

MLIS Field Study (LBSC707) FAQ

What resources are available to me for finding a field study?

- [MLIS Student Handbook](#)
- [A Guide to a Successful Field Study](#)
- [Field Study Contract and Plan](#)
- [Field Study Database](#)

How can I find a field study?

- Use the [iSchool Field Study Database](#) to find specific openings and contact information for institutions you might be interested in. You can either apply for internship/volunteer opportunities you find (through job sites like Indeed or other LIS job sites) or contact an institution you'd like to work directly to ask about opportunities. We recommend reaching out to institutions directly to see if they can work with you rather than exclusively looking at internship postings. Find institutions that meet your interests, your career goals, your availability, and your ability to travel (whether you want a remote or in-person position, what days you can work, how far you can travel). Contact multiple places to see what options you have, shop around, and be flexible. If you don't get a response from institutions, feel free to follow up with the person you emailed in a gentle way.
- Please note, your LBSC707 instructor will need to approve your field study placement to make sure it complies with the requirements..

What if I register(ed) but can't find a field study?

- You will need to drop the course if you cannot find a field study to complete the requirement. Please be aware there are deadline(s) to cancel registration (termination of enrollment in ALL courses) with 100% refund. See the [Office of Extended Studies](#) academic calendar for summer deadlines and [Registrar's](#) calendar for spring/fall.

Will I get my money back if I drop this course?

- See the [Office of Extended Studies](#) (summer) or Registrar's (spring/fall) academic [calendar](#) for drop dates. Please be aware there are deadline(s) to cancel registration (termination of enrollment in ALL courses) with 100% refund. OES also provides additional Payment Information for the summer session.

I already work in an information institution. Can I do my Field Study there?

- The goal of the field study is for students to gain a breadth of experience. You cannot complete a Field Study in a unit where you currently work or used to work. Your Field Study supervisor cannot be your current work supervisor. You can do a Field Study in the same organization just in a different department.

What are the chances I can get a remote field study?

- Remote field studies have become more common in recent years and there are generally enough remote opportunities available to people who need to complete their field study remotely. When searching for internship postings, search for “remote” or “virtual” opportunities and when contacting individual institutions, let them know you are interested in remote work or projects that can be completed remotely.
- The US State Department sponsors a 9-month remote internship program, the [Virtual Student Federal Service](#), which hires thousands of e-interns each summer. VSFS students have the opportunity to work on exciting projects with dozens of federal agencies. Past partner agencies have included the Institute for Museum & Library Services (IMLS), the National Gallery, National Library of Medicine, National Archives, National Park Service, National Science Foundation, the United States Postal Service and many more.

What should I say when I email institutions?

- When you contact a person/institution, please give them as much information as possible. They aren't necessarily familiar with our field study requirements and may be unsure about what it entails.
- Explain who you are and why you are contacting them, for example “I am a current MLIS student at the University of Maryland. I would like to participate in an internship at [your institution] this [insert upcoming semester]. Field study (internship) placements are a required part of my MLIS degree.”
- Tell them about the field study requirements: “I would need to complete 120-hours of work during the semester. Please be aware the semester runs from [insert semester dates]. More information can be found in the sample Field Study Contract between students and supervisors.”
- Tell them why you are interested in working with them and if you are interested in paid work only or can volunteer. List your interests, skills, and what you hope to learn through your field study. Propose a project if you have something in mind, but be flexible in what they can offer. Thank them for taking the time to consider.
- **Page 7 of the [Guide to a Successful Field Study](#) includes an email template, please reference that as well!

Do students get jobs at their Field Study sites?

- Yes! Our most recent Job Placement Survey indicated that 1 in 5 students received job offers from their Field Study site.

Who is my Field Study Instructor and who is my Field Study Supervisor?

- The Field Study Instructor is your iSchool professor teaching LBSC 707. The Field Study Supervisor oversees your work at your Field Study site.
- The Field Study instructor will approve your field study placement.

Can I waive the Field Study requirement?

- To be eligible for a waiver, you must have a minimum of two years full-time professional experience. You must apply for a waiver through Graduate Student Services. Even if you are eligible for a waiver, you are strongly encouraged to complete a Field Study.
- Applicants with part time experience must demonstrate that the part time work is equivalent to at least two years of full time professional work. Graduate Assistantships cannot be counted as professional experience for a waiver.
- Waivers will not be considered in the semester a student wishes to graduate.
- To learn more about a waiver, please see the MLIS Student Handbook.

Why is the Field Study course only offered online?

- In 2020 we stopped offering different online and in-person versions of the field study course. Because the field study requires students to work 120-hours at an institution, coming to campus for class was often difficult and burdensome for them to fit into their schedules. Year by year, fewer and fewer students participated in the in-person section. After doing a number of surveys and focus groups and based on student feedback, we decided that we would only offer the course online.

What is the difference between a [Field Study Contract](#) and a [Field Study Plan](#)?

- The Field Study Contract lays out the iSchool's expectations for both the student and the Field Study Supervisor.
- The Field Study Plan determines the student's schedule and specific responsibilities for the field study.
- Both the Contract page and the last page of the Plan need to be signed by you and your site supervisor
- Both the Contract and Plan need to be approved and signed by your LBSC 707 instructor.

What if I can't get my contract to you on time?

- Please contact the instructor if you are concerned about submitting your contract before the start of class. Given the circumstances, the instructor can work with students on an individual basis to make arrangements for when contracts and plans are submitted.
- The field study guide says to submit your contract 4 weeks before the start of class, but we can be flexible given the uncertainty of when institutions will open again. If you have already secured a placement and have your contract, please send it to Abbie Basile, Field Study Lead (ajbasile@umd.edu) as soon as possible.



Tips

Consult the [MLIS Student Handbook](#). Most questions about Program policies and procedures can be answered there.

Some internship sites require extensive background checks. Apply early for these to ensure that the necessary paperwork is complete in time for the Field Study.

Field Study Checklist

- Register LBSC 707.** It is offered in Spring, Summer, and Fall semesters.
- Find a Field Study Placement.** Feel free to use iSchool Field Study Database or opportunities you find through any other job/internship site. Many students successfully find field studies by contacting institutions they are interested in working at.
- Complete the Field Study Contract.** Complete the Contract with your Field Study Supervisor and submit to your Field Study Instructor 3-4 weeks before the start of the semester.
- Complete the Field Study Plan.** Complete the Plan with your Field Study Supervisor and submit to your Field Study Instructor 2 weeks before the start of the semester for review and approval. You can access the Evaluation Form on the iSchool Field Study Database.
- Participate in LBSC 707 coursework.** Be sure to keep up with required homework, discussions, or meetings in addition to the 120-hours at your Field Study Site.