INFORMATION STUDIES, PHD

PhD Overview

The Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies prepares graduates for academic and professional careers where an in-depth knowledge of research processes and evaluation is needed. The program emphasizes the study of the representation, storage, retrieval, use, and impact of information resources on society. Graduates will contribute to the knowledge base of the discipline and will take on leadership roles as scholars and administrators in the discipline and the profession.

SOIS Overview
About the School of Information Studies

The School of Information Studies prepares students for careers in libraries and the information professions. The School's array of graduate programs provides students with the opportunity to develop attitudes associated with progressive information services, and to develop an understanding of the value, role, and application of modern technology as it relates to library operations and the transfer of information.

In harmony with the mission of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a major urban research institute, the School of Information Studies strives to make significant contributions towards extending and enhancing the quality of information services and the promotion of information and technological literacy to a diverse society. The School of Information Studies is committed to excellence in instruction, research, and service.

Goals of the school are:

1. To prepare professionals who are able to provide leadership and adapt to change in a technological and knowledge-based environment for careers in libraries, school media centers, information systems, and related areas, according to accepted professional standards.
2. To enrich the library and information science profession through recruitment of students with strong academic skills from diverse cultural, geographic, and subject backgrounds.
3. To enable undergraduate students to achieve qualifications to pursue careers in the information professions through the provision of degree and certificate programs.
4. To enable students to develop specializations in the information professions at the graduate level through the provision of single and dual degree programs.
5. To promote a research orientation through participation in the Doctor of Philosophy degree program.
6. To contribute to the international knowledge base of library and information science through research and publication.
7. To facilitate the development, provision, and evaluation of library and information services through consultation services to individual organizations and leadership in professional associations locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally.
8. To offer opportunities for professionals and the wider community to update their skills and knowledge through advanced and continuing education courses, workshops, and programs offered nationally and internationally.

Related Advanced Certificates

- Certificate of Advanced Study in Archives and Records Administration (https://catalog.uwm.edu/community-engagement-professions/information-studies/advanced-study-archives-records-administration-graduate-certificate/)
- Certificate of Advanced Study in Digital Libraries (https://catalog.uwm.edu/community-engagement-professions/information-studies/advanced-study-digital-libraries-graduate-certificate/)

Admission Requirements
Application Deadlines

Application deadlines vary by program, please review the application deadline chart (http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/program-deadlines/) for specific programs. Other important dates and deadlines can be found by using the One Stop calendars (https://uwm.edu/onestop/dates-and-deadlines/).

Admission

Students begin the Information Studies doctoral program in the fall. Applications are accepted only for the fall semester.

An applicant must meet Graduate School requirements plus these departmental requirements to be considered for admission to the program in regular status:

- Have a cumulative GPA in coursework for the Master's degree of at least 3.5 and an undergraduate GPA of 3.0. Applicants possessing a Master of Library and Information Science, or a master's degree in an allied discipline, are encouraged to apply.
- Submit three letters of recommendation from qualified persons who can attest to the applicant's aptitude for doctoral study. At least one letter must be from an academic.
- Submit a writing sample that demonstrates the applicant's analytical and critical thinking skills. This may take the form of a published research paper, term paper from a previous graduate program, or earlier completed thesis.
- Submit a curriculum vitae.
- Verbal and quantitative scores for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/admission/#gre) taken within the past five years are optional and are not required for admission consideration.
- Applicants are encouraged to bring at least two years of relevant professional experience prior to entering the PhD program.

Applicants lacking the requisite GPA or academic area may be considered for admission on probation, and may be required to complete preparatory coursework.

Credits and Courses

Students will need to complete a minimum of 30 credits of approved coursework at the 700-level or higher.

Standard Graduate School minimum and maximum credit loads (http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-policies-procedures/) apply. Full-time students are discouraged from taking more than 9 credits per semester.

Students, along with their major professor, should develop a plan for coursework that will prepare the student to carry out research in their areas of interest. Although an identified dissertation topic is not required

upon entry to the program, students should begin to formulate ideas for potential topics as soon as possible thereafter.

Code	Title	Credits
Foundation Courses		
INFOST 901	Current Issues in Information Studies	3
INFOST 910	Doctoral Seminar in the Organization of Information	3
INFOST 960	Doctoral Seminar in Information Policy	3
INFOST 970	Doctoral Seminar in Information Retrieval	3
Research Methods and Design		
INFOST 903	Qualitative Research Methods [1]	3
INFOST 904	Quantitative Research Methods [1]	3
Select a minimum of 3 additional credits in approved research methods coursework [2]		3
Specialized Area		
Select a minimum of 9 credits related to the specialized area(s) of the dissertation topics from the following: [3]		9
Approved existing graduate courses within SOIS		
Advanced special topics classes offered within SOIS at the 700-level or higher		
INFOST 999	Independent Research	
Courses offered outside of SOIS		
Total Credits		**30**

[1] In exceptional cases, and with the approval of the major professor, a student may satisfy these research methods requirements through courses offered in other campus units.

[2] The particular focus of these 3 credits will be guided by the student's planned research areas and may include coursework in research design, qualitative, quantitative, or other research methods. Additional coursework may be required at the discretion of the major professor.

[3] Specific courses must be approved by the major professor.

Minimum Grade Requirement in the Required Courses

The minimum grade requirement for each of the SOIS foundation and methods courses is "B". If a doctoral student fails to meet this requirement, they are required to retake the course. Students may retake a failed course one time. A student who fails to receive a "B" or higher after retaking a required course will be recommended to the Graduate School for academic dismissal.

Additional Requirements

Major Professor as Advisor

Unless a student specifically requests a particular faculty member, all doctoral students initially are assigned an "interim" advisor. After the completion of 12 credits, a student is required to designate a faculty member from an approved list of major professors with specialized interests compatible with those of the student to act as the major professor. The major professor is expected to assist the student in planning the remainder of the program of studies, chair the student's preliminary examination committee, supervise the completion of the PhD dissertation, and conduct the dissertation defense meeting. All students should consult the program handbook for additional details on school policies and procedures.

Residence

The student must meet minimum Graduate School residence requirements of one continuous academic year of full-time graduate studies at UWM; physical residency in Milwaukee is not necessary. This can be satisfied by completing at least 8 graduate credits in each of two consecutive semesters, or 6 or more graduate credits in each of three consecutive semesters, exclusive of summer sessions. Residence credit cannot be earned at the master's level.

Distance Students

Distance students (not located near Milwaukee, Wisconsin) are encouraged to apply. Such students will be required to attend an orientation on campus at the beginning of the program. SOIS doctoral seminars will be streamed live online for distance students to participate synchronously with local students and faculty, and students will be responsible for meeting all other program requirements via online courses or other approved means. Students begin the Information Studies doctoral program in the fall. An applicant whose file is incomplete will be asked to contact the Graduate School. Application requirements and deadlines are the same for traditional and distance students. Distance students must also meet the UWM Graduate School residency requirements; physical residency in Milwaukee is not necessary.

Preliminary Examinations / Preparatory Essays

Students will be required to complete the doctoral preparatory essays toward the end of their coursework. The purpose of the essays will be to demonstrate the student's mastery of coursework and relevant subject matter and the student's qualifications to proceed with dissertation research. The essays will consist of two areas: one in the major area, and one to be determined by the major professor and the student, e.g., methodology. The essays will represent non-credit research papers based on topics assigned by the student's doctoral committee, which will consist of at least three members. The timeline for completion of the essays will be at the committee's discretion. Based on the committee's assessment of the essays, students will be recommended for advancement toward the PhD or academic dismissal from the program. If the essay results are found to be unsatisfactory, the student will have one opportunity to repeat the essay in a future semester after conferral with the major professor on how to prepare for the next attempt.

The preparatory essays must be successfully completed within four years of initial enrollment.

Dissertation Proposal

A doctoral committee of at least four faculty members will be in place by the time the student undertakes their dissertation proposal. Students may have a maximum of six committee members. The committee will consist of at least three members from the School of Information Studies and a faculty member with appropriate expertise from outside the School. All doctoral committees shall be chaired by a major professor from the SOIS graduate faculty. Approval of the dissertation proposal, which ordinarily should occur within two semesters after successfully passing the preparatory essays, allows a student to proceed toward completion of the dissertation.

Dissertation

The candidate must write a dissertation which demonstrates their ability to formulate a research topic and pursue independent and original investigation that contributes to the knowledge base of the field.

Dissertation Defense

After submission of a reading copy of the dissertation to the student's doctoral committee, the candidate and the major professor will schedule a committee meeting for the purpose of undertaking an oral defense of the dissertation work by the candidate. At the conclusion of the candidate's oral remarks, the dissertation committee will vote on passing the candidate's dissertation work. A majority of the committee must vote to approve the dissertation and recommend granting of the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Approval of the dissertation by the student's doctoral committee satisfies a final requirement for the PhD degree in Information Studies from the UWM-SOIS.

Time Limit

All components of the PhD program must be completed within seven years of matriculation.

Additional Information for Doctoral Students

For additional information on policies and procedures for doctoral students, please see the Graduate School Doctoral Requirements (http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/doctoral-requirements/) page.