PhD in Information Science and Learning Technologies

About the Program

The PhD program prepares students to understand and carry out research in diverse settings, including research on information and education mediated through the use of technology. A proud member of the iSchools group, we seek individuals who are committed to conducting research that probes novel questions, explores new domains, and advances our field of study.

Doctoral student in the School of Information Science & Learning Technologies (the iSchool at the University of Missouri) follow interdisciplinary paths, and come to us from a variety of backgrounds. In this PhD, you will gain the competencies required to:

- Analyze and evaluate current research
- Design and conduct research projects
- Create and share new disciplinary knowledge
- Participate as a member of the research community

Degree Requirements

Doctoral Seminar Courses (9 credit hours)		
IS_LT 9910	Design and Analysis of Research in Information Science and Learning Technologies	3
• Research and Theory Seminars on topics such as Human Computer Interaction and Human Information Behavior (3 credit hours each, see the SISLT iSchool website for more information).		18
Elective SISLT Coursework (minimum of 18 credit hours)		
1-3 master's level conceptual courses in Educational Technology or Library Science (if entering doctoral program without Master's in Educational Technology, Library Science, or a related field)		
Research Methodologies (minimum of 9 credit hours)		
9 credit hours minimum includes: at least one course in qualitative research design and one course in quantitative research design. You should choose research methods courses that will support your dissertation. You may choose them from the College of Education and Human Development's research method courses, or you may look outside the College of Education and Human Development if your Program of Study committee thinks it is appropriate.		
Support Field (9 or more credit hours)		
Coordinated coursework related to an area of emphasis outside IS_LT and research courses selected in consultation with your program committee		9
Dissertation		

Time spent in the program as an active member of our community of learners will support the achievement of these competencies. The completion of the program will prepare students for career tracks in higher education, public policy, or public and private research in various fields including but not limited to interaction design, instructional design, and library and information science.

Plan of Study

During your first two academic semesters, you will work with your assigned advisor to select courses and identify Professional Immersion activities that will successfully lead toward the completion of your degree. During this same time period, you should work to establish professional relationships with faculty in SISLT and your supporting field who you would like to include on your Program Committee. Prior to the beginning of your second academic year of study, you must have identified your Program Committee and conducted a Program of Study meeting with your Program Committee. Early approval of your Program of Study will enhance your academic experience in SISLT. This is a very important part of the degree planning process; failure to receive approval of your Program of Study prior to the second academic year may mean that courses or activities completed afterward may not count toward your degree.

Qualifying Examination

Approximately one to two semesters after you have had your Program of Study and Residency plan approved by your committee, AND BEFORE you may complete your portfolio and take comprehensive exams, you will be required to complete a qualifying examination. The exam task will require you to complete a task that academic professionals would be required to perform. For example, we might have you provide a scholarly review of a journal or conference paper submission. Your advisor will provide more details.

Comprehensive Examination Process

The comprehensive examination is an assessment of your comprehensive knowledge of information science and learning technologies. It is your responsibility to inform your committee members of your intent to complete your comprehensive exam prior to the beginning of the semester in which you plan to complete the exam.

The IS&LT examination consists of three parts:

- Portfolio
- Written component
- Oral component

For more information on the comprehensive exam process, please refer to the SISLT PhD Handbook at https://sislt.missouri.edu/ISLT-PhD-Handbook (https://sislt.missouri.edu/ISLT-PhD-Handbook/).

Dissertation Requirements

The program culminates with a significant research effort - the dissertation - that contributes to the knowledge base of our field. Whether one major study (i.e., a “traditional” dissertation) or a series of smaller studies (i.e., a three-article dissertation), the dissertation is designed to position our graduates alongside the leading theorists, researchers and practitioners in the field.

You should become involved in research throughout your program so that, by the time the comprehensive examination is completed, you have a well-formulated topic for research. Research may include required coursework activities, collaborations with faculty, or an independent effort. Earlier research can serve to explore a dissertation topic, serve as a pilot study, or become part of a dissertation prospectus. However, formal approval of a dissertation prospectus by your Committee must precede the serious pursuit of the study.

Dissertation Committee

Following the completion of the comprehensive examination, the responsibility of the Program Committee is completed. You will then form a committee to direct your dissertation. This committee may, but does not have to, consist of the same members as the Program Committee. You are encouraged to include those faculty members who

can best support your line of research as members of your Dissertation Committee. During your academic program, your interests may change and should be reflected in the Dissertation Committee membership. The Dissertation Committee must consist of a minimum of three SISLT faculty members. The Dissertation Committee chair must be a member of the MU doctoral faculty. A faculty member or practitioner holding a terminal degree from outside of SISLT who has expertise in your research may be added as a special Committee member with program approval. At least one member must be from a program other than IS&LT, typically from your minor or supporting field.

Dissertation Proposal Meeting

You will be required to schedule a dissertation proposal meeting prior to beginning your research. Your Dissertation Committee must approve your conceptualization and methodology prior to beginning any data collection. The proposal meeting is open to all faculty and students in the School. The proposal should include the first three chapters (Chapter 1: Rationale for the Study, Chapter 2: Literature Review, Chapter 3: Description of Methodology) of the dissertation unless your Committee has approved an alternative form.

Dissertation Defense

After receiving your Dissertation Chair's approval, you may schedule your dissertation defense. A copy of your dissertation must be sent to each committee member at least three weeks prior to the defense meeting. Other faculty, students, and staff may also attend your oral defense. It will be announced to the entire program at least one week prior to the scheduled examination time. These people will be excused while the Committee evaluates your performance.

Admissions

Applicants are required to meet two sets of minimum qualifications for admission: the requirements of the PhD in Information Science and Learning Technologies program (https://education.missouri.edu/degree/information-science-learning-technologies-phd/) and the minimum requirements of the Graduate School (https://gradschool.missouri.edu/admissions/eligibility-process/). Because requirements vary, you *must* refer to a degree program's graduate admission page to learn about specific admission criteria, application deadlines, eligibility and application process. Your application materials will be reviewed by both the Graduate School and the degree program to which you've applied before official admission to the University of Missouri.

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