e.g., using data collected by others). The student then uses that prospectus to form an Integrative Paper committee in consultation with their advisor.

The prospectus must be submitted to the Doctoral Program staff by the advisor of the student (i.e., IP committee chair) no later than two weeks before the start of the semester in which the Integrative Paper will be attempted. Only after the submission of this prospectus can students register for the Integrative Paper credits. No later than Week 4 of the IP semester, the student must submit the names

of the IP committee members with the current copy of the prospectus (if any changes have been made) to the Doctoral Program staff for approval by the Doctoral Program Committee.

Committee Composition

The Integrative Paper committee includes 3-5 members, including the chair (who must be the student's advisor). A majority of the committee members must be (1) must be Full Members of the Graduate Faculty and (2) members of the iSchool faculty. Faculty who have joint appointments with the iSchool and another department will count toward the second requirement.

Unlike the dissertation examining committee, which must be approved by both the Doctoral Committee and the Graduate School, the Integrative Paper committee only needs to be approved by the Doctoral Committee.

General Timeline

- [Required] At least two weeks before the IP semester: IP chair submits the prospectus to the Doctoral Program coordinator; (if necessary) the student starts working on the IRB application.
- [Required] No later than Week 4: The student submits the names of the IP committee members to the Doctoral Program staff. The Doctoral Program Committee reviews and approves the composition of the IP committee. The result will be communicated back to the student within one week.
- [Recommended] Week 4-6: Check-in with your IP committee members and share the progress of the IP.
- [Required] Week 12-13: The student submits the completed IP to the committee. The committee should have at least two weeks to review the IP. Each committee member independently reviews the IP.
- [Required] Week 14-15: The IP committee meets with the student, clarifies any points regarding the IP, and completes the IP rubric to assign a final grade for the IP. If desired by the committee members, the student may give a presentation to the IP committee at this meeting.

Full-Time Students

Full-time students should have the Integrative Paper accepted by no later than the end of the fall semester of their third year. Full-time students should plan to complete the Integrative Paper in one semester. The student must register for three credit hours of INST898: Pre-Candidacy Research and should not enroll in any other courses during the same semester. Extensions may be available in line with the extenuating circumstances detailed in the [Leave of Absence section of the Graduate School Registration Policies](#).

Part-Time Students

Part-time students should have the Integrative Paper accepted by no later than the end of the fall semester of their fourth year. Part-time students should plan to complete the Integrative Paper in two semesters. For each of the semesters spent on the Integrative Paper, the student must register for three credit hours of INST898: Pre-Candidacy Research and should not enroll in any other courses during the same semester. Extensions may be available in line with the extenuating circumstances detailed in the [Leave of Absence section of the Graduate School Registration Policies](#).

Submission Guidelines

In preparing the Integrative Paper, the student is encouraged to work closely with a faculty member throughout the process. Interaction with their advisor and other faculty (e.g., discussing preliminary ideas, critiquing drafts) is highly desirable, both for increasing the quality of the research and for building student-faculty ties. However, the IP manuscript has to be written entirely by the student and direct edits by the chair or any of the committee members are prohibited.

The Integrative Paper is to be submitted to the committee members in a format (paper or electronic) as agreed upon by the student and the committee members. The expected length, including abstract, tables, figures, and appendices, but not references, is 7,500 words. Excessive length is often an indication that the student has not been able to integrate and refine their findings and knowledge. In other matters of style and format, the paper, including its footnotes and bibliography, should be of a quality consistent with that of an article about to be submitted to a professional journal or conference. The cover page should include the paper's title, author's name, and an abstract of no more than 150 words.

International students may seek editing and grammatical assistance from campus organizations that provide such help. The Graduate School offers an [English Editing for International Graduate Students \(EEIGS\)](#). The EEIGS program is free, and is staffed by volunteer editors from the Volunteer Service Corps, the Golden ID program, and the community. All graduate students can use and benefit from the Graduate School Writing Center and its many available resources.

If a student seeks assistance from any of these programs on their Integrative Paper, the program must provide the student with a letter detailing the grammatical and editing assistance provided, and this letter must be submitted with the Integrative Paper.

Co-Authorship

Co-authored papers of any sort will not be accepted as Integrative Papers. The writing of the Integrative Paper must be entirely the work of the individual student. However, in some cases, the work that leads up to the Integrative Paper may involve other collaborators—for example, the student analyzing the data that have already been collected as part of a larger project; the student analyzing the data with another researcher to ensure a high-level of inter-rater reliability; or the student conducting a literature review but using the data from a shared resource. After the paper is accepted, however, the student may collaborate with others to develop the paper further.

Research Involving Human Subjects

If a research project in which a doctoral student participates involves social-behavioral human research (including surveying, interviewing, audio or video taping human subjects, or doing experiments on human subjects), then compliance with the University of Maryland policy for human subjects research is necessary. The student needs to apply and obtain an approval or an exemption for the research from the university's [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). Students planning to conduct human subject research should consult with their faculty advisor(s) before applying to the IRB for approval or exemption. They need to complete the required IRB electronic training program available through the university IRB website. The college has an IRB liaison responsible for advising on IRB preparation and submission. The IRB liaison needs to review and sign an IRB application before it is submitted to the university's IRB.

Evaluation Criteria

A paper is judged to satisfy the Integrative Paper requirement if it provides strong evidence that the doctoral student is capable of completing a satisfactory dissertation. The review of the Integrative Paper is very much like the editorial process at a leading professional journal or conference. There are at least three independent readers of the paper, followed by an overall recommendation. The requirements for clarity of expression, quality of work and methodology, and originality are at the level of a research journal. The standard for acceptance on initial submission is that the paper be comparable to articles published in respectable academic journals or conferences. However, in evaluating empirical papers which involve primary data collection, allowance will be made for smaller sample sizes. Papers that do not meet this standard will be returned for revision.

With respect to specific criteria, the Integrative Paper reviewers consider three distinct questions:

- Has the student developed and clearly stated the research question(s)? Satisfying this criterion can take many forms; the essential requirement is that the student generates findings and ideas that represent a new contribution to the literature.
- Has the student developed and defended a reasonable and appropriate method of inquiry for resolving the research question? This criterion depends heavily on the doctoral student's field of specialization, the particular research question(s), and the particular expertise they bring to the subject. However, it should include the selection of data sources, research samples, models and their underlying assumptions, and the appropriate use of inference-drawing procedures.
- Was the student able to use appropriate research methodology and bring the research project to a logical conclusion? This criterion includes a clear description of the methods used and their application, an exploration of both the limitations and implications of the study, a summary of the contributions of the study, and an ability to analyze and report the research findings in a readable, clear, and concise manner.

Review Outcome

The committee must have at least two weeks to review the paper, as well as additional two weeks to review any revised versions to receive a passing grade for the semester in which the Integrative Paper will be attempted. Students should allot time accordingly while writing the paper.

The range of evaluations of the Integrative Paper follows standard reviewing practices for journal and conference submissions. The potential designations a faculty member may give to a paper are:

- **Accept as is.** This indicates passage of the requirement with no further work on the part of the student. Such a designation is rarely given, and is assigned if the paper is on a level with those that might be accepted in a refereed journal or conference.
- **Accept with minor revisions.** This indicates that the core of the paper is acceptable in its current form, but some small changes are required on the part of the student. Upon completion of these revisions, which should be enumerated by the IP committee, the paper will be on a level with those that might be accepted in a refereed journal or conference.
- **Revise and resubmit.** This indicates that the paper is not acceptable in its current form, but the paper has potential to be acceptable with major work from the student. Upon completion of major revisions, which should be enumerated by the IP committee, the paper may reach the level of acceptability.
- **Reject.** This indicates a major failing to meet the requirements of the paper.

If the integrative paper is not submitted to the committee at least two weeks before the end of the

semester, the outcome is an automatic reject.

Each faculty reviewer assigns one of the above outcomes to the Integrative Paper under review. The advisor writes a report of the discussion and the recommendations made (i.e., accept as is, minor revisions, revise & resubmit, or reject), which includes all of the comments from the committee and the grade assigned by the committee.

Acceptable: Accept as is or Accept with minor revisions

To meet the Integrative Paper requirement, a student must receive a passing grade from every reviewer of the paper. If the student receives a mixed recommendation outcome of "accept as is" or "accept with minor revisions" from IP committee members, this requirement is automatically satisfied. Minor revisions only need to be reviewed by the IP chair. The student will have two weeks to complete these revisions. In both of these cases, the appropriate passing grade is entered into the student's record for the Integrative Paper course.

Not acceptable: Revise and resubmit or Reject

In the case of a recommendation of "revise and resubmit," the student will have an opportunity to make major revisions to make an acceptable Integrative Paper. The revision period shall be no longer than two months. The student will receive an Incomplete grade for the duration of the revision period. The revised paper is then reviewed by the same IP committee to determine if the necessary changes have been made. If so, the student passes the requirement.

If the two-month revision period overlaps with the next academic semester and the student needs to stay registered for courses (e.g., due to registration requirements from International Student and Scholar Services), the student should work with their IP chair and Graduate Student Services to register for an independent study (e.g., INST818) as a placeholder while the revision outcome is determined.

If the outcome of the "Revise and Resubmit" is unacceptable OR the student fails to submit a revision within two months of the initial review outcome, the grade outcome will be a failing grade. The IP committee will then deliver their recommendation and report to the Doctoral Committee with a request to discuss at its next meeting whether the student should be dismissed from the program due to lack of satisfactory progress or be allowed to retake the Integrative Paper within a specified timeline.

If the outcome of the Integrative Paper is "Reject," the Doctoral Committee will discuss at its next meeting whether the student should be dismissed from the program due to lack of satisfactory progress or be allowed to retake the Integrative Paper within a specified timeline.

The student who failed the IP may submit a written statement to plead their case to the Doctoral Committee. In addition, the IP chair and student may respectively attend the Doctoral Committee meeting to provide further information to assist the Doctoral Committee's deliberation. If the Doctoral Committee decides that the student should be dismissed from the program, the Committee will initiate formal proceedings for dismissal, which will be handled by the College's Students in Academic Difficulty (SAD) Committee.

Suggestions on Successfully Completing the Integrative Paper

Many doctoral students want to submit empirical papers to meet the Integrative Paper requirement. Such research may utilize either secondary or primary sources of information. Equally acceptable is a paper which provides a new perspective for viewing the literature and/or developments in a field. Such

a paper, however, must provide new insights in its synthesis of the field. A survey of the scholarly literature by itself is not appropriate. Theoretical papers are also acceptable, as long as they break new ground or significantly amplify existing theory. Regardless of the method employed, the paper must represent a contribution of new ideas and findings to the literature. Students are encouraged to check successful examples of IPs that students have been sharing in the Knowledge Repository on ELMS.

Dissertation proposals are not appropriate to submit as Integrative Papers no matter how competently they are written, since evidence of research capability must be demonstrated by completing a research project as well as designing one properly. Such proposals can usually be developed into pilot studies, a write-up of which could readily become an Integrative Paper.

The most frequent and severe shortcomings in Integrative Papers often concern their beginnings and endings. All too often students feel the paper should principally demonstrate their knowledge of methodology. While occasional instances of misused statistics, conceptual inconsistencies, and inappropriate research tools have been discovered, a more general problem appears to exist, namely the failure of doctoral students to clearly state what the paper is to accomplish or what was learned and substantiated when the research was completed, or to demonstrate their mastery of undertaking a research project independently. Furthermore, organization, reporting style, and clarity of expression are often in need of improvement.

In addition, students should not consider the Integrative Paper as a second dissertation. Therefore, it is equally important not to fall into the trap of doing “too much” for this paper. The goal of an Integrative Paper is to prepare students for the dissertation experience in a manner that shortens the time to graduation, not lengthens it. The evaluation process is like the refereeing process employed by leading scholarly conferences or journals. The critiques rendered by the Integrative Paper reviewers provide critical evaluation as part of the learning process. An Integrative Paper submitted to the committee is presumed to offer clear evidence of the doctoral student's ability to complete work toward their Ph.D. degree. The paper must be entirely original work by the student. The student signs a statement asserting that they have sole authorship of the paper.

Students are strongly encouraged to seek feedback from their advisors before submitting the paper. However, the advisor's comments cannot constitute anything beyond suggestions. Further, such feedback is purely advisory and represents no guarantee that the student will pass the requirement when the paper is formally submitted. Faculty can provide general guidance, but are not required or expected to provide feedback about the potential outcome of the review process.

IX Admission to Candidacy

After successful completion of course work and the Integrative Paper, all requirements for the degree other than the dissertation proposal and the dissertation will have been completed, and the student will advance to the status of doctoral candidate. More information can be found in the [Doctor of Philosophy section of the Graduate Catalog](#).

Candidacy

A student must be admitted to candidacy for the doctorate within five years after matriculation to the doctoral program and at least six months before the date on which the degree will be conferred. It is the responsibility of the student to submit an application for admission to candidacy when all the requirements for candidacy have been fulfilled. Applications for admission to candidacy are made by the student and submitted to the Graduate Student Services Office for further action and transmission to the Graduate School. Application forms may be obtained at the Graduate School, Room 2123, Lee Building, or [online](#). Paperwork must be received by the Graduate School **prior to the 25th of the month** in order for the advancement to become effective the first day of the following month.

Continuous Registration

Doctoral candidates are automatically registered for 6 credits of dissertation research every semester, excluding summer and winter sessions, until the degree is awarded. Every student seeking the Ph.D. must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 12 dissertation credits hours (INST899) prior to graduation. A student must be registered in INST899 in the semester when they defend their dissertation.

Doctoral candidates are not eligible for Waivers of Continuous Registration. Each doctoral candidate must maintain continuous registration in INST899 (Doctoral Dissertation Research) until the degree is awarded. Waivers of Continuous Registration may be granted only under the university's policy for Leave of Absence for Graduate Students for Childbearing, Adoption, Serious Health Condition, Dependent Care, or Financial Hardship. More information can be found in the [Registration Policies section of the Graduate Catalog](#).

All graduate students must register for courses and pay associated tuition and fees each semester, not including summer and winter sessions, until the degree is awarded. A student who fails to register and who has not requested and received a Waiver of Continuous Registration or leave of absence will be notified by the Graduate School after the first day of classes that the student must register for the current semester. The Graduate School also informs the Graduate Student Services Office that the student is in jeopardy of termination. If the student does not register, they will be dismissed from the Graduate School at the end of the semester for failure to comply with the continuous registration requirement.

A student who is dismissed for non-registration may appeal dismissal during a 30-day period following the end of the semester of non-registration. If the student does not appeal, or if the appeal is denied, and the student wishes to continue in the Graduate School, the student must apply for readmission. In this case, readmission does not alter the initial requirements for time to complete the degree or advance to candidacy.

X Dissertation Proposal

Timelines

Doctoral students must have their proposal accepted no more than two years after advancing to candidacy and their dissertation accepted no more than two years after their proposal is accepted.

The Doctoral Committee will consider one-semester extensions only to these timelines for extenuating circumstances. Students who do not comply with these timelines may be dismissed from the program. The PhD Program Coordinator will notify students first within six months of the two-year deadline, and again three months after that. If a student has not reached their milestone by the deadline, they will be able to request an extension from the Doctoral Committee. Extension requests require a statement from the student about why they need the request, the work they have completed to-date, and a specific timeline for completion of the work to be finished. A separate statement from the student's advisor(s) is also required. If students fail to have their milestones completed after the one-semester extension, then their case will be referred to the Students in Academic Distress (SAD) Committee for possible dismissal from the program.

Dissertation Examining Committee

Upon successful completion of the Integrative Paper, students must identify the chair of their dissertation committee. Typically, this person is the student's pre-candidacy advisor; however, a different faculty member may be designated. The student, in consultation with their committee chair, selects a dissertation committee, which must be approved by the Doctoral Committee before the proposal defense.

Because the dissertation examining committee is the same committee to evaluate the dissertation proposal and dissertation, the committee membership requirements for the dissertation proposal are the same as those for the dissertation. The university guidelines for selection of committee members are as follows, and additional information can be found in the [Graduate Faculty Members section of the Graduate Catalog](#):

- **Dissertation Examining Committee Membership.** The Committee must include a minimum of five members of the Graduate Faculty, at least three of whom must be Full Members. The Chair of the committee normally is the student's advisor, who should be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty or have been granted an exception to the policy by the Dean of the Graduate School. Each Committee has a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School. Further, the dissertation committee composition should be submitted to the Doctoral Committee and approved early in the process of preparing the proposal.
- **Nomination of the Dissertation Examining Committee.** Membership on a Dissertation Examining Committee requires nomination by the student's advisor and approval by the Doctoral Committee. At the *proposal defense stage*, students should email the composition of their committee, along with their title and abstract, to the Doctoral Program staff for approval. At the *dissertation defense stage*, committee membership requires approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. The nomination of a Dissertation Examining Committee should be provided to the Graduate School at least six weeks before the date of the expected final dissertation defense. The dissertation examination cannot be held until the Graduate School approves the composition of the Dissertation Examining Committee. Furthermore, if the Graduate Faculty status of any member of an approved Dissertation Examining Committee changes, the approval

of the Dissertation Examining Committee may be void, and a new Dissertation Examining Committee nomination form may be required to be approved by the Graduate School.

- **Chair.** Each Dissertation Examining Committee has a chair, who must be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty or, by special permission, has been otherwise appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. Dissertation Examining Committees may be co-chaired upon written recommendation of the Doctoral Program Director and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School; at least one of the co-chairs must be a Full Member of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty.
- **Representative of the Dean of the Graduate School.** Each Dissertation Examining Committee will have a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School appointed to it. The Dean's Representative should have some background or interest related to the student's research. The Dean's Representative must be a tenured member of the Graduate Faculty at the University of Maryland and must be from a graduate program other than the home program of the chair and co-chair (as applicable) of the examination committee. In cases where a student is in an interdisciplinary graduate program, the Dean's Representative must be from a unit other than the home unit(s) of the chair of the committee and the student's advisor.
- **Special Members.** Individuals from outside the University of Maryland who have been approved for Special Membership in the Graduate Faculty may serve on Dissertation Examining Committees. These Special Members must be in addition to the required three Full Members of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. For procedures to nominate an individual for Special Membership, please contact the Graduate School.
- **Service of Former University of Maryland Faculty Members.** Graduate Faculty who terminate employment at the University of Maryland (and who do not have emeritus status) retain their status as members of the Graduate Faculty for a 12-month period following their termination. Thus, they may serve as members and chairs (but not as Dean's Representatives) of Dissertation Examining Committees during this 12-month period if they are otherwise eligible. After that time, they may no longer serve as chairs of Dissertation Examining Committees. They may serve as co-chairs only if granted an exception by the Dean of the Graduate School, or they may be appointed as a Special Member (see above).
- **Professors Emeriti and Associate Professors Emeriti** may serve on Dissertation Examining Committees provided they are members of the Graduate Faculty.

In addition, the Doctoral Committee requires that a majority of a student's committee must be composed of members of the iSchool faculty.

Doctoral Committee's Approval of Dissertation Examining Committee

For the dissertation proposal defense, the doctoral student does not need approval by the Graduate School. However, the student must email the Doctoral Program staff to nominate their committee **at least six weeks before the planned proposal defense date**. This lead time allows the Doctoral Committee to review and approve the committee (including electing special members to the Graduate Faculty). Nominations submitted late may not be approved in time and the proposal defense will have to be postponed.

Preparing the Dissertation Proposal

The student must submit a dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee. This proposal includes a literature review, research plan, research methods to be used, research goals and objectives, timelines for the work, potential limitations, and any other elements deemed appropriate by the committee.

The chair and the committee work with the student to determine the format and content of the proposal and the type of proposal defense. Before the student can move past the proposal stage, a written proposal must be unanimously approved by the committee. Any changes to the goals, objectives, methods, plan, or other major element of the dissertation work must be approved by the chair in consultation with the other members of the committee.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

After completion of the proposal, an oral defense of the proposal must occur in a format similar to that of a dissertation defense (see Section XI: Dissertation). The defense should be announced by the student's advisor to the college at least **two weeks before the scheduled date**.

At the defense, the student gives a presentation to the committee – lasting generally a minimum 15 minutes and a maximum 45 minutes – that summarizes their proposal and what they will do in the dissertation itself. Generally, it is recommended that the student prepares a 20-minute talk. After this presentation, there will be questions from the general audience and then from the committee.

After questions have been asked and suggestions made, the student and general audience will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates. Upon completion of the deliberation, the committee will immediately inform the student and the Doctoral Program Director and Coordinator of the outcome of the proposal defense. In addition, the Dissertation Proposal form for Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessments (see Appendix A) needs to be completed and submitted to the Doctoral Program staff.

XI Dissertation

The purpose of the dissertation is to demonstrate the ability to successfully conduct original and meaningful research that contributes to the scholarly discourse.

A dissertation is a significant undertaking that involves applying, integrating, analyzing, and advancing research in the area in which the student has chosen to specialize. The topic of study must be carefully selected by a student in close consultation with the student's advisor. **Students should begin considering potential dissertation topics as soon as they begin their doctoral studies.**

Eligibility

A student is eligible to defend their dissertation if they (a) have advanced to candidacy and successfully defended the dissertation proposal, (b) have met all program requirements for a dissertation examination, (c) are in good standing as a graduate student at the university, (d) are registered for at least one credit of INST899, and (e) have a valid Graduate School-approved Dissertation Examining Committee. If this is the second examination, the examination needs to be approved by the Graduate School prior to the defense.

Timelines

Graduate School policy indicates that the dissertation must be finished and defended within no less than six months and no more than four years from admission to candidacy. The Graduate School considers extension requests for extenuating circumstances only for a maximum of one year per request. All extension requests must be approved by the Doctoral Committee in advance.

Additionally, iSchool policy states that the dissertation must be accepted no more than two years after the proposal is accepted. The Doctoral Committee will consider one-semester extensions only to this timeline for extenuating circumstances. Students who do not comply with these timelines may be dismissed from the program. The PhD Program Coordinator will notify students first within six months of the two-year deadline, and again three months after that. If by that point students have still not reached their milestone, they will be able to request an extension from the Doctoral Committee.

Extension requests, for both the Graduate School and iSchool policies, require a statement from the student about why they need the extension, the work they have completed to-date, and a specific timeline for completion of the work to be finished. A separate statement from the student's advisor(s) is also required. If students fail to have their milestones completed after the one-semester extension, then their case will be referred to the Students in Academic Distress (SAD) Committee for possible dismissal from the program.

Dissertation Format

The content and format of a Ph.D. dissertation is highly flexible. Students should discuss their plans for their dissertation research with their advisor(s) to confirm that the proposed research is aligned with program expectations for research rigor. Students can review past published dissertations in the UMD Library's online electronic archive, [Digital Repository at the University of Maryland \(DRUM\)](#).

Given the highly interdisciplinary nature of the iSchool – both in students' research interests as well as faculty training – a wide range of approaches to completing dissertation research is accepted. A traditional dissertation is a monograph that consists of an in-depth investigation of a substantive

information problem. Additionally, students may follow the “three-paper model” for their dissertation (see below). It is important to note, however, that these are not the only ways to structure a dissertation, and students are encouraged to work with their advisor(s) and dissertation committee to identify the approach most appropriate to their research questions.

The dissertation proposal defense also provides a space for discussion and feedback on the proposed research plans. Students will prepare a proposal that identifies their core area of focus and research questions, provides a detailed overview of related work, and (at minimum) provides a methodological approach to address the research questions. In some cases, students may have already completed some of the research for their dissertation; this is acceptable, but should be discussed with their advisor(s) early in the process. The dissertation proposal will be presented to the full examining committee, allowing for a discussion of strengths and weaknesses, including recommendations for changes to study design before proceeding.

In the three-paper dissertation approach, students will produce a minimum of three full-length papers (chapters) deemed to be of publishable quality by the dissertation examining committee. Each paper should provide clear and unique contributions that address the dissertation’s overarching research. Minimum expectations for a dissertation following this format are:

- An introduction chapter that outlines the problem of interest, presents the core research question(s), and describes how the dissertation research will address the research question(s). Most introduction chapters also provide an overview of the rest of the dissertation.
- Three (or more) chapters – one for each paper – that are complete and of publishable quality. None of the papers needs to be published prior to the dissertation defense; however, at least one paper needs to have been submitted for publication in an archival, peer-reviewed venue (journal or conference proceedings) at the time of the defense.
- A chapter that synthesizes the findings and contributions across the studies and provides insights into how this research advances the field (similar to a discussion section in a paper, but covering all three studies).
- Additional chapters may be included at the student’s discretion (e.g., separate literature review chapter, separate chapters for introduction and conclusion, etc.). Students should clearly discuss the dissertation’s primary contributions and directions for future research in the discussion or conclusion chapter.

Additional points for the three-paper format include:

- While the three papers do not need to be sequential (each one builds on the prior), they must be connected. The dissertation should have a clear and coherent narrative driven by a research question that each study addresses in some way.
- The iSchool recognizes that disciplinary norms vary regarding how much work is completed prior to the dissertation proposal defense. In some cases, this means one or two of the studies have been completed at the time of the proposal defense. Students should work closely with their advisor(s) in determining the timing of the proposal defense. Regardless of how much work has been completed prior to the proposal defense, the proposal document should include details for each study, including those that may be partially or fully completed as well as for studies yet to be conducted.
- Much of the research completed in the iSchool is collaborative and many students work with faculty and other students as collaborators on projects. A dissertation study can be collaborative, but the bulk of the work must be led by the student. For published papers, the

student must be listed as the first (or lead/corresponding) author to be able to include the paper in their dissertation. For any collaborative paper, a note should be included in the chapter that lists co-authors and clearly describes the student's contributions to the study.

Research Assurances

Everyone at the University of Maryland who is conducting research that involves human subjects must obtain approval in advance from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is charged with approving the initiation of research involving human subjects and conducts periodic reviews of that research to ensure that all projects comply with Federal regulations. These regulations are strict, and the Graduate School urges all graduate students to consult with the IRB before beginning any research involving living subjects. For application forms and guidelines on issues such as research involving minors or prisoners, surveys, and the use of audio taping, videotaping, digital recordings, and photographs, please see the [Institutional Review Board's website](#).

Graduate School's Approval of Dissertation Examining Committee

Although the student's dissertation examination committee has been approved by the Doctoral Committee before the dissertation proposal defense, the committee must be approved by the graduate school well before the dissertation defense. Approximately three months before the planned dissertation defense, the doctoral candidate must submit a signed [Nomination of Thesis or Dissertation Committee Form](#) to the Graduate Student Services Office. The form is then transferred to the Graduate School, which approves the nomination.

Report of Examining Committee (REC) Form

Once the Registrar's Office approves the Nomination of Thesis or Dissertation Committee Form, the Report of Examining Committee (REC) Form will automatically be emailed to all committee members three business days prior to the defense date indicated on the form. A REC form will not be generated if the Dissertation Committee has not been approved.

Dissertation Defense

Each doctoral candidate is required to orally defend his or her doctoral dissertation as a requirement in partial fulfillment of the doctoral degree. Once the dissertation chair and committee members agree that the dissertation is complete and ready to defend, the student, chair, and committee will determine an appropriate time for the defense.

The members of the Dissertation Examining Committee must receive the dissertation **at least ten working days before the scheduled examination**. Should the Dissertation Examining Committee deem it reasonable and appropriate, it may require submission of the dissertation more than ten working days in advance of the examination. Though paper copies are traditionally given to committee members to review, the student and their committee may agree to use an electronic format or a combination of paper and electronic formats. If multiple formats are used, the content of all copies must be identical without exception.

Oral examinations must be attended by all members of the student's officially established Dissertation Examining Committee as approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. All examinations must be open to all members of the University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. Programs may wish to routinely open dissertation examinations to a broader audience. Should a last-minute change in the constitution of the Dissertation Examining Committee be required, the change must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the director of the student's graduate program and the chair of the

student's Dissertation Examining Committee.

Oral examinations must be held in university facilities that are readily accessible to all members of the Dissertation Examining Committee and others attending the examination. The chair selects the time and place for the examination. Announcements of the date, time, and location of the examination, as well as the candidate's name and the dissertation title, is disseminated at least **five working days in advance** to all members of the Graduate Faculty and graduate students within the graduate program in which the candidate's degree is to be awarded. Mass-distribution methods, such as email, a faculty/student newsletter, or individual announcements are acceptable. Merely posting a paper notice on a corridor bulletin board does not constitute a sufficient announcement.

Current Graduate School policy allows for a committee member to request permission to participate in a dissertation defense remotely, and only in exceptional cases would remote participation be permitted for the student, a committee chair, and/or Dean's Representative. For qualifying exemptions, the committee chair must request remote participation at least **10 business days before** the oral dissertation defense date. Requests can be made on the [Graduate School](#) website. More information about the Remote Defense Policy can also be found on the [Graduate School](#) website.

The Dean's Representative must be identified at the beginning of the examination. The responsibilities of the Dean's Representative include the following: ensuring that the procedures of the oral examination comply with those of the Graduate School (as described herein) and reporting to the Dean of the Graduate School any unusual problems experienced in the conduct of the examination.

The dissertation examination consists of two parts:

- **Part 1 is a public presentation by the candidate** on the main aspects of the research reported in the dissertation followed by Q&A. The student is permitted to briefly present a summary of the dissertation, emphasizing the important results and giving an explanation of the reasoning that led to the conclusions reached. During Part 1, questions from the audience and from the Dissertation Examining Committee are permitted. For questions from persons who are not members of the Dissertation Examining Committee, the Chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee has discretion to decide whether such questions are germane to the topic of the dissertation and how much time should be allotted for the answers.
- **Part 2 is a formal examination of the candidate** by the Dissertation Examination Committee. This part is open only to the Dissertation Examination Committee and other members of the Graduate Faculty. During Part 2, only members of the Dissertation Examination Committee are permitted to ask questions. The chair invites questions in turn from each member of the Dissertation Examining Committee. The questioning may continue as long as the Dissertation Examining Committee feels that it is necessary and reasonable for the proper examination of the student.

The Dean of the Graduate School may void any examination not carried out in accordance with the procedures and policies of the Graduate School. In addition, upon recommendation of the Dean's Representative, the Dean may rule an oral examination to be null and void.

Outcome of the Defense

After questioning has been completed, the student and any others who are not members of the Dissertation Examining Committee are asked to leave the room while the Dissertation Examining Committee discusses whether or not the dissertation and its defense are satisfactory. Attendance at the

final discussion and vote is limited to the members of the Dissertation Examining Committee.

The Committee has the following options:

- To accept the dissertation without any recommended changes and sign the Report of Examining Committee.
- To accept the dissertation with recommendations for changes and, except for the chair, sign the Report of the Examining Committee. The chair checks that the changes to the dissertation have been made, and, upon his or her approval, signs the Report of Examining Committee.
- To recommend revisions to the dissertation and not sign the Report of Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised dissertation for the Dissertation Examining Committee's approval. The Dissertation Examining Committee members sign the Report of Examining Committee if they approve the revised dissertation.
- To recommend revisions and convene a second in-person meeting of the Dissertation Examining Committee to review the dissertation and complete the student's examination.
- To rule the dissertation (including its examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails.

Following the committee deliberation, the chair, in the presence of the Dean's Representative, must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. In addition, the Dissertation form for Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessments (see Appendix A) needs to be completed and submitted to the Doctoral Program staff.

The student passes if one member refuses to sign the Report, but the other members of the Dissertation Examining Committee agree to sign, before or after the approval of recommended changes. Two or more negative votes constitutes a failure of the candidate to meet the dissertation requirement. In cases of failure, the Dissertation Examining Committee must specify in detail and in writing the nature of the deficiencies in the dissertation and/or the oral performance that led to failure. This statement is to be submitted to the Doctoral Program Director, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the student. A second examination may be permitted if the student will be in good standing at the time of the proposed second examination. A second examination requires the approval of the Doctoral Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. If the student fails this second examination, or if a second examination is not permitted, the student's admission to the graduate program is terminated.

Submission and Publication of the Dissertation

Students should consult with the [University of Maryland Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide](#) to ensure that they are following the correct formatting guidelines for the dissertation.

Dissertations are to be submitted to the Graduate School in electronic format after final approval of the dissertation by the Dissertation Examining Committee. Please refer to the University of Maryland [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\) website](#) for the details of this process.

Dissertations submitted to the university through the ETD process are also deposited in the UMD Library's online electronic archive, [Digital Repository at the University of Maryland \(DRUM\)](#). This is a free public archive of academic work by university faculty and graduate students. The submission of the dissertation to the university in fulfillment of degree requirements grants the university the one-time, non-exclusive right to publish the document on DRUM.

As the owner of copyright in the dissertation, students have the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, make derivative works based on, publicly perform and display their work, and to authorize others to exercise some or all of those rights. When students submit their dissertations to the Graduate School, they will be given several options regarding providing access to their dissertations via [ProQuest Dissertations & Theses \(PQDT\)](#) database and DRUM.

International students may seek editing and grammatical assistance from campus organizations that provide such help. The Graduate School offers an English Editing for International Graduate Students (EEIGS). The EEIGS program is free, and is staffed by volunteer editors from the Volunteer Service Corps, the Golden ID program, and the community. All graduate students can use and benefit from the [Graduate School Writing Center](#) and its many available resources.

If a student seeks assistance from either of these programs on their dissertation, the program must provide the student with a letter detailing the grammatical and editing assistance provided. This letter must be submitted with the dissertation.

XII Financial Assistance

Assistantships and Fellowships

Most Graduate Assistants (GAs) are appointed either for a regular academic year (9.5 months) or for 12-month appointments. Some appointments may be for a shorter period. The academic-year appointment generally begins in August and ends in May. Students may be reappointed one or more times at the discretion of the College. To allow a larger number of qualified students to benefit from assistantships, the number of years that a graduate student may serve as an assistant in any capacity may be limited.

Reappointment is dependent upon satisfactory performance and progress toward a graduate degree. As with all university faculty and staff positions, appointment and reappointment are contingent upon the availability of funds. Inquiries concerning funding should be directed to the student's advisor and the Doctoral Program staff.

The Doctoral Committee awards a number of assistantships and fellowships to doctoral students each year. The assistantships and fellowships are reviewed on an annual basis and may be renewed if the student is making satisfactory progress in the doctoral program and there are funds to continue support.

Assistantship responsibilities can include teaching, research, and/or administrative duties. The assigned duties of a graduate assistant are consistent with the aims and objectives of the teaching and research missions of the university. An appointment of 20 hours per week is considered a full-time assistantship. An appointment of 10 hours per week is considered a half-time assistantship. The responsibilities assigned to a graduate assistant generally correspond to what may be reasonably expected given the graduate assistant's education and experience. Please note that teaching assistantships are typically only available for in-person courses and, thus, students must be available on-campus for in-person activities in order to fulfill the expectations of their assistantship. Further assistantship information is available in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Fellowships are merit-based awards designed to enable the recipients to focus full-time on their graduate studies. Further information about the financial policies regarding fellowships is available in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

The University of Maryland Graduate School offers many fellowships, prizes, and awards. The application/nomination deadlines for the various opportunities are different, but most are in the spring semester. Many of these awards require a nomination from the Doctoral Program (rather than a self-nomination). Each year, the Doctoral Program staff will communicate the award deadlines and process for an internal self-nomination for each award. All self-nominations will be reviewed and decided upon by the Doctoral Committee. More information can be found on the [Student Fellowships & Awards page of the Graduate School's website](#).

Further funding opportunities are available from grants being administered in the College and many other types of positions around campus. Externally funded grants at the College often have student assistantships. The selection of such assistantships is made by the faculty member administering a grant. Individual faculty and the research facilities affiliated with the College, including but not limited to, the Human Computer Interaction Lab (HCIL) and the Social Data Science Center (SoDa), may also have assistantship opportunities available.

Outside of the college, many other units on campus offer assistantships related to Information Studies,

such as campus libraries, computer centers, and graduate offices. The Graduate Student Services Office makes announcements of these assistantship opportunities available as soon as they are received through the College website and email listservs.

Doctoral Students Research Awards (DSRA)

The purpose of the DSRA is to provide funding to assist current iSchool PhD students who could greatly advance their doctoral research (e.g., Integrative Paper, proposal-, or dissertation-related research) by means of limited financial support, including participant compensation for human-subjects research; purchase of hardware or software (exceptions apply) needed to complete the research project; and travel-related expenses for presenting at conferences, colloquiums, workshops, or other scholarly meetings. The DSRA provide up to \$1,500 to cover costs associated with students' research on a reimbursement basis. Students may receive the award twice during their PhD education at the iSchool.

Eligibility: iSchool PhD students

Amount of support: up to \$1500 per application

Process: Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a **rolling basis**. Once the funding is approved, recipients will work with the research support staff to manage the spending of the allocated funds. All funds are to be spent and work completed within two years of the date of notification. Final reports will be due upon completion of the work, or no later than two years from the date of notification.

In the [online application form](#), please include the following:

- 1-Page project description
- Proposed budget & timeline
- Student's CV
- Advisor letter – Students who are applying must provide a statement from a faculty advisor/mentor attesting to research need and lack of other funding available

We will communicate within one week from when the application is submitted.

More information can be found on the [Scholarships & Awards section of the iSchool's website](#).

Travel Funding

[The Dr. Dana Rotman Doctoral Student Travel Award](#) is offered through the College. Eligible doctoral students must be currently enrolled in the College of Information Studies and have been selected to present a paper or lead a workshop, or who are assuming another significant scholarly role or a specific participation role, at a professional or academic conference. Doctoral students are eligible to receive this award twice during their PhD education at the iSchool. Students must be registered, degree-seeking graduate students during the travel period, and applications must be made before the travel dates. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis or until funds run out. Award amounts will be determined based on each individual application. The maximum award amounts that students can request are as follows: \$250 (domestic conference, east of the Mississippi River); \$400 (domestic conference, west of the Mississippi River); \$600 (international conference). Although it is not required for the student to apply for the Jacob K. Goldhaber Travel Grant (see below), it is highly encouraged to apply to offset the costs if needed.

The [Graduate School](#) administers the International Conference Student Support Awards and the Jacob K. Goldhaber travel grants for graduate students. Because funding is limited, students are urged to apply for appropriate support as soon as their papers have been accepted, following the guidelines on the [Scholarships & Awards section of the iSchool's website](#).

External Fellowships

External fellowships are sponsored and funded by organizations outside the university. Corporations, charitable foundations, and numerous other groups fund graduate fellowships. Some of these fellowships are won independently by students in national competitions; others are awarded directly to the colleges or programs, which then select student recipients. Students submitting applications for admission to graduate programs are considered for such awards as appropriate; no additional application forms are required. iSchool graduate students have been supported on fellowships from the Department of Defense, Ford Foundation, National Science Foundation, and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, to name a few. In addition, several graduate programs sponsor fellowship programs jointly with federal agencies, such as the National Institutes of Health, NASA, and the National Institute of Standards in Technology. More information about currently available external fellowships can be found on the [Scholarships & Awards section of the iSchool's website](#).

Matching tuition scholarships for external fellowships are awarded, subject to the availability of funding, to students who have received external fellowships that provide a stipend, but do not provide separate funds to cover the cost of tuition. More information on the Graduate School policy on External Fellowship Tuition Remission can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Other Funding Resources

[The Office of Student Financial Aid](#) administers a number of programs to assist graduate students, including loans and federal work study.

XIII Support, Organizations, and Opportunities

As part of the overall academic and professional development of doctoral students, there are other research support and community involvement opportunities available at the College.

Student Organizations and Representatives

The Doctoral Program Committee meets monthly during the academic year and consists of the Doctoral Program staff, the Director of Graduate Operations, the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs, at least three additional iSchool faculty members, and one student representative. The role of the student representative for the Doctoral Program Committee is to serve as the elected representative of the iSchool doctoral student community. They represent and support the interests of the students in the College, collaborate with the Graduate Student Services Office, and assist in shaping school and program policy, mediation activity, and faculty relations. By supporting scholarly activities and personal growth, this position aims to promote social, educational, and professional development. The student representative has voting rights; however, due to legal requirements related to privacy, meetings or portions of meetings where the Doctoral Committee addresses issues pertaining to individual students or applicants to the College are not open to students. The student representative is elected each year at the beginning of the semester.

The iSchool Assembly is the deliberative body that governs the curriculum, programs, and activities of the College. iSchool Assembly meetings take place on the first Friday of the month in September, December, February, March, April, and May. Members of iSchool Assembly include all iSchool faculty and staff, plus one student representative from each iSchool degree program. The role of the student representative is to attend all Assembly meetings and to report any relevant proceedings back to their program colleagues. Student representatives may also request items be added to the Assembly agenda on behalf of the iSchool doctoral student community. The student representative for iSchool Assembly has voting rights. The student representative is elected each year at the beginning of the semester.

The College has a few other student organizations in which doctoral students can become involved. The College has student chapters of the American Library Association (ALA), the Society of American Archivists (SAA), the Special Library Association (SLA), and the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T), among others. Along with these chapters of national organizations, the College also has a School Library Media Specialist Student Association.

Doctoral Student Offices

Doctoral students are provided office or carrel space in the Hornbake or Patuxent buildings. This space is assigned related to the areas of student interest, the faculty with whom the students are working, the projects that students are working on, and student seniority in the doctoral program. All space assignments are subject to current availability of space in the College.

Along with offices, the College has many other spaces in which students can study, gather, and relax. The fourth floor Hornbake Commons provides a lounge and kitchen for student use. The second floor of Hornbake has carrels, a computer lab, meeting rooms, and open spaces that students can use. There are also open conference rooms and collaboration spaces in the basement of Hornbake and on both floors of Patuxent.

Research Labs, Centers, and Interest Groups

The College features an interdisciplinary, collaborative, and active research culture. Students wishing to become involved in research activities should speak to faculty members and other students with similar interests to find out about opportunities for involvement in ongoing projects or to discuss new project ideas of their own.

Several different research facilities and interest groups are closely affiliated with the College and its faculty. These facilities indicate areas of particular research strength at the College and offer significant opportunities for students to become involved in research projects, meet well-known researchers, hear academic talks, and work with other students who share their interests.

The [Center for Archival Futures \(CAFe\)](#) seeks to develop and disseminate human-centered approaches to creating the systems, processes, and institutions which enable the use of and care for digital objects and data over time. We take a holistic view of digital curation as a research area, education domain, and growing profession that transcends disciplines and organizational contexts. To accomplish the mission of developing and disseminating human-centered approaches to understanding the use of and care for digital objects and data over time the Center for Archival Futures conducts research, education, and partnership building in the following areas: data in communities, digital lifecycles, and data in knowledge ecosystems. We advance knowledge and practice by serving as an active hub, bringing together researchers, professionals, and students to facilitate collaborative research projects, experiential learning, demonstration projects, and other activities that promote the development of nuanced, actionable understandings of human-centered approaches to the use of and care for digital objects and data over time.

The [Computational Linguistics and Information Processing \(CLIP\)](#) Lab works on several areas of broad scale multilingual processing, such as machine translation, summarization, scalable translingual document detection, and cross-language information retrieval, and on architectures for wide area computation with heterogeneous information servers, such as those for scientific discovery from biomolecular data sources.

The [Human-Computer Interaction Lab \(HCIL\)](#) has a long, rich history of transforming the experience people have with new technologies. From understanding user needs, to developing and evaluating those technologies, the lab's faculty, staff, and students have been leading the way in HCI research and teaching. HCIL develops advanced user interfaces and design methodology. The lab's primary activities include collaborative research, publication and the sponsorship of open houses, workshops, and symposia.

The [Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities \(MITH\)](#) is collaboration among the University of Maryland's College of Arts and Humanities, Libraries, and Office of Information Technology. MITH is the university's primary intellectual hub for scholars and practitioners of digital humanities, electronic literature, and cyberculture, with research clustering around digital tools, text mining and visualization, and the creation and preservation of electronic literature, digital games, and virtual worlds.

The [Organizational Teams and Technology Research Society \(OTTRS\) Interest Group](#) aims to advance research and collaboration on the study of teams as relevant to technology and information. Topics include, but are not limited to, teams and artificial intelligence, technology to support different types of teams, collaborative learning, ethics in teams and technology, leveraging technology to improve the

study of teams, and more. There is a human focus, but OTTRS is inspired by computational potential and technological advances, and explicitly welcomes multiple and interdisciplinary approaches.

The [Search Mastery Interest Group](#) is committed to leadership in the advancement of search literacy as a high-priority component of a information literacy education.

The [Social Data Science Center \(SoDA\)](#) — a Center established by the College of Information Studies and the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) within the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences — is an inter-disciplinary academic and research center. We strive to become a leader in research and education involving new forms of social and behavioral data. SoDa sponsors seminars, workshops and focused conferences designed to bring attention to the rapidly expanding universe of digitized data and new forms of behavioral data, as well as developments in data science that can benefit investigators in the social sciences.

The [Sociotechnical Cybersecurity \(STC\) Interest Group](#) examines and evolves current ideas around sociotechnical cybersecurity, including organizational, economic, social, legal, educational, psychological, and other human aspects of cybersecurity. Sociotechnical aspects of cybersecurity considers the human element. STC includes organizational, economic, social, legal, educational, psychological, political, policy, cultural, system, and other approaches engaging the human and technology interactions needed to secure the space, infrastructure, people and systems within the cyber environment. The STC interest group combines this effort in the College’s academics, research, and events.

The [Trace Research & Development Center](#) uses an interdisciplinary approach to increase accessibility and usability of technology for people of all ages and ability levels. The Trace Center has been a leader in research and development in the field of technology and disability since 1971. The current focus of their work is everyday information and communication technologies. Their purpose is to prevent barriers and capitalize on opportunities presented by standard and emerging technology, in order to create a world that is as accessible and usable as possible, for as many people as possible.

The [University of Maryland Institute for Advanced Computer Studies \(UMIACS\)](#) fosters and enhances interdisciplinary research and education in computing across the College Park campus through research programs, cutting-edge computing infrastructure, and long-term partnerships with national and international research centers. The Institute's programs are led by distinguished researchers, many of whom hold joint appointments in strong academic units such as Computer Science, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Linguistics, Geography, Philosophy, Business, Education, and the College of Information Studies.

The interest groups and the research centers CAFE, CLIP, HCIL, SoDA, and Trace are sponsored or co-sponsored by the College. In addition, there are many other research facilities on campus that might relate to students’ academic interests. A comprehensive list can be found on the [Centers and Institutes section of the University of Maryland’s website](#).

Writing and Publishing

To help graduate students improve the quality of their writing, the [Graduate School Writing Center](#) maintains a website for Writing Resources. Students should become actively involved in publication activities beginning in their first year in the program. Publishing in refereed journals and refereed conferences is an essential part of not only an academic career, but the educational process of a

doctoral program. Opportunities for publications can derive from course work and independent research. Many people gain their first publishing experience by taking part in ongoing research projects as a member of a study team. Opportunities for involvement in projects may be available through centers and labs, as well as through individual faculty members.

Ombuds Office

The [Graduate School's Ombuds Office](#) assists graduate students with concerns related to their graduate experience. The Ombudsperson is an impartial, independent, and confidential resource for graduate students at the university who helps to surface and resolve school issues. The Ombudsperson can also help to affect positive change by providing upward feedback on patterns of problems and complaints to appropriate senior officers.

Graduate Student Legal Aid Office

The [Graduate Student Legal Aid Office](#) is a part-time program of the Graduate Student Government and operates under the auspices of the Office of Student Affairs. It is funded solely by graduate student fees and has been in operation since 1987. The Graduate Student Legal Aid Office provides free legal information and related assistance to individual graduate students on a wide range of both off-campus and university matters. It also maintains active educational and outreach programs for the graduate student community, and is available to provide speakers for student events and other campus activities. The office is staffed by an experienced attorney and paralegal. While it is a small, two-person office funded on a part-time basis, it strives to be as accessible as possible to the graduate student community. The attorney cannot represent students in court.

Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS)

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The [Accessibility & Disability Service \(ADS\)](#) office provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact ADS as soon as possible so that they have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682. Information about sharing your accommodations with instructors and more is available from the [Counseling Center](#).

Basic Needs Security & Resources

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing enough food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit [UMD's Division of Student Affairs](#) website for information about resources the campus offers and contact the [Graduate Student Services Office](#) if you need additional support.

XIV Campus Safety Resources

Our collective safety is a shared responsibility. As members of our campus community, faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to contact officials when safety concerns arise. Suspicious behavior should not be ignored. Early intervention in such cases is vital, and trained colleagues are prepared to assist.

Here are some warning signs of concern:

- Possession of a weapon
- Violence – striking, pushing, or assaulting another person
- Threat of violence or physical harm – in person, over the telephone, or electronically
- Stalking – pursuing another person
- Destructive behavior – damaging property
- Verbal aggression – expressions of uncontrollable anger, hostility, or frustration
- Disorderly or substantially disruptive behavior
- Unusual, bizarre, or disturbing behavior

Share your concerns with and report suspicious behavior to an appropriate resource listed below.

The university has a full suite of resources available to the entire campus community. The resources include:

1. Weapons, Violence, Substantial Disruption, Threats – [The Department of Public Safety](#) will respond to any act or threat of violence. To contact them, call 301.405.3333 or 911. Additionally, the Office of Student Conduct is authorized to impose an immediate suspension from classes (pending a hearing) if a student engages in threatening or disruptive behavior. Procedures may be initiated by the Vice President for Student Affairs or the Director of Student Conduct.
2. Behavioral Health or Psychiatric Concern – If you or someone you know needs immediate behavioral health/psychiatric attention or hospitalization may be necessary, contact [Behavioral Health Services](#) at 301.314.8106. The Department of Public Safety (301.405.3333 or 911) should be contacted if medical transportation is required.
3. Emotional or Psychological Distress – For anyone displaying emotional or psychological distress, comprehensive evaluation and treatment are provided by the [Counseling Center](#). You may contact the Counseling Center at 301.314.7651 for a consultation.
4. Disorderly or Disruptive Behavior – Report student behavior that is disorderly, disruptive, or poses a concern for violence to the [Office of Student Conduct](#) at 301.314.8204 or studentconduct@umd.edu. Disruptive or disorderly students may be charged under the [University's Code of Student Conduct](#) and/or be referred for specific counseling or other mental health interventions, if appropriate.
5. Behavior Evaluation and Threat Assessment, or Consultation – The [BETA Team](#) provides student behavior-related evaluation, assessment, and consultation to the campus. The team is comprised of representatives from the departments of Public Safety, Behavioral Health, Counseling, and Student Conduct. If you would like to discuss a specific student behavioral

concern, please contact the BETA Team at beta@umd.edu or 301.314.8204. You may also submit a report on the BETA Team’s website.

6. Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct – The [Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct \(OCRSM\)](#) supports the University’s commitment to a working and learning environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, stalking, etc.: All UMD faculty, staff in supervisory roles, teaching assistants, and academic advisors are designated as “Responsible University Employees” and are required by law to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to OCRSM.

To speak with someone confidentially, students can contact one of UMD’s confidential resources, such as [CARE to Stop Violence](#) at 301.741.3442 or the [Counseling Center](#) at 301.314.7651.

Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinator for assistance or supportive measures at 301.405.1142 or titleixcoordinator@umd.edu.

You may wish to print or save the following list of potential issues, resources and contact information:

WEAPONS, VIOLENCE, SUBSTANTIAL DISRUPTION, THREATS
Department of Public Safety (www.umdps.umd.edu) - 301.405.3333 or 911

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OR PSYCHIATRIC CONCERNS
Behavioral Health Service (<https://health.umd.edu/behavioral-health>) - 301.314.8106

EMOTIONAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCERNS
Counseling Center (www.counseling.umd.edu) - 301.314.7651

DISORDERLY OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR
Office of Student Conduct (www.studentconduct.umd.edu) - 301.314.8204

BEHAVIOR EVALUATION, THREAT ASSESSMENT, OR CONSULTATION
BETA Team (beta.umd.edu) - 301.314.BETA (301.314.2382)

CIVIL RIGHTS AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
Office of Civil Rights & Sexual Misconduct (ocrsm.umd.edu) – 301.405.1142

CONFIDENTIAL VIOLENCE ADOVCACY, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH
CARE to Stop Violence (health.umd.edu/CARE) – 301.741.3442

Everyone can help by taking advantage of the services outlined above and by looking out for one another. Together, we can ensure a safe environment for all.

Questions and Comments about the Handbook

Any questions and comments about the handbook, including requests for clarification, should be directed to the Doctoral Program staff.

Appendix A Maryland's iSchool Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessments

Program Goals

How people access, use, and communicate information has become critical to professional success, life-long learning, and even government policies.

This Ph.D. program is an interdisciplinary program taught by a multidisciplinary faculty at a leading public research university. This doctoral degree is an academic degree rather than a professional one, providing a background in theory and method that will prepare graduates for careers in conducting research and teaching in Information Studies. In order to complete the program, students will have to demonstrate high attainment in scholarship and critical thinking, as well as the ability to carry out independent scholarly research.

Assessment Activities

Learning Outcome One

Students will demonstrate adequate yearly progress towards the Ph.D. degree through their performance in coursework and research activities.

Benchmark Measure: First Year and Annual Reviews

Measures and Criteria:

A committee comprised of at least three and no more than five full-time faculty members, a majority of whom must be members of the college faculty, will conduct the required first year review. Subsequent annual reviews will be conducted by at least the student's advisor, and a committee if requested by the student and/or the advisor. Students should prepare a portfolio of work and make a brief (10 minute) presentation of their progress to the committee. The student's advisor and the other faculty members will review the student's work; meet with the student to hear the presentation and discuss the student's progress; and are highly encouraged to write a report of the discussion, which sets expectations and identifies any recommendations made.

Students will be evaluated in several areas including:

- Course performance
- Contributions to ongoing research projects
- Initiative in these research activities
- Ability to present and communicate their research

The program goal is for 80% of students to receive an average score of "meets expectations" or higher in each category of the rubric.

Learning Outcome Two

Students will complete an Integrative Paper that demonstrates the ability to independently conduct and disseminate high quality research and scholarship.

Benchmark Measure: The Integrative Paper

Measures and Criteria:

A committee comprised of the student's advisor and at least two other college faculty members will review the Integrative Paper, write evaluations, and then discuss the evaluations with the student. Then the committee will reach a decision regarding the grade assigned to the paper. Each faculty reviewer will assign one of these grades to the Integrative Paper being reviewed. The advisor is highly encouraged to write a report of the discussion and the recommendations made, which will include all of the comments from the committee and the final grade assigned to the student, and will send the report to the student.

Students will be evaluated in several areas including:

- Identification or communication of a research problem;
- Identification of key literature;
- Use of appropriate research methods;
- A clear and succinct statement of research questions;
- Validity of the results;
- Preparation of an Integrative Paper that makes a significant and original contribution to the field;
- Production of a paper that is suitable for publication

The program goal is for 85% of students to receive an average score of "meets expectations" or higher on every requirement.

Learning Outcome Three

Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively plan and propose novel research and scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.

Benchmark Measure: Dissertation Proposal

Measures and Criteria:

Before beginning to collect data for their dissertation research, students will prepare and present a proposal to their committee. The proposal must include a literature review, a research plan, a description of the proposed research methods, a description of the research goals and objectives, a proposed timeline, an outline of the potential limitations of the study, and any other elements deemed appropriate by their committee.

Students' proposals will be evaluated as to how well they meet each of the following requirements:

- Identification of a significant and original problem
- Review of the relevant literature and description of the gap that the dissertation addresses
- Exploration of key assumptions or theories supporting the work
- Inclusion of a clear, succinct statement of the research questions to be addressed
- Selection of methodology appropriate to the research questions
- Description of a clear plan for presenting data and findings
- Creation of a written product that is clear, well-organized, and grammatically correct

- Inclusion of a detailed, feasible timeline in which the work will be completed

Each committee member will fill out an evaluation. The program goal is for 90% of students to receive an average score of “meets expectations” or higher on every requirement.

Learning Outcome Four

Students will demonstrate ability to conduct and disseminate novel research and scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.

Benchmark Measure: Dissertation Defense

Measures and Criteria:

Each committee member shall complete the 8-category assessment rubric and provide written comments to the student based on the overall written product and oral presentation. The written comments of each committee member and verbal summarization of the overall evaluation of the student’s performance will be provided to the student by the chair of the Dissertation Committee.

Students will be evaluated based on how well they meet each of the following requirements:

- Identification of a significant and original problem
- Review of the relevant literature and description of the gap that the dissertation addresses
- Exploration of key assumptions or theories supporting the work
- Clear and succinct statement of research question(s)
- Appropriate choice of methodology
- Clear and thorough presentation of data and discussion of findings
- Creation of a written product that is clear, well-organized, and grammatically correct
- Delivery of a clear, well-organized presentation of the study
- Production of material that is suitable for publication

The program goal is for 95% of students to receive average scores of “meets expectations” or higher in each category of the rubric.

Discussion and Findings

The College of Information Studies and the Doctoral Committee will review these learning benchmarks on an annual basis to assess their suitability for gauging the success of each Ph.D. student. The data generated by these assessment processes, particularly students’ scores on specific rubric items, will be used to shed light on where students may be facing obstacles in their Ph.D. degree progression. This information will be used to motivate continued discussion about these benchmarks and the measures and criteria used to assess student success on each of them, with the goal of iteratively improving and evolving the Ph.D. program to better meet the needs of the students, to optimize the quality of the education the students receive, and to ensure the program’s ongoing success.

Annual Review

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Make successful progress toward completing the doctoral program, including completing course requirements and milestones.

Committee Member Requirements

An initial annual review will be conducted at the end of the second semester of taking doctoral courses. Subsequent annual reviews will be conducted during the spring semester of each year in which a program milestone is not completed (i.e. Integrative Paper, dissertation proposal, or dissertation). In years when the student completes one or more program milestones, that milestone review will constitute the student's annual review for that academic year.

A committee comprised of at least three and no more than five full-time faculty members, a majority of whom must be members of the college faculty, will conduct the required first year review. Subsequent annual reviews will be conducted by at least the student's advisor, and a committee if requested by the student and/or the advisor. The student's advisor and the other faculty members will review the student's work; meet with the student to discuss the student's portfolio or current status; and write a report of the discussion which sets expectations and identifies any recommendations made.

The committee or advisor will create a report from the review and send it to the Graduate Student Services Office for placement in the student's file. In the case of annual reviews that occur while a student is completing coursework, at the end of the semester in which the review occurs, the Graduate Student Services Office will conduct an administrative review of the student's grades (including the grades for that semester) and other materials to ensure that the student is meeting all University requirements in terms of academic performance (e.g., sufficient GPA), course selection for completion of program requirements, and any other issues of administrative or academic standing. In the case of annual reviews that occur after the student has completed coursework, the student's standing in the program will be assessed by the successful completion of program milestones or by demonstrating to the committee continuing progress toward completing milestones and receiving the degree. Upon completion of the review, the student and the committee members will receive a letter summarizing the results of the annual review and any administrative reviews, including a copy of the completed DGOA form, which shows the names and signatures of the faculty who participated in the evaluation.

While it is ideal for the Committee to reach a consensus, in cases where there is a disagreement about the outcome, the student passes if no or only one member of the committee vote(s) to fail the student, and fails if two or more committee members vote to fail the student.

Annual Review Assessment Guidelines

Indicator: Demonstrates progress toward degree.	
Outstanding	During Coursework: The student maintains a grade of A <i>in all</i> of their courses in the past year. After Coursework: The student has made exceptional progress toward program milestones.
Exceeds Expectations	During Coursework: The student maintains a grade of A <i>in all but one</i> of their courses in the past year. After Coursework: The student has made <i>significantly above average</i> progress toward program milestones.
Meets Expectations	During Coursework: The student maintains a grade of A <i>in more than half</i> of their courses in the past year. After Coursework: The student has made <i>acceptable</i> progress toward program milestones.
Below Expectations	During Coursework: The student receives a grade of B or below <i>in more than half</i> of their courses in the past year. After Coursework: The student has made <i>minimal</i> progress toward program milestones.
Unsatisfactory	During Coursework: The student receives <i>any grade</i> of C or below in the past year. After Coursework: The student has made <i>no</i> meaningful progress toward program milestones.

Indicator: Clearly communicates an evolving research agenda.	
Outstanding	The student is able to clearly articulate a remarkably impressive research agenda and has made tremendous progress over the past year in advancing that agenda.
Exceeds Expectations	The student is able to clearly articulate a strong research agenda and has made very significant progress over the past year in advancing that agenda.
Meets Expectations	The student is able to clearly articulate a coherent and compelling research agenda and has made progress over the past year in advancing that agenda.
Below Expectations	The student states a number of research interests, but does not clearly communicate a coherent research agenda.
Unsatisfactory	The student does not show any research interests or future plans to develop a research agenda during the doctoral program.

Indicator: Participates actively in research activities.	
Outstanding	The student has participated regularly in research activities. These activities show promise to further the student's stated research interests. Some of these research activities have resulted in multiple publications or conference presentations as sole author or first author in a co-authored paper.
Exceeds Expectations	The student has participated regularly in research activities. These activities show promise to further the student's stated research interests. Some of these research activities have resulted in either one publication or conference presentation as an author or co-author.
Meets Expectations	The student has participated regularly in research activities. These activities show promise to further the student's stated research interests.

Below Expectations	The student demonstrates a shallow participation in research activities. Such activities do not hold promise to further the student's stated research interests.
Unsatisfactory	The student has not participated successfully in research activities.

Indicator: Takes initiative in research activities.	
Outstanding	The student has participated regularly in research activities. They have shown great ability to work independently when given tasks, and they contribute original thought, motivation, and initiative to work beyond the requirements of a project. They have been lead authors on projects that have resulted in publication, funded grants, or conference presentations.
Exceeds Expectations	The student has regularly initiated their own research activities. They have shown great ability to work independently when given tasks, and they contribute original thought, motivation, and initiative to work beyond the requirements of a project. They have been major contributors or (co)authors on projects that have resulted in publication, funded grants, or conference presentations.
Meets Expectations	The student has successfully initiated their own research activities. Their work in these projects consistently meets the expectations of their advisor(s) or faculty who were supervising the research. The student shows initiative in designing the research activity and following through.
Below Expectations	The student's work has not consistently met the expectations of their advisor(s) or faculty who were supervising the research.
Unsatisfactory	The student has not initiated any research activities or shown any meaningful curiosity or creativity in research.

Indicator: Demonstrates ability to analyze, critique, and synthesize research.	
Outstanding	Student shows exceptional ability to understand their research literature, synthesize ideas, and has shown exceptional ability to develop novel ideas and knowledge that further the literature.
Exceeds Expectations	Student shows the above average ability to understand their research literature, synthesize ideas, and has shown ability to develop novel ideas and knowledge that further the literature.
Meets Expectations	Student shows acceptable ability to understand their research literature, synthesize ideas, and develop research interests that build from the conceptual base.
Below Expectations	Student shows some ability to understand their research literature. However, they need improvement on synthesizing ideas and developing new knowledge that build from their conceptual base.
Unsatisfactory	Student shows little ability to understand their research literature, synthesize new concepts, and build new ideas.

Indicator: Demonstrates scholarly oral communication skills.	
Outstanding	Student shows exceptional oral communication skills via course participation, research activities, conference presentations, or other venues. The student has demonstrated excellent poise in presenting in formal venues.

Exceeds Expectations	Student shows above average oral communication skills via course participation, research activities, conference presentations, or other venues. The student has also experience presenting in formal venues.
Meets Expectations	Student shows acceptable oral communication skills via course participation, research activities, conference presentations, or other venues.
Below Expectations	Student shows basic oral communication skills via course participation, research activities, conference presentations, or other venues. However, their ability to clearly communicate their research requires further improvement.
Unsatisfactory	Student has not shown adequate basic oral communication skills via course participation, research activities, conference presentations, or other venues.

Indicator: Demonstrates scholarly written communication skills.	
Evidence can come from the student's writing sample, coursework, or other written artifacts (i.e. publications etc.).	
Outstanding	Student shows exceptional ability to communicate research or ideas in writing. The student has received endorsements from their committee members that their writing is particularly strong. The student also has documented formal examples of their writing such as publications that have undergone the academic peer review processes.
Exceeds Expectations	Student shows above average ability to communicate research or ideas in writing. The student has received endorsements from their committee members that their writing is particularly strong.
Meets Expectations	Student shows acceptable ability to communicate research or ideas in writing.
Below Expectations	Student has basic ability to communicate research or ideas in writing. However, they may need improvement in any areas such as writing in an academic style or grammar.
Unsatisfactory	Student has poor ability to communicate research or ideas in their writing.

First-Year Review Assessment Form

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Make successful progress toward completing the doctoral program, including completing course requirements and milestones.

Student's Name: _____

print name

Committee Member Signatures

print name

signature

Advisor

print name

signature

Review Date: _____

mm/dd/yyyy

print name

signature

Indicators	Outstanding	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
1. Demonstrates progress toward degree.					
2. Clearly communicates an evolving research agenda.					
3. Participates actively in research activities.					
4. Takes initiative in research activities.					
5. Demonstrates ability to analyze, critique, and synthesize research.					
6. Demonstrates scholarly oral communication skills.					
7. Demonstrates scholarly written communication skills.					

Please fill out and sign this form and submit it to the PhD Program Coordinator. Thank you!

Integrative Paper

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Complete an Integrative Paper that demonstrates ability to independently conduct and disseminate high quality research/scholarship.

Committee Member Requirements

The Integrative Paper Committee should comprise

- a chair, who must be the student's advisor
- 3 to 5 members, including the chair
- a majority of whom must be Full Members of the Graduate Faculty
- a majority of whom must be members of the iSchool faculty.

Unlike the dissertation examining committee, which must be approved by both the Doctoral Committee and the Graduate School, the Integrative Paper committee does not need to be approved by the Graduate School.

The committee will review the Integrative Paper, write evaluations, and then meet to discuss the evaluations without the student. Then, the committee will reach a decision regarding the grade assigned to the paper. Each faculty reviewer will assign one of these grades to the Integrative Paper being reviewed. The advisor will write a report of the discussion and the recommendations made, which will include all of the comments from the committee and the grade assigned by the committee, and will send this report to the student.

The review is very much like the editorial process at a professional journal. There are three independent readings of the paper, followed by an overall recommendation. The requirements for clarity of expression, quality of work and methodology, and originality are at the level of a research journal. The standard for acceptance is that the paper be comparable to articles published in respectable academic journals.

The committee must have at least two weeks to review the paper, as well as an additional two weeks to review any revised versions to receive a passing grade for the semester in which the Integrative Paper will be attempted. Students should allot time accordingly while writing the paper.

The range of evaluations of the Integrative Paper follows standard reviewing practices for journal and conference submissions. The potential designations a faculty member may give to a paper are:

- **Accept as is.** This indicates passage of the requirement with no further work on the part of the student. Such a designation is assigned if the paper is on a level with those that might be accepted in a refereed journal or conference.
- **Accept with minor revisions.** This indicates that the core of the paper is acceptable in its current form, but a few small

changes are required on the part of the student. Upon completion of these small changes, which should be enumerated by the IP committee, the paper will be on a level with those that might be accepted in a refereed journal or conference.

- **Revise and resubmit.** This indicates that paper is not acceptable in its current form, but the paper has potential to be acceptable with major work from the student. Upon completion of major revisions, which should be enumerated by the IP committee, the paper may reach the level of acceptability.
- **Reject.** This indicates a major failing to meet the requirements of the paper.

If a submission is not made by 2 weeks before the end of the semester, the outcome is an automatic reject.

The student's advisor and other members of the committee review the Integrative Paper, write evaluations, and then meet to discuss the evaluations. A presentation of the Integrative Paper is optional, depending on the student's and/or committee's preference. Each faculty reviewer assigns one of the above outcomes to the Integrative Paper under review. The advisor writes a report of the discussion and the recommendations made (i.e., accept as is, minor revisions, revise & resubmit, or reject), which includes all of the comments from the committee and the grade assigned by the committee.

Acceptable: Accept as is or Accept with minor revisions

To meet the Integrative Paper requirement, a student must receive a passing grade from every reviewer of the paper. If the student receives a mixed recommendation outcome of "accept as is", or "accept with minor revisions" from IP committee members, this requirement is automatically satisfied. Minor revisions only need to be reviewed by the IP chair. The student will have up to two weeks to complete these revisions. In both of these cases, the appropriate passing grade is entered into the student's record for the Integrative Paper course.

Not acceptable: Revise and resubmit or Reject

In the case of a recommendation of "revise and resubmit," the student will have an opportunity to make major revisions to make an acceptable Integrative Paper. The revision period shall be no longer than two months. The student will receive an Incomplete grade for the duration of the revision period. The revised paper is then reviewed by the same IP committee to determine if the necessary changes have been made. If so, the student passes the requirement.

The committee will create a report from the review of the Integrative Paper and send it to the Graduate Student Services Office for placement in the student's file. Upon completion of the paper, the student will receive a copy of the completed DGOA form, which shows the names and signatures of the faculty who participated in the evaluation. The student and the advisor will work with the Graduate Student Services Office to complete the "Advance to Candidacy" paperwork.

Integrative Paper Assessment Guidelines

Indicator: Identifies and communicates the research problem.	
Outstanding	The student demonstrates exceptional depth in outlining the research problem.
Exceeds Expectations	The student presents the research problem with ample considerations of the broader implications of the work.
Meets Expectations	The student clearly states the research problem.
Below Expectations	The research problem is vague and not well defined. Questions remain as to exactly what the problem is.
Unsatisfactory	The student does not effectively convey the research problem.

Indicator: Details the motivations for undertaking the research.	
Outstanding	The student demonstrates exceptional motivations for the research and potential outcomes.
Exceeds Expectations	The student presents compelling motivations for undertaking research.
Meets Expectations	The student presents motivations for undertaking the work.
Below Expectations	The research motivation is vague and not well defined. Questions remain as to how significant the problem is overall.
Unsatisfactory	The student does not effectively convey the significance of the research.

Indicator: Identifies key literature.	
Outstanding	The student shows an impressive ability to interconnect and extend the knowledge of multiple disciplines.
Exceeds Expectations	The student shows a distinct ability to interconnect and extend the knowledge of multiple disciplines.
Meets Expectations	The student addresses and synthesizes the key literature of the field.
Below Expectations	The student only weakly synthesizes key literature.
Unsatisfactory	The student fails to synthesize the key literature.

Indicator: States research question(s) clearly and succinctly.	
Outstanding	The student shows exceptional insight in stating research questions.
Exceeds Expectations	The student shows impressive insight in stating the research questions.
Meets Expectations	The student clearly and succinctly states the research questions.
Below Expectations	The student presents research question(s) that lack depth or do not match the research method utilized.
Unsatisfactory	The student does not clearly state the research question(s) or the questions are poorly conceived and/or formed.

Indicator: Designs study appropriate to field of study and the research question(s).	
Outstanding	The student proposes an innovative design and approach to examining the research question(s).
Exceeds Expectations	The student proposes a creative design and approach to examining the research question(s).
Meets Expectations	The student proposes a design and approach appropriate to the field of study and the research question.
Below Expectations	The student proposes a study design that is not fully developed.
Unsatisfactory	The student proposes a study design does not answer the research question.

Indicator: Presents data and findings clearly and thoroughly.	
Outstanding	Student demonstrates an exceptional approach to analyzing data, synthesizing findings, identifying significance and building new ideas from their data.
Exceeds Expectations	Student demonstrates a strong approach to analyzing data, synthesizing findings, identifying significance and building new ideas from their data.
Meets Expectations	Student appropriately analyzes data, synthesizes findings, identifies significance, and builds new ideas from their data.
Below Expectations	Student does not fully analyze data, synthesize findings, identify significance and/or build new ideas from their data.
Unsatisfactory	Student does not properly analyze data, synthesize findings, identify significance and/or build new ideas from their data.

Indicator: Prepares an Integrative Paper that makes an original contribution.	
Outstanding	The student paper shows exceptional insight in advancing scholarship.
Exceeds Expectations	The student paper shows deep depth and wide breadth in advancing scholarship.
Meets Expectations	The student paper makes an original contribution to scholarship.
Below Expectations	The student paper makes a limited contribution to scholarship.
Unsatisfactory	The student paper makes no contribution to scholarship.

Indicator: Produces material that is suitable for publication.	
Outstanding	Journal or conference publications will result from this research.
Exceeds Expectations	Journal or conference publications are highly likely to result from this research.
Meets Expectations	Journal or conference publications may result from this research.
Below Expectations	Significant revisions will be necessary for journal or conference publications to result from this research.
Unsatisfactory	It is unlikely that journal or conference publications will result from this research.

Integrative Paper Assessment Form

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Complete an Integrative Paper that demonstrates ability to independently conduct and disseminate high quality research/scholarship.

Student's Name: _____

Committee Member Signatures

- Check one: Accept as is
 Accept w/ minor revisions (up to 2 weeks to revise)
 Revise and resubmit (up to 2 months to revise)
 Reject

_____ (Chair)

print name

signature

print name

signature

print name

signature

Review Date: _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Indicators	Outstanding	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
1. Identifies and clearly states the research problem.					
2. Details the motivations for undertaking the research.					
3. Identifies key literature supporting the study.					
4. States research question(s) clearly and succinctly.					
5. Designs study appropriate to field of study and the research question(s).					
6. Presents data and findings clearly and thoroughly.					
7. Prepares an Integrative Paper that makes an original contribution.					
8. Produces material that is suitable for publication.					

Please fill out and sign this form and submit it to the PhD Program Coordinator. Thank you!

Dissertation Proposal

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Effectively plans and proposes novel research and scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.

Committee Member Requirements

The student must submit a dissertation proposal to the committee, which will be written before data collection begins. This proposal will include a literature review, research plan, research methods to be used, research goals and objectives, timelines for the work, potential limitations, and any other elements deemed appropriate by the committee. The chair and the committee will work with the student to determine to format and content of the proposal and what type of proposal defense will be required. Any changes to the goals, objectives, methods, plan, or other major element of the dissertation work must be approved by the chair in consultation with the other members of the committee.

At the defense, the student will give a presentation to the committee – lasting a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum 45 minutes – that summarizes their proposal and what they will do in the dissertation itself. Generally, it is recommended that the student prepares for a 20 minute talk. After this presentation, there will be questions from audience and then non-Ph.D. holders will be asked to leave as questions are asked from the committee. After the questions and suggestions from the committee are completed, the student will be asked to leave while the committee deliberates. Upon successful completion, the dissertation committee will sign a form to indicate that the student has passed the proposal. While it is ideal for the Committee to reach a consensus, in cases where there is a disagreement about the outcome, the student passes if no or only one member of the committee vote(s) to fail the student, and fails if two or more committee members vote to fail the student.

The completed forms and related documents will be forwarded to the Student Services Office for inclusion in the student's file. The student and will receive a copy of the completed DGOA form, which shows the names and signatures of the faculty who participated in the evaluation.

Dissertation Proposal Assessment Guidelines

Indicator: Identifies significant and original problem.	
Outstanding	The student identifies an exceptionally significant and original problem that will make a potentially transformative contribution to the field.
Exceeds Expectations	The student identifies a highly significant and original problem that will make a major contribution to the field.
Meets Expectations	The student identifies an original and significant problem that will make a contribution to the field.
Below Expectations	The student identifies a somewhat significant and original problem that is somewhat likely to make a contribution to the field.
Unsatisfactory	The student identifies a problem of limited originality and significance that is unlikely to make a contribution to the field.

Indicator: Bases the study on relevant literature.	
Outstanding	The student demonstrates mastery of subject matter and associated literature.
Exceeds Expectations	The student demonstrates very sound knowledge of subject matter and associated literature.
Meets Expectations	The student demonstrates good knowledge of subject matter and associated literature.
Below Expectations	The student demonstrates some knowledge of subject matter and associated literature.
Unsatisfactory	The student demonstrates a lack of understanding of subject matter and associated literature.

Indicator: Explores key assumptions or theories supporting the work.	
Outstanding	The student demonstrates mastery of key assumptions or theoretical concepts.
Exceeds Expectations	The student demonstrates very sound understanding of key assumptions or theoretical concepts.
Meets Expectations	The student demonstrates good understanding of key assumptions or theoretical concepts.
Below Expectations	The student demonstrates some understanding of key assumptions or theoretical concepts.
Unsatisfactory	The student demonstrates a lack of understanding of key assumptions or theoretical concepts.

Indicator: States research question(s) clearly and succinctly.	
Outstanding	The student clearly states one or more research questions with the potential to transform research in the field.

Exceeds Expectations	The student clearly states one or more compelling research questions.
Meets Expectations	The student clearly states one or more research questions.
Below Expectations	The student fails to clearly state research questions.
Unsatisfactory	The student fails to clearly develop, state, or employ research questions.

Indicator: Chooses methodology appropriate to question(s).	
Outstanding	Research reflects mastery of the state-of-the-field research methods/tools. The rationale for using chosen methods/tools is exceptionally clear.
Exceeds Expectations	Research uses state-of-the-field research methods/tools. The rationale for using chosen methods/tools used is very well articulated.
Meets Expectations	The methodology chosen is appropriate for investigating proposed questions. The rationale for using the chosen tools/methodologies is clear.
Below Expectations	The methodology chosen is somewhat well-aligned with or appropriate for investigating proposed questions. The rationale for using the chosen tools/methodologies is somewhat clear.
Unsatisfactory	The methodology chosen is not well-aligned with or appropriate for investigating proposed questions. The rationale for using the chosen tools/methodologies is not clear.

Indicator: Describes clear plan for presentation of data and findings.	
Outstanding	The described plan for the presentation of data and findings is exceptionally clear and very well justified.
Exceeds Expectations	The described plan for the presentation of data and findings is very clear and well justified.
Meets Expectations	The described plan for the presentation of data and findings is clear and justified.
Below Expectations	The described plan for the presentation of data and findings is only somewhat clear or only somewhat justified.
Unsatisfactory	The described plan for the presentation of data and findings is not clear or is insufficiently justified.

Indicator: Creates a written product that is clear, well organized, and grammatically correct.	
Outstanding	Organization and documentation are excellent. There are no apparent grammatical, spelling, or word usage errors. Overall, the writing is of publishable quality.
Exceeds Expectations	Organization and documentation are very good. There are very few grammatical, spelling, or word usage errors. Overall, the writing is of a very good quality.

Meets Expectations	Organization is good and documentation is acceptable. There is a limited number of grammatical, spelling, or word usage mistakes. Overall, the writing is acceptable.
Below Expectations	Organization and documentation are marginally adequate. There are some grammatical, spelling, or word usage mistakes. Overall, the writing is somewhat acceptable.
Unsatisfactory	Organization and documentation are not adequate. There are numerous grammatical, spelling, or word usage mistakes. Overall, the writing is of an unacceptable quality.

Indicator: Describes a detailed and feasible timeline of work to be completed.	
Outstanding	Timeline is exceptionally clear and detailed. Work seems highly likely to be completed in the time allowed.
Exceeds Expectations	Timeline is very clear and detailed. Very good potential for completion of the work in the time allowed.
Meets Expectations	Timeline is acceptable and detailed. Good potential for completion of the work in the time allowed.
Below Expectations	Timeline is somewhat clear or detailed. Some potential for completion of the work in the time allowed.
Unsatisfactory	Timeline is unclear or insufficiently detailed. Work seems unlikely to be completed in time allowed.

Dissertation Proposal Assessment Form

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Effectively plans and proposes novel research/scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.

Student's Name: _____

print name

Proposal Defense Date: _____
mm/dd/yyyy

Committee Member Signatures

_____ Advisor
print name signature

_____ Dean's Representative
print name signature

_____ signature

_____ signature

_____ signature

Indicators	Outstanding	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
1. Identifies significant and original problem.					
2. Bases the study on relevant literature.					
3. Explores key assumptions or theories supporting the work.					
4. States research question(s) clearly and succinctly.					
5. Chooses methodology appropriate to question(s).					
6. Describes a clear plan for presentation of data and findings.					
7. Creates a written product that is clear, well-organized, and grammatically correct.					
8. Describes detailed and feasible timeline of work to be completed.					

Please fill out and sign this form and submit it to the PhD Program Coordinator. Thank you!

Dissertation

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Conduct and disseminate novel research/scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.

Committee Member Requirements

Each committee member shall complete the assessment rubric and provide written comments to the student based on the overall written product and oral presentation. The written comments of each committee member and verbal summarization of the overall evaluation of the student's performance will be provided to the student by the chair of the Dissertation Committee.

After questioning has been completed, the student and any others who are not members of the Dissertation Examining Committee are asked to leave the room while the Dissertation Examining Committee discusses whether or not the dissertation and its defense are satisfactory.

The Committee has the following options:

- To accept the dissertation without any recommended changes and sign the Report of Examining Committee.
- To accept the dissertation with recommendations for changes and, except for the chair, sign the Report of the Examining Committee. The chair will check that the changes to the dissertation have been made, and, upon his or her approval, sign the Report of Examining Committee.
- To recommend revisions to the dissertation and not sign the Report of Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised dissertation for the Dissertation Examining Committee's approval. The Dissertation Examining Committee members sign the Report of Examining Committee if they approve the revised dissertation.
- To recommend revisions and convene a second in-person meeting of the Dissertation Examining Committee to review the dissertation and complete the student's examination.
- To rule the dissertation (including its examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails.

Following the examination, the chair, in the presence of the Dean's Representative, must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. The chair and the Dean's Representative both sign a Report of the Examining Committee indicating which of the above alternatives has been adopted. A copy of this statement is to be included in the student's file at the graduate program office, and a copy is given to the student. The student passes if one member refuses to sign the report, but the other members of the Dissertation Examining Committee agree to sign, before or after the approval of recommended changes. Two or more negative votes constitute a failure of the candidate to meet the dissertation requirement. In cases of failure, the Dissertation Examining Committee must specify in detail and in writing the nature of the deficiencies in the dissertation and/or the oral performance that led to failure. This statement is to be submitted to the program's Graduate Director, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the student. A second examination may be permitted if the student will be in good standing at the time of the proposed second examination. A second examination requires the approval of the program's Graduate Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. If the student fails this second examination, or if a second examination is not permitted, the student's admission to the graduate program is terminated.

The completed forms and related documents will be forwarded to the Graduate Student Services Office for inclusion in the student's file. The student will receive a copy of the completed DGOA form, which shows the names and signatures of the faculty who participated in the evaluation.

Dissertation Assessment Guidelines

Indicator: Identifies significant and original problem	
Outstanding	The student identifies an exceptionally significant and original problem that will make a potentially transformative contribution to the field.
Exceeds Expectations	The student identifies a highly significant and original problem that will make a major contribution to the field.
Meets Expectations	The student identifies an original and significant problem that will make a contribution to the field.
Below Expectations	The student identifies a somewhat significant and original problem that is somewhat likely to make a contribution to the field.
Unsatisfactory	The student identifies a problem of limited originality and significance that is unlikely to make a contribution to the field.

Indicator: Creates theoretical framework based on relevant literature	
Outstanding	The student demonstrates 1) mastery of subject matter and associated literature, and 2) mastery of theoretical concepts.
Exceeds Expectations	The student demonstrates 1) very sound knowledge of subject matter and associated literature, and 2) very sound understanding of theoretical concepts.
Meets Expectations	The student demonstrates 1) good knowledge of subject matter and associated literature, and 2) good understanding of theoretical concepts.
Below Expectations	The student demonstrates 1) some knowledge of subject matter and associated literature, and 2) some understanding of theoretical concepts.
Unsatisfactory	The student demonstrates 1) a lack of understanding of subject matter and associated literature, and 2) a lack of understanding of theoretical concepts.

Indicator: States research question(s) clearly and succinctly	
Outstanding	The student clearly states one or more research questions with the potential to transform research in the information field or a related field or subfield.
Exceeds Expectations	The student clearly states one or more compelling research questions.
Meets Expectations	The student clearly states one or more research questions.
Below Expectations	The student fails to clearly state research questions.
Unsatisfactory	The student fails to clearly develop, state, or employ research questions.

Indicator: Chooses methodology appropriate to question(s)	
--	--

Outstanding	Research reflects mastery of the state-of-the-field research methods/tools. The rationale for using chosen methods/tools is exceptionally clear.
Exceeds Expectations	State-of-the-field research methods/tools are used to solve the defined problems. The rationale for using chosen methods/tools used is very well articulated.
Meets Expectations	The methodology chosen is well-aligned with or appropriate for investigating proposed questions. The rationale for using the chosen tools/methodologies is clear.
Below Expectations	The methodology chosen is somewhat well-aligned with or appropriate for investigating proposed questions. The rationale for using the chosen tools/methodologies is somewhat clear.
Unsatisfactory	The methodology chosen is not well-aligned with or appropriate for investigating proposed questions. The rationale for using the chosen tools/methodologies is not clear.

Indicator: Presents data clearly, draws appropriate conclusions, and thoroughly discusses findings	
Outstanding	Analysis and interpretation of data and findings is exceptionally comprehensive and clear. The student draws groundbreaking conclusions from data and findings.
Exceeds Expectations	Analysis and interpretation of data and findings is very comprehensive and clear. The student draws important conclusions from data and findings.
Meets Expectations	Analysis and interpretation of data and findings is comprehensive and clear. The student draws appropriate conclusions from data and findings.
Below Expectations	Analysis and interpretation of data and findings is somewhat comprehensive and clear. The student draws somewhat appropriate conclusions from data and findings.
Unsatisfactory	Analysis and interpretation of data and findings is not comprehensive and is unclear. The conclusions drawn by the student do not flow logically from data or findings.

Indicator: Creates a written product that is clear, well organized and grammatically correct.	
Outstanding	Organization and documentation are excellent. There are no apparent grammatical, spelling, or word usage errors. Overall, the writing is of publishable quality.
Exceeds Expectations	Organization and documentation are very good. There are very few grammatical, spelling, or word usage errors. Overall, the writing is of a very good quality.
Meets Expectations	Organization is good and documentation is acceptable. There is a limited number of grammatical, spelling, or word usage mistakes. Overall, the writing is acceptable.
Below Expectations	Organization and documentation are marginally adequate. There are some grammatical, spelling or word usage mistakes. Overall, the writing is somewhat acceptable.
Unsatisfactory	Organization and documentation are not adequate. There are numerous grammatical, spelling, or word usage mistakes. Overall, the writing is of an unacceptable quality.

Indicator: Produces material that is suitable for publication.	
Outstanding	Journal or conference publications will result from this research.
Exceeds Expectations	Journal or conference publications are highly likely to result from this research.
Meets Expectations	Journal or conference publications may result from this research.
Below Expectations	Significant revisions will be necessary for journal or conference publications to result from this research.
Unsatisfactory	It is unlikely that journal or conference publications will result from this research.

Dissertation Assessment Form

Doctoral Graduate Outcomes Assessment (DGOA)

Ph.D. in Information Studies

Outcome: Conduct and disseminate novel research/scholarship on a significant problem in the information field.

Student's Name: _____

print name

Defense Date: _____

mm/dd/yyyy

Committee Member Signatures

_____	Advisor
print name	signature
_____	Dean's Representative
print name	signature

print name	signature

print name	signature

print name	signature

Indicators	Outstanding	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations	Unsatisfactory
1. Identifies significant and original problem.					
2. Bases the study on relevant literature.					
3. Explores key assumptions or theories supporting the work.					
4. States research question(s) clearly and succinctly.					
5. Chooses methodology appropriate to question(s).					
6. Presents data clearly, draws appropriate conclusions, and thoroughly discusses findings.					
7. Creates a written product that is clear, well-organized, and grammatically correct.					
8. Produces material that is suitable for publication.					

Please fill out and sign this form and submit it to the PhD Program Coordinator. Thank you!

