Library and Information Science

Director
- Lindsay K. Mattock

Graduate degree: M.A. in library and information science
Graduate certificate: special collections librarianship
Faculty: https://slis.uiowa.edu/faculty-and-staff
Website: https://slis.uiowa.edu/

Today’s age is defined by the intersection of information, technology, and human creativity. In this context, library and information science is dedicated to understanding the nature of information, the interaction between information and communication technologies, the relationship between information and knowledge, the cognitive and affective aspects of knowledge acquisition, and the interface between people and information. It offers new knowledge, technological benefits, and professional expertise for every dimension of human affairs.

Library and information professionals take on many challenges in serving the needs of their constituencies—children and teachers, members of academic communities, employees of profit and nonprofit organizations, and the public at large—constituencies that range from information poor to information rich. They work in the contexts of issues such as information and communication technology, public and private information policy, managerial policy, and regional, national, and international economics.

The School of Library and Information Science prepares professionals to meet these diverse challenges. It offers a graduate-level program of preparation for careers in all types of libraries and information centers, providing students with a strong, well-rounded education in an environment that supports individuals from all segments of a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual society. Its curriculum reflects the profession’s immediate and long-range needs and prepares students to be leaders in a changing field.

By promoting excellence in research, the school contributes to the base of theoretical and practical knowledge in library and information science and helps develop an understanding of how to meet the varied and changing information needs of individuals and society. It also provides public service through continuing education programs, selective consulting services for library and information centers, and participation in professional organizations. The school strongly encourages its students, faculty members, and alumni to shape the future of the profession by filling key roles in organizations involved in all aspects of the information cycle.

Undergraduate students who want to pursue a degree in library and information science may choose to participate in the combined degree program which allows them to complete their baccalaureate and graduate degrees in five years. See Combined Programs in the M.A. in library and information science section of the Catalog.

Graduate students working toward the M.A. degree in library and information science may elect to pursue a combined Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree program in collaboration with the College of Law or an M.F.A. in book arts offered by the Center for the Book. See Combined Programs in the M.A. in library and information science section of the Catalog.

Students interested in school librarianship may earn teaching licensure through the College of Education; see "School Teacher Librarian" under Requirements in the M.A. in library and information science section of the Catalog.

Library and information science M.A. students may earn the Certificate in Book Studies/Book Arts and Technologies or the Certificate in Special Collections Librarianship. In addition, they may earn the Certificate in Informatics and choose a subprogram in bioinformatics and computational biology, geoinformatics, health informatics, or information science. In addition, other graduate students may earn the Certificate in Special Collections Librarianship.

Related Certificate

Public Digital Humanities

The Certificate in Public Digital Humanities is especially for students with humanities backgrounds who want to gain expertise and credentials to work more intensively with technology. The program brings students together with varied academic backgrounds to learn how to communicate, sort out the roles required for fully functioning teams, and understand the unique contributions made by individuals across disciplines. Students learn to appreciate the diversity of humanities research methods while identifying core digital activities that underlie research projects. For more information, see the Certificate in Public Digital Humanities.

Student Organizations and Activities

All M.A. students in the school are automatically members of LISSO, the Library and Information Science Student Organization, which also serves as the student chapter of the American Library Association. LISSO sponsors various activities, such as speaker series, workshops, brown bag lunches, and social events. Participation in LISSO events provides students with significant opportunities for professional and extracurricular growth. Students also are encouraged to join other state and national professional organizations.

B Sides is a student-run project from the School of Library and Information Science. The journal and podcast aim to provide an interactive and accessible space where library and information science students, faculty, alumni, and community professionals can dialog about all aspects of the profession, study, research, and practice of library and information science and related fields.

Honor Society

The Beta Beta Theta Chapter of Beta Phi Mu, the international honor society for library and information science, is located at the University of Iowa. Each year new members are chosen from the top 25 percent of the preceding year’s graduating class. To be eligible for membership, graduates must achieve a g.p.a. of at least 3.75, demonstrate professional promise, and be recommended by the faculty.