

# Graduate Advising Handbook

## Master of Science in Networking and System Administration 2017-2018

This handbook represents our best efforts  
to provide accurate information,  
but all information contained in this document  
is subject to change.

system administration



networking

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# Introduction

The Master of Science (MS) degree program in Networking and Systems Administration at RIT consists of a core curriculum and additional electives. The core provides students with the basics in scholarship and an overview of computing at the enterprise level. This is filled out with a choice of 4-5 electives allowing the student to broaden or deepen his or her plan of study.

This program has been designed to support five essential outcomes for our graduates. These outcomes are as follows:

- Critical thinking is addressed throughout the curriculum in the application of knowledge in research and laboratory activities. Specifically, students evaluate the results of experiments performed in class, and they evaluate alternative solutions to problems in networking and systems administration domain.
- Global interconnectedness is addressed by the very nature of our discipline and the scope of our degree. Networks and computing system deployments are global in nature and require the students to look beyond their local environment. They have to consider the norms and infrastructure capabilities of other countries as they design and deploy networks and computing system solutions on an enterprise scale.
- Ethical reasoning is a core attribute required for all individuals who design, deploy, administer and maintain computing and network systems and infrastructure. At all times these individuals are responsible for a key asset of any organization, their data. Whether it is in the creation, storage, archiving, or transporting of the data, our students learn their ethical responsibility to the integrity of the organization's data assets.
- Integrative literacies are the basis of what is taught in our program. The student is challenged with assessing a computing or networking situation, developing a solution comprised of many components, and then integrating those components to create the successful solution.
- Creative and Innovative thinking is continually employed in our curriculum and is a key to success in a technological world. There are constantly new technologies emerging which challenge computing and network professionals to rethink and create new solutions, which leverage these technologies. So creativity and innovation is a must whether the student is troubleshooting a computing or networking problem or designing a solution to support and organization's business plan.

## *Related MS Programs at RIT:*

- ❖ Information Sciences and Technologies (College of Computing and Information Sciences)
- ❖ Networking and Systems Administration (College of Computing and Information Sciences)
- ❖ Human-Computer Interaction (College of Computing and Information Sciences)
- ❖ Computing Security and Information Assurance (College of Computing and Information Sciences)
- ❖ Software Engineering (College of Computing and Information Sciences)
- ❖ Computer Science (College of Computing and Information Sciences)
- ❖ Computer Engineering (College of Engineering)
- ❖ Game Design and Development (College of Computing and Information Sciences)

# General Information

Applications for admission are processed throughout the year, and graduate students generally begin their programs of study in the Fall semester. Course offerings are limited during the summer term. Students should contact the Department of Information Sciences and Technologies if they plan to start their studies during the Spring semester. A Spring start requires departmental approval. There is not a specific deadline for applications, but the number of students accepted each semester is limited. Also, you must be aware of the lead time to process your application. See the table below for deadlines for the Fall semester and different types of applications. It is advantageous for students to apply early. Application forms may be obtained online or by writing to:

Graduate Enrollment Services  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Bausch & Lomb Center  
58 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, New York  
14623-5604  
[gradinfo@rit.edu](mailto:gradinfo@rit.edu)  
<http://www.rit.edu>

Semester	Typical Starting Date of Semester	Domestic Application Deadline (Part Time)	Domestic Application Deadline (Full Time)	International Application Deadline (Full Time only)
Fall	~ September 1	August 1	August 1	July 1
Spring	~ January 25	December 15	December 15	November 15

## Distance Learning

This program is available on-campus or entirely online in distance-learning format – although some course options are only available on-campus. You can enroll in the program regardless of where you live or work. Instead of going to a traditional college classroom, distance courses use a variety of methods, including Web-based presentations, video and audio recordings, audio and computer conferencing, and electronic blackboards. These tested educational delivery methods give you time and place flexibility while maintaining RIT's academic standards and quality of instruction. Information about online learning at RIT is available at <http://online.rit.edu>.

A wide variety of support services are available remotely, including advising, on-line library catalogs and indexes (some with full text), inter-library loans, internet-based audio conferences, computer conferencing and other software. There is no difference between a program of study completed at a distance or on-campus at RIT. Courses offered in distance learning format follow the same semester schedule and are charged the same tuition rate as other RIT on-campus courses.

International students seeking an I-20 to reside in the United States while studying in this program should note that they are required to be enrolled for at least six (6) credits per semester in on-campus courses. Distance learning or online courses do not qualify for the 6-credit requirement. However, this program's courses are offered online in two formats: a pure online format and a "blended" format. The blended format requires students to participate online in exactly the same way as distance students, plus they attend a weekly recitation with a faculty member. This required recitation allows blended-format courses to count toward the 6-credit residency requirement.

To participate in this online program, you will need the following:

- Access to a personal computer or workstation (running an up-to-date Web browser)
- Access to the Internet via a network connection to your own Internet Service Provider.

## **Entrance Requirements**

### *Undergraduate Degree*

The applicant should have a baccalaureate degree and have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (“B”) or above from an accredited institution of higher education using the US system or grading. For students from a university using the British system, students should have at least a first class degree. Knowledge of computing, programming, networking, and a strong foundation in mathematics are a plus.

### *Bridge Courses*

These courses are designed to assist students in meeting the computing, mathematics, and networking prerequisites for the MS in Networking and System Administration program. There is more information regarding bridge courses later in this handbook.

## **Transfer Credits**

A student may propose to transfer into the in MS in Networking and System Administration program up to six graduate semester credits that were taken at another university with a grade of ‘B’ or better. Courses must have been taken within the past two years. The Director of Graduate Programs will evaluate these proposals. Official transcripts along with the syllabi of the transfer courses must be sent to:

Graduate Enrollment Services  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Bausch & Lomb Center  
58 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, New York  
14623-5604  
[gradinfo@rit.edu](mailto:gradinfo@rit.edu)  
<http://www.rit.edu>

## **GRE Scores**

GRE scores are required from applicants whose undergraduate degrees are from foreign colleges. Other applicants may wish to include GRE scores to enhance their applications (e.g., when undergraduate GPA is less than 3.0). Official test results must be submitted to:

Graduate Enrollment Services  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Bausch & Lomb Center  
58 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, New York  
14623-5604  
[gradinfo@rit.edu](mailto:gradinfo@rit.edu)  
<http://www.rit.edu>

## **TOEFL Scores**

The *Test of English as a Foreign Language* (TOEFL) score is required for every applicant for whom English is not his or her native language. A score of at least 570 on the paper-based test or 230 on the computer-based test is required or 88 on the internet-based test. Exceptions can be made for an applicant whose academic record is strong. Upon arrival at RIT, students whose native language is not English may be required to take the *Michigan English Test* and follow the recommendations of RIT’s English Language Center.

## **Financial Aid and Employment Opportunities**

## *Costs*

Information on tuition, registration student services, etc. can be found online at <http://www.rit.edu/grad>. RIT offers various forms of financial aid for graduate students.

The Department of Information Sciences and Technologies awards partial tuition merit-based scholarships each year. Merit-based scholarships are based on the applicant's application, including grades, courses taken, university attended, and letters of recommendation and GRE scores.

The department employs several graduate students as Graduate Assistants. Assistantships offer a scholarship and provide an hourly wage based on 20 hours of work. The amount of the scholarship varies up to full tuition and depends on departmental needs and the applicant's qualifications. We require very specific skills for these assignments as well as in-person interviews. We make Graduate Assistantship assignments throughout the academic year for the following Fall, although openings may unexpectedly occur. If you wish to be considered for an assistantship, please make sure that we have received your full application by March 1st of the preceding school year if you are applying for Fall admission.

- ❖ Qualified graduate students may apply to be lab assistants and graders.
- ❖ A student can earn money each semester by working on campus. For more information visit the Office of Student Employment located in room 1350 in the University Services Center (USC), 585-475-2631 or visit <http://www.rit.edu/emcs/seo>.

# Curriculum

The graduate program of study consists of 30 credits. You will pursue either a project or a thesis track.

## *Prerequisites:*

There are certain prerequisite skills that a student must have before beginning the MS in NSA degree program. On occasion, students are admitted who lack some of these skills. In such a case, the student must make up the deficiency before beginning coursework in the degree program.

The prerequisite skills are listed below. To the right of each are one or more RIT courses that will fulfill the deficiency. Students may elect to fulfill these requirements at another institution of higher education. In that case, the student must have his or her course selections pre-approved by the Director of Graduate Programs.

## *The Bridge Program*

- Object oriented programming (1 year)      ISTE 120 & 121 Computation Prob. Solving in the Info. Domain I & II (or equivalent)
- Networking concepts      NSSA 606 Wired and Wireless Networking
- Principles of System Admin      NSSA 605 Principles of System Admin
- Statistics      DECS-782 Statistical Analysis for Decision Making

NOTE: Students with significant programming background, but not in an object-oriented language may satisfy the first requirement with a single course: ISTE 200 Java for Programmers, with the approval of the Director of Graduate Programs.

## *The Core Courses:*

- ISTE 605 Scholarship in IST – 3 credits
- NSSA 602 Enterprise Computing – 3 credits
- NSSA 615 Advanced OOP for Networking and Systems Admin – 3 credits
- NSSA 620 Emerging Computing and Network Technologies – 3 credits
- NSSA 714 Advanced Large Scale Computing – 3 credits

## *The Thesis Track:*

- Three elective courses (see below) – 9 credits
- NSSA-790 Thesis – 6 credits

## *The Project Track:*

- Four elective courses (see below) – 12 credits
- NSSA-791 Project – 3 credits

Your program of study must follow one of the two tracks above. Only the Director of Graduate Programs can approve changes of a student's program of study.

Any grade lower than "C" is considered failing. If a student receives a "D" or "F" they should meet with the graduate advisor as soon as possible to discuss the repercussions and create a recovery plan.

## **Approved Electives**

The following electives are approved courses from the Information Sciences and Technologies department. Courses other than these must be approved by the Director of Graduate Programs to be used as an elective in this program.

- *NSSA 610 Advanced Wired Networking Concepts +*

- *NSSA 611 Advanced Topics in Wireless Networks and Technologies +*
- *NSSA 612 Network Modeling and Analysis +*
- NSSA 621 Design and Deployment of Wireless Networks
- NSSA 710 Network Management
- NSSA 713 Enterprise Service Provisioning +
- NSSA 712 Advanced Storage Technologies
- NSSA 715 Network Design and Performance
- NSSA 716 Enterprise Mobile Computing
- ISTE-721 Information Assurance Fundamentals
- ISTE-764 Project Management

+ These electives have a theoretical focus and each student is required to take least one theoretical course.

### **Independent Study**

Students have a limited opportunity to obtain credit for independent study and to use that credit to meet degree requirements. Generally, independent study projects represent work that is different from, or an extension of, existing course offerings. In order to take an independent study, students must have a faculty sponsor. The faculty sponsor has to be a member of the IST faculty. Students and that faculty sponsor will fill out the Independent Study form to decide what they will do and how students will be graded. Students and the faculty sponsor must also sign the Independent Study form and the Director of Graduate Programs must approve it before the student is allowed to register for an Independent Study course. After the student's work is complete, they are required to submit a report of their work to the sponsor of their independent study. The expected amount of time spent for a 3 credit hour independent study is equivalent to a 3 credit hour lecture. A detailed report describing the completed work has to be handed in to the faculty sponsor. A typical report is expected to consist of about 30 pages. You can apply at most six (6) semester hours of Independent Study toward your MS degree.

### **Cooperative Education**

Graduate students are eligible for *optional* co-op work consisting of up to two semesters of full-time employment. A co-op position is not assured. The co-op program is available for full-time students in good standing (cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better or a semester GPA of 3.0 or better in the semester immediately preceding the requested co-op term) who have completed the Bridge Program and at least 4 foundation courses (12 credits) of the MS program of study, excluding bridge courses.

Co-op positions must be secured by the beginning of the academic term in which you wish to co-op.

**Permission for mid-semester co-ops will not be granted.**

To register for co-op, you must participate in "Co-op Orientation". Information may be obtained from the Office of Career Services and Cooperative Education (<https://www.rit.edu/emcs/oce/>).

### **Probation and Suspension**

Any matriculated graduate student whose Program Grade Point Average falls below a 3.0 (B average) after 12 semester credit hours have been completed will be placed on probation and counseled by the departmental advisor concerning continuation in the graduate program. Those students placed on probation must raise their Program Cumulative GPA to the 3.0 level within 9 semester credit hours or risk suspension from the graduate program. Should it be necessary to suspend a graduate student for academic reasons, the student may apply for readmission to the dean of the college or designee (department head, program director, etc.) upon demonstration of adequate reason for readmission. Re-admission is **not** guaranteed.

# Student Advising

## Faculty Advisor

Students are assigned to a faculty member as an academic advisor. Faculty can provide the best advice about career paths, academic choices, and routes to a successful career after graduation. Students may approach their assigned advisor, or any faculty member with whom they feel comfortable, for advice.

## Graduate Academic Advising

The graduate advisor is available to assist and advise graduate students and is able to answer day-to-day questions, such as deciding what to take next term, dealing with a course that you're having trouble in, completing the paperwork that goes along with being a student at RIT, or just to talk with when you're feeling a bit overwhelmed.

# MS Project and Thesis

The Master's thesis or project forms the capstone of the MS program. It is a large body of work, which you undertake independently, but under the supervision of a full-time IST faculty member. A project consists of a nontrivial software development and/or deployment effort and a report discussing it; or it is a report dealing with more theoretical questions. Original insight into a problem is desirable but not required. The project report is expected to be a scientific paper:

- describing background and relevant results in the area
- detailing the work carried out
- discussing the significance of the deliverables of the endeavor and providing appropriate reference citations

The project should take about as much effort as that devoted to a three-credit course. The project report is to be submitted in electronic and paper copy. Copies must also be provided to your committee.

A thesis should deal with a significant question and involve some original insight. Compared to a project, a thesis has a much higher level of expectation in terms of background research and justification. A thesis should also result in a paper submitted to a conference, a journal or other form of public dissemination. More specifically, the difference between a project and thesis is the technical depth of the work involved. The requirements for a project are less stringent than for the thesis. The thesis requires more depth and the student should develop a substantial understanding of the topic through library research, experimentation, etc. The thesis should take about as much effort as that devoted to two three-credit courses. The thesis report will be bound and reside in RIT's Library archives. Copies must also be provided to your committee.

The purpose of a Master's thesis or project is to be of educational value to the student and to independently create and present a large, interesting, piece of work. Any acts of plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic 'F' for the project. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism you should contact your committee chair before you complete your write up or make your presentation. Additionally, by forming your committee and registering for Project or Thesis you have effectively created a contract between your chair and yourself. Your chair will contribute a substantial amount of time guiding project activities. Failure to complete your project or thesis within the agreed upon schedule may result in receiving a grade of 'F'.

In either case, you will need to write a new Proposal, form a new committee, and register for project or thesis again. In both cases the 'F' will remain on your transcript. Additionally, by signing your proposal the committee members agree to serve on your committee for one year. After one year they can resign from the committee if they feel the student is not making adequate progress.

## **Your Committee**

Your project/thesis committee is composed of three members for a thesis or 2 members for a project:

- chair
- 2 readers (only 1 reader is required for a project)

The function of the chair is to direct the technical aspects of your project and to ensure that your project or thesis meets the department's technical and administrative requirements. The chair has to be a member of the IST faculty.

You will meet with your chair periodically. Monthly progress reports must be provided. The reader(s) may also review your monthly reports and provide feedback on your progress or concerns they may have to your chair. Your committee must be provided with a final copy of your report ten days prior to your defense. The reader(s) do not have to be a member of the IST faculty, but must hold an MS degree and be approved by your chair.

Other faculty members may also review your work and make recommendations to your chair. All advisement will come directly from your chair. The chair, and reader(s) must sign off on your Proposal before you register for project or thesis. It is most important that you establish a committee before you begin serious work on your project. Failure to do this may cause significant delay in the completion of your degree.

## **MS Project/Thesis Proposal**

The proposal should contain the following sections, unless otherwise arranged with your chair:

- A summary describing what you will do.
- An overview of the area of your project/thesis.
- A hypothesis.
- How the proposed work will be evaluated against existing work.
- Architectural overview of the planned system; i.e., the design specification. This may be less well understood, hence somewhat shorter.
- A list of the principal deliverables of your project/thesis and the form in which these will be delivered, such as: technical paper or report, input/output examples or demonstration, code (the complete system should be given to your principal advisor archived on a single file, user manual, design documentation and maintenance manual.
- Annotated references. This should include the following: previous master's projects or theses, books, papers, URLs.
- Detailed schedule, including target defense date.
- Status of the work at the present time. Monthly updates must be provided.

## **MS Project or Thesis Registration for Credit**

To register for Project or Thesis, you must give the office a copy of your Proposal signed by the chairperson and reader(s). The Department has a form for you to complete. Your proposal must be approved by the Graduate Director before you will be enrolled in your capstone. The department enrolls you in project or thesis. If you do not finish your Project or Thesis in the first semester in which you register for credit, you will receive a grade of 'I.' You should continue to post monthly progress reports on your RIT web page until you finish.

## **Doing a MS Project/Thesis Related to Your Work**

A student may be working in the computing field, and find that their work provides them with an opportunity to do projects that are comparable to the MS Project or Thesis, and they would like that work to qualify. This approach is possible, and there is precedent for doing it. Students can even have a reader from their place of

employment, but the chair of their committee must be a Information Sciences and Technologies faculty member and be knowledgeable in the proposed area of work. The work that will be submitted as the Project or Thesis must be monitored by the faculty members on the committee and the student must report their progress monthly.

Because an IST faculty member is monitoring your work, this rules out submitting a proposal for work that has already been completed. In addition, the report, and a significant portion of the other work products such as code, must be made available for other students to read in the future. The committee sets the requirements - not the employer. It is your responsibility to assure that your employer's requirements for confidentiality are respected.

### **Checklist for the Defense**

The last step in the process is the defense. After the student has completed the write up of his/her work and the chair and the reader(s) have approved it, the student defends his work during a 50-minute presentation. The defense is open to the public.

The student is required to follow the procedures outlined below:

- Schedule the defense and register that scheduling with the department office; assure all committee members are able to attend; reserve the room with the department staff.
- Assure that the room has all the facilities you require (board, markers, projectors, ethernet connection, etc).
- Post announcements at least 10 days prior to the event unless otherwise approved by your committee.
- Verify with the department staff that all necessary paperwork has been completed (including current application for graduation).
- Review your presentation with at least one of your committee members (typically the committee chair) before presenting it formally. The defense should take 60 minutes, but you must allow time for questions and discussion. When you rehearse, it should take 40 minutes.
- A rehearsal is highly recommended. Ask a friend or two or a member of your committee to sit through a complete presentation. This is the only way you will know how long it takes and will help in locating the bugs (demos that fail, typos, faulty visuals, etc.) in your presentation.
- Prepare handouts for your presentation consisting of copies of your. Discuss with your committee chair how many copies to prepare.

### **Deliverables**

The final paperwork for a Project requires that you give each of your committee members and the department a copy of the professionally written report, in a pressboard binder (or some flat binding).

The report must also include a CD/DVD, which has the following content:

- Report in PDF: The filename has to be *report.pdf*
- Proposal in PDF: The filename has to be *proposal.pdf*
- Defense announcement in plain text or PDF: The filename has to be *announcement.pdf/announcement.txt*

The final paperwork for a Thesis requires that you arrange for a bound copy of the thesis for the RIT Library, the department, and each committee member (that makes six copies, counting your own). Give the department secretary copies of:

- the thesis binding receipt
- the thesis abstract
- the signed cover page

**You will not be certified for your degree until these steps have been completed.**

### **Full Time Equivalency**

Continued, active registration at RIT can be important for students who must maintain full-time student status, such as students with loans to repay or foreign student visas to maintain. Students working on their thesis or project may be registered for fewer than 9 credits.

To be considered a full-time student even though you are registered for fewer than 9 credits, you must complete a “full-time equivalency” form. The IST Department allows you to apply for full-time equivalency for a maximum of one year. You must have a GPA of at least 3.0. Please see the *Graduate Advisor* or the *Director of Graduate Programs* to complete the appropriate paperwork.

## **Miscellaneous Information**

### **IST Student Services Office**

The IST Student Services office is in Golisano Hall (GOL, Room 2100). The phone number is 585-475-2700; office hours are 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday through Friday. The office maintains records for each matriculated graduate student. Bring your policy and procedure questions to the staff in this office (e.g., grade problems, transfer of programs, transfer of credit, forms, registration). This office can assist with change of program, intent to graduate, add or drop a course, and register for project or thesis.

To help us maintain accurate records, make sure we have the correct spelling of your name, your current address, your student number, and your day and evening telephone numbers.

### **The 7-year Rule for Completing a Degree**

You may not use any courses for graduation that were taken more than seven years ago (this rule does not apply to Bridge Program courses).

### **Guidelines for Petitioning for an Extension Beyond the 7-year Limit**

In cases where the fulfillment of degree requirements extends beyond the 7-year limit, the Director of Graduate Programs must petition the Graduate Council for a formal extension.

*Please note the following important requirements for these petitions:*

Application for an extension should be submitted to the Graduate Program Director at least one full semester prior to the expiration of the seven-year time limit.

When a student’s program is projected to exceed the seven-year limit, he/she should not be encouraged to take courses or work on a thesis or final project until a decision has been made by the Graduate Council.

A student can apply through the Director of Graduate Programs for an extension of the 7-year rule.

*The student has the following options to prove that the student’s knowledge of the course(s) beyond the seven year limit are current:*

- ❖ A student can retake the course(s) at RIT and pass the course with a passing grade.
- ❖ A student can retake the course(s) at another institution and pass the course with a passing grade. The Director of Graduate Programs must approve the course selection, before the student is allowed to register.
- ❖ The student has to pass an exam of the course(s) in writing at RIT. The exam will be similar to a final of the course(s).

*Documents included in the petition submitted to the chair of Graduate Council by the Director of Graduate Programs should include the following:*

- ❖ Petition support signed by Dean's office.
- ❖ Detailed plan for completion of degree, addressing each unmet requirement. Generally, no more than one calendar year's extension will be granted.
- ❖ Circumstances that delayed completion of degree.
- ❖ RIT graduate transcript (and, where relevant, undergraduate transcript).
- ❖ Current résumé.
- ❖ A copy of the thesis description or final project proposal (if completed).
- ❖ A list of courses that will be older than seven years (and by how much) at the projected date of graduation. At the time of certification, the Director of Graduate Programs will provide written documentation of the currency of overdue courses.
- ❖ Letter of support from the Director of Graduate Programs or faculty advisor.

### **Loss of Student Status**

*You may be withdrawn from the program if:*

- ❖ You fail to register for courses for three successive semesters.
- ❖ You have not registered for thesis or project within one year after completing your coursework.
- ❖ You have not completed your thesis or project within one year after registering for project or thesis.

*If you are in danger of being withdrawn, please see the Director of Graduate Programs.*

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is an expectation of all students at RIT. Any act of improperly representing another person's work as one's own is an act of academic dishonesty. The RIT code of academic conduct is documented in the university's Policies and Procedures manual:

<http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/sectionD/D8.html>  
<http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/sectionC/C0.html>

## **Appendix A - Forms**

### **Thesis Forms**

Following are various forms used in completing a thesis capstone:

- Proposal Approval form
- Defense Announcement
- Final Thesis Approval form
- Thesis Title page

These forms are available on this program's graduate website.

### **Project Forms**

Following are various forms used in completing a project capstone:

- Proposal Approval form
- Defense Announcement
- Final Project Approval form
- Project Title page

These forms are available on the department's graduate website.

## Appendix B – Frequently Asked Questions

### Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Is there a scholarship available?** All full-time and some part-time students who do not have significant outside sources of funding and who have strong academic and/or employment backgrounds are eligible to receive a scholarship. Once assigned, this scholarship is for two semesters of support.
- 2. What about my scholarship if my studies exceed two semesters?** While economic contingencies cannot be foreseen, scholarships are generally renewed as long as the student is making steady progress on the degree and remains in good standing (attains a GPA of 3.0 or better). You must request such a renewal/ Requests for renewals must be made, in writing, using the RIT Graduate Scholarship Application form (see the Student Services office) at least one semester before the extension is desired.
- 3. Does scholarship cover courses taken in summer terms?** Normally not. However, upon request, the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor may extend a scholarship to cover summer term courses.
- 4. Are there graduate assistantships available?** The department offers a small number of graduate assistantships (GA) positions yearly. To apply, you must fill out and submit an application to the graduate coordinator no later than **March 1st** for the next academic year. Assistantships are granted for a maximum of two semesters.
- 5. May I work (co-op) as part of my studies?** Graduate co-op is available. It is optional and you may do at most one (1) co-op semester prior to capstone completion. You must meet the requirements for co-op and ensure that your job is appropriate before beginning work. See the graduate coordinator and our representatives from Career Services and Cooperative Education for assistance with this. However, it is important that working does not interfere with your completing your MS capstone and obtaining the degree.
- 6. How do I get ideas for my capstone and help getting started?** You will likely have ideas from your coursework, and you can always seek the help of a faculty member with whom you have a good relationship.
- 7. I am an international student. Are there special study rules I should know about?** Yes. International students must take at least 6 credits per term on campus. This can be a problem in a degree designed for online students. To accommodate this need, we offer most of our courses in two formats. The first is a totally online format which does not count toward the 6 credits of on campus coursework.  
  
The other format is a “blended” format. These courses require the same work as a totally online course, but bear an additional requirement of at least one on-campus meeting per week with an instructor. These courses do count toward the 6 credits of on campus coursework.
- 8. May I take other courses in place of those indicated on the program worksheet?** Possibly – depending upon the reason and your background. Any and all changes to your plan of study must be pre-approved by the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor.