

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
INFORMATION SYSTEMS
TECHNOLOGY**

STUDENT GUIDELINES

ACADEMIC YEAR 2002-2003

**GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN THE
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
INFORMATION SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM**

WELCOME

Congratulations! You are now a student in the M.S. in Information Systems Technology Program offered by the Management Science Department of the School of Business and Public Management at The George Washington University.

The GW MS-IST program offers you the opportunity to develop a strong foundation of current IS skills and to learn how to more effectively utilize information systems technology to solve the problems facing business and government organizations today and in the future. We encourage you to make the most of your academic experiences by challenging yourself to go beyond the faculty member's expectations. Graduate-level work is demanding, but we think you will find it rewarding both personally and professionally.

In addition to your course work, your faculty and fellow students represent an invaluable resource of practical field knowledge, international experiences, and industry-specific expertise. We encourage you to take the time to get to know your classmates as they have the potential of becoming your strongest professional colleagues. The Metropolitan DC/Northern Virginia technology community also represents a unique opportunity for you to become involved in special events, conferences, and social gatherings that can enhance your knowledge of the field.

We hope that you will take full advantage of all that is offered both inside and outside of the classroom to make the most of your GW MS-IST experience. If we can assist you along the way, please let us know.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

MS-IST Program Office

The MS-IST Program has nearly 400 students at three locations. There are three tracks along with two specialized cohort programs. This variety allows us to meet the needs of a diverse audience, but can sometimes be confusing to incoming students. The purpose of this document is to provide incoming students with an overview of the program along with some important information that they will need as they progress through their courses of study. The program is run through the The Information Systems Technology Program Office which provides IST students and prospective students with assistance on admissions, new student orientation, academic advising, program coordination and evaluation, course/faculty scheduling, monitoring of academic performance and program requirement, and graduation clearance. Information on events, program or schedule changes, and other timely announcements will be posted in the IST Program Office as well as on the MS-IST web site: <http://www.msist.gwu.edu>.

Dr. John M. Artz, Program Director

The Director's responsibility is to coordinate the various aspects of the program. This does not mean the Program Director is a substitute advisor to every student. However, serious problems with courses, faculty,

administration or other students should always be called to the Director's attention. Dr. Artz can be reached at (202) 994-4931, or via email at jartz@gwu.edu.

Major Fields

There are three major fields within the Master of Science in Information Systems Technology degree:

- Management Information Systems (MIS) *(Available at Ashburn and Virginia Square)*
- Information Systems Development (ISD) *(Available at Foggy Bottom and Ashburn)*
- Information Systems Project Management (ISPM) *(Available at Foggy Bottom)*

Regardless of your major field, your degree is a Master of Science in Information Systems Technology. The major field does not appear on your diploma but is reflected in your transcript.

Locations

The MS-IST program is offered at multiple locations. **However, students are accepted at a specific location and are required to take classes at the location at which they were accepted.** Students may change their home location by submitting a petition to the Program Director.

Location	Address	Program Coordinator	Email
Foggy Bottom	The George Washington University Department of Management Science 401 Monroe Hall 2121 G Street NW Washington, D.C. 20052	Dr. Artz	jartz@gwu.edu
Virginia Square	The George Washington University Graduate Education Center, Arlington 3601 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, Va.	Dr. Williams	lrw@gwu.edu
Ashburn	The George Washington University Virginia Campus 20101 Academic Way Suite 321 Ashburn, Va. 20147-2604	Dr. Carson	carson@gwu.edu

Program Assistants

The MS-IST Program Assistants assist faculty and students with course registration, monitoring of academic progress and performance, and graduation clearance. Please see your Program Assistant if you need help locating course information, program statements, course incomplete or petition forms or if you need to schedule a waiver exam.

Program Assistant	Program	Phone	Email
Jesica Mera	Foggy Bottom	(202) 994-6403	jcm@gwu.edu
Kirsten Butterfield	Virginia Square	(202) 994-6403	kbutter@gwu.edu
Sarah Tate	Ashburn	(703) 726-8330	vais@gwu.edu

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a new student, we ask you to take a few moments to read through this entire document to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures for the program. Please keep in mind that the policies and procedures in effect at the time of your admission to the program will be applicable to you throughout your program.

We strongly suggest you do the following:

1. Save your admission letter.
2. Obtain, read, and save a copy of the GWU Bulletin (catalog) valid for the semester you were admitted - it states the rules for your degree program.
3. There will be a general advising session prior to the beginning of class. All new students are expected to attend the orientation session and general advising session, so please mark the date and time on your calendar. At that time, you will meet with an advisor. It is not necessary to contact your advisor prior to this advising session. However, if you have special questions or concern, feel free to contact your advisor at any time..
4. If you are a full-time student (enrolled for 9 credit hours or more per semester) it may not be possible to take a full time course load until you have satisfied the prerequisites. You will need to register for as many prerequisite courses as possible each semester until you have fulfilled all of them.
5. Do not listen to other student's versions of rules and procedures. They may be incorrect and following their advice can get you into trouble. When in doubt, consult The George Washington University Bulletin for Graduate Programs, your academic advisor or the program director.
6. Keep the University informed of any changes in your address, name, e-mail, or daytime and home phone numbers. We need to have your current address, e-mail and daytime phone number in order to mail you information or contact you in case of a problem or last minute schedule change.

PROGRAM PLANNING

PROGRAM STATEMENT

All IST students are required to fill out a program statement during their first semester after formal admission as a degree candidate. This becomes an approved program of study between the student and the University that defines their requirements for graduation. Once the program statement is complete, changes in the course schedule or in the student's choice of elective can be accommodated. However, these changes should be approved by the faculty advisor and the program director in advance and must be noted on a revised program statement. It is the students' responsibility to insure that an accurate, current program statement is on file in the MS-IST office. For more information on how to fill out your program statement, consult the [Master of Science in Information Systems Program Statement Guidelines](#).

☞ **Students who deviate from their current program statements without authorization may delay or prevent their graduation from the program.**

COURSE SELECTION AND SCHEDULING

We recommend no more than three courses per semester for full time students and no more than two courses per semester for part-time students. If you need to satisfy the full set of prerequisites, it may not be possible to take more than two courses per semester for your first two semesters – even if you are a full-time student.

PREREQUISITES

Prerequisites insure that all students are sufficiently prepared for graduate level courses. Students are admitted to the degree program with diverse academic backgrounds and a variety of work and professional experience. The prerequisites serve to level the knowledge base for entering students and afford a richer classroom experience. It is valuable, but not a requirement, that prerequisites be satisfied prior to the beginning of formal graduate studies. However, students who leave prerequisites till the end of the program will still be required to taken them in order to graduate. If you require prerequisite courses, it is mandatory that you take as many of them per semester as possible until they are all completed. Your advisor will provide guidance on scheduling these prerequisites.

There are four prerequisite areas:

- 1) programming
- 2) systems analysis
- 3) database systems
- 4) statistics

Prerequisites may be waived based on prior “academic” coursework (taken within the past five years) provided a grade of “B” or better was obtained. Professional seminars and other nonacademic courses are not adequate. However, students who have prior professional experience in these areas may choose to waive prerequisites by taking waiver examinations, which are available in the first three areas. See Master of Science in Information Systems Technology Prerequisite Waiver Examinations for more information.

Waiver examinations must be taken before the end of the student’s first semester.

Prerequisites not previously satisfied may be satisfied by completion of an approved academic course or, if approved by your faculty advisor, a prerequisite workshop. The courses offered by SBPM that satisfy the prerequisites are:

Programming	Mgt. 119
Systems Analysis	Mgt. 120
Database	Mgt. 121
Statistics	Mgt. 202

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT

The SBPM faculty expects all students to be proficient in written and spoken English. International students coming from countries where English is not the official language must take the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) placement test during the application process. Only those students who have scored 600 or higher on written TOEFL or 250 on the computer TOEFL can be considered for admission. However, if a student demonstrates an inadequate command of English in a given course, the instructor may require further EFL evaluation.

MAJOR FIELDS

You must select a major field prior to filling out your program statement. You may change your major field with your advisor's permission as long as it does not affect your home location, however, you may lose courses depending on which courses have already been taken. To change your home location requires the permission of the program director.

DOUBLE MAJORS

Students may elect to major in two fields of the Master of Science in Information Systems Technology program. Students taking a double major are allowed to take courses in the second major as their electives to minimize the number of courses required for a double major. For example, a student double majoring in ISD and ISPM would be required to take a total of fourteen courses, or 42 credit hours, beyond satisfying prerequisites. In the case of a double major, students are strongly encouraged to complete the requirements for one major before beginning the courses for the second. There are additional constraints on this special option - your Faculty Advisor will provide you guidance if you select this option.

ELECTIVE COURSES

Some of the fields within the IS program contain elective courses to be selected by students. These electives should be selected with the guidance of your advisor.

CAPSTONE COURSE

The capstone course, MGT 287- Design of On-Line Information Systems, is a required course in the curriculum and must be taken either as the last course in the program or concurrently with the last required course(s).

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Students are advised to obtain and save a copy of the Graduate Bulletin effective upon their admissions into the MS-IST Program. The academic policies and regulations outlined in the Bulletin govern the rules for your degree program. **All work for the master's degree must be completed within five years of admission.**

Some of the academic policies and regulations in effect for students admitted for the 2000-2001 academic year* include:

**Students admitted in a prior academic year should consult the appropriate Graduate Bulletin for applicable policies and regulations.*

GRADING POLICY

The primary point of contact for all course-related grading issues is the faculty member. Grades for Graduate coursework are as follows:

A	Excellent	F	Fail	W	Authorized Withdraw
B	Good	I	Incomplete	Z	Unauthorized Withdraw
C	Minimum Pass	IPG	Incomplete in Progress	CR	Credit

Grades of A-, B+, B-, C+ and C- may also be given.

An average of B or better is required for the master's degree. **A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 is required for award of a graduate degree.** All graduate courses and undergraduate courses taken for graduate credit after matriculation as a degree candidate (except those audited or taken for a grade of CR) will be used in the calculation of the grade-point average.

PROBATION

A student whose grade-point average falls below 3.0 after completing a minimum of 9 credit hours will be placed on probation. This probation extends through the period in which the student next attempts 12 credit hours of work, including prescribed courses. A student's program may be further restricted by the IST Program Director, if deemed necessary. During this period the student's performance will be monitored to determine suitability for continued study. Please note that Incomplete grades are **NOT ALLOWED** during the probation period. A student who is subject to probation for a second time at any point during the program is automatically suspended.

GRADE OF F

A master's degree candidate who receives a grade of F is required to present cause, for consideration by the IST Program Director, as to why continued study should be permitted. Once a grade of F is earned in a required or elective course, it remains part of the student's permanent record and is calculated into the grade-point average. A master's degree candidate who receives a grade of F in a core or required course, and who is permitted to continue graduate studies, must repeat the course and achieve at least the grade of B. (Such a repeat does not expunge the grade of F, which remains part of the student's record.) Should this level of performance not be obtained, the student will be denied further registration as a degree candidate.

INCOMPLETE

At the option of the instructor, the grade of I may be recorded if a student, for reasons beyond the student's control, is unable to complete the work of the course, and if the instructor is informed of, and approves, such reasons before the date when grades must be reported. Faculty members assigning a grade of I (Incomplete) must complete and provide the student with a "Contract for Incomplete Grade" outlining the work that must be completed and the date by which the work will be due to the instructor. The date agreed upon for completion must be no later than the last day of the examination period for the Fall or Spring semester immediately following the semester or summer session in which the grade of I was assigned. An Incomplete that is not changed within the period automatically becomes an F. In cases of well-documented circumstances, an instructor and a student may jointly petition the IST Program Director for additional time to complete the course work. Such a petition should be submitted within the same period outlined above. The grade of I cannot be changed by reregistering for the course at GW or by taking its equivalent elsewhere. The grade of I remains on the student's permanent record even after the course has been successfully completed.

Students who are registered for a course that they have not attended and in which they have done no substantial graded work, will be assigned a grade of Z.

WITHDRAWAL

The last day for complete withdrawal without academic penalty is the fourth week after registration for the fall or spring semester, respectively. A course dropped in the fifth to eighth week is assigned a W grade (authorized withdrawal). Rules governing timing of withdrawal from a summer session course are published in the summer session bulletin. A course may not be dropped without confirmation from the instructor that the student has received to date a passing grade. A student cannot drop a course that he or she is failing.

All charges for courses from which a student withdraws are subject to the refund policy listed under Fees and Financial Regulations in the Graduate Bulletin.

SUSPENSION

A graduate student who does not meet the conditions of probation (see above) will be suspended. A student who is suspended or withdraws under these conditions may apply for readmission after the lapse of one semester. An outstanding Incomplete grade at the time of suspension must be completed or will turn to an administrative F. To be readmitted the student must submit evidence that indicates academic success if readmitted. A student so readmitted will continue on academic probation and must achieve a minimum grade-point average of 3.50 in the next 12 credit hours of graduate study. Should the student fail to achieve this minimum grade-point average, a second suspension will result and subsequent readmission will be denied.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A student who finds it necessary to interrupt active pursuit of his/her degree for a semester or more may petition the IST Program Director for a leave of absence of up to one year. An MS-IST student who discontinues active enrollment in the IST Program without being granted a leave of absence must apply for readmission and will be subject to the new regulations and requirements in force.

CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT

Once a student begins the MS-IST program, he/she is expected to be continuously enrolled and actively engaged in fulfilling requirements for the degree each semester of the academic year until the degree is conferred. A student who breaks continuous enrollment at the University without requesting and being granted a leave of absence must apply for readmission and, if readmitted, be subject to the new regulations and requirements in force.

STUDENT PETITIONS

Student petitions are designed as a vehicle to request special consideration on a particular area of the IST Program. Petitions are available from the MS-IST Program Office and must be accompanied by any supporting documentation before being considered. Petitions may be submitted for a variety of reasons including:

- Leave of Absence (maximum two semesters)
- Extending an Incomplete
- F Grade – Request to Continue Studies
- Program Adjustments – Adding or dropping a course beyond deadline
- Changing Field of Concentration within the Program
- Transfer Coursework:

1. Coursework completed prior to admission (not over 5 years old with a grade of B or better)
2. Requesting to take coursework elsewhere while currently enrolled at GW
3. Withdrawing from a course (while having a passing grade)
4. Exceeding 5-year limit to complete the MS-IST Program

CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty is central to the mission of the GW School of Business and Public Management. Students are expected to commit themselves to high standards and to the promotion of academic integrity. Detailed information regarding the code is published in a brochure entitled *The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity*.

REGISTERING FOR CLASSES

Registration for graduate courses is conducted via The George Washington University Touch-Tone Registration System (202) 994-5000. After registering, a student may continue to adjust his/her schedule by phone through the end of the priority registration period. Detailed registration information, along with information on late registration fees, tuition refunds, and withdrawals, can be found in the current semester's *Schedule of Classes*. In general, to avoid late fees or having less than 100% of tuition funds refunded, courses must be dropped or added **prior to the first day of the semester or session. However, because the dates and penalties incurred change each semester, students should always refer to the current Schedule of Classes.**

CLOSED COURSES

If a course is full, the only way to get into the class is to have the faculty instructor or department office manager approve a Registration Transaction Form. Additionally, the faculty member teaching the course must agree to accept the student. A Registration Transaction Form may be picked up in the MS-IST Program Office (Monroe 402B).

TRANSFERRING COURSES

(including Non-degree courses at GW)

Students may, with program permission, transfer up to 6 credit hours of graduate study into the MS-IST Program. Courses taken prior to admission into the degree program may be transferred into a student's degree program either from other institutions, or from courses taken at George Washington University in a non-degree student status **provided that those courses were not used to satisfy the requirements of another degree program**. Students wishing to take courses at other institutions after admission to the degree program should get permission from their faculty advisor **before** taking the course. In either case, only the course credits transfer—not the grades. Also remember that you must be enrolled at GW each semester during your degree program. If you plan to take a course elsewhere, and will not be in attendance at GW for a given semester, you must register for continuous enrollment.

The requirements for transfer are:

- The course must have been taken within five years of the student's admission into the MS-IST program or while completing his/her degree.
- The student must receive a grade of B or better for any transfer courses.

- Courses taken in fulfillment of another degree (either from GW or another institution) may not be counted as transfer credits.
- The student must file a petition with the IST Program Office, along with a course syllabus, for approval of the transfer course.
- Upon completion of the course to be transferred, the student must submit to the IST Program Office an official transcript from the school where the course(s) were taken. The course will then be added as an elective transfer to the student's permanent GW record and transcript.

COURSES AT OTHER GWU LOCATIONS

Although variations of the MS-IST program are offered at other locations, students are required to take **all** their courses at their home campus. Any exemptions to this restriction must be requested by submitting a formal petition, signed by your advisor, to the program director.

GRADUATION

Students must file an Application for Graduation prior to the following dates:

- February 1 – for students completing degree requirements in the Spring Semester
- July 1 – for students completing degree requirements in the Summer Sessions
- October 1 – for students completing degree requirements in the Fall Semester

These forms are obtained from the IST Program Office. Your Program Statement on file in the MS-IST Program Office enables the Program Manager to determine whether it is possible for you to complete degree requirements by the end of the designated term. ***Students who do not have a current Program Statement on file with the IST Program Office may unnecessarily delay their graduation clearance.*** Students must have satisfactorily completed all curriculum requirements and be free from all indebtedness to the University in order to graduate.

Students must have a GPA of 3.0 or better to graduate.

Although degrees are conferred in September, February, and May, the graduation ceremony is held in May only. September and February graduates are eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony the May following their graduation dates. Students who are completing their program during the summer sessions and have six credit hours or less remaining are eligible to participate in the May graduation ceremony. While technically a September graduate, the student must submit his/her application by February 1 to participate in the ceremony.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

With all the information that students have to absorb as they enter the program, it is likely that they will miss a few of the important points. Here are some of the key points that lead to problems when students miss them.

- 1) You must get your program statement filled in and signed before the end of your first semester.
- 2) If you choose to take any waiver exams, they must be taken before the end of your first semester.
- 3) Prerequisite courses must be taken as soon as possible, preferably before the end of the student's first year in the program.

- 4) Prerequisite courses must be taken, regardless, even if they are left until the end of the program.
- 5) Students must take courses at the location to which they were admitted.
- 6) In order to receive a grade of incomplete "I", for a course, you must fill out an incomplete contract with the instructor.
- 7) Any incomplete grades must be completed by the end of the Fall or Spring semester following the semester in which the grade of "I" was assigned or the grade will automatically be changed to an "F".
- 8) Students who do not maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 will be placed on academic probation.
- 9) Any student who receives an "F" in a course will have to present cause, to the program director, as to why the student should remain in the program.
- 10) Students must have a GPA of 3.0 or better to graduate.
- 11) If it becomes numerically impossible for a student to achieve a grade point average of 3.0 by the time they graduate, the student will be automatically suspended from the program.