

Ph.D. Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to the School of Information Studies (iSchool) at Syracuse University.

This handbook is for all students pursuing the graduate program of study for the Ph.D. in Information Science and Technology.

The Ph.D. in Information Science and Technology is a full-time, residency-based, research-oriented degree awarded for excellence in the advancement and dissemination of new knowledge in the information field. Our program addresses information-related phenomena in all settings: individual, organizational, societal, political, and technical.

Since the program's inception in 1969 as the first broad, interdisciplinary doctorate in the field, the PhD in Information Science and Technology has been training researchers, educators, consultants, and others who share the view that information is a manageable resource.

Students are expected to develop mastery across aspects of human uses of information, technologies that work with information, and theories of information. Our program is human-centered, rather than computer-centered – distinguishing us from the program in computer science and computer engineering. The Ph.D. in Information Science and Technology is also more technology-oriented than most programs in psychology, sociology, communications, and management/organizations.

The focus in the PhD program is to train the next generation of scholars and intellectual leaders in the information fields. A strong Ph.D. program helps our research-active faculty to achieve their scholarly goals and expand their impact and both their and the school's reputation. As such the Ph.D. program serves as a recruiting device, helping us to attract excellent young faculty. We are both extremely proud, and committed to ensuring, that our graduates are consistently winning scholarly awards and are prized by employers and colleagues for their broad, interdisciplinary training combined with methodological and topical depth.

The iSchool PhD is a research degree and about two-thirds of the graduates enter academia. The rest work in research labs, policy-oriented organizations in governments and the non-profit sector, and some become entrepreneurs. Given the focus on preparing future faculty peers, the PhD program also provides for advancing its graduates skills for teaching excellence.

Learning Outcomes

- Conduct original information science and technology research
- Summarize and synthesize a topically focused body of relevant literature
- Explain foundational knowledge of information systems, services and policies
- Formulate and analyze information technology problems using appropriate analytical tools
- Analyze and synthesize data
- Develop skill in scholarly writing
- Develop and deliver instruction

Resources

There are several faculty and staff resources supporting the Ph.D. program.

Program Director

Each degree program in the School has a Program Director. The Program Director acts as a central resource for questions regarding program requirements, curriculum decisions, funding, and has oversight of the program. The Program Director also acts as a liaison between individual programs and the School as a whole. In this role, he or she is your advocate for matters concerning policy and procedures, and for special problems that might arise. He or she approves milestones, petitions, transfer credits, and leaves. Currently, Bei Yu is the Ph.D. Program Director.

Faculty Advisors

Before the start of the first semester, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. The faculty advisor serves as a mentor for academic and professional development. Students may see their faculty advisor for questions about specific course content, questions regarding which electives to take to fulfill a specific career goal, etc. Students may seek advice from any faculty member, not only the advisor.

Graduate Academic Advisor

The Graduate Academic Advisor assists Ph.D. students and faculty with registration, add/drop forms, leave paperwork, and missing grades. He or she may also review and provide input on graduate petitions. The Graduate Academic Advisor also manages doctoral records and paperwork flow, oversees milestones, plans doctoral student orientations, and works with the PhD Program Director and the Graduate School. In this role, they are your advocate for matters concerning process, administrative questions, and milestones. Tess Schaffer is the current Graduate Academic Advisor for doctoral students.

Graduate School

The Graduate School, located in Lyman Hall, provides a variety of professional development, research, and support programs for the nearly 4,000 masters and 1,400 doctoral students on our campus. Individual graduate programs are administered by departments or interdisciplinary committees and are subject to approval by the appropriate schools and colleges and by the University Senate. These policies and standards are administered by the Graduate School. All post-baccalaureate degrees are awarded through the Graduate School, so all milestone paperwork will need to go through the Grad School to be certified. Kristina Ashley is the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Information Technology Services

The iSchool houses its own Information Technology Services (ITS) team, located in 002M Hinds Hall. The team's primary role is to assist faculty and staff with their technology needs, but can help students with iSchool-related computing issues, such as questions regarding the lab computing environments, issues accessing the remote lab, and issues downloading software. For assistance, visit the online help desk form and submit a ticket by emailing ischoolit@ot.syr.edu. Enterprise level issues (e.g. web, email, learning technologies) are handled by the University's ITS team at www.its.syr.edu.

Center for International Services (CIS)

For international students, CIS is the first and possibly most important place you will visit on campus. CIS works closely with the Graduate School and all academic departments to assure that international graduate students enrolled at SU can achieve their academic objectives and become an integral part of the SU academic community. The Center for International Services is the place to go on campus if you have questions regarding immigration regulations, passports, visas, insurance, employment, and travel. Our staff are available to offer advice and information and address any questions or challenges while living in the U.S.

The center is the official liaison office with U.S. immigration offices for all non-immigrants at Syracuse University. CIS provides you with an orientation program designed and conducted especially for new international students. This orientation program is held the weekend prior to the opening weekend of the University. Check the website for the exact time, date, and location of orientation. To ensure you do not miss any important information, be sure to check your syr.edu email account on a regular basis. Visit <https://international.syr.edu> for more information.

Academic Rules

The official academic rules of Syracuse University are here:

- [Graduate School Course Catalog](#)
- [Graduate School Specific Academic Rules](#)

Any reference to Academic rules can be found in these links.

Nominal Doctoral Program Sequence of Events (Progress of a Student through the Program)

Starting the program

- A student applies and is admitted (see section 2).
- A temporary advisor is assigned (see section 4). This advisor is not expected to have overlapping research interests, but to serve as guide and advocate for the new student and to help them make the transition to the iSchool and Ph.D. program. There is every expectation that in the first 6-18 months of the program this advisor will give way to one that is more closely aligned with your research interests and goals.

Year 1

- Coursework and other activities are planned with the faculty advisor (see section 5). A typical semester workload is two courses plus the Practicum in Research (IST 810) and Practicum in Teaching (IST 840) (see section 6), for a total of nine (9) credits of graduate study. Students working as teaching or graduate assistants normally take three courses, or 9 credits.]
- A regular advisor is chosen, usually no later than the end of the first year in the program. The regular advisor may, but need not, be the same person as the temporary advisor (see section 4).
- The student starts a portfolio. In the Spring of the first year, the first evaluation meeting is held (see section 8).

Year 2

- Continue planning the program of study with advisor. A committee may be formed to provide additional advice.
- Annual evaluations will be held each Fall semester (see section 8) until the student reaches candidacy.

Year 3+

- During the third year, but no later than the fifth year, the student forms a committee, and schedules a committee meeting to obtain certification of completion of program of study (End of Coursework, section 10 and Credit Hours, section 11).

Candidacy to Completion

- When the student obtains certification of completion of program of study, the School will certify the student as having completed the comprehensive exam (see section 13). At this point, the student becomes a doctoral candidate.
- As soon thereafter as possible, but within two years of end-of-coursework, a dissertation proposal is presented to the committee for approval (see section 15).
- Within five years of becoming a candidate, the dissertation research is completed, the thesis is written, and a defense is scheduled with an examination committee (see section 16).

Section 1: Administration of the Ph.D. Program

1.1 The Faculty, the Dean, the Ph.D. Program Director, and Program Manager are responsible for policies and procedures regarding the Ph.D. Program.

- The Faculty approve changes and additions to the Ph.D. Policy.
 - Individual faculty members are expected to fulfill the responsibilities described in the Ph.D. Policy, including participation in teaching and research practica, advising doctoral students, participating in evaluation committees, serving on dissertation committees and contributing to the evaluation of students.
- The Dean approves admissions decisions (see section 2.1) and financial aid (see section 3.2).
- The Ph.D. Program Director (the Director) will be a member of the faculty appointed by the Dean to oversee the administration of the Program and to promote the development of the program.

1.2 Doctoral Committee

- The Doctoral Committee is a standing committee of Faculty and is chaired by the Doctoral Program Director
- The Doctoral Committee provides advice to the Dean and the Director on the administration of the program.
- The Dean will appoint faculty members to the Doctoral Committee on an annual basis.
- At least two (2) Ph.D. students will be asked to serve on the Doctoral Committee each year.

Section 2: Doctoral Admissions

2.1 The Dean admits students to the Ph.D. program, relying on the advice of the Director and Doctoral Admissions Committee.

- This committee is comprised of all members of the Doctoral programs committee and others who volunteer to participate in reviewing Ph.D. applicant's admissions material.

2.2 Applicants to the doctoral program are required to:

- Submit an application form including a statement about his/her academic and career plans, commitment to Information Science & Technology and commitment to research
- Provide an official copy of all post-secondary transcripts, showing that he/she holds at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college
- Take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and have the scores sent to Syracuse University. This is recommended, not required
- Take the TOEFL test if the applicant's native language is not English. This requirement is waived if the applicant has completed a post-secondary degree in English.

- Provide three letters of recommendation, preferably from faculty members familiar with the applicant's academic and scholarly work, focused on the experience, aptitude and training in research.

2.3 An applicant's suitability for the program will be judged based on the following considerations

- Abstract Reasoning: ability in both verbal and quantitative reasoning, as well as analytic writing, is essential.
- Commitment to Information Science & Technology: the applicant must be genuinely interested in this School's focus on information and people.
- Fit of interests to the School and its' research-active faculty.
- Commitment to research: the applicant must be interested in doing research as a major part of his/her professional activities.
- Appropriate motivation: this program makes heavy demands on the time and energy of the student. The student must have reasonable tolerance for the flexibility that this School feels is essential to the fruitful pursuit of understanding of information and its transfer among people.
- GRE test scores are expected to be greater than the 80th percentile on the verbal, quantitative and analytical sections. Special care is required in interpreting the GRE scores of applicants who have suffered educational deficiencies because of social, physical, or environmental circumstances and/or who lack proficiency in English. An applicant may include a description of such mitigating circumstances in his/her application form statement and provide as much additional evidence as possible of his/her academic potential.
- English ability: TOFEL test score must be greater than 650 (250 on the computer test). The applicant must demonstrate conversational ability in an interview and written ability in a sample of written English.
- Other potential contributions to the School.

2.4 An applicant who is admitted is expected to enroll as a full-time student

- An applicant who is admitted may defer acceptance for one year, after which the applicant must reapply.
- An admitted student is expected to actively engage in apprenticeship-type scholarship training in a face-to-face fashion, typically through the end of coursework.

2.5 An applicant who is not accepted may reapply.

2.6 Students who have left the program for any reason before graduating may reapply.

Section 3: Financial Support

3.1 It is the intent of the iSchool to award all students in satisfactory standing financial aid (stipend, benefits and tuition) during the first five years of their study, including summer funding for first three years. However, because of the limited availability of funds and the need to support both new and continuing students, support is not and cannot be guaranteed for any student.

- Awards generally require that the student work as a research or teaching assistant.
- Students are encouraged throughout the program to develop alternative sources of funding, through faculty, School or personally sponsored programs of research.
- Funding may be available past the fifth year, but decisions regarding such funding may be based on the needs of the iSchool rather than individual merit.

3.2 The Dean will make financial aid awards on the advice of the Director and Doctoral Committee.

- Awards will typically be made in the Spring semester.
- Student members of the Doctoral Committee will not take part in the discussion of financial aid awards.
- The Doctoral Committee will solicit from each student who applies for aid information about his/her needs, experience, abilities, current objectives, and the extent of outside funding, if applicable. In the case of new students, the results of the candidate's admissions process and his/her assessment of needs from the application will be employed.

3.3 Recommendations will be determined on merit, based on the multiple criteria that contribute to a student's merit.

- No attempt is made to specify the exact criteria of merit. The committee will negotiate a balance among diverse criteria.
- The rating given to the student at his/her most recent evaluation will be considered. A rating of unsatisfactory will result in lower priority in ranking.
- Other criteria that may be considered include potential for research; academic progress and experience; the student's tenure in the program, with priority inversely related to the extent of financial aid already received; the fit between the iSchool's needs and the abilities and academic interests of the student; and balance of support among new and continuing students.

Section 4: Advisor

4.1 Every student must have a faculty advisor.

- The advisor is the intermediary between the University (including the School of Information Studies) and the student. It is the advisor's responsibility to assist the student in planning a program of study and in orienting him/her to the formal and informal instructional and research programs of the School.
- A student is assigned an advisor when admitted into the program (Doctoral Form #1).
- A student may change advisors at any time by gaining the consent of the new advisor and filing Doctoral Form #2, which notifies the former advisor.

4.2 The student should receive guidance from the advisor about:

- Planning a program of study
- Planning a program of research and teaching practica
- Selecting committee members
- Choosing a dissertation topic
- Writing a formal dissertation proposal
- Writing the dissertation

- Other issues related to his/her academic program career planning

4.3 Any full-time, tenured or tenure-track member of the IST Faculty may serve as a student's advisor with the agreement of the student and the faculty member. This noted, every effort is made to be sure that the faculty member is research active.

- Other qualified individuals may serve as a student's advisor with the agreement of the student and the individual and approval of the PhD Program Director and the Graduate School.
- A faculty member may continue to serve as an advisor for one year after he or she has left the School, with the agreement of the student and the individual and approval of the Director. Such an arrangement should be approved only for a student who expects to defend his or her dissertation within the year.

Section 5: Program of Study (Sequence and Selection)

5.1 The student is expected to spend two to three years (depending upon his/her background) completing a plan of study, which includes coursework that is relevant to research preparation, research and teaching practica, and other educational experiences. The Program of Study should be seen as a living document, started in the first semester, and updated regularly throughout the program.

- The goal of the Program of study is to obtain (a) a comprehensive mastery of the methods and substance in the field of information studies and (b) the ability to synthesize productively diverse data, theories, and methods. Meeting this goal is the first requirement of the program.
- A student taking coursework is expected (though not required) to take two courses or seminars per semester as well as the teaching and research practica (see section 6).

5.2 A student's choice of courses and other activities should be discussed with the student's advisor.

- In choosing courses, a student taking coursework should give first consideration to the doctoral seminars offered by the iSchool.
- Students are encouraged to talk with their advisor about the total set of commitments being made in courses, practica, and other additional activities.

Section 6: Practicum in Research and Teaching

6.1 Students are required to complete a minimum of four research (IST 810) and four teaching (IST 840) practica.

- Research practica are two credits per, and the teaching practica is one credit per
- Typically, practica will be completed within the first four semesters of the student's program of study, not including summers.
- Practica must be completed before end-of-coursework (see section 10).

6.2 The Director (or another faculty member serving as the Research and Teaching Practicum Coordinator) will be assigned IST 810 and IST 840 as part of his/her teaching load. That faculty member will be responsible for:

- Consulting with students taking practica during registration or the first week of classes regarding appropriate research and teaching activities for the practicum.
- Arranging meetings and other experiences relevant to research and teaching apprenticeship for students enrolled in the practica.
- Assigning grades for the practica. The grades should reflect the evaluations of the faculty members with whom the student worked in research and teaching activities and the student's participation in other activities of the practicum.

6.3 Research practica (IST 810)

- Students taking a research practicum should register for two (2) credits of IST 810.
- A student taking a research practicum must be actively involved in a research project or projects with a faculty member throughout the term.
- The student and the research practicum supervisor should complete Doctoral Form #12 to record the plans for the practicum and #14 to record the evaluation.
- Research and research-related activities should be comparable in value and effort to at least a two-credit course.
- A student should ordinarily not take more than one research practicum with the same faculty member. The Director can approve an exception if the two practica are distinctly different projects.
- Students are expected to be continuously involved in research activities throughout their residency in the program. After all practicum requirements are met, the student and advisor will determine the student's research activities.

6.4 Teaching practica (IST 840)

- Students taking a teaching practicum should register for one (1) credit of IST 840.
- A student taking a teaching practicum will be assigned as a teaching apprentice to a faculty member or will teach a course under the oversight of a faculty member.
- The student and the teaching practicum supervisor should complete Doctoral Form #13 to record the plans for the practicum and #15 to record the evaluation.
- The teaching practicum should address the following objectives:
 - Improve the student's communication skills (if possible, by giving him/her increasingly sophisticated teaching responsibilities).
 - Give the student an understanding of a wide variety of subjects that are of value to information professionals.
 - Bring the student into contact with a number of faculty members in addition to those with whom the student otherwise has contact.
- The student's involvement should be comparable in value and effort to at least a one-credit course.
- Students teaching a course for the first time can fulfill two teaching practicum requirements.
- A student should not take more than one teaching practicum with the same faculty member (with the exception of teaching a course). The Director can approve an exception if the two practica are distinctly different teaching experiences.

6.5 If the student feels that research or teaching activities during a particular semester are not of educational value, he/she should discuss the situation with his/her advisor who will follow through with the Director.

Section 7: Curriculum and Course Catalog

7.1 The program is extremely flexible, with only 12 required practica and 18 required dissertation credits.

7.2 The program will offer at least nine credits of doctoral courses each semester to include:

- IST 810 and IST 840
- Two methods or seminar courses
- IST 999 (dissertation credits)

7.3 Refer to the [Graduate School Course Catalog](#) for more information.

Section 8: Annual Evaluation

8.1 Unless otherwise stated, the policies in this section apply only for active students who have not been admitted to candidacy (see section 13).

- After a student has been admitted into candidacy, the student's committee will determine the student's status in the program and report it annually to the Director. It is recommended that candidates meet at least once a year with their committee to discuss their progress in the past semester and plans for the coming semester.

8.2 The major purpose of the annual evaluation meeting is to provide the student with the Faculty's collective assessment of his/her progress in the program and of his/her plans for the following academic year.

8.3 The student will schedule an annual evaluation for his or herself in the Spring semester and for each continuing student in the Fall semester.

- In extraordinary circumstances, a student, a student's advisor, or the Director can call an evaluation meeting at any time.
- For first-year students who are not progressing satisfactorily in the opinion of members of the evaluation committee (see section 8.6), an early evaluation meeting should be scheduled to provide the student with a greater opportunity to react to the evaluation and to improve his/her performance.
- The Director can schedule additional evaluation meetings for a student at a time recommended by a student's evaluation committee.
- A student who expects to end coursework (see section 10) in the current academic year may combine the annual evaluation and end-of-coursework meetings, with the prior approval of the Director.

8.4 It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to arrange the evaluation meeting, to ensure that the members of the committee are informed of the meeting and to obtain their input for the meeting.

- An active student who fails to arrange an evaluation meeting for two consecutive academic years will be considered to be in inactive status (see section 9) and not in good standing in the program, as of one year after the date of the last annual evaluation. The Director and the student's advisor may set requirements for the student's return to active status.
- The evaluation should not be scheduled if there are missing grades older than the current semester.

8.5 At least two weeks before the evaluation meeting, the student will:

- Prepare and make available to all members of the committee a portfolio consisting of a copy of any important papers or projects completed since the previous evaluation meeting.
- Prepare and distribute to all meeting attendees a written statement including at a minimum:
 - Brief biographical background including previous education, degrees, institutions, and dates.
 - A listing of all graduate-level courses relevant to the Ph.D. program including course title, instructor, date and grade. If the course title is not informative, a short description should be given.
 - A list of all presentations made and publications submitted.
 - A description of all practicum experiences.
 - Plans for the future, including courses, research ideas and timetables.
 - A self-assessment of what skills and knowledge have been learned or acquired and what still needs to be pursued.
- Confirm that all participants have been informed of the meeting and will either attend or submit letters.

8.6 The following people will take part in a student's evaluation:

- **Required:** these individuals must be in attendance. If any of these individuals are unavailable, the meeting should be rescheduled.
 - The student
 - The student's advisor
 - The Director
- **Strongly Recommended:** these faculty are expected to attend but may write a letter in lieu of active participation in the student's evaluation.
 - Any member of the IST Faculty who taught the student in a course or directed the student in a research or teaching practicum since the student's last evaluation (or, in the case of new students, since the student began his/her program of study).
 - Any member of the IST Faculty who oversaw the student's work as a research, graduate or teaching assistant.
- **Invited:** these faculty may attend or submit a letter for the student's evaluation at their discretion.
 - Research and Teaching Practicum Coordinator
 - Chair of any committee on which student served since student's last evaluation
 - Non-IST Faculty who taught the student in a course since the student's last evaluation (or, in the case of new students, since the student began his/her program of study).
 - If in the opinion of the student's advisor and the Director a faculty member has not been invited whose opinion is crucial to the evaluation, the evaluation meeting should be rescheduled to solicit that faculty member's input.

8.7 Conduct of the meeting

- The student's advisor chairs the meeting.
- Part of the meeting may take place without the student present.
- The student should be present when a verbal summary statement of his/her progress to date and his/her potential for completion are reviewed.
- The format of the meeting will allow each person (including the student) to seek clarification, and to support or rebut the statements made.

8.8 The student's advisor will take the minutes of the meeting.

- The minutes will contain the date of the meeting, the names of those present and the faculty's assessment of the student's status in the program. If the student's progress is judged not satisfactory, the reasons for this judgment must be included in the minutes of the meeting.
- The minutes should include the major points presented by those attending and the joint advice of the faculty for the student. Major disagreements and rebuttals by faculty or the student should also be included.
- A copy of the minutes will be given to the student.
- A copy of the minutes will be included in the student's permanent file.
- The student's advisor must file Doctoral Form #3 to record the committee's decision.

8.9 On the basis of the prepared statements and the general discussion, the faculty present will determine by majority vote the student's status in the program. They can decide that:

- The student's progress is satisfactory and the student is considered "in good standing" in the program.
- The student's progress is questionable. The student is not in good standing, but may remain in the program.
- The student's progress is not acceptable. The student will not be allowed to remain in the program.

8.10 The evaluation committee may recommend an additional evaluation meeting for the student before the next regular meeting (see section 8.3).

8.11 Standards for evaluation

- No attempt is made to spell out the exact standards that the student must meet. Each faculty member must apply standards he/she believes to be appropriate to ensure that only high-quality researchers and teachers will be awarded Ph.D.s in this program.
- The following criteria should be considered minimal:
 - The student must be doing well in doctoral-level coursework. He or she must maintain a 3.0 grade point average
 - The student should have no more than three credits (one course) incomplete over six months old. (Incomplete in this context refers to work not completed in the time originally specified for the course or project and includes both courses and other non-course activities).
 - The student must be able to work productively with faculty and other students in coursework, research and teaching.
- In his/her first year a student must demonstrate:
 - The ability to understand the methods and substance of the field of information studies.
 - The ability to communicate his/her understanding to other people.
 - The ability to do research under supervision.
- After the first year, the student must proceed at a reasonable pace in demonstrating:
 - An accomplished mastery of the basic methods and substance of the field of information studies (culminating in an official ending of his /her program of study);
 - The ability to synthesize productively diverse data, theories, and methods (culminating in his/her own dissertation proposal);
 - The conceptual ability to develop and defend an original research proposal (also culminating in his/her own dissertation proposal);
 - The ability to carry out all stages of the research process independently (culminating in his/her own dissertation).

8.12 Every attempt should be made to give students an opportunity to improve their status. Ordinarily, students should not be asked to leave the program until they have been "not in good standing" for at least one semester.

- Student will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the program voluntarily rather than be "dropped."

Section 9: Inactive Status / Leave of Absence

9.1 A student may take a leave from active participation in the program (see Academic Rules, Section 15) by obtaining the permission from his or her evaluation committee at a regular or special evaluation meeting.

- If the student is determined to be not in good standing at this meeting, the committee may set conditions that must be met by the student before the student can return to active status.

9.2 An inactive student is still in the program.

- Annual evaluation meetings are not required for inactive students, so section 8.4 does not apply.
- All time regulations remain in effect and the student is responsible for meeting deadlines as they may occur.

9.3 A student may return to active status by notifying the Director of his or her intention to return and by registering

- If conditions were placed on the student's return, the student will notify the Director and the student's advisor of how these conditions were met. The Director and advisor will agree that the conditions were met before accepting the student's return to active status.

9.4 A student may not remain in inactive status longer than thirty (30) months from the date inactive status was granted.

- Petitions for extending this deadline will not be approved except in the most extreme and extenuating circumstances.
- Any student who has not regained active status before the end of the thirty-month period will be considered to have voluntarily withdrawn from the program.

Section 10: End of Coursework

10.1 When a student has completed his or her program of study and developed a comprehensive mastery of his or her field, he or she may apply to end coursework.

- There is no specific number of credits required to demonstrate the mastery and ability described in section 5.1. However, students must meet at a minimum the University credit-hour requirements in section 11
- Students must make their first attempt at ending coursework by the end of their third year in the program. If a student does not successfully end coursework by the end of the third year, the annual evaluation committee should carefully review the causes for their lack of progress and realistically assess the likelihood of their finishing.
- Students must successfully end coursework by the end of their 5th year in the program.

10.2 The purpose of the end-of-coursework meeting is both retrospective (certification and acceptance of a program of study) and prospective (advice on defining or refining a dissertation topic).

10.3 To end coursework, a student's program of study and the student's comprehensive mastery of the field must be reviewed and certified as adequate by a committee comprising of at least the Director and three IST faculty members who are familiar with the student's work.

- Individuals from outside the School may be included on the end of coursework committee with the agreement of the student and the individual and the approval of the Director.

10.4 At least two weeks before the end-of-coursework meeting, the student will:

- File Doctoral Form #4 to formally establish the committee.
 - As membership in the committee changes, Doctoral Form #4 should be refiled.
- File Doctoral Form #5 to schedule the meeting. This should be done as soon as possible; usually way earlier than two weeks before
- Prepare and make available to all members of the committee a portfolio demonstrating his/her competencies, masteries, and abilities.
 - The portfolio should be appropriately organized with a table of contents and introduction, including a summary of the contents.
 - The portfolio should include:
 1. The products of courses, research projects, and other activities such as teaching and work during the student's program of study in the iSchool, and
 2. Brief descriptions of the activities, including coursework that contributed to the student's education.
- Prepare and distribute to all meeting attendees a written statement including at a minimum:
 - A statement arguing the student's comprehensive mastery of the methods and substance of his or her field.
 - A prospectus describing the intended topic and methods for the dissertation (note though that the end-of-coursework meeting is not a defense of the prospectus).
- Confirm that all participants have been informed of the meeting and will attend.

10.5 Conduct of the meeting

- The student's advisor chairs the meeting.
- Part of the meeting may take place without the student present.

10.6 The student's advisor will take the minutes of the meeting.

- The minutes will contain the date of the meeting, the names of those present and the committee's decision regarding the certification of the program of study. If the committee does not certify the program of study, the minutes must include the reasons for the decision and an identification of those courses or other educational experiences remaining to be taken.
- A copy of the minutes will be given to the student.
- A copy of the minutes will be included in the student's permanent file.
- The student's advisor must file Doctoral Form #6 to record the committee's decision.

10.7 Certification of completion of a program of study will be given, when, in the opinion of the committee:

- The student has demonstrated a comprehensive mastery of the methods and substance of the field of information studies.
- The student has demonstrated the ability to synthesize diverse data, theories, and methods.
- The student is competent in the process of research through supervised participation in research projects.
- The student is ready to proceed without further formal coursework in the preparation of a dissertation proposal.

10.8 A student whose program of study is not certified may schedule another end-of- coursework meeting.

Section 11: Credit Hours

11.1 Credit-hour requirements are not the primary basis of the decision that a student has completed an adequate program of study. That decision is based on the student's demonstrated competency as well as credit-hour requirements.

11.2 A minimum of 78 credit hours are required: 60 credit hours of coursework and 18 credit hours of dissertation work.

11.3 There is no time limit for including courses in a student's program.

11.4 Up to 50 percent of relevant coursework credits (30 credits) may be transferred from outside Syracuse University. The other 50 percent must be taken within Syracuse University. (Academic Rules, Section 20).

- A completed masters degree that is relevant to the Ph.D. study counts for 30 transfer credits regardless of the actual number taken.
- There is no time limit on credits transferred.
- Transfer credits may be accepted regardless of the grade if they are part of a completed Master's degree program. Transfer credits not part of a completed Master's degree program must have a grade of "B" or better. (Academic Rules, Section 20).

11.5 A graduate course / credit can count for two degrees, therefore it can only be used twice within the University.

- If you receive a Masters degree and a Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) from Syracuse University, be aware which courses you have already used towards those degrees. A class that has been counted towards both degrees cannot be used towards a Ph.D. degree.

Section 12: Registration and GRD 998

12.1 A student must be registered full time (9 credits) for fall and spring in the program

- Once a student has completed coursework and dissertation credits (IST 999) he or she must be continually registered. Failure to do so will result in the student being discontinued by the University.

12.2 A student needs to register for GRD 998, a zero credit, zero dollar "Degree in Progress" placeholder that will maintain student status in the system.

- You cannot take "credits of GRD 998" as it is a placeholder
- GRD 998 is a Graduate School course
- You do not need to register for GRD 998 if you are registered for a class

12.3 In order to submit a diploma request, a student must be registered.

Section 13: The Comprehensive Examination and Candidacy

13.1 The Graduate School rules refer to a qualifying exam (Academic Rules, Section 32).

- When a School certifies that the student has passed the qualifying exam, it certifies that the student's knowledge of the field is sufficiently current.
- Upon passing the qualifying exam, the student becomes a doctoral candidate and is ABD (All But Dissertation) (Academic Rules Section 32).

13.2 Because the iSchool does not require that students take a comprehensive exam, the Dean will certify to the Graduate School that a student has successfully completed the qualifying exam when the student's committee has certified that the student has completed an adequate program of study and successfully passed End of Coursework (see Section 10).

13.3 A student must become ABD within 7 years of matriculating into the program. Failure to do so will require the student to register for GRD 991 each fall and spring semester until ABD status is achieved. If the students does not register for GRD 991, he or she will be withdrawn from the program.

Section 14: Masters of Philosophy in Information Science & Technology

14.1 The degree of Masters of Philosophy in Information Science & Technology (M.Phil.) may be awarded to students who:

- Successfully end coursework (see section 10).
- Submit a Masters Thesis and have it accepted.

14.2 The M.Phil. may only be awarded to students who are matriculated for the Ph.D. in Information Science & Technology.

14.3 The M.Phil. is not a prerequisite for the Ph.D. in Information Science & Technology.

14.4 The M.Phil. may not be used as transfer credit under section 14.4.

14.5 The end-of-coursework committee (see section 10.3) will determine the acceptability of the Masters Thesis.

14.6 Students whose Masters Thesis is not accepted may submit another thesis.

Section 15: Preparation and Defense of Dissertation Proposal

15.1 A student must prepare and defend a dissertation proposal.

- The student is expected to defend a proposal within two semesters of completing their end of coursework.
- The proposal must be accepted within two years of end of coursework.
- If a proposal is not accepted within two years, the student must redo end-of- coursework when the proposal is presented.

15.2 The dissertation proposal must contain: (a) an introduction to the problem being studied, (b) a review of the relevant literature, and (c) a description of the methodology to be used. In most cases, these will correspond to the first three chapters of the dissertation.

15.3 The dissertation proposal must be reviewed, and formally accepted, at a proposal meeting, by a committee consisting of at least four members, of which three must be IST faculty.

- Students are encouraged to include a non-IST member on the committee. This member could be faculty from another department or School at Syracuse University, or an acknowledged expert working in government or industry or at another University.
- The dissertation proposal cannot be scheduled during the period when faculty are not on academic year appointments. This means that no proposals can be held during holiday breaks or summer.

15.4 At least two weeks before the proposal defense the student must:

- Schedule a proposal meeting with his/her committee and announce the meeting.
- File Doctoral Form #7.
- Distribute an abstract of the proposal to all IST faculty members, all resident Ph.D. students, and interested Master's students.
- Provide each member of the committee and the Director with a copy of the proposal and upload a digital copy to Blackboard.

15.5 Conduct of the meeting

- The student's advisor chairs the meeting.
- Other faculty members and students are encouraged to attend and participate in the proposal meeting.

15.6 The student's advisor will take the minutes of the meeting.

- The minutes will contain the date of the meeting, the names of those present and the committee's decision regarding the acceptance of the proposal. If the committee does not accept the proposal, the minutes must include the reasons for the decision. If the proposal is accepted with modification, the minutes must record details of the required revisions.
- A copy of the minutes will be given to the student.
- A copy of the minutes will be included in the student's permanent file.
- The student's advisor must file Doctoral Form #8 to record the committee's decision.

15.7 The committee must decide by majority vote whether:

- The proposal as written is accepted.
- The proposal with modifications is accepted.
 - A detailed list of the modifications needed to be acceptable must be provided to the candidate, and a copy placed in their folder.
- The proposal is not accepted.
 - A detailed explanation of the issues resulting in the non-acceptance should be placed in the candidate's folder.

15.8 If a proposal is not accepted, the student may submit another proposal.

- The current members of the committee, including the supervisor, are not obligated to continue on their committee, though they may opt to do so.
- If the second proposal is not accepted, the student is not allowed to continue in the program.

Section 16: Dissertation Research and Final Oral Exam (Dissertation Defense)

16.1 The third and final formal requirement of the program is that a candidate will research, write and defend a dissertation (Academic Rules, Section 32).

- The candidate should work closely with his/her advisor in doing the dissertation research and writing the dissertation. He/she should consult, as necessary, with members of his/her committee and other faculty members.
- A dissertation must be defended within five years of certification of the qualifying exam (see section 13) (Academic Rules, Section 32). If the dissertation is not defended within five years, the student must redo end-of-coursework before the dissertation is defended.
- The student will also be required to enroll in 1 credit of GRD 998 (see Section 17), each fall and spring semester until the completion of the doctoral degree. Failure to do so will result in the student being withdrawn from the program (Academic Rules, Section 32)

16.2 The dissertation must contain: (a) an introduction to the problem being studied, (b) a review of the relevant literature, (c) a description of the methodology to be used, (d) a review of the data collection and its analysis, model construction and validation, or specifics of the research conducted, and (e) a discussion of the findings and outcomes, linking this to relevant literature and suggesting implications. The exact form of the dissertation, number of chapters, and structure of the elements are to be decided in consultation with your advisor.

16.3 The dissertation must be reviewed and formally accepted at an oral examination by an Examination Committee (Academic Rules, Section 32).

- The Examination Committee consists of five or six members:
 - The student's committee (as noted in 15.3)
 - An external examiner from outside of IST, chosen by the student's advisor and the Director
 - An oral examination chair, who should be a faculty member from another department or School at Syracuse University (see also the academic rules from the Graduate School)
 - The external examiner and the oral examination chair may be served by one person
- The oral examination cannot be scheduled until the student's advisor and at least one other member of the student's committee, or the Director, have certified the "dissertation is acceptable for the purpose of examination". (Academic Rules, Section 32).
- The dissertation defense cannot be scheduled during a time when the faculty are not on academic year appointments. This means that no defenses can be held during holiday breaks or summer.
- Should the candidate miss this date, the defense must be rescheduled.
- Schedule the exam with their examination committee and announce the meeting.
- At least 22 days before the final oral examination the student must provide each member of the examination committee with a reading copy of the dissertation.
- The reading copies of the dissertation should be in the format required by the Graduate School.
- The dissertation must be complete in all substantive ways, including chapters, appendices, bibliography, title, footnotes and table of contents and should adhere to the formatting standards of the University.
- Acknowledgements should be omitted.
- Should the candidate miss this date, the defense must be rescheduled.
- Schedule the exam with their examination committee and announce the meeting.
- Distribute an abstract of the dissertation to all IST Faculty members, all resident Ph.D. students, and interested master's students.

16.3.1 A go/no-go decision has no bearing on the outcome of the defense; it is only an indication that a defense is appropriate

16.3.2 A defense will be held only if all members agree to do so: missing votes are treated as a no-go decision.

16.3.3 At least 14 days before the final exam, the student must schedule the exam with their examination committee and announce the meeting.

16.3.3.1 File Doctoral Form #9

16.3.3.2 Distribute an abstract of the dissertation to all IST Faculty members, all resident Ph.D. students, and interested Masters and undergraduate students

16.3.3.3 Make one additional copy available for viewing.

16.4 Conduct of the meeting

- The chairperson appointed by the Graduate School chairs the meeting (Academic Rules, Section 32).

- The final oral exam is open to all interested faculty members and students. They may participate in the examination.
- The external and internal examiner will lead the questioning.
- All members of the committee, other than the advisor, are expected to be involved in the questioning of the student.

16.5 The student's advisor will take the minutes of the meeting.

- The minutes will contain the date of the meeting, the names of those present and the committee's decision regarding the acceptance of the dissertation. If the committee does not accept the dissertation, the minutes must include the reasons for the decision. If the dissertation is accepted with modification, the minutes must record details of the required revisions.
- A copy of the minutes will be given to the student.
- A copy of the minutes will be included in the student's permanent file.
- The student's advisor must file Doctoral Form #10 to record the committee's decision.
- The external and internal examiner are to rate the defense and dissertation document as:
 - (a) excellent (of similar levels of quality as the top 20% of such efforts)
 - (b) satisfactory (of similar levels of quality as 60% of such efforts)
 - (c) weak (of similar levels of quality with lower 20% of such efforts)
 And report this, with summary comments as to why, to the director of the doctoral program within seven (7) days following the date of the defense
 - Within 21 days of the defense, the director of the doctoral program will provide a summary letter to the student and their advisor, reflecting the examiner's rating and comments.
 - The examination committee must decide by majority vote (per Academic Rules Section 32) whether:
 - The dissertation is accepted as written (pass)
 - The dissertation with minor revisions (editorial) is accepted (pass)
 - The dissertation with major revisions (substantive) is accepted (pass)
 - The dissertation is not accepted (not pass).
- A student can attempt a second defense if the dissertation is not accepted.

16.6 All members of the examination committee, including the student's advisor, vote on acceptance of the dissertation.

16.7 If the dissertation is accepted, the student must provide the School of Information Studies and the University Library with bound copies of the complete thesis after all of the changes and corrections have been made.

- The School's copy will become the property of the School and will be made available to all interested students and members of the faculty.

16.8 If the committee finds that, as a result of the defense, revisions are required, a deadline must be set by the committee for the student to complete.

- The deadline for these revisions must be less than 1 year from the defense date.
- Failure to submit the revisions by the deadline means the dissertation is not accepted (and the student cannot continue after a second non-acceptance, per 16.6).

Section 17: Exceeding Time to Degree Requirements and GRD 991

17.1 The Graduate School follows for a policy of charging doctoral students who are beyond established time limits for achieving ABD status or completing dissertations (see Academic Rules, Section 32)

- Doctoral students must achieve ABD status within 7 years of matriculation.
- Doctoral students must successfully complete and defend their dissertation within 5 years of achieving ABD.

17.2 A student who does not meet these requirements must enroll in one credit hour of GRD 991 for the fall and spring semesters until their milestone is achieved.

17.3 If you fail to register for GRD 991 for a given term, you will be withdrawn from the program.

Section 18: Voluntary Withdrawal

18.1 A student may voluntarily withdraw from the Ph.D. program at any time by informing the Ph.D. Program Director, his or her advisor and filing the required University paperwork.

- Withdrawal terminates a student's relationship with the School, and results in the cessation of any benefits being received from the School.
- A student who has withdrawn may reapply for admission to the program.

Section 19: Participation on Committees; Ph.D. Cohort Mentor

19.1 Students are encouraged to take an active part in the life of the School and to serve on School committees during their residencies.

19.2 Ph.D. students who would like to serve on committees or as Ph.D. student representative to the Faculty Meetings should express their interest early in the Fall semester.

- If more than one student expresses interest in a position, the representative will be chosen by a vote of the Ph.D. students.

19.3 At the end of the first year, one student from Cohort 1 will volunteer to serve as the Ph.D. mentor for the next year's incoming Cohort. The Ph.D. cohort mentor will serve as a resource for the new cohort and serve as an informal point of contact to support their transition to doctoral studies.

Section 20: Records

20.1 The PhD Program uses Blackboard to maintain electronic records for doctoral students.

20.2 A student's records are available for examination by the student at any time, with the exception that the student does not have access to letters of recommendation written for him/her if confidentiality was guaranteed to the writer.

- Such recommendations will be filed separately from the student's other records so as not to interfere with the student's ready access to other records.

20.3 It is the student's responsibility to see that his or her records are up to date and Accurate.

- Errors in the records should be brought to the attention of the Director or the Graduate Academic Advisor for correction.

Section 21: Full Time Status

21.1 Syracuse University considers you a full-time student, and the Registrar can confirm your full-time status, if you meet one of the three criteria, below, for the semester in which verification of full-time status is requested. Your status is used for a variety of purposes, including the determination of federal loan eligibility and/or repayment.

- You are registered full-time by taking 9 credits in the fall or spring
- You hold an appointment as a graduate assistant or fellow and are registered
- You are engaged, at a level equivalent to full time study, in actively working on your dissertation

21.2 Most students who have obtained ABD and have earned 78 credits will need to get a Certification of Full Time Status form filled out and signed every semester until they submit a diploma request. This form is required by the Slutzker Center.

Section 22: Health Insurance

22.1 Syracuse University requires every full time, matriculated student to have health insurance coverage.

22.2 You must be able to provide proof of insurance. If you have access to qualifying health insurance already, you may waive the SU plan. Qualifying coverage is:

- Provided by a U.S. based insurer
- Covers emergency and non-emergency services in the Syracuse area
- Compliant with all aspects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

22.3 Please visit healthinsurance.syr.edu for more information

Section 23: Auditing a Course

23.1 Auditing means that you attend and/or participate in a class without earning credit

23.2 Audited classes do not meet any degree requirements and aren't counted towards enrollment status.

23.3 You may audit a class with approval of the instructor, and in consultation with your advisor.

Section 24: Future Professoriate Program (FPP)

24.1 The Graduate School offers the FPP, a structured professional development experience that prepares graduate students to be future faculty members

24.2 iSchool Ph.D. students should enroll in FPP for their first two years.

24.3 Students are eligible for stipends both years for meeting participation requirements

24.4 Please visit [Future Professoriate Program](#) for more information

Section 25: Application of these Policies

25.1 These policies apply to all Ph.D. students in the School of Information Studies who first register after 8 November 2002.

25.2 Students who first registered before 8 November 2002 are subject to the policies in effect when they first registered.

- Students may elect to be subject to the current policies by filing a written request with the Ph.D. Program Director (This election cannot be reversed).

Forms

1. Assignment of initial advisor
2. Change of advisor
3. Evaluation team report
4. Committee members
5. Meeting to end program of study
6. End of program of study results

7. Scheduling a proposal defense
8. Proposal defense results
9. Scheduling a thesis defense
10. Thesis defense results
11. IST 810—Research practicum plan
12. IST 840—Teaching practicum plan
13. IST 810—Research practicum evaluation
14. IST 840—Research practicum evaluation