HCIM Master's Student Handbook

2023 - 2024

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INTRODUCTION

As noted in the University of Maryland's Graduate Catalog, our 30-credit M.S. in Human-Computer Interaction is typically completed in two years by full-time students, while offering flexibility to accommodate part-time and professional students. Our core curriculum grounds students in the fundamentals of HCI perspectives and methodologies, while electives offer in-depth insight into specialized areas of the field. The choice of an individual thesis or a client-based team capstone project in the second year allows students to demonstrate the skills they've acquired in the form best suited to their career goals.

The program learning outcomes below outline the major competencies students can expect to develop in their time in the program.

1. Design Competencies

Complete a project from brief through to production designs, using iterative feedback and critique to improve initial work from sketch to aesthetically coherent, professional quality interactive mockups.

2. Research and Evaluation Competencies

Plan and execute an HCI research project by conducting background research, formulating the research questions, choosing the appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative research methods, evaluating the utility, usability, and user experience of the artifact, and making recommendations for improvements.

3. UX Strategy Competencies

Apply an understanding of organizational strategy to the creation of innovative digital products and services. Work with internal and external stakeholders to communicate UX/HCI research, design, and evaluation techniques to enhance the organization's value proposition and advance its mission and goals.

4. Professional Competencies

  a. *Collaborate effectively within and across diverse research and work teams, with others who have diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and/or work styles (whether in person or online/distributed).*
  b. *Write and orally present effectively for diverse audiences, incorporating high-quality, relevant research and promoting the value of multiple, diverse perspectives.*

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The HCIM program requires students to complete 30 credit hours, consisting of required courses (12 credits), electives (12 credits), and either a capstone or a thesis (6 credits).

30 Credits Total

12 required course credits | **12** elective credits | **6** capstone or thesis

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PROGRAM STRUCTURE
THINGS TO NOTE

- The 30 credit hours of academic work must be completed with a **minimum 3.0 GPA** within **five calendar years** from the first semester of registration.

- At least **24** of the **30** total credits must be designated **INST**, **INFM**, or **LBSC** courses taken within the iSchool. Up to **6** credits may be taken outside the iSchool.

- Students may opt to include three 1-credit courses as well as traditional 3-credit courses to reach their 12 elective credits.

- Students on F1 visas must follow the conditions for maintaining status. In particular, only one online/distance education course can count towards full-time enrollment per semester.

- The Graduate School offers guidance about transferring in up to 6 graduate credits (if they were not used for a previous degree) and about taking courses at other institutions in the Maryland system under certain conditions.

COURSEWORK

Students in the HCIM program must complete a minimum of 30 credits to graduate. These credits are spread across core (required) courses, electives, and capstone or thesis requirements. Each type of course is discussed below separately. Your HCIM advisor will be available to review your academic plan, course planning, and registration.

Core Courses

All students are required to complete the following courses to gain the necessary skills and theoretical foundation to complete their degree:

- INST 630 - Introduction to Programming for the Information Professional
- INST 631 - Fundamentals of Human-Computer Interaction
- INST 711 - Interaction Design Studio
- INST 710 - User Experience Research Methods or INST 798 Seminar in Research Methods and Data Analysis

Course Sequencing

- Core courses must be completed before the capstone or thesis.
- Students who waive a course must replace that course with an equivalent 3-credit course.
- INST 631 is currently offered once during each academic year in the Fall semester.
- A typical course load for our students is 2-3 courses per semester. More information about what is considered full-time status is available here.

CORE COURSE
GRADE REQUIREMENTS

HCIM students must receive a grade of B (3.0 GPA) or higher in all core (required) courses to be considered passing. If a student receives lower than a B in a required course, the course must be repeated so that credit may be received.

Waiving the Programming Course

In previous years, students with a strong computer science background were sometimes allowed to waive the INST 630: Introduction to Programming course. Since the course is being redesigned to address programming from an HCI standpoint and is thus relevant to both beginners and those with programming experience, **waivers are no longer being granted**, effective with incoming students in Fall 2022.

Research Methods

All HCIM students are required to complete at least one of the following research methods courses:

INST 710 - User Experience Research Methods (highly recommended for students who anticipate taking the capstone in their second year and pursuing an industry career). INST 710 provides a broad and practical look at UX methods and principles of Contextual Inquiry and Contextual Design to conduct a user research project. This typically includes a team-based project with an external client.

OR

INST 798 - Seminar in Research Methods and Data Analysis (appropriate for students pursuing a pre-doctoral course of study with prior methods experience). Each section of INST 798 provides a deep, narrow dive into a research method and offers preparation for independent scholars. Further, INST 798 sections generally assume that students will conduct solo and self-guided research. Please note that different sections of INST 798 will emphasize different research methods--qualitative and quantitative. Please check with the HCIM graduate student advisor or instructor to get details about each semester's offerings.

Additional methods courses beyond INST 710 or INST 798 may also be taken as electives. Depending on their anticipated research needs, students may take both INST 710 AND INST 798, and they may also take the INST 798 seminar multiple times if the topics are different.

ELECTIVES

While any graduate-level course **(600 and above)** offered *within the iSchool* may be considered an elective, please consult with your academic advisor to ensure that the selected classes benefit your goals and course of study. Students should also read the course description in Testudo and ensure they meet any knowledge and skill requirements identified before signing up for an iSchool elective course.

ELECTIVES
THINGS TO NOTE

- Students may also take a single relevant 400-level undergraduate class for graduate credit. No additional 400-level courses can be counted toward the HCIM degree, nor can any undergraduate courses listed below the 400 level.
- Any course that was applied to requirements for any other degree cannot be counted toward the HCIM requirements.
- Course offerings vary every year depending on staffing and scheduling needs, and are also contingent on enrollment.

In addition, students may identify courses *outside of the iSchool* that are relevant for their particular path. Both of these options for elective courses are discussed below.

Example Electives within the iSchool

Strongly Recommended Electives for HCIM Students

INST 702 - Advanced Usability Testing
INST 703 - Visual Design Studio

Other Recommended Electives
(Pending course offerings and availability)

- INST 622 - Information and Universal Accessibility
- INST 627 - Data Analytics for Information Professionals
- INST 633 - Analyzing Social Networks and Social Media
- INST 639 (1 credit) - Practical Skills in HCI: Recent 1-credit topics have included UX Strategy, UX Analytics, Communicating Design Decisions, Information Architecture, Mastering the Master's Thesis, Makerspaces, and Discontinuous Innovation - these are highly variable, depending on instructor availability
- INST 670 (1 credit) - Introduction to Javascript Programming
- INST 671 (1 credit) - Introduction to Web Programming
- INST 650 - Facilitating Youth Learning in Formal and Informal Environments
- INST 651 - Promoting Rich Learning with Technology
- INST 652 - Design Thinking & Youth
- INST 682 - Personal Health Informatics & Visualization
- INST 704 - Inclusive Design in HCI
- INST 728C - Advanced Visual Design for Interfaces
- INST 705 - Game Design
- INST 728F - Games and Learning
- INST 728J - CSS/HTML Basics
- INST 728X - Designing Technology with Older People
- INST 713 - Futures of Work
- INST 741 - Social Computing Technologies and Applications
- INST 760 - Data Visualization
- INST 762 - Visual Analytics

*While INST 702: Advanced Usability and INST 703: Visual Design Studio are not currently required courses, students who desire a career in the UX industry are strongly advised to consider them as essential to be well-prepared for available job opportunities. Similarly, students who intend to pursue research careers, including a PhD, are encouraged to focus their electives on more methods courses, including statistics.

Electives Outside of the iSchool

Students are required to take a minimum of 24 credits within the iSchool, and may also request to take up to 6 credits of HCIM-relevant courses outside the iSchool. On occasion, our HCIM students have searched Testudo and found relevant offerings that are open to them within other departments and colleges, including Art, Computer Science, Education, and Journalism. **Please pay special attention to any listed prerequisites or restrictions.**

If you are considering a course relevant to your degree but outside of the iSchool, please fill out an [approval form for taking courses outside of the iSchool](). If approval is granted, you are responsible for getting approval from the instructor and host department and following any other registration requirements. The HCIM program has a list of approved outside-of-iSchool elective courses that you can take. Please submit [an approval form for taking courses outside of the iSchool]() for any course outside of the iSchool, including courses approved by the HCIM program.

Courses Approved by the HCIM Program
- ARTT 479D - Advanced Digital Media Studio; Immersive and Virtual Environments
- CMSC 730 - Interactive Technologies in Human-Computer Interaction
- CMSC 839A - Advanced Topics in Human-Computer Interaction; Embodied Media Design
- CMSC 838C - Advanced Topics in Programming Languages; Advances in XR
- CMSC 838J / CMSC 730 - Interactive Technologies in Human-Computer Interaction
- CMSC 838K - Advanced Topics in Programming Languages; Behavior Change and Affective Computing
- EDMS 645 - Quantitative Research Methods I
- EDCP 694 - Student Leadership Development
- ENCE 489G - Special Problems in Civil Engineering; Sustainability and Infrastructure
- ENSE 624 - Human Factors in Systems Engineering
- ENPM 808A - Advanced Topics in Engineering; Introduction to Machine Learning
- IDEA 698 - Independent Study (Prerequisite: Permission from the Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.)
- IMDM 498A - Special Topics in Immersive Media; Augmented Reality Design for Creatives and Coders

- JOUR 628T - Specialized Topics in News Writing and Reporting; Data Visualization
- MITH 610 / COMM 738D - Introduction to Digital Studies in the Arts and

Humanities
- MITH 729 - Colloquium in Digital Studies/ENGL798D Critical Theory Colloquium; Digital Studies
- PSYC 614 - Emotion: From Biological Foundations to Contemporary Debates in the Psychological Sciences
- PSYC 630 - Behavioral and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Adults
- PSYC 779A - Seminar in Human Performance Theory
- SOCY 682 - Critical Race Theory
- SURV 630 - Questionnaire Design and Evaluation
- SURV 656 - Web Survey Methodology
- SURV 751 - Introduction to Big Data and Machine Learning
- SURV 752 - Introduction to Data Visualization
- TLPL 788A - Special Topics in Education; Learning Equity: In and Out of School

There are also circumstances under which students may seek out courses unavailable at UMD, but available at other institutions. See the [UMD Graduate Catalog](#) for details about how students may initiate this and what the steps are to secure approvals. Search for *Inter-Institutional Registration*, *University System of Maryland* or *The Washington Consortium Arrangement*.

Self-Designed Summer Learning

The summer between your first and second year is purposefully left open for you to pursue interests relevant to your degree. Some students take an internship; some research with faculty; some volunteer or work on independent game entries. You may even wish to spend the summer doing an additional technical program!

Learning outside of a registered summer course will not result in degree credits. Still, it is vital for portfolio-building and preparation for capstone or thesis projects.

We strongly encourage you to connect with the University's Career Center at https://careers.umd.edu/ and watch for postings about internship and career fairs. Your student advisor can help you prepare for opportunities that you're excited about.

Internships

Most HCIM students seek a summer internship beginning in the Fall of their first year in the program. In this case, students are pursuing an internship relevant to their extant and new skills. Alternative summer plans include:

- Working in a research lab on campus.
- Doing personal projects.
- Prepping for your capstone/thesis year.

While internships are highly prized and a tremendous professional accomplishment, they are not required for graduation from our program, and you will not receive college or course credit for one.

Off Campus Work For F1 Visa Students

Off-campus work is only legally available to F1 students **after their first two semesters** of study in the United States. Therefore, summer is your first opportunity for paid off-campus work.

The Office of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) offers Curricular Practical Training and guidance on the procedure you must follow to take advantage of these opportunities. In particular, you must submit your internship offer letters for approval to the ISSS *before* **accepting them.** You must also register for course UNIV099 (a zero credit) to tie the work to your academic record.

If you receive an on-campus job offer, such as a research assistantship, you do not need ISSS approvals to accept that offer.

FULL-TIME & PART-TIME OPTIONS

The HCIM program may be attended on a full-time or part-time basis. Please note that some required classes (e.g., INST 775/776 - Capstone) may only be offered during the day to accommodate client schedules, and students will have to make arrangements in their schedules to attend.

While some iSchool electives may be offered online, core HCIM courses are offered only in person on campus.

International students should consult with the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office regarding any special requirements related to in-person or online

courses for those holding F1 visas.

Part-Time and Full-Time Status

Courses are assigned 3-credit or 1-credit values, and students must have 30 credits of core, elective, and capstone/thesis credits to graduate.

In addition, the Graduate School uses a [unit system](#) in making calculations to determine whether students have full-time or part-time status. This determination may be relevant for student loans, assistantships, and/or visa 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: 600-897 carry 6 units per credit hour.
- Master's Research: 799 carries 12 units per credit hour.

To be certified as full time for student loans, assistantships, and/or visa status, a graduate student must reach **48 units per semester**. Graduate assistants holding regular appointments (20 hours/week) have full-time status if they are registered for at least 24 units in addition to the assistantship. Holders of half-time assistantships (10 hours/week) are considered full-time if registered for 36 units. Audited courses cannot be used in calculating full-time or part-time status.

Full-Time Status for International Students

International students on F-1 or J-1 student visas must maintain full-time status according to Federal regulations governing F-1 and J-1 students. Under certain circumstances, international students may drop down to part-time status during their final semester in the program. More information about [maintaining status](#) is available through [International Student and Scholar Services](#).

International students should always consult with ISSS regarding any questions about their status. ISSS advisors may be reached at 301-314-7740 or online at https://globalmaryland.umd.edu/offices/international-students-scholar-services.

Sample Course Plans

The following course plans are intended to provide a possible picture of an HCIM student's course load under various conditions. These are not a prescriptive registration guide; students are encouraged to develop their course plans in consultation with their advisor and remember that while core courses and capstone/thesis courses are offered every year, elective courses are offered on a rotating basis.

	Year 1	Year 2
Sample Full-time Plan	Fall ● INST 630 ● INST 631 ● INST 710 or a 798 methods course Spring ● INST 711 ● Elective (3-credit or three 1-credit combo) ● Elective (3-credit or three 1-credit combo)	Fall ● INST 775 or 799 ● Elective (3-credit or three 1-credit combo) Spring ● INST 776 or 799 ● Elective (3 credit or three 1-credit combo)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Sample Part-time Plan	Fall: ● INST 631 ● INST 630	Fall: ● INST 710 or 798 ● Elective (3-credit elective or three 1-credit combo)	Fall: ● INST 775 or 799
	Spring: ● INST 711 ● Elective (3-credit or three 1-credit combo)	Spring: ● Elective (3-credit or three 1-credit combo) ● Elective (3-credit or three 1-credit combo)	Spring: ● INST 775 or 799

CAPSTONE OR THESIS

All students must complete either a capstone project or a thesis as a culmination of their studies. Each option currently requires registering for

<div align="center">

6 credits

3 credits in Fall | 3 credits in Spring

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The HCIM program team will help students determine which option is right for them, with discussions starting early in the second semester of the program.

Capstone or Thesis Course Sequencing

Please note that certain program requirements must be completed before students begin their thesis or capstone:

- The core curriculum (INST 630, 631, 711, and a research methods course such as 710 or 798) must be completed before students begin their capstone or thesis work.
- In the standard two-year program, the thesis and capstone are arranged to start in the fall of the student's final academic year, and the required coursework must be completed over two consecutive semesters.

Capstone

Students who register for the HCIM capstone work on group projects for external clients who come to us with a challenging problem or opportunity that requires user research and iterative design to produce product designs and interactive prototypes.

During the capstone course, students will:

- Apply and refine their UX skills in user research, design concepts, interaction and visual designs, and interactive prototypes, all validated through iterative refinement with end users and stakeholders.
- Meet with and present to the industry client, sharing their work frequently at different intervals.
- Learn what to expect in industry and hone the skills (including project management and collaboration) to be successful.

As an outcome of the capstone, students will have a major UX project that they can publicly discuss, present, and share in their portfolio.

You can read more about previous capstone projects on the [iConsultancy web pages](#).

CAPSTONE
THINGS TO NOTE

- Students currently register for INST 775 and INST 776 in consecutive semesters.
- The instructor is responsible for assigning students to project teams and guiding overall learning.
- Student teams will also have a point of contact within the organization sponsoring the project.

Capstone students are responsible for making end-of-semester presentations to their clients on a schedule determined by the instructor in conjunction with the client. It is a course requirement that the students be present **in person** for these presentations.

Thesis

Where the capstone entails working on an extended group project for an external client, the thesis is an individual, self-guided project involving independent knowledge creation. While the thesis writer works closely with a professor/advisor, the research is their own. Please note that a master's thesis is not as extensive a research and writing effort as a PhD dissertation. The thesis is typically approximately 75 pages long and could include sections on 1) Introduction (Motivation for/Framing of the Work); 2) Prior Work (Literature Reviews); 3) Methods; 4) Results/Findings; 5) Discussion (Implications, Limitations, Future Work); 6) Conclusion/(Contributions).

Thesis projects are best undertaken by those with well-developed research topics and strong writing and organizational skills. The faculty thesis advisor and committee members will provide feedback on the work and support the student in identifying the standards for publishable quality in their topic area

Getting Started

To get started with the thesis track, interested students should complete the following steps in the spring of their first year.

Step 1: Review the [Graduate School's Academic Policies: Master's Degrees](#) document and note those sections relating to the thesis. - *Spring semester of first year*

Step 2: Find a thesis advisor who is willing and able to supervise a master's thesis in your desired topic area. The best approach is to begin talking to faculty members very early in the process to see if your project idea fits with their research agenda and if they have time to advise you on the project. - *Spring semester of first year*

Step 3: Register for INST 799 with the advisor's section number in the fall and an additional 3 credits of INST 799 with the same advisor in the spring of their second year. - *Summer after first year*

How To Write a Great Thesis Proposal to a Potential Advisor
- Introduce your topic
- Include some relevant studies (You can start by including some citations appropriate to your thesis work.)
- What problem do you want to solve?
- Why is this problem important to address?
- What goals do you want to achieve with your research?

- What specific research questions do you want to investigate?
- What research method(s) do you propose to use to investigate your research questions? Include recruitment strategies you're thinking about using and how you'll collect and analyze your data.
- What theoretical framework will you include in your research? (We can discuss ideas about the theoretical framework, you don't have to have them right away).
- What are the limitations of your study? (as proposed)
- What contributions do you plan to make with your research?
- What is your proposed timeline? ([Start with the academic deadlines the graduate school sets for thesis submission](#), and work backward from that date)
- What other faculty members do you want to include in your committee? (You will need two additional committee members)
- Start informally discussing your research idea with the individual you will be most interested in working with, then continue your conversation with the additional potential members.

Establishing a Committee

The student and the advisor, who will serve as the chair of the Thesis Committee, will assemble the complete thesis committee.

Step 1: Identify at least two other members who meet the criteria specified in the [Graduate School Master's Degree Policies](#). - *Fall semester of second year*

Step 2: Submit the [Thesis Committee nomination form](#) as soon as the committee has been determined, but at least six weeks prior to examination and in accordance with the [university's academic deadlines](#). Committee members are responsible for approving the proposal and evaluating the thesis itself (see below for a discussion of each of these). - *By early spring semester of second year*

Proposal and Research

The student works closely with their academic advisor (also known as the Thesis Committee Chair) to design an appropriate research plan and course schedule.

Step 1: Draft a thesis proposal

- Under the direction of the Chair, the student develops a thesis proposal that describes the work to be accomplished as part of the thesis. - *Early fall semester of second year*

Step 2:   Submit an IRB

- Before research on the thesis can begin, any relevant research assurances, including the use of human subjects in the research, must be submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) following their established procedures. - *Early fall semester of second year*

Step 3:   Complete research and drafts under the guidance of the thesis advisor.

- The student completes their research and drafts the thesis with guidance and input from the Chair as needed. The student, Chair, and committee members work out the schedule for reading chapters of the in-progress thesis and reviewing the final draft of the thesis in advance of the defense. Theses should be formatted according to the editorial and technical specifications of the Graduate School. - *Ongoing from fall semester to March of second year*

Defense Procedure

Step 1: The Chair will schedule the defense after ensuring the student is eligible to defend.

- This will be scheduled so that all Thesis Committee members can attend, with at least two weeks advance notice.The Graduate School Master's Degree Policies include details on emergency cancellations, remote attendance, and related issues. - *By late March of second year*

- The oral defense typically occurs within the College of Information Studies building. Thesis defenses are open to the entire University community and are announced, including student and committee member names, time, location, title and abstract, via the HCIM electronic list at least 5 working days in advance of the scheduled date. - *By mid April of second year*

- Prior to the defense, the Chair of the committee will secure the Report of the Thesis Examining Committee created by the Graduate School. The Chair must request this form at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled oral examination. This document is used to record the outcome of the defense after its completion. - *By late March of second year*

Step 2: The student will present their oral defense. - *by mid-April of second year*

- During the oral exam, the student presents the research questions, methods, and findings to attendees. During or after the oral exam, they also typically field questions from attendees and committee members.

Step 3: The Committee makes its determination.

After the oral examination is complete, the Thesis Committee deliberates in private, without the student present and attendees, and decides on the outcome. Once decided, they share the outcome with the student. They may:

- Accept the thesis without any recommended changes and sign the Report of the Examining Committee.
- Accept the thesis with recommendations for changes and, except for the Chair, sign the Report of the Examining Committee. The Chair will check the thesis and, upon their approval, sign the Report of the Examining Committee.
- Recommend revisions to the thesis and not sign the Report of the Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised thesis for the Thesis Examining Committee's approval.The Thesis Examining Committee members sign the Report of the Examining Committee when they approve the revised thesis.
- Recommend revisions and convene a second meeting of the Thesis Examining Committee to review the thesis and complete the student's examination.
- Rule the thesis (including its examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails.

Passing the Defense

To pass, a student must receive passing votes from all Committee members. One vote of failure means that the student does not pass.

The Committee may call a second examination as a result of a failed defense. If the student fails the second defense, or if no second defense is called, the student loses standing as a graduate student at the University of Maryland (see Graduate School Policies for details).

Procedures for the Oral Examination, including outcome options, can be viewed in The Graduate Catalog.

The Chair uses the Report of the Examining Committee document to record the outcome of the defense after its completion.

Publishing and Final Submission

Following the completion of the Report of the Thesis Examining Committee, the student must submit that form and the Thesis and Dissertation Electronic Publishing Form signed by the student and the Chair to the Office of the Registrar. More information about Submission and Publication of the Thesis can be found in The Graduate Catalog and information about Thesis & Dissertation Filing can be found on the Graduate School's website.

To be successfully submitted, a thesis must conform to the electronic thesis guidelines and style guide. To facilitate the submission of the thesis, the student should consult these resources early in the process of writing the thesis and follow the requirements accordingly. The final deadline is typically late April or early May.

The thesis and accompanying forms must be submitted by the deadlines posted by the Graduate School.

Guidelines for Structuring the Thesis Year

Early in the fall semester of their second year, thesis students are encouraged to work backwards to create a schedule for completion of the thesis in the spring semester, keeping in mind these key dates. Pending instructor availability, an INST 639 1-credit course under the title Practical Skills in HCI: Mastering the Master's Thesis may be available. This course is intended to provide supplemental research training, although students are generally expected to understand how to conduct a literature review and do productive HCI research by the conclusion of their required courses.

- The University specifies a final date by which thesis projects must be submitted to the Graduate School electronically each semester. See the [academic deadlines.](#) The deadline is typically in late April or early May.

- Students are responsible for scheduling their oral defense with their advisor and committee at least two weeks in advance of the thesis submission date to allow time for requested changes and corrections made by the committee. This usually means thesis projects must be defended by the second week of April.

- Further, students must submit a final draft of their thesis to their Thesis Committee no less than **two weeks** before their oral defense date. This typically means sharing a copy of their draft thesis at **the end of March**.

Working from these known deadlines, students can then continue to work backward to allow ample time to conduct their research and write their thesis. Because this is a large and complex undertaking, students should build out a schedule in advance in consultation with their advisor, allowing ample time for feedback and revision along the way.

GRADUATION

Applying for Graduation

All candidates for graduation must submit a [Graduation Application](#) by the 10th class day of their final semester. The deadline date is posted on the [Graduate School website](#). The form must be submitted through [Testudo](#), where students can also view their application status.

International Students Applying for Graduation

In addition to the steps outlined above, international students must provide an official final copy of their transcripts to the Graduate School in order to be considered to graduate. The final copy will have the school seal and the certification of courses.

GRADUATION THINGS TO NOTE

Failure to complete the above steps will result in a student not being cleared to graduate. Students who miss the application deadline must file a petition with the Graduate School and their academic advisor. If the petition is not approved, the student must apply for graduation during the next semester, register for a minimum of one-credit course in the following semester, and pay all appropriate tuition and fees for that course in the subsequent term.

University-Wide Commencement

Graduating students are eligible to participate in Maryland's University-wide commencement ceremony in May. Details will be provided here: https://commencement.umd.edu/.

Students who complete their degree requirements in a summer or fall term may attend and participate in the Spring graduation as well.

iSchool Commencement Ceremony

The iSchool hosts its own formal graduation ceremony in May. Depending on space requirements, graduating students may be asked to RSVP for themselves and their guests. Students who graduate in summer or fall are also eligible to be recognized in the ceremony in the spring.

Diplomas

Diplomas are mailed to students approximately 2 months after graduation. Diploma Services should be contacted for all diploma-related questions.

Calculating Grades

Grades are calculated in the following format:

A+ at 4.0 quality points

A at 4.0 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

C- at 1.7 quality points

Every graduate student must maintain a cumulative grade point **average (GPA) of 3.0** for all courses taken at the University to maintain good academic standing. A student may repeat a course to earn a better grade. Whether higher or lower, the most recent grade is used to compute the grade point average.

GRADING

- Students do not earn credit toward the degree for courses in which they receive a grade of C+ or lower.

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

- HCIM students must receive a grade of B or higher in INST 630, 631, 710, 711, thesis or capstone to be considered passing.

- If a student receives a B- or below in a required course, the course must be repeated, and may only be repeated one time.

- If a student fails to earn a B or better in the repeated course, they will be referred to the Students in Academic Difficulty Committee and may be dismissed from the program

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 and the Dean of the Graduate School. Graduate credits transferred from another institution are not included in the calculation of the grade point average.

Schedule Adjustment & Tuition Refund Policy

The Schedule Adjustment Period is the first ten business days of classes during the Fall or Spring semester. A similar time period is designated for Summer, Winter and 12-week terms and any course that does not meet the standard term dates.

Students can add, drop, or change course sections during the Schedule Adjustment Period. Courses added prior to and during the Schedule Adjustment Period will appear on students' permanent records. Courses dropped prior to or during the Schedule Adjustment Period will not appear on the student record, nor will they count towards the number of attempts a student has for any given course.

Graduate students may obtain refunds for courses that are dropped during the Schedule Adjustment Period. Students may drop and add courses without penalty provided that the changes are made on the same day and that the total number of credits does not change. Graduate students are charged by the credit hour. A percentage charge and/or complete charge will be imposed according to the schedule below:

- Prior to the first day of classes: 100% refund. There will be no charge for courses dropped prior to this date.

- **[Effective Spring 2023]** During the first five days of classes: 100% refund. There will be no charge for courses dropped during this period. For Summer, Winter, and 12-week terms view the associated academic calendars for the no charge drop period deadlines.

- **[Effective Spring 2023]** After day 5 of schedule adjustment through the end of schedule adjustment: 80% refund. There will be a 20% charge imposed for courses dropped during this period. For Summer, Winter, and 12-week terms view the associated academic calendars for the no charge drop period deadlines.

- Anytime after the Schedule Adjustment Period: 0% refund. There will be no refund; students incur the full charge for courses dropped during this period.

"Incomplete" Grades

An "incomplete" is an unusual grade that an instructor may award to a student whose work in a course has been qualitatively satisfactory, but who is unable to complete some small portion of the work required to complete the course because of illness or other circumstance beyond the student's control.

In awarding the grade of "I" for graduate courses other than 799, instructors must fill out an "Incomplete Contract for Graduate Students." The contract specifies the work remaining to be completed. It must be signed by the instructor and the student. Incomplete grades are permitted at the full discretion of the instructor(s), and must be accompanied by a signed Incomplete Contract which stipulates the outstanding work

that must be completed, the deadline by which the work must be submitted, and the grade that the student will earn if the work is not completed by the deadline. The signed contract must be submitted to your academic advisor.

Students remain in good standing despite grades 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.

Academic Probation

A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. Permission of the Program Director and the Director of Graduate Operations is required for a student on probation to register for courses. Probation will be lifted when the student achieves a cumulative GPA of 3.0. A student on probation who has completed fewer than 15 credits must raise his or her GPA to 3.0 or above by the end of the semester in which the student completes 15 credit hours or he/she will be dismissed from the Graduate School and HCIM program. A student who has completed 16 or more hours of coursework and whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation and will have one semester in which to raise his or her cumulative GPA to a 3.0 or he/she will be dismissed from the Graduate School and HCIM program.

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.

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 GPAs fall below a 3.0 will be placed on academic probation, and 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, the student will be referred to College's Students in Academic Difficulty committee for review and possible dismissal from their program.

Students who earn a B- or lower on core/required courses will be given one semester to retake the course, where they must earn a B or better in their second attempt. If, after the second attempt, the student still does not earn a B or better, the student will be referred to College's Students in Academic Difficulty 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 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.

Academic Integrity

All students should familiarize themselves with the Graduate School's [policies on 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.

Students who are found to have falsified, fabricated, or plagiarized in any context, such as coursework, laboratory research, archival research, or thesis / dissertation writing, will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. The [Office of Student Conduct]() has some discretion in determining 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 will be dismissal (suspension or expulsion) from the University.

Program Administration

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

Within the College of Information Studies, the HCIM program falls under the oversight of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Director of Graduate Operations. It is directed by the HCIM Program Directorship in consultation with the HCIM Committee, which consists of faculty representatives, one representative of the HCIM students, and the Dean of the College as an ex officio member.

The monthly meetings of the HCIM Committee are open to anyone interested in participating. However, due to legal requirements related to privacy, meetings or portions of meetings where the HCIM Committee addresses issues pertaining to

individual students or applicants to the College are not open to students.

The HCIM Program Directorship lead the HCIM Committee in performing the following tasks:

- Oversee administration of the program;
- Define, evaluate, and modify principles and learning outcomes upon which the program is based;
- Make admission and funding decisions about applicants to the program.

The HCIM Program Coordinator supports the daily operations of the program.

The Graduate Academic Advisor is the Graduate Student Services representative who provides support and guidance to individual students in the HCIM program on their courses selection, plans, and progress.

Program Communication

The HCIM program and the iSchool use email as the official communication channel to communicate about key deadlines, scholarships, assistantship opportunities, internships, etc. through established listservs and LinkedIn.
- HCIM program listserv: hcimprogram@umd.edu
- HCIL listserv: hcil@cs.umd.edu
- HCIM Connections: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12847314/

The HCIM program maintains a mailing list to which all enrolled HCIM students are subscribed through their official UMD email address. Students may forward mail from this address to their preferred personal email account if they wish.

You are responsible for knowing about all program information sent to the list. If you are not receiving mail from the HCIM program listserv, please contact program administration to be readded to the list with your official UMD email.

Please check your official UMD email at least once per day to stay current.

Quick Reference Guide

Questions about . . . ?	Contact	Email	Phone
Tuition and fees	Student Financial Services and Cashiering	billtalk@umd.edu	(301) 314-9000
Financial aid	Office of Student Financial Aid	umfinaid@umd.edu	(301) 314-8377
Billing and payment	Student Financial Services and Cashiering	billtalk@umd.edu	(301) 314-9000
Visas, I-20s, CPT/OPT	International Student & Scholar Services	Schedule Appointment with ISSS Advisor	(301) 314-7740
Registration	Office of the Registrar	registrar-help@umd.edu	(301) 314-8240
Insurance and medical care	University Health Center	health@umd.edu (general comments & questions–not personal health data)	(301) 314-8180
Counseling	University Counseling Center		(301) 314-7651
Accessibility issues	Accessibility & Disability Service	adsfrontdesk@umd.edu	(301) 314-7682
Legal issues	Graduate Student Legal Aid Office	glao@umd.edu	(301) 405-5807
Parking, bus schedules	Department of Transportation Services	transportation@umd.edu	(301) 314-DOTS (301) 314-3687
Improving your writing	Graduate School Writing Center	gradwritingfellows@umd.edu	(301) 405-9871
Registration questions, forms, waivers, graduation	iSchool Student Advising	dsmith49@umd.edu	(301) 405-6453
Program issues	HCIM General Messages	hcim@umd.edu	