ODU MLIS Student Handbook

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Admissions

Applicants may hold a bachelor's degree in any field. Applicants to the School Library Concentration must have a teaching license. Other applicants interested in school library licensure but who do not have a teaching license, may be advised into additional coursework and testing.

Admission Deadlines

- New students are admitted twice each year and may begin in the fall, spring, or summer semesters.
- Deadline for Summer/Fall admissions is April 1.
- Deadline for Spring admissions is November 1.

Application Requirements

- A 500-word essay addressing how this degree will forward the applicant’s pursuit of lifelong learning
- Transcripts for all post-bacc coursework with an undergrad GPA of 3.0*
- Application to the Graduate School
- Current resume
- If the applicant’s primary language is not English, they must submit a current score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) that meets the University's current standard

*GRE or MAT scores are NOT required but may be requested.

Provisional Admissions

Faculty may waive some admissions requirements for a student whose application otherwise shows promise for success. Provisional admissions requires a 3.25 GPA for the first 12 credits in MLIS coursework. After 12 credits of coursework, provisional status may be lifted. During the provisional period, faculty will monitor student progress prior to registration and will communicate any concerns about the student’s status. In the event a student's GPA is not 3.25 after completion of 12 credits, the student may be dismissed from the program. This dismissal will be documented with Form G8.

Communications

Students are expected to use ODU email or Blackboard for all official, written communications with ODU faculty, staff, and offices. MLIS students are expected to check ODU email regularly, as faculty will use email for important information, questions, and alerts regarding student progress and status in the program.
Students are also encouraged to use the MLIS Program’s Blackboard organization space, the program’s website, Facebook, and Twitter to stay in touch with one another and the program faculty and staff.

**Attendance**

Courses in the MLIS Program are online and asynchronous but are NOT correspondence courses. Students are expected to be engaged throughout the semester and should consult the syllabus, schedule, assignments, and rubrics for participation expectations.

Students are advised to check the university academic calendar for important dates such as drop/add and withdrawal dates. Students must request a withdrawal, or drop/add if applicable. Failure to log in to an online class does not result in an automatic drop; tuition and fees will remain charged to a student’s account.

Students who are experiencing academic difficulty or issues due to health, family, or other life circumstances should communicate with the instructor, the program advisor, and/or the Graduate Program Director. Students may withdraw from class after the official withdrawal date and up to the last day of classes in a semester but must provide documentation and complete the Permission to Withdraw After Deadline form.

**Transfers**

Old Dominion University’s transfer policy provides the following guidelines:

- No more than 12 credit hours may be transferred.
- 51% of a degree must be completed with ODU coursework.
- No courses will transfer from another ODU degree.
- Transfer courses must be approved by the Graduate Program Director (GPD).
- Only graduate courses transfer to a graduate degree.

The MLIS Program has further guidelines:

- All coursework must be from the 5 years prior to application to the program.
- All students must take Foundations of Library and Information Studies (LIBS 608) at ODU; a foundations course from another program will NOT transfer.
- All transfer courses are subject to approval from the GPD and faculty.
- Only courses with a grade of B or better will be accepted for transfer.

Students are responsible for:

- Requesting consideration for course transfer in writing to the GPD.
- Providing an official transcript.
- Providing copies of course descriptions and/or syllabi when requested.
Continuance

Students must earn at least a B minus in all coursework and maintain at least a 3.0 GPA in the MLIS Program overall. Courses in which a student earns less than a B minus must be repeated in order to count for the degree. A student whose overall GPA falls below 3.0 may be suspended or dismissed from the program. This decision is made in consultation with faculty and the student will be notified in writing of the decision. Students are expected to follow the procedures outlined in the Graduate Catalog to appeal a dismissal or apply for reinstatement following suspension.

Students who interrupt their studies for one or more semesters should consult with the program advisor or GPD about their plan of study and return to the program. Following multiple or lengthy separation, a) courses that are more than 8 years old will not count toward a degree, b) students may be required to re-apply to the program.

Program Policies

Plans of Study

A Plan of Study provides a road map for completing program requirements in a timely manner that meets the needs of an individual student. Students will be advised into initial courses and preliminary Plan of Study following admissions. A formal plan of study should be filed with the signature of the GPD when a student completes 12 credit hours. Changes to this Plan of Study are the student’s responsibility and should be made in consultation with the program advisor or GPD.

Core Classes

Students in the MLIS Program are expected to complete the following core courses:

**LIBS 608. Foundations of Library and Information Science. 3 Credits.**
This course provides social, cultural, and historical perspectives on libraries and librarianship. The purpose, functions, and processes of information and library science are explored. Current types of libraries and information agencies are explored including certification and licensure for various specialties. Legal, ethical, advocacy, and economic policies, trends, and positions are addressed.

**LIBS 658. Knowledge Resources: Planning, Selecting & Managing Collections. 3 Credits.**
Examines the concepts and issues related to the lifecycle of recorded knowledge and information including emerging technologies. Addresses fundamentals of planning, selecting, analyzing, managing, and developing collections and technology resources for diverse communities.

**LIBS 674. Management and Leadership in Library and Information Studies. 3 Credits.**
An examination of the critical issues concerning the leadership and management of a library. Students
will explore the issues involved in building library programs to include considerations of physical space, budgetary decisions, and personnel.

**LIBS 677. Knowledge Organization and Access. 3 Credits.**
Describes the fundamentals whereby library materials are uniformly described and made available through recognized cataloging, processing, organizing and accessing of materials. In this course, students will develop the ability to apply and adapt the principles of classifying and cataloging, and will understand how these fundamental skills fit into the broader area of technical processing and how they support the principles of services in the library. Prerequisite: graduate standing.

**Professional Conference Attendance**
Professional engagement is a value of the program and an important aspect of becoming an information professional. As a part of the LIBS 608 Foundations course, students are required to attend one day of a professional conference, preferably a state or regional conference organized by a professional LIS association. When possible, students are encouraged to attend a conference with faculty and classmates. Information about relevant conferences will be shared in LIBS 608.

**Summer Institute**
The Summer Institute is an annual event during the ODU summer session in which the MLIS Program brings together students, alumni, local and regional practitioners, and experts from the field. It is a multi-day professional development and networking opportunity for all. The institute includes speakers, concurrent sessions, breakouts, keynotes, and other activities. Typically before the institute begins for the whole group, there is a day reserved for a pre-conference for MLIS students to attend during which they may meet with faculty and other students.

Students are required to attend the Summer Institute at least once during the MLIS Program, though they are encouraged to attend every year when time and resources allow. To fulfill this requirement, students may attend a single day of the institute, excluding the pre-conference, which does not count toward attendance.

**ePortfolios**
Students will complete an ePortfolio that is evaluated at the end of their coursework and generally before they begin their internship. The ePortfolio serves as the program’s comprehensive exam. Students are asked to select artifacts from completed assignments and provide evidence and reflection regarding how they have attained the MLIS Program’s Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). The ePortfolio is also designed to showcase a student’s professional accomplishments and aspirations. Students include a current resume, a statement of philosophy, and a curation of professional resources relevant to their future careers. The ePortfolio is evaluated by faculty using a rubric provided to students. For the completion of their ePortfolio, students are encouraged to save their work, assignments, and other
materials in cloud storage. The university provides students with access to Google Drive for purposes such as these.

Internships

Completion of a 160-hour internship is a requirement for all graduates of the MLIS Program. After meeting eligibility requirements, students are placed in an appropriate information setting, aligned to their personal and professional goals. The internship is an opportunity to focus on learning experiences and authentic professional engagement alongside other professionals in the field. During the internship experience, students document their progress toward meeting their goals and reflect on their personal and professional growth. Additionally, they develop and plan a project developed to measure impact for data-driven decision making.

Students pursuing a certification for School Library Media may have additional requirements for the internship.

School Librarianship

Students seeking an endorsement or an initial teaching license in library media have specific requirements related to coursework, internship, and other requirements from the Virginia Department of Education. Students are strongly advised to seek advising and pay attention to deadlines and requirements of particular school divisions. The Darden College of Education and Professional Studies has Memos of Understanding (MOUs) with many Virginia school divisions with eligibility for tuition discounts. Students must be employed continuously with the school division and should inquire about additional details from their division.

Independent Studies

LIBS 697 Independent Study in Library Science is available for special topics and can be taken for 1-3 credit hours. Students are responsible for a) proposing the study to a faculty member who agrees to serve as the instructor and b) working with the faculty member to develop an approved syllabus with course objectives, readings, schedule, and major deliverables. A request must be submitted to the GPD for scheduling.

Grades

Students should consult course syllabi for information about how grades are assigned. Grades are posted and available in LeoOnline at the end of each semester. Questions about grades should be directed to the instructor. Grades are assigned points and a grade point average (GPA) is calculated. https://www.odu.edu/academics/academic-records/grades/gpa-calculator

The MLIS Program uses the following scale for assigning final letter grades:
Many courses and assignments in the program allow students to submit drafts for instructor feedback. Students are encouraged to submit work for this formative assessment and to review and comment on classmate drafts.

**Incomplete Grades**

A grade of Incomplete or ‘I’ may be assigned for incomplete work in a course. Students must request an Incomplete from the instructor and an ‘I’ will be assigned only with instructor approval. A plan to complete missing work should be developed with the instructor and is the responsibility of the student. An "I" and a plan for completion may be negotiated in an exceptional case beyond a student's control, such as illness, when substantial time and progress has been made toward completion of the course. In the event that coursework is not completed and a letter grade is not given by the instructor at the end of the semester following the assignment of an ‘I’ grade, the grade automatically converts to an ‘F’.

Students are referred to the Graduate Catalog for more information, including detailed policies regarding Withdrawals and Incompletes.

[https://www.odu.edu/academics/academic-records/grades/incompletes-withdraws-zgrades](https://www.odu.edu/academics/academic-records/grades/incompletes-withdraws-zgrades)

**Course Delivery**

Courses in the MLIS Program are delivered in an online, asynchronous format. However, students should be aware of the following synchronous and in-person requirements or expectations.

**Office Hours**

Faculty will post regular online office hours in the syllabus and the course. Office hours are optional for students, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. Students are encouraged to attend.
Partner and Group Work/Presentations

Library and information professionals do not work in isolation. Collaboration is a core value of the program and the profession. Most courses in the MLIS Program have projects that need to be completed with a partner or group. Students are expected to find the time and means to complete work with their classmates. Additionally, there may be synchronous class presentations that students need to schedule. Presentations are also recorded to accommodate classmate attendance.

Practicum Experiences

Most courses in the MLIS program include some sort of observation or practical experience in a library or information workplace. Students are expected to identify the sites for these practicums and negotiate access that fits their schedule. Students experiencing difficulty should consult with the instructor as soon as possible.

LiveText

LiveText is an accountability management system required by the MLIS Program; this online application provides evidence of meeting standards for accreditation purposes. Accreditation of the University, the College, and specific programs is essential, as academic communities, employers, and other constituents recognize it as evidence of quality. LiveText is purchased by the student once while enrolled in the program. The online application is available for student use while registered and enrolled at Old Dominion University and for one year following graduation. It will be used in several courses, for student teaching or internships, and for the ePortfolio. More information can be found at https://www.odu.edu/oce/teacher-education/resources/livetext

Graduation

Students must successfully complete:

- 30 credit hours; no courses with less than a B minus may be used for graduation.
- RCR Training
- Summer Institute
- ePortfolio
- Internship

Students are advised to apply for graduation at least six months before they plan to graduate and must complete the university’s Graduate Assessment Survey.

Students who wish to participate in May or December commencement ceremonies are advised to pay attention to university deadlines to apply and get tickets for family members. August graduates may participate in the December graduation.
Degrees post to transcripts several weeks after graduation. Students requesting transcripts may indicate if they desire to wait for transcripts showing degree conferral.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships (GA or GAship) are often available for full-time students. A full-time student must register for 9 credit hours in the fall and spring and 6 credit hours in the summer (some GAs do not work during the summer). Please contact the program advisor or GPD for more information.

Student of the Year Award

The LIS faculty select one student each year for a Library Studies Student of the Year recognition. Criteria include excellence in coursework, engagement with peers, unique and creative expression and synthesis of ideas, and display of professional dispositions.

Alumni

The LIS faculty want to keep in touch with alumni. We look forward to seeing you at professional conferences. Please provide us with an alternate email or other contact information following graduation. Please share new jobs and other celebrations with us and continue to follow the program on Facebook and Twitter.

Accreditation

The Master of Library and Information Studies is currently recognized by the American Library Association with Pre-Candidacy Status. Students are a key stakeholder group in this endeavor and every effort will be made to include them in communication about the process. If and when the program is accredited, ALA accreditation is applied to any degrees conferred in the 24 months prior to accreditation.

ODU’s School Library Program is nationally recognized by the American Library Association (ALA)/American Association of School Librarianship (AASL) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and is an approved program by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for the preparation and endorsement of school librarians.

*Old Dominion University’s Masters of Library and Information Studies has been granted pre-candidacy status by the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association. Pre-candidacy status is an indication that ODU’s Master’s of Library and Information Studies has voluntarily committed to participate in the ALA accreditation process and is actively seeking accreditation. Pre-candidacy does not indicate that the program is accredited nor does it guarantee eventual accreditation of the program by ALA.*