Library & Information Studies

MLIS Student Handbook

September 2024

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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. Applicants interested in school library licensure but who do not have a teaching license may require additional coursework and testing.

Admission Deadlines

New students are admitted twice each year and may begin in the fall, spring, or summer semesters.

- Priority deadline for Summer admission is March 1.
- Priority deadline for Fall admission is April 1.
- Priority deadline for Spring admission 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 undergraduate (expected GPA of 3.0 or greater) and graduate coursework
- Application to the Graduate School
- Current resume/CV
- 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

Provisional Admissions

Faculty may waive some admissions requirements for a student whose application otherwise shows promise for success. Provisional admission 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 Canvas for all official, written communications with ODU faculty, staff, and offices. MLIS students are expected to check ODU email regularly, as faculty will use ODU email addresses for important information, questions, and alerts regarding student progress and status in the program.

Students are also encouraged to use the MLIS Program's Canvas organization space ("LIBS PROGRAM"), the program's website and social media to stay in touch with one another and the program faculty and staff.

Attendance

Courses in the MLIS Program are online and primarily asynchronous. 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, a faculty advisor, and/or the Graduate Program Director (GPD). Students may withdraw from a class up until the ODU Official withdrawal date with a grade of W. Students experiencing academic or personal difficulties are encouraged to contact Student Outreach and Support:

https://www.odu.edu/life/dean-students/student-outreach.

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.
- Students may not apply graduate credits to more than one 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 can not be used as a replacement.
- 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 their advisor or the GPD about their plan of study when they return to the program. Following lengthy separation, (a) courses more than 8 years old will not apply toward a degree, and (b) students may be required to re-apply to the program.

Program Policies

Plan of Study

A Plan of Study provides a roadmap 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 by the time a student registers for their fourth course (12th credit hour). Changes to this Plan of Study are the student's responsibility and should be made in consultation with an 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. **Prerequisites**: Admission to the Master of Library and Information Studies Degree.

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. **Pre- or corequisite**: LIBS 608.

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. **Pre- or corequisite**: LIBS 608.

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. **Pre- or corequisite**: LIBS 608.

Literature Classes

While access to and knowledge of a wide variety of literature is one component of librarianship, the library profession is grounded in the ability to select, evaluate, and recommend literature to various users based on an information need. This knowledge, situated within the context of different types of literature, is introduced and practiced within each of the literature courses in the LIBS program, making them different from literature courses found in other disciplines. Because library principles are the focus of each literature course in the program, students are encouraged to select **a maximum of two** in their plan of study. Additional literature courses will require a statement of rationale describing how the courses will benefit a specific career goal and the approval of the program director.

Professional Conference Attendance

Professional engagement is a value of the program and an important aspect of becoming an information professional. Students are encouraged to attend professional conferences, such as a state or regional conference organized by a professional LIS association. When possible, students are encouraged to attend a conference to meet faculty and classmates. Information about relevant conferences and faculty attendance will be shared with students.

Summer Institute

The Summer Institute was an annual event during the ODU summer session in which the MLIS Program brought together students, alumni, local and regional practitioners, and experts from the field. It was a multi-day professional development and networking opportunity. The Summer Institute and attendance requirement has been suspended until further notice.

ePortfolios

Students will complete an ePortfolio that is evaluated at the end of their coursework. Students in the school library concentration will complete the ePortfolio the semester before they begin their internship. Students not in the school library concentration may complete the ePortfolio concurrently with their internship. The ePortfolio should not be completed more than one semester before the completion of all coursework, as the ePortfolio serves as the program's comprehensive exam and is required for graduation.

Students are asked to select artifacts from completed assignments to provide evidence and reflection regarding how they have attained the MLIS Program's Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) during their coursework in the program. As the ePortfolio is also designed to showcase a student's professional accomplishments and aspirations, students will 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. Students are responsible

for independently creating and submitting their e-Portfolio following this rubric and other guidance provided. More information regarding e-Portfolio completion, submission, and policies may be found through the MLIS Program Space in Canvas.

For the completion of their ePortfolio, it is the responsibility of the student to save and back-up their work, assignments, and other materials. Students are provided access to Google Drive for purposes such as these by the university.

Internships

Completion of a 160-hour internship is a requirement for all graduates of the General MLIS Program. After meeting eligibility requirements, students are placed in an appropriate information setting that is 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 that allows the student to measure impact and implement data-driven decision making. More information regarding internship policies and procedures may be found through the MLIS Program Space in Canvas.

Students pursuing certification for School Library Media may have additional requirements for the internship. A full outline of MLIS Internship requirements and policies can be found in the MLIS Internship Handbook:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/126Eeh2wB37QdMHfFCwOg7dg0C0cWFyrQ/edit

School Librarianship

Students seeking an endorsement or an initial teaching license in school 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.

Background Checks

Old Dominion University candidates in approved professional educational programs, including school library preparation, are required to provide a background clearance check when registering for a course that requires a field experience:
https://www.odu.edu/success/academic/teacher-education/placement/background-checks.

Students enrolled in a placement course requiring a background check must have the clearance complete by the drop/add date of the semester. Students not meeting this requirement will be required to drop the course.

THE CLEARANCE BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS MAY TAKE UP TO EIGHT (8) WEEKS.

Research

MLIS students are expected to be thoughtful consumers and producers of research. Throughout the program, students will be encouraged to contribute to the research conversation at an appropriate level (e.g., through online communities, guided discussions, submission to research and practitioner journals, or participation in conference sessions). They will also be asked to critically evaluate contributions made by others in research and participatory information environments. When appropriate, MLIS students may be included on faculty research projects.

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.

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".

More information, including detailed policies regarding Withdrawals and Incompletes, can be found in the Graduate Catalog: 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 opportunities 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; accordingly, 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 may also be recorded.

Practical Experiences

Most courses in the MLIS program include some type of observation or practical experience in a library or information workplace. Students are expected to identify the sites for these experiences and negotiate access that fits their schedule. Students experiencing difficulty with this process 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. Most students will purchase Livetext while enrolled in LIBS 608. The online tool 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/tep-requirements/livetext.

Graduation

Students must successfully complete:

- 30 credit hours; no courses with less than a B minus may be used for graduation

- Responsible Conduct of Research Training; provided through the Graduate school

- 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 either

the May or the December graduation ceremony. More information about graduation and commencement may be found at
https://ww1.odu.edu/academics/graduation-commencement/graduation

Degrees post to transcripts several weeks after graduation. Students requesting transcripts through the registrar 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 GA 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 GPD for more information.

Student of the Year Award

The MLIS faculty selects two students each year for a Library Studies Student of the Year recognition. One student in the General MLIS and one student in the School Library Concentration are selected. Criteria include excellence in coursework, engagement with peers, unique and creative expression and synthesis of ideas, and display of professional dispositions.

Alumni

The MLIS faculty want to keep in touch with alumni. We look forward to seeing you at professional conferences. Following graduation, please provide your advisor or the GPD with an alternate email or other contact information. Please also share new jobs and other celebrations with us, and continue to follow the program on social media.

Accreditation

The Master of Library and Information Studies Program at Old Dominion University is accredited by the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation, with the status of Initial accreditation. The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled for Fall 2028.

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.