Library and Information Science, MA

Students who pursue the Master of Arts in library and information science gain an understanding of the foundations of library and information professions, including the history of the fields, ethical and philosophical concerns, and principles of stewardship for a variety of forms of documentation and records. Students are taught the theory and practice of strategic management within information organizations, preparing them for careers and leadership in a broad variety of information organizations. They gain the knowledge needed to anticipate future trends in information access and organization. Students study the close relationship between research and practice. Finally, students become knowledgeable about the factors that underlie users’ information needs and appropriate strategies to assist them.

The MA in library and information science has held continuous accreditation from the American Library Association since 1971. The degree prepares students to work in public libraries, K–12 school libraries, academic libraries, archives, and special collections.

The School of Library and Information Science combines online education with on-campus instruction and collaboration allowing online students to participate in real-time learning experiences with their campus classmates. Both full- and part-time enrollment options are available for on-campus or virtual coursework. For more information about the online program option, see Online MA in LIS on the School of Library and Information Science website.

Learning Outcomes

Gateway Knowledge

Students will understand the historical, social, cultural, and civic contexts of various library and information service roles in the United States, and students will internalize key values of the profession such as intellectual freedom, information equality, and community well-being. Students will also learn best practices in professional communication and development.

Information Resources

Students will understand the lifecycle of recorded knowledge and information from creation to use and the best practices for developing collections—including acquisition, selection, purchasing, processing, storage, and deselection—with special attention to emerging formats and genres of information resources.

Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education

Students will understand that lifelong learning and continuing education are organizational goals for libraries and information centers to provide as well as professional goals for library and information workers to seek out. Students will understand best practices for professional development and also best practices for teaching and learning in libraries and information centers.

Management and Administration

Students will understand best practices for project and team management, strategic planning and communication, organizational workflows and assessment, library advocacy and development, and community partnerships and engagement.

Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information

Students will understand how to evaluate, represent, and organize information and knowledge across cultures and communities as well as how to devise, maintain, and use systems of organization in both physical and digital environments toward efficient discovery and retrieval by diverse users.

Reference and User Services

Students will understand the techniques for discovering, retrieving, evaluating, and synthesizing information from diverse sources, and students will understand methods for learning and describing the information needs of various users and communities and how libraries and information centers can work with these communities toward meeting their needs.

Research and Evidence-Based Practice

Students will understand the methods of intervention-oriented research and assessment methods in libraries and information centers, and students will recognize, evaluate, and apply the different types of evidence that information professionals use to measure the success of services, practices, and facilities.

Information Equity

Students will understand that a central value of libraries and information centers is to mitigate information inequality, and students will endeavor to improve library and information practices through informed, respectful, and inclusive interventions that recognize and centralize social difference across race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, socioeconomic status, nationality, religion, age, education, literacy, and other vectors.

Technological Knowledge and Skills

Students will understand and identify the technological infrastructure that enables library and information services, and students will be able to evaluate existing and emerging technologies toward inclusive and effective practice.

Requirements

The Master of Arts in library and information science requires 36 s.h. of graduate credit. Students must maintain a minimum Graduate College program grade-point average of 3.00 and earn a grade of B-minus or higher in each of their required courses and a grade of C or higher in their elective courses. Courses may be repeated one time if a student receives a grade below the stated threshold. If the second completion does not result in a minimum qualifying grade, the student will be ineligible to complete the MA in library and information science at the University of Iowa.

See the School of Library and Information Science Handbook on the School of Library and Information Science website for further details.

Students may apply a maximum of 12 s.h. of graduate transfer credit from non-University of Iowa institutions and
9 s.h. transfer credit from a University of Iowa graduate program. These courses must be in library and information science or areas related to the degree and are subject to applicable rules and approval by the curriculum committee. Approval is based on the course's content, currency, and applicability to a student's program.

The program may be completed on campus or in a mostly synchronous distance mode and is designed to be completed in two years with enrollment of 9 s.h. during each of the fall and spring semesters. The School of Library and Information Science strongly recommends that students not register for more than 12 s.h. during fall and spring semesters and 8 s.h. during summer sessions. The program also may be completed through part-time study.

The curriculum includes two levels of coursework. Core courses consist of five required courses that provide a solid grounding for all successive coursework. Students select elective coursework consisting of seven courses for 21 s.h. based on their areas of interest. This two-level arrangement allows students to concentrate in an area that most closely matches their professional goals.

A thesis option is available for students who seek additional research experience; students must be enrolled in the on-campus option to do a thesis.

The MA with a major in library and information science requires the following coursework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Courses</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>21</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Core Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5010</td>
<td>Libraries, Culture, and Society (taken in student's first semester)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5030</td>
<td>Information Organization</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6115</td>
<td>Information and Inquiry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6170</td>
<td>Management, Teams, and Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:7900</td>
<td>SLIS Graduation Seminar</td>
<td>0</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>One of these:</th>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5020</td>
<td>Foundations of Computing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6040</td>
<td>Media Production Workshop</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6140</td>
<td>Digital Environments and Library Users</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6335</td>
<td>Metadata Theories and Applications</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Electives

With their advisor's guidance, students select seven courses for 21 s.h. or a combined course total of 21 s.h. from these:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:4150</td>
<td>Introduction to Book Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:4910</td>
<td>The Book in the Middle Ages</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:4920</td>
<td>The Book in Early Modern Europe</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5041</td>
<td>College and University Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5042</td>
<td>Public Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5044</td>
<td>School Library Media Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5200</td>
<td>Innovation and Technology Methodology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5220</td>
<td>Resources for Children</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5230</td>
<td>Resources for Young Adults</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5520</td>
<td>Studies in Book History and Technologies</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5530</td>
<td>Preservation Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5535</td>
<td>Book Conservation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5600</td>
<td>Reading Culture: History and Research in Print and Digital Media</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:5630</td>
<td>Introduction to Special Collections and Archives</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6020</td>
<td>Literacy and Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6130</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6140</td>
<td>Digital Environments and Library Users</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6145</td>
<td>Digital Preservation and Stewardship</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6150</td>
<td>Information Behavior</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6250</td>
<td>Cataloging and Classification</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6255</td>
<td>Rare Books Cataloging</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6330</td>
<td>Collection Development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6335</td>
<td>Metadata Theories and Applications</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6345</td>
<td>Stewardship of Information and Collections</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6350</td>
<td>Archives: Theory and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6355</td>
<td>Advanced Topics in Special Collections</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6370</td>
<td>Topics in Book Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6411</td>
<td>Special Topics in Library and Information Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6490</td>
<td>Information Policy and Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6520</td>
<td>Practicum in Libraries and Information Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6530</td>
<td>School Library Media Practicum</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6570</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIS:6580</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>0-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students can choose to satisfy 3 s.h. for the degree with an approved practicum in special collections (register for SLIS:6520 Practicum in Libraries and Information Centers). Placements must be approved. For more information, see the School of Library and Information Science website.

### Specializations

To earn the degree, students do not need to select an area of specialization. However, programs often are designed around particular career goals, and the school offers courses in the following specialized focus areas that students may choose to take to prepare them for working in a specific area of library and information science.

- **Europe**
  - The Book in Early Modern Europe
  - The Book in the Middle Ages
  - Introduction to Book Studies
  - Research in Print and Digital Media
- **Archives**
  - Rare Books Cataloging
  - Archives: Theory and Practice
  - Advanced Topics in Special Collections
  - Topics in Book Studies
  - Special Topics in Library and Information Science
- **Collections**
  - Collection Development
  - Rare Books Cataloging
  - Collections and Archives
- **Information Policy and Ethics**
  - Information Policy and Ethics
  - Practicum in Libraries and Information Centers
- **Information Services**
  - Digital Preservation and Stewardship
  - Digital Preservation and Stewardship
- **Information Technology**
  - Information Technology
  - Information Technology
- **School Library Media**
  - School Library Media Practicum
  - School Library Media Practicum
- **Public Libraries**
  - Public Libraries
  - Public Libraries
- **College and University Libraries**
  - College and University Libraries
  - College and University Libraries
- **Special Topics**
  - Special Topics in Library and Information Science
  - Special Topics in Library and Information Science
  - Special Topics in Library and Information Science
- **Stewardship of Information**
  - Stewardship of Information
  - Stewardship of Information
  - Stewardship of Information
Public Libraries

Public libraries provide informational, educational, and recreational materials and a wide range of services for a diverse clientele. Although public libraries receive the bulk of their funding from local taxes, they also may be organized on a regional or statewide cooperative basis. The variety of uses, services, materials, and organizational structures of public libraries makes this a challenging area of librarianship. Public librarians need to develop skills in analyzing the communities they serve, designing comprehensive marketing plans to meet their needs, implementing the plans in a cost-effective way, and evaluating the success of their efforts.

Academic Libraries

The academic library, whether in a community college, a four-year college, or a university, provides information services in support of the parent institution's teaching, research, and public service missions. These services include instruction in the use of the library and its resources. Management skills and subject or language competence often are required. Since librarians in this setting usually are considered academic faculty members, a second master's or other advanced degree is recommended.

School Librarian

School librarians provide instruction to students in accessing, evaluating, and using information; collaborate with teachers on the use of resources in instruction; provide leadership in the use of instructional and information technologies for technology-enabled student learning; offer reading guidance; provide reference service; and manage the library media center. In the state of Iowa, school librarians are referred to as teacher librarians.

The University of Iowa offers a state-approved program leading to endorsement as Teacher Librarian K-12. In order to fulfill state requirements for this endorsement, students must hold or be eligible for a teaching license and must complete a designated sequence of courses that leads both to certification and to the MA degree.

Licensed teachers employed in Iowa schools may enroll in a distance education program that leads to an MA in library and information science and endorsement for school librarianship. Contact the School of Library and Information Science for details.

Students who are interested in school libraries but lack a valid Iowa teaching license may earn licensure as a teacher librarian by completing 30 s.h. in the College of Education. The Master of Arts in library and information science with teacher licensure requires 66 s.h. of credit. Students must apply and be admitted to both programs.

Combined Programs

Undergraduate Degree/MA

Students working on an undergraduate degree at the University of Iowa who are interested in earning an MA in library and information science may apply to a combined undergraduate degree and MA degree program. The Undergraduate to Graduate (U2G) program enables students to begin work on the MA degree as they complete their baccalaureate degree and complete both degrees in five years. Students admitted to the program may count 12 s.h. toward both their undergraduate degree and the MA degree.

Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program.

For more information, visit Undergraduate to Graduate (U2G) on the Graduate College website.

MA/JD

The School of Library and Information Science and the College of Law offer a combined Master of Arts/Juris Doctor program. Students in the combined program may apply a limited amount of credit toward both degrees, thereby completing the combined program with fewer semester hours than if each degree was completed separately. Students enroll in law courses their first year and begin taking School of Library and Information Science courses in their second year.

Separate application to each degree program is required. For more information about the JD, see Juris Doctor, JD (College of Law) in the catalog. Elective courses also are available through the College of Law for students who wish to specialize in law librarianship but who do not want to pursue the JD.

MA/MFA in Book Arts

The School of Library and Information Science and the Center for the Book offer a combined Master of Arts/Master of Fine Arts in book arts. The combined program allows students with a strong interest in the physical book to acquire training in the book arts, book history, and material book studies. The earned expertise in the production and legacy of the book as a physical artifact combined with expertise in library and information science can be an asset for those focused on careers in special collections libraries and archives.

Students in the combined program earn both degrees by completing fewer semester hours than if each degree was completed separately. Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program. For more information, see the MFA in book arts in the catalog.

Students interested in a librarianship career with a more general interest in the physical book should consider the book studies/book arts and technologies certificate in combination with the MA in library and information science.

MA/Certificate in Book Studies/Book Arts and Technologies

The Center for the Book and the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) collaborate to offer the certificate in book studies/book arts and technologies/MA library and information science program. The combined program enables students to earn an MA in library and information science and a Certificate in Book Studies/Book Arts and Technologies. It requires admission to the School of Library and Information Science MA program and the Center for the Book certificate program.

The MA/Certificate in Book Studies/Book Arts and Technologies offers multiple pathways into professional engagement with artifacts available in archives and libraries, such as rare and artist books. Students select courses that enable them to gain skills and knowledge in areas of service such as conservation, cataloging, instruction, and outreach. The combined program requires 51 s.h. of coursework. Students take 27 s.h. of SLIS courses; 15 s.h. of book arts, studies, and technologies courses; and the remaining 9
s.h. may be taken in either SLIS or Center for the Book coursework, or from another unit with approval from the SLIS advisor.

Admission deadline is Feb. 1 for fall entry. For more information, see the Certificate in Book Studies/Book Arts and Technologies in the catalog.

MA/PhD in English

The combined MA in library and information science/PhD in English program prepares students for careers in academic libraries as humanities subject specialists, reference and instruction librarians, first-year experience librarians, special collections librarians and curators, and archivists. It also enhances the research profiles and methodological toolboxes of digital humanists as well as archival historicists, in addition to improving pedagogical skills. Offered by the Graduate College and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; see the PhD in English in the catalog.

Admission

Applicants begin the admission process by submitting an online graduate application through the Office of Admissions. Applicants then receive a HawkID and can upload the remaining application documents through MyUI. Transcripts of all academic work, a written statement of purpose and goals, a résumé or curricula vitae, and three letters of recommendation are required. Applicants to the teacher-librarian program are asked to include a copy of their current teaching certificate. The admission committee considers each applicant’s letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, résumé or curricula vitae, and other appropriate criteria, as well as an applicant’s grade-point average (GPA). Applicants for admission to the MA program should have a GPA of at least 3.00 on a 4.00 scale. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores are not required. Admission is competitive.

Completed applications should be received by Feb. 1 for priority consideration for fall admission. Decisions of the admissions committee are announced approximately six weeks after the application deadline. Late applications are considered if places are still available. Financial aid often is not available for late applicants. Admitted students are assigned a faculty advisor for program planning during their first semester.

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Financial Support

The School of Library and Information Science typically offers limited partial-tuition scholarships and graduate assistantships. To be considered for scholarships or assistantships, applicants must meet the MA program’s grade-point average requirement for admission; see Admission [p. 4] in this section of the catalog. At the discretion of the admissions committee, limited graduate assistantships may be offered to incoming students based on academic merit and prior experience. In addition, available assistantships in the School of Library and Information Science and in other programs and departments throughout the university are advertised as they become available; students should apply for specific assistantships.

To learn more about available opportunities, view the School of Library and Information Science website for information on departmental scholarships. Part-time employment usually is available in the University of Iowa Libraries or other campus units.

Applications for student loans, work-study eligibility, or other financial assistance should be submitted directly to the university’s Office of Student Financial Aid.

Career Advancement

School of Library and Information Science graduates have many options for employment. Alumni hold positions in public, school, special, and academic libraries as well as other information settings. They serve in varied roles, such as information consultant, database manager, library administrator, webmaster, network coordinator, cataloger, children’s librarian, school library media specialist, and archivist.

The school shares announcements of national and international job opportunities through an electronic mailing list. In addition, the Library and Information Science Student Organization (LISSO) sponsors talks by speakers versed in areas of librarianship as well as workshops on résumé writing, social media networking, and interviewing. Internships and other opportunities provide students with hands-on experience that may enhance their job prospects.

For recent information on library and information science placement, see the Library Research Service (LRS) website and the annual Placement and Salaries 2022 report on the Library Journal website.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

Library and Information Science, MA

This sample plan is being reviewed and will be added at a later date.