# SELF-STUDY

University of Kentucky

College of Communication and Information

School of Information Science

## Master of Science in Library Science
## MSLS
## January 2026

**UK** College of Communication and Information

*School of Information Science*

**School organized and maintained for the purpose of graduate education in Library and Information Science**

School of Information Science (SIS)

**Degree program being presented for accreditation by the Committee on Accreditation**

Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS)

The program presented for accreditation is a 36-hour graduate degree program through which students earn the Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS) degree. The American Library Association first granted accreditation to the Bachelor of Science in Library Science at the University of Kentucky (UK) in 1942. The MSLS program was first awarded accreditation from the American Library Association in 1949 and has continuously maintained its accreditation.

**Parent Institution**

The University of Kentucky

**Chief Executive Officer, University of Kentucky**

Eli Capilouto, DrPH, President

**Chief Academic Officer, University of Kentucky**

Dr. Robert S. DiPaola, Provost

**Principal Administrator, College of Communication and Information**

Jennifer Greer, Ph.D., Dean

**Principal Administrator, School of Information Science**

Youngok Choi, Ph.D., Director

**Regional Accrediting Agency and Status**

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC); Reaffirmed: 2023; Next Reaffirmation: 2033

**Title and Version of the Standards Addressed in the Program Presentation**

*Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies,* 2023

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AASL | American Association for School Librarians |
| AAQEP | Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Program |
| ACRL | Association of College and Research Libraries |
| ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act |
| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| ALA | American Library Association |
| ALISE | Association for Library and Information Science Education |
| ALSC | Association for Library Service to Children |
| AMIA | Association of Moving Image Archivists |
| AMP | Accelerated Master's Pathway |
| AR | Administrative Regulation |
| ASB | Alternative Spring Break |
| ASIS&T | Association for Information Science & Technology |
| AY | Academic Year |
| BCALA | Black Caucus of the American Library Association |
| CAEP | Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation |
| CAO | Chief Administrative Officer |
| CELT | Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching |
| CI | College of Communication and Information |
| CITS | College of Communication and Information Technology Services |
| COA | Committee on Accreditation |
| CPE | Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education |
| CV | Curriculum Vitae |
| DGS | Director of Graduate Studies |
| DOE | Distribution of Effort |
| DRC | Disability Resource Center |
| FAFSA | Free Application for Federal Student Aid |

| | |
|---|---|
| FMLA | Family and Medical Leave Act |
| GLAM | Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums |
| GRE | Graduate Record Examination |
| HBCU | Historically Black Colleges and Universities |
| HSI | Hispanic-Serving Institution |
| ICIS | International Conference on Information Systems |
| ICR | Instructional Communication and Research |
| ICT | Information Communication Technology |
| IFLA | International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions |
| ISC | Integrated Strategic Communication |
| ITS | Information Technology Services |
| JASIST | Journal of the Association of Information Science and Technology |
| JCPS | Jefferson County Public Schools |
| KDLA | Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives |
| KTPS | Kentucky Teacher Performance Standards |
| KUSI | Kentucky Underground Storage |
| LGBTQ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer |
| LIS | Library and Information Science |
| LISR | Library and Information Science Research |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| LQ | Library Quarterly |
| MECA&D | Maine College of Art & Design |
| MLA | Medical Library Association |
| MLIS | Master of Library and Information Science |
| MS-ICT | Master of Science in Information Communication Technology |
| MSLS | Master of Science in Library Science |
| OEO | Office of Equal Opportunity |
| OFA | Office of Faculty Advancement |
| OSPIE | Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness |

| | |
|---|---|
| RCAP | Research and Creative Activities Program |
| ROI | Return-on-Investment |
| RUSA | Reference and User Services |
| SAA | Society of American Archivists |
| SCALE | Services for Children of All Abilities in Libraries: An Exploration |
| SHP | Student Health Plan |
| SIG | Special Interest Group |
| SIS | School of Information Science |
| SoLAR | Society for Learning Analytics Research |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| TCE | Teacher Course Evaluation |
| TDL | Temporary Disability Leave |
| TRACS | Triage, Referral, Assistance and Crisis Support |
| UHS | University Health Services |
| UK | University of Kentucky |
| URM | Underrepresented Minority |
| WCAG | Web Content Accessibility Guidelines |
| W3C | World Wide Web Consortium |
| YALSA | Young Adult Library Services Association |

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# Introduction

## *The Institution*

Founded in 1865 as a land-grant institution, the [University of Kentucky (UK)](#) is dedicated to improving people's lives through excellence in education, research and creative work, service, and healthcare. The city of [Lexington](#), Kentucky, which is located within the [Bluegrass region of Kentucky](#), is home to the main campus of the University. Under the direction of [President Eli Capilouto](#), the University's physical presence has undergone many changes in the last seven years, including the addition of new buildings and significant renovations to existing buildings.

The University is unique in that it is one of only eight institutions that contain schools of agriculture, engineering, medicine, and pharmacy within a single, contiguous campus. UK operates with an annual budget of more than $6.5 billion, employs more than 26,000 people and serves nearly 40,000 students.

At the University of Kentucky, the university administration controls most resources centrally. In terms of financial resources for the School of Information Science (SIS), the budget flows from the University to the College and then to the program. Typically, the School's operating budget is flat from year to year with adjustments made based on new faculty or staff positions and metrics like credit hour production, retention, and graduation rates.

The Provost's Office controls office and classroom space centrally. The School's employee offices are housed in one building, the [Lucille Caudill Little Fine Arts & Design Library](#). This building also has four classrooms on the third floor, with SIS having priority scheduling access for these classrooms.

Other resources, like the learning management system (LMS; the campus LMS is Canvas) and several software packages (Microsoft Office, various Adobe products), are provided by [University Information Technology Services](#) (ITS). ITS does not provide direct support in terms of budget and services to the School. Our College, the College of Communication and Information, maintains an [information technology group](#) responsible for supporting software and hardware needs. Beginning in AY 2025-2026, the University has initiated a phased consolidation of selected services, including information technology, at the institutional level. At the time of this report, these structural changes have not affected operations of the School or the LIS program.

## The College

The College of Communication and Information is composed of two schools (School of Information Science and School of Journalism and Media), and two departments (Department of Communication and Department of Integrated Strategic Communication). Collectively, these units offer five bachelor's programs, two master's programs, three undergraduate certificates, and four graduate certificates. In addition, the college offers an interdisciplinary master's and Ph.D. program. Nearly 100 full-time faculty lead more than 2,300 undergraduate majors and 400 graduate students while also teaching in the university's general education curriculum (UK core) and supporting students pursuing minors and certificates in the college. The college also houses the University of Kentucky's independent student newspaper, the Kentucky Kernel, and the championship-winning Intercollegiate Debate Team.

In 1993, the College of Library and Information Science merged with the College of Communication to become the College of Communication and Information Studies. That merger created the School of Library and Information Science. In summer 2012, the College name changed to the College of Communication and Information, and, in fall 2012, the College became a member of the iSchools (see Appendix I.8 SIS Historical Timeline for more detail).

## The School

Classes in library science began at the University in 1918 offering classes through the English Department of the College of Arts and Sciences, with a focus on library instruction for educators. By 1929, students could enroll in a complete Library Science program, which became the Department of Library Science in 1932. In 1942, the American Library Association (ALA) accredited the program, making it the only ALA-accredited program in the Commonwealth, a distinction it continues to hold. The Department became the Graduate School of Library Science in 1968 and the College of Library Science in 1970 — the first stand-alone college of library science in the United States. In 1982, it became the College of Library and Information Science. The 1993 merger with the College of Communication placed it within the newly formed College of Communication and Information Studies as the School of Library and Information Science.

The School has grown significantly over the years. Starting as a single master's degree, the School now offers two master's degrees: the Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS) and the Master of Science in Information Communication Technology (MS-ICT), as well as an undergraduate major in ICT and a minor in Information Studies. The LIS program and the ICT program share one University budget. The Instructional Communication and Research (ICR) non-degree program is funded through a separate budget. Academic budgets are provided by the University to the College, which allocates money accordingly. Faculty from the School also teach, advise and participate in the College's Ph.D. program.

During this review period, a new School Director was appointed. Jeff Huber, Ph.D., served as the Director of the School from the fall of 2008 until summer 2023. Following a national search in academic year (AY) 2022–2023, Youngok Choi, Ph.D., previously department chair at The Catholic University of America, was named as the new Director in March of 2023. Choi joined UK on July 1, 2023, and has served as Director since then. As Director of the School, Choi reports to the Dean of the College of Communication and Information, Jennifer Greer, PhD.

Choi also served as Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) for both the LIS and ICT master's programs until Program Coordinator positions were created in fall 2024. Choi is currently serving as the program coordinator and DGS for the LIS program as Shannon Oltmannn, PhD., who was the LIS program coordinator, left the University for another position at the end of AY 24-25.

The Dean's Office of the College has also experienced some changes during the review period:

> Derek Lane, Ph.D. — Interim Dean, AY 2018–2019

> Jennifer Greer, Ph.D. — Dean, August 2019–October 2023 (left to take Interim Vice Provost position with the University)

> Brandi Frisby, Ph.D. — Acting Dean, October 2023–April 2024

> Jennifer Greer, Ph.D. — Dean, May 2024 (returned from Interim Vice Provost position)

As mentioned previously, the School established three program coordinator positions in fall 2024 to provide more focused oversight on instructional communication, information communication technology, and library science. These dedicated coordinator roles allow more focused attention to items like class scheduling, curriculum development, and student success.

Currently, the School employs nearly 50 full-time employees, including both staff and faculty.

## The School's Budget

The School of Information Science operates with two separate budgets. One budget covers the library science program and the information communication technology program. The second budget covers the instructional communication budget. When the instructional communication started, one of its primary charges was to teach UK core courses and as such, it was awarded specific monies to support that specific goal. In both cases, the budgets primarily cover salaries for full-time faculty and staff.

## The Program

The Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS) degree is a 36-credit hour program that most students complete in two to three years. The program also offers an option for students to complete the requirements for school librarian certification concurrently with the master's degree. Students may begin the program in the fall, spring, or eight-week summer semesters.

To earn the MSLS degree, all students must complete four required core courses (LIS 600 Information in Society, LIS 601 Information Search, LIS 602 Knowledge Organization, and LIS 603 Management in Information Organizations) and an additional eight elective courses (Appendix I.9 Library Science Course List). Students can use the elective clusters as course suggestions in addition to talking with their advisor about course selection. All courses in the library science program are three credit hours and offered in an online and asynchronous format. Our program began offering online courses in 1999 and the degree became fully online 10 years later in 2009.

## Relevant Personnel

Since the last accreditation visit, there have been several leadership changes:

- In 2019, Jennifer Greer was named Dean of the College of Communication and Information.
- In 2022, Robert DiPaola was named Provost for the University.
- In 2023, the School's Director, Jeff Huber, returned to faculty.
- In 2023, the School named its new Director, Youngok Choi.
- In 2023, Jennifer Greer accepted an interim position as Acting Vice Provost and Dean Liaison.
- In 2023, Brandi Frisby was named acting Dean of the College.
- In 2024, Jennifer Greer returned to the College as Dean.
- In 2024, the School appointed Shannon Oltmann as the Library Science Program Coordinator, a new position.
- In 2025, Youngok Choi assumed the coordinator position after Shannon Oltmann took a job at another institution.

## Process

The faculty established chapter committees and an initial calendar of accreditation related events in fall 2021. For the remainder of the 2021–2022 academic year, the chapter groups reviewed previous self-studies, both from UK and from other programs, and began generating lists of relevant data sources. In fall 2022, faculty developed crosswalk spreadsheets to help translate the proposed standards in the ALA draft standards document to the previous standards from the 2015 version. In the spring of 2024, the faculty reviewed the 2023 Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies. As needed, relevant data sources were updated to address the standards for their assigned chapters. The faculty continued drafting chapters throughout the fall 2024 semester and completed several rounds of revisions in the spring 2025 semester. Over the summer of 2025, the Director and Assistant Director worked on further revisions and employed a copy editor to provide additional support. In late summer, the School shared a draft of its self-study with

partners and its constituents to obtain their feedback. During the fall of 2025, the Accreditation Committee and the Director finalized content, data, and appendix materials. Our review period covers AY 2018–2019 through AY 2024-2025. Chapters were assigned to groups of faculty as follows:

**Standard I: Systematic Planning**

Shannon Oltmann, Associate Professor, convener; Beth Bloch, Assistant Professor; and Shannon Crawford Barniskis, Assistant Professor

**Standard II: Program-Level Learning Outcomes and Curriculum**

Maria Cahill, Professor, convener; Daniela DiGiacomo, Associate Professor; and Namjoo Choi, Associate Professor

**Standard III: Faculty**

Soohyung Joo, Associate Professor, convener; Sarah Barriage, Associate Professor; and Brian Real, Assistant Professor

**Standard IV: Students**

Ashley DeWitt, Senior Lecturer, convener; Yvonne Eadon, Assistant Professor; and Will Buntin, Assistant Director

**Standard V: Infrastructure**

Will Buntin, Assistant Director, convener; Sean Burns, Associate Professor; and Youngok Choi, Professor

# Standard I: Systematic Planning

## *Introduction*

This chapter documents a clear and continuous planning process that includes: Strategic Planning Committee activities (Sections I.2.1–I.2.3), a historical overview of planning cycles (2015–2020, 2022–2027), faculty meetings, curriculum retreats, and assessment practices, as well as detailed accounts of data gathering, program evaluation and decision-making mechanisms. It demonstrates the use of structured cycles, such as Plan-Do-Study-Act, and includes examples of faculty- and committee-led changes to curriculum, student support, and program infrastructure.

The library and information science (LIS) program has a new strategic plan to set updated priorities for the program. In developing the plan, the program focused on actions that address challenges and opportunities of our current environment, optimize the effective use of the program's resources, and enhance the program's engagement with the community and the profession. Our efforts in developing this new strategic plan were systematic, collaborative, and included staff, faculty, graduates, students, and community members. Several key constituencies were involved during the planning process. The LIS Planning Committee (renamed the Assessment Committee for the 2025–2026 academic year) drove assessing and planning the future directions of the program, as well as the Strategic Planning Committee, which focused on long-term planning. Additional committees also contributed, like the Curriculum Committee, which plans for and implements revisions to pedagogy or curriculum. These formal committees and processes, retreats, and monthly faculty meetings help to inform the decision-making process. This chapter describes the work of the LIS systematic planning process in accordance with COA Standard I.

## *Standard I.1 Mission and Goals*

### Library Science Program Mission and Goals

The LIS program continually reviews its vision, mission, goals, and objectives through a formal process of strategic planning every three to five years. In addition, analyses of several data collection efforts shape future directions and assess improvements over time. Through the strategic planning process, the LIS faculty developed a clear sense of our vision for what the MSLS program is meant to offer for our stakeholders, a shared understanding of who we are and the outcomes we intend to achieve, and the values we reflect in our pedagogy and service.

The [vision](#) of the LIS program, as described in the 2022–2027 Strategic plan is:
- Empowered by information.
- Transformed by learning.
- Driven by research.

The [mission](#) of the program is:
- To prepare the next generation of information professionals to be leaders in the field through innovative curriculum, research, and professional services. We conduct high-quality research that impacts the information fields and aids practitioners.

The program [goals](#) include:
- Developing further a welcoming culture that fosters effective research, teaching and learning.
- Producing competent information professionals who can facilitate the flow of information in a rapidly changing society.
- Recruiting, developing, supporting and retaining a talented and promising body of faculty, staff, and students.

## Quality Education

The vision and mission of LIS help foster quality education by emphasizing the importance of an innovative curriculum. We ensure an innovative curriculum through frequent revisions to required core courses, an active Curriculum Committee that reviews newly proposed courses, and a dedicated faculty that develops and adapts new pedagogical approaches and content/courses. Updates to our curriculum are grounded in evidence-based teaching practices. They are regularly evaluated through student learning outcomes and feedback, ensuring that instructional approaches directly contribute to meaningful learning experiences. More specific examples and evidence of curriculum updates can be found in Standard II.

## Alignment with LIS Profession

We align with the needs of the LIS profession (see [Table II.2 Alignment of Program Learning Outcomes and Professional Competencies](#)) and prepare students to be leaders in their field. Our alumni lead public libraries across Kentucky and beyond, receiving national recognition such as the Library Journal's LIS Movers and Shakers award. The mission and goals of the LIS program are designed to align closely with the evolving needs of the library and information science profession, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to face contemporary challenges in the field.

## Access and Opportunity

Our vision and mission incorporate the value of ensuring information serves all people. Research by many of our faculty has an explicit focus on the needs of communities and individuals, which they incorporate into the courses they teach, to better prepare students for the changing landscape of their future customers and careers. We ensure that our commitment

to access and respect for various perspectives is reflected in student recruitment strategies, advising practices, and faculty development, so that all students can succeed.

## Continuous Improvement

The LIS program employs a structured and iterative approach to continuous improvement, ensuring that its goals and objectives remain responsive to the evolving needs of students, faculty, and the broader LIS profession. Feedback from alumni, employers, and the External Advisory Council has directly informed actions such as adjusting course content, refining elective offerings, and enhancing student advising structures.

Systematic planning processes, such as regular curriculum reviews, faculty retreats, monthly faculty meetings, and biennial surveys of employers and alumni provide opportunities to assess progress and implement necessary changes.

Additionally, the LIS Strategic Planning Committee, Planning Committee, and Curriculum Committee work in tandem to evaluate data from sources such as student learning outcomes, curriculum audits, program-level reviews, and the representation of various perspectives across the program. These assessment-driven refinements have led to tangible improvements, including adjustments to elective clusters, the establishment and exploration of new certification options, and initiatives to strengthen career preparation and advising (see Standard II.2 and Standard IV.4 for further discussion). Input from the External Advisory Council ensures that these refinements are aligned with professional expectations and emerging trends in the LIS field. By maintaining a dynamic and evidence-based planning process, the LIS program ensures that its curriculum, research initiatives and student support services continue to evolve in alignment with best practices and emerging trends in the field.

The program prioritizes key areas, such as access and opportunity, practical skill development, curricular innovation, and research excellence, each of which reflect critical concerns within the LIS field today. By regularly assessing curricular offerings, revisiting elective clusters, and conducting curricular audits, the program ensures that students gain relevant, applied knowledge and skills that prepare them for various roles in libraries, archives, and information organizations. These changes are informed by current trends in the LIS profession, including the growing demand for digital literacy, data management, culturally responsive services, and user-centered design, ensuring graduates are well prepared for emerging roles in the field (see ALA State of America's Libraries Report and IFLA Trends Report 2024 for further detail).

The program's commitment to systematic assessment and review, informed by employer surveys, alumni feedback, and external advisory council input, ensures that graduates develop the competencies necessary for leadership in a rapidly changing information landscape. Through this strategic alignment, the LIS program not only serves the needs of its students but also contributes to the broader LIS profession by fostering adaptable, skilled and ethically grounded professionals.

## Alignment with Institution's Mission and College Goals

The LIS program's mission also reflects the values and commitments of the University of Kentucky and the College of Communication and Information. UK's mission highlights the importance of serving a global community, while the College's strategic goals emphasize innovation, critical thinking, and a shared sense of purpose, captured in its call to "come join us." The LIS program continues this thread of global engagement and shared knowledge by emphasizing the impact of its scholarship on the LIS field and by supporting practitioners through research and service. As the sections below will illustrate, the LIS program's goals and objectives actively support the university's broader commitment to facilitating learning, expanding knowledge, and serving communities locally and globally.

## School of Information Science Mission and Goals

In 2022, the School drafted its first mission/vision statement. In fall 2023, SIS initiated its first-ever *School-level* strategic planning process, marking a significant step toward establishing a long-term vision for the School. Through discussions amongst faculty, staff and administrators, key themes emerged, including collaboration, creativity, curiosity, determination, fairness, excellence, and kindness.

The mission and vision of SIS follows: "The University of Kentucky School of Information Science, an interdisciplinary community of scholars and professionals, brings together communication, information, instruction, and technology. Students learn to leverage knowledge and skills to become critical and informed members of communities. We model and foster equitable and human-centered approaches to problem solving, innovative research, information access and synthesis, and responsible leadership," as found on our website.

This mission statement emphasizes the importance of a broad curriculum to deliver quality education that prepares students for the 21st century and the information professions of the future. It also highlights a commitment to fostering "human-centered approaches" to our work demonstrating these values are incorporated into our mission statement and, more broadly, our research and teaching.

The SIS mission is informed by the broader missions of the College of Communication and Information and the University of Kentucky. The innovative college mission statement encourages people to become part of our academic community: "We launch critical and innovative thinkers, creators, and doers. Come join us." In its strategic plan, the College has created a brand promise of "shaping passions into professions." This promise is central to the School's focus on preparing passionate, engaged information professionals. The College of Communication and Information continuously revisits this mission and brand promise to ensure actions are aligned with them.

At the University of Kentucky, the [current strategic plan](#) (adopted in 2021) incorporates three prongs into the mission statement.

The university:
1. Facilitates learning, informed by scholarship and research.
2. Expands knowledge through research, scholarship and creative activity.
3. Serves a global community by disseminating, sharing, and applying knowledge.

As indicated by this mission statement, the University of Kentucky takes student education seriously, prioritizing serving a broad range of students and extending the vision of college education to more students. Similarly, SIS is committed to serving a range of students through its academic programs.

An iterative and open approach led to the establishment of the School's strategic plan ([see Appendix I.1 SIS 2025-2018 Strategic Plan](#)), covering the years 2025–2028. The plan is designed to align our mission with evolving professional and educational needs while leveraging the School's strengths and identifying areas for growth. Further refinements are ongoing to ensure that the plan reflects both faculty and staff priorities and provides a strong foundation for future initiatives. The SIS strategic plan is mentioned here to highlight the School-level goals. The plan includes the following priorities and goals:

1. **Exploring innovation and efficiencies:** Improve efficiencies and innovation to better serve faculty, staff, and students.
   a. Institutional knowledge and processes
   b. Committee streamlining
   c. Professional development
   d. Student support
   e. Work-life balance and well-being
   f. Space planning

2. **Building community:** Strengthen internal and external connections to foster a collaborative and welcoming professional community.
   a. Program promotion
   b. Internal community engagement
   c. University collaboration and outreach
   d. Building trust and opportunity
   e. Industry and alumni engagement

3. **Refreshing the curriculum:** Refresh and innovate curricula to meet the evolving needs of students and stakeholders.
   a. Curriculum innovation
   b. Regular curriculum review
   c. Leveraging technology

4. **Fostering research:** Foster research initiatives and interdisciplinary collaboration to elevate our scholarly impact.
     a.     Research support for faculty
     b.     Research support for students
     c.     Doctoral program exploration
     d.     Participation in interdisciplinary research

These priority areas and goals are focused on strengthening SIS as a cohesive unit. The SIS strategic plan aligns with the strategic plans of the College of Communication and Information and the University. For example, there is a strong focus throughout all the plans on strengthening the curriculum to better prepare students for 21st-century career paths. Likewise, there is an emphasis on fostering collegiality, collaboration, and interdisciplinary research.

With the recent implementation of our first strategic plan, the library science program now has an opportunity to reference and align its own planning efforts with broader School-level priorities. Future plans can intentionally build upon the School's framework to support shared goals and reinforce institutional cohesion.

## *Standard I.2 Process*

### Continuous Review

LIS employs an ongoing systematic planning process that involves collecting data, analyzing the data and then implementing changes based on that analysis. In this process, the program involves all relevant constituents. (See Table I.2 further down for more details about some of the review mechanisms in place.)

### Data Gathering

The LIS program utilizes a wide variety of data to inform its planning process. Some of these data inputs are listed below, along with how often they are collected:

- Course-level data
  - Syllabi, every semester
  - LIS 600 Pre- and Post-Tests, every semester
  - Teacher-Course Evaluations (TCEs) and other direct student feedback, every semester

- Faculty and Committee Reports
  - Reports from Curriculum, Assessment, Planning, Admissions and other faculty committees, monthly and annually

- External reports
  - The Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) reports on the LIS educational field, annually
  - American Library Association (ALA) data, including reports such as the Public Libraries Annual Report Data, annually
  - Reviews of other MSLS or MLIS programs, their core courses, and their focus areas, as needed
  - *US News & World* Reports and other program reviews or ranking systems, as these are published
  - ALA (re)accreditation feedback, every seven years

- Student data
  - Entrance surveys, every semester
  - Exit Assessment Data Survey, every semester
  - Focus groups, as needed

- Alumni and Employer Surveys
  - Alumni, every other year
  - Employer, every other year

- Curriculum Audits
  - Technology audit, every other year
  - Practical skills audit, every other year

- Admissions and Marketing Materials
  - Reports to LIS faculty, monthly
  - Recruitment plans, as needed
  - Promotional materials and advertisements, created as needed
  - Reports on outreach activities, as needed

- Advisory Board
  - Minutes of External Advisory Board meeting, annually
  - Report produced for External Advisory Board, annually
  - Survey of External Advisory Board, as needed

- Research Reports and Output
  - Reports to the Associate Dean of Research for CI, every semester
  - Reports on faculty participation in local/regional conferences and other venues, as needed
  - Reports of services to practitioner communities, as it occurs
  - Recognition from local/regional bodies, as it occurs
  - Faculty annual or biennial review packages, annually or biennially

This data is reviewed regularly in monthly faculty meetings, LIS curriculum retreats, SIS council meetings, and LIS external advisory council meetings. The LIS faculty meet monthly for approximately 60-90 minutes at each meeting. In these monthly meetings, led by the program coordinator, faculty discuss announcements, old and new business, and committee updates (see Appendix I.2 Library Science Faculty Meeting Minutes 2018-2025). The LIS faculty are regularly updated on any School committee activities by the appropriate representative. In addition, all LIS committees provide a monthly update on their work and seek input from other faculty. These meetings serve to keep everyone informed and updated; in addition, all faculty have a chance to ask questions and participate in the governance of the unit. Discussions and decisions in the monthly LIS faculty meetings directly inform the work of LIS committees.  in the governance of the unit. Discussions and decisions in the monthly LIS faculty meetings directly inform the work of LIS committees.

In addition to these monthly meetings, the LIS faculty hold biennial curriculum retreats. In these meetings, faculty share course overviews, assignments, and updates with one another. While some faculty might teach one or more required LIS courses, no one faculty member teaches every core course. We want all faculty to be well-informed about the content and key assignments of core courses, particularly as these are central to students' exit assessments. During curriculum retreats, we also discuss current and proposed elective clusters to better guide our students.  We provide updates on revised and cross-listed courses, graduate certificates, and other curricular matters.

All School of Information Science employees (faculty and staff) meet three times a year in SIS council meetings, led by Director Choi. In SIS council meetings, all employees are updated on general School actions and activities. Everyone is also updated about the actions and decisions of programs, such as the LIS program, as well as any School-wide issues or updates. Since the School has an expressed goal of breaking down silos between the programs, SIS council meetings are important events to share information, build community, and employ shared governance.

Finally, the data described above is shared with the LIS external advisory council (Appendix I.6 LIS External Advisory Council Membership) in annual meetings, typically held during spring semesters. At these meetings, led by Director Choi, all external advisory council members are invited to campus to discuss the program and to share perspectives from their professional positions. As part of the LIS program's commitment to systematic planning and continuous assessment, input from the External Advisory Council plays an important role in shaping the program's strategic direction. The LIS faculty share their research expertise and their recent work, and Director Choi reviews the strategic decision making undertaken in the previous academic year. Often, the group has in-depth discussions about the future directions of the LIS program, the profession, courses we could offer, or the changing environment for our graduates. Based in part on such prior discussions, for example, we have added courses on programming and outreach and on advanced management.

The LIS program has maintained the following committees, through 2024–2025 AY: Planning, Curriculum, Admissions and Strategic Planning. Each committee has a unique focus. Refer to Table I.1.

**Table I.1. LIS committees and their duties**

| Committee | Focus |
|---|---|
| **Planning** | Collects and analyzes data, including alumni survey, employer survey, and learning outcomes assessment; addresses overall issues for the program (replaced in 2025–2026 with "Strategic Planning Committee") |
| **Curriculum** | Reviews proposals and makes recommendations to the full faculty for new courses; organizes biennial curriculum retreat; addresses any additional issues related to curriculum. |
| **Admissions** | Collects and shares data on annual admissions; reviews requirements for admissions (replaced in 2025–2026 with "Student Affairs Committee") |
| **Strategic Planning** | Responsible for monitoring progress on the LIS strategic plan |

## Alignment with Institutional Assessment

The LIS program utilizes systematic planning that aligns with the University of Kentucky's approach to planning. The University expects academic units to engage in continuous improvement and conducts a comprehensive program review every six to eight years. For LIS, the ALA reaccreditation process serves as one component of the university review process. This process is flexible, allowing units to focus on mission-aligned priorities while evaluating key areas such as faculty, financial and physical resources, student learning outcomes, retention and completion rates, research productivity, and community engagement.

Each unit conducts a self-study, which is reviewed by an external committee that provides constructive feedback, highlights program strengths, and offers recommendations for growth and innovation. The department then translates these insights into actionable improvements, developing an implementation plan that outlines whether the program will grow, sustain or close. This plan is submitted to the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), ensuring transparency, accountability and data-informed decision-making in the University's academic programs. The UK self-study for the library science program would normally be due spring 2025. Given the timeline of our accreditation cycle, the UK review process will begin after the accreditation site visit. The program will submit the final version of this document as well as additional supplemental materials.

The University of Kentucky has a comprehensive planning and assessment process that emphasizes continuous improvement across all university units. As outlined in Administrative Regulation 1:4 (AR 1:4): Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Policy, this process ensures that

unit functions align with the university's strategic goals, engages all units in ongoing improvement, and informs budgeting to support the institution's mission. The University planning process is illustrated below in Figure I.1. The strategic planning process should articulate the institutional vision. This then informs the planning and assessment processes, including educational programs, administrative support, and educational support. The planning and assessment processes guide operational planning, which includes components such as budgeting, facilities, and human resources. This information feeds back into strategic planning in an ongoing process. The institution's mission and goals provide a common foundation which guides decision making. As shown in the figure, the institutional mission and goals are at the center of these processes.



(Adapted from SACSCOC Summer Institute 2021)

**Figure I.1. The University Planning Process**

At the university level, many parties play key roles in institutional planning and effectiveness. Below, we briefly describe some of these key parties and their responsibilities.

- The Board of Trustees – Approves the University's mission, strategic plan, and annual operating and capital budgets.
- President of the University – Initiates the development of the University Strategic Plan and annual operating budget while being accountable to the Board of Trustees for assessing and documenting institutional effectiveness.
- Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) – Ensure that designated units and services actively participate in institutional planning and effectiveness, linking these efforts to decision-making and resource allocation. They collaborate with the Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (OSPIE) to maintain alignment with reporting cycles. In the College of Communication and Information, the CAO is Dean Jennifer Greer.
- OSPIE – Oversees university-wide assessment and planning processes by managing timelines, maintaining review data, providing guidance, supporting strategic planning, facilitating effectiveness initiatives, offering feedback and delivering training.

This structured approach fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that institutional planning, assessment, and resource allocation remain aligned with the university's mission and strategic priorities while allowing the units autonomy to make mission-driven decisions within their available resources.

These university-wide planning and assessment processes inform the LIS program's systematic planning efforts by providing a broader framework and expectations for continuous review of the program's goals, mission, and objectives. For academic units, such as the School of Information Science, this systematic planning process typically means a combination of student learning outcomes assessment, periodic review, and administrative unit planning that are designed to assess student learning. Additionally, the unit ensures its operational goals align with the university's accreditation requirements of the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges](#) (SACSCOC) and the [Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education](#) (CPE).

UK works continuously to strengthen the assessment process of academic programs and has a coordinated, centralized, and campus-wide process for assessing student learning outcomes. However, assessment is ultimately a faculty-driven process, in that programs are empowered to develop outcomes, develop assessment methods, and analyze the results to guide changes within their program based on the assessment results. OSPIE ensures reports are submitted, provides a framework for the process that aligns with SACSCOC expectations, and provides training, support, and feedback as needed.

Just as OSPIE oversees university-wide planning, the LIS program employs structured assessment mechanisms, including faculty reviews, student learning outcomes assessments, and strategic planning evaluations, to measure the attainment of program goals and objectives.

All academic programs are expected to maintain an up-to-date assessment plan with OSPIE. These assessment plans include the program's student learning outcomes, a curriculum map and an assessment plan for measuring students' achievement of the program's outcomes. While programs determine the cycle for assessing individual student learning outcomes, they are expected to submit an annual report with the assessment results of at least one student learning outcome. They are also expected to identify any necessary action items that are identified through their assessment process and provide an update on their ongoing changes. The program faculty have the responsibility to determine what, if any, changes are warranted to the curriculum, pedagogy, support services, and other aspects of the academic program based on their assessment.  These requirements encourage a continuous assessment cycle of "Plan-Do-Study-Act," in which the program develops the outcomes, provides student with the opportunity to learn and demonstrate the outcome, assesses students' progress, and then plans revisions to the program as needed.

## Constituents Involved

In the LIS program, several constituents are involved in systematic planning. The core group involved in systematic planning is the LIS faculty and staff; this group handles most of the decision-making, implementation and evaluation related to systematic planning.  As outlined elsewhere, the parent institution guides the programmatic assessment and planning processes for the LIS program. There are also regular meetings between the program coordinator, assistant director, and director; between the director and the college dean; and amongst the director, the dean, and representatives from the Provost Office. These meetings all serve to keep key individuals in the parent institution well-informed about the program, and then have relevant information fed back into the program.

Students are involved in systematic planning by invitation to join LIS committees, such as the Planning Committee and the Curriculum Committee. In addition, students are surveyed when they enter the program and when they complete the exit assessment. We also gather student feedback with occasional focus groups and other surveys as warranted. Student completion of the exit assessment (through which they demonstrate mastery of the program learning outcomes) is a significant way we assess our program (more details on students are provided in Standard IV).

Employers are another key constituent of the LIS program. They are represented on the external advisory board and in the employer survey, conducted every other year. Employers are encouraged to share their assessment of our curriculum and student preparation for the workforce, as well as their anticipated workforce needs.

The library science external council is also a very important constituent. The council serves as a consultative body composed of distinguished professionals from various sectors of the library and information science field. The council typically consists of ten members, including directors of state-level public libraries, department chairs and deans from academic libraries, the State Librarian, the Kentucky Department of Education School Librarian Lead, and learning specialists

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from P-12 institutions. Faculty and staff from the LIS program meet with the external advisory council each spring ([Appendix I.6 LIS External Advisory Council Membership](#) for a list of members).

Table I.2 illustrates the involvement of stakeholder groups in the ongoing planning, implementation and assessment efforts of the LIS program, highlighting areas where each stakeholder group has contributed valuable input.

**Table I.2. Continuous review with stakeholder involvement in program planning, implementation, and assessment**

| Stakeholders | Methods of engagement | Sample consultation areas |
|---|---|---|
| **Faculty** | Faculty retreat each fall<br><br>Monthly faculty meetings<br><br>Various other committee meetings (Strategic planning committee, planning committee, curriculum committee, etc.)<br><br>Curriculum Retreat, biennial | • Assessment of learning outcomes and program objective achievement<br>• Course offerings and schedules<br>• Curriculum coverage<br>• Faculty searches<br>• Mission, goals and objectives<br>• New program initiatives<br>• Recruitment and enrollment issues<br>• Strategic planning |
| **Staff** | Daily consultation by email, phone or in person<br><br>Meetings as needed | • Assessment of learning outcomes and program objective achievement<br>• Budget management<br>• Comprehensive examination<br>• Course offerings and schedules<br>• Outreach to stakeholders<br>• Recruitment and enrollment issues<br>• Support for students and faculty |
| **Students** | Exit survey each semester<br>Course evaluations each semester<br><br>Student representatives on the | • Assessment of learning outcomes and program objective achievement<br>• Career planning and support<br>• Curriculum coverage<br>• Evaluation of teaching and learning |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | curriculum, planning and other committees<br><br>Student organization events<br>Focus group as needed | • Evaluation of facilities and resources |
| **LIS Advisory Council** | Council meeting in the spring semester per year | • Assessment of learning outcomes and program objective achievement<br>• Market trends and needs<br>• New program initiatives<br>• Outreach to stakeholders<br>• Planning and assessment<br>• Recruitment and enrollment issues |
| **Alumni** | Alumni survey every other year | • Assessment of learning outcomes and program objective achievement<br>• Career planning and support<br>• Curriculum changes<br>• Market trends and needs<br>• Relations with alumni |
| **College and the university (dean and associate dean of graduate studies, Graduate School, OSPIE, Associate Provost of Academic Affairs, UK Online, CELT, Career Services, University Libraries)** | Consultation by email, phone and in person<br>Meetings as appropriate | • Admissions<br>• Assessment of learning outcomes and program objective achievement<br>• Evaluation of program performance<br>• New program initiatives |
| **Employers** | Employer survey every other year | • Assessment of graduates' knowledge and abilities<br>• Curriculum coverage<br>• Market trends and needs |

## Changes to the Planning Process

This section describes two significant changes to the LIS program. First, in AY 23–24, Director Choi determined that each program in SIS (LIS, ICT and ICR) would benefit from having respective program coordinators. One of the purposes of making these positions was to ensure

each unit within the School had a dedicated administrator to help oversee the planning processes/functioning of that unit. Beyond that, this change created more opportunities for faculty to build leadership skills. This position also helps to build and maintain the institutional knowledge necessary for effective planning at the program and School levels. Shannon Oltmann, Ph.D., began serving as the LIS program coordinator effective July 2024 (the start of the fiscal year). Since being appointed as program coordinator, Oltmann led the monthly LIS faculty meetings and helped coordinate planning and scheduling until she left UK at the end of the spring 2025 semester for a position at Wayne State University. Director Choi is serving as interim program coordinator for the LIS program for AY 24-25.

The second significant change pertains to the committee structure for library science. Throughout AY 24–25, the LIS faculty discussed whether the current committee structure was still serving the needs of the program, particularly considering a) the need to gather and assess specific data; b) the desire to be more engaged with recruitment; and c) the implementation of the LIS strategic plan. First, faculty listed all tasks and decisions that needed to be undertaken by the program, then the program coordinator separated these tasks into categories based on similarity and overlap. These categories then formed the basis for specific, focused committees. Based on these discussions, the faculty developed a revised committee structure. In April 2025, the LIS faculty voted to approve the formation (or revision) of the following committees. The draft charge for each committee is included, though the first iteration of the committees — to begin in academic AY 25–26 — will fine tune these charges.

1. Strategic planning committee: Ensure the program is driven by a faculty-created strategic plan. This committee works closely with the director, assistant director, program coordinator, and others as needed.
2. Assessment committee: Ensure the program is collecting, reviewing and utilizing assessment data. This committee works closely with the SIS data collector, the assistant director, and others as needed.
3. Curriculum committee: Ensure the program reviews curriculum and curricular decisions. This committee works closely with the assistant director, program coordinator, SIS data collector, and others as needed.
4. Student affairs committee: Ensure the program is engaging with and responsive to student needs and concerns. This committee works closely with Student Affairs staff, the director, the assistant director, and others as needed.
5. Exit exam committee: Ensure the program implements and reviews an appropriate and effective exit evaluation. This committee works closely with the SIS data collector, assistant director, Student Affairs personnel, and others as needed.

With the change in committee structure, the LIS faculty have implemented some changes in which committees, going forward, will be responsible for various collection procedures. Table I.3 below can be compared with Table I.1 to see how data collection procedures have shifted with the change in committee structure. (Note: data not collected/produced by LIS committees, shown in Table I.1, will still be collected, but is not shown in Table I.3.)

**Table I.3. LIS committee structure effective fall 2025**

| Committee/group | Data collected/produced | Additional notes |
|---|---|---|
| **LIS Strategic Planning committee** | • Monthly and annual reports | |
| **LIS Assessment Committee** | • Alumni survey<br>• Employer survey<br>• Monthly and annual reports<br>• Other data needed to assess program | |
| **LIS Curriculum Committee** | • Curriculum retreat reports<br>• Monthly and annual reports<br>• Learning outcome assessment<br>• Reviewing curriculum | Committee will determine best approaches for reviewing curricular coverage of belonging, technology, and practical skills going forward |
| **LIS Student Affairs Committee** | • Student interest surveys<br>• Recruitment strategies and data<br>• Student retention data<br>• Review student welcome process<br>• Monthly and annual reports | |
| **LIS Exit Exam Committee** | • Data on exit essays<br>• Monthly and annual reports | |

## Standard I.2.1 Continuous review

To measure progress toward the LIS program goals, the LIS program establishes strategic goals that are specific and actionable objectives in response to current challenges or opportunities over a five-year time frame. The period under review crosses two strategic plans for the LIS program (one from AY 15–20 and one from AY 22–27); as evidenced by the timespans, the strategic planning process was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This section describes the planning process that has incorporated continuous review of the program's vision, mission, goals, and objectives. The vision, mission, goals, and objectives are reviewed each time a new strategic plan is developed to ensure they are relevant and meaningful. In addition, various LIS committees — especially the Strategic Planning Committee — regularly review the goals and objectives each semester to ensure the program is working toward achieving them.

## Review of Vision and Mission

Throughout AY 14–15, the LIS faculty engaged in frequent discussions to determine forward-looking, aspirational, and motivating vision and mission statements. As a result, the faculty finalized and approved the current Vision and Mission in 2015. These statements were periodically reviewed by faculty through 2020, who consistently found this vision and mission to be informative of the systematic planning processes.

In AY 20–21, the LIS faculty reinitiated the strategic planning process, with a new plan developed for 2022–2027. The ad hoc strategic planning committee, which led the process of crafting the strategic plan, was comprised of junior and senior faculty. Additionally, the committee consulted with the full LIS faculty frequently as the plan was developed to ensure all voices and perspectives were represented.

The first several months of AY 20–21 were devoted to reviewing the above vision and mission statements, which were created before most current members of the faculty joined the University of Kentucky. Thus, it was essential to ensure that the vision and mission were still relevant and meaningful to the current composition of the faculty, to the needs of the LIS program and the broader library community, and to the systematic planning process itself. As we engaged in conversation around this vision and mission, the LIS faculty concurred that they were still impactful, timely and useful as guides for our program. Thus, they were not amended.

## Goals and Objectives

The 2015–2020 LIS strategic plan (Appendix I.3 LIS Strategic Plan, 2015-2020) was designed around the ALA COA standards of that time and the then-current university strategic plan. The LIS plan had the following objectives, categorized by COA Standards. Each objective was accompanied by specific metrics (not listed below):

**Standard 1: Systematic Planning**
- Objective 1.1: Systematic planning will leverage all available data.

**Standard 2: Curriculum**
- Objective 2.1: Ensure that graduates are able to demonstrate expertise in the information professions through quality curriculum.
- Objective 2.2: Promote curricular and co-curricular transformation that recognizes the educational advantages of varying perspectives.

**Standard 3: Faculty & Staff**
- Objective 3.1: Recruit professional staff with high potential for success at a top 20-level research university.
- Objective 3.2: Increase faculty research and scholarly productivity.
- Objective 3.3: Promote excellence across the university with faculty.
- Objective 3.4: Enhance the success, retention and advancement of all cadres of faculty and professional staff engaged in the varied missions of the university.

- Objective 3.5: Enhance faculty and staff connection with community through engagement, outreach and service.
- Objective 3.6: Enhance campus/community collaborations in areas where opportunities exist to build belonging.
- Objective 3.7: Enhance the impact and public awareness of the university's research and scholarship on the knowledge-based economy of Kentucky and the nation.

**Standard 4: Students**
- Objective 4.1: Recruit and enroll high-ability students.
- Objective 4.2: Promote excellence across the university with our students.
- Objective 4.3: Increase student engagement with their local communities.

**Standard 5: Administration, Finances and Resources**
- Objective 5.1: Strengthen the integration and utilization of innovative, cost-effective information technology solutions to enhance all missions of the University.
- Objective 5.2: Maintain building space available to academic programs and for research and support functions.

**Standard 6: Evaluation**
- Objective 6.1: Course level rubrics will be used for programmatic assessment.
- Objective 6.2: Portfolio assessment will demonstrate successful attainment of learning outcomes.

Throughout 2015–2020, the LIS faculty reviewed the above standards and objectives. For example, LIS program committees became more consistent about filing annual reports which explained data collected, evaluated, and used to implement changes (part of a metric for Objective 1.1). The LIS program employs a structured and iterative approach to continuous improvement, ensuring that its goals and objectives remain responsive to the evolving needs of students, faculty, and the broader LIS profession.

The metrics for objective 2.1 included regular review of program learning outcomes, student exit surveys, alumni surveys and employer surveys to ensure a quality curriculum was developed. Based on these data sources, the faculty identified a need to strengthen students' communication skills; as a result, LIS 603: Management in Information Organizations, a required course, was redesigned to include a mandatory, semester-long group project to create a strategic plan for an actual information organization. Students are required to communicate with their group members (utilizing technology of their choice). Peer accountability is built into each stage of the assignment to ensure students are utilizing good communication skills.

Students must also present their strategic plan to the stakeholders in the partnering organizations. This project typically faces initial skepticism from students but ends up being a favorite assignment due to building closer relationships with group members and having a real-world component. Although the course content has been frequently updated for LIS 603, the

semester-long group project remains a fundamental part of the course. In addition, SIS began promoting a CI Graduate Certificate in Instructional Communication in 2015, to offer additional opportunities for students to both learn about communication skills and earn a credential in that area.

For Objective 3.4, the metrics included offering two faculty mentor/mentee events per year; this occurs through leadership of the School-level Promotion and Tenure Committee (renamed to the Faculty Development Committee beginning in AY 25–26). Objective 4.1 included metrics such as maintaining high applicant GRE scores; increasing recruitment activity; and maintaining average enrollment at 200-235 students. Although GRE scores were initially required, faculty voted in fall 2018 to no longer require GRE scores due to the test's lack of predictability with respect to graduate student success and its historic bias issues. Recruitment activity was increased by having staff attend additional state and regional conferences until the COVID-19 pandemic changed conference attendance patterns. However, student enrollment has consistently stayed within or above the proposed range.

As mentioned above, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the LIS program's strategic planning cycle, but it resumed in AY 20–21. After the LIS faculty approved the vision and mission, the ad hoc strategic planning committee met regularly to guide the faculty to articulate and develop goals and objectives. Drawing on data from past performance in research, service and teaching, the Library and Information Science Program Strategic Plan 2022–2027 outlines four goals, each with several objectives:

1. Foster broader access, representation, and belonging across our curriculum, student body, and research initiatives.
   a. Create an action plan of items based on a bi-annual curriculum audit which emphasizes open access, opportunity, and representation. (Evidence: audit report, curriculum committee report)
   b. Plan and implement recruitment strategies that expand awareness of the LIS program and ensure all students have opportunities to learn about and access the program. (Evidence: recruitment plan, promotional materials)
   c. Propose a school-level award recognizing outstanding contributions to fostering a welcoming and supportive learning environment. (Evidence: award, research summaries, publications)

2. Further emphasize the uniqueness and strengths of our curricular options.
   a. Increase enrollment by 5% in the graduate certificate in instructional communication. (Evidence: enrollment numbers)
   b. Assess the viability of adding a second certificate for MSLS students, including conducting a UK landscape scan. (Evidence: environmental scan, feedback from students, report on viability)
   c. Revisit lists of concentration-themed courses to assure currency, relevancy and thoroughness. (Evidence: updated concentrations, feedback from students)

3. Prepare students to be professionals and leaders in the field and support students' career aspirations with excellent teaching, advising, service and support.
   a. Create a bi-annual audit of practical skills developed and assessed in coursework. (Evidence: list of practical assignments, audit report, curriculum committee report)
   b. Form an ad hoc committee with faculty and staff to develop concrete ways to improve career preparation and advising commitments and assistance. (Evidence: committee report)
   c. Better use of the University's professional career services. (Evidence: collaborate with UK career services)
   d. Maintain high satisfaction with student support. (Evidence: exit survey)

4. Promote excellence in research that advances discipline knowledge and evidence-based practices in library and information science.
   a. Maintain or increase program scholarly activity. (Evidence: annual number of publications in professional and academic venues, monthly report from Associate Dean of Research)
   b. Propose a school-level annual award to recognize unique, quality scholarly activity. (Evidence: award, research summaries, publications)
   c. Expand visibility of faculty research in library/practitioner communities. (Evidence: participation in local/regional conferences and other venues, services to practitioner communities, recognition from local/regional bodies)

## Standard I.2.2 Assessment of attainment

The LIS program regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its curriculum and the attainment of program goals and objectives using a range of tools and strategies. For instance, the LIS Strategic Planning Committee was established on Nov. 4, 2022, to spearhead strategic planning and evaluation activities specifically for the LIS program with respect to the 2022–2027 strategic plan. In other words, the purpose of the Strategic Planning Committee is to implement the strategic plan and monitor progress through collaboration with other LIS committees. Through this process, the program goals and objectives are regularly reviewed. Comprising three faculty members, the LIS Strategic Planning Committee advises the program faculty on planning matters specific to the strategic plan

According to the November 2022 LIS faculty meeting minutes, the Strategic Planning Committee "delegates tasks to other committees, completes appropriate tasks that are not delegated to other committees and writes an annual report," focusing on how the program has made progress in its implementation of the 2022–2027 strategic plan. See Appendix I.4 Strategic Planning Committee Reports AY22-23 to AY24-25 for more information.

Following the development of strategic goals, the LIS Strategic Planning Committee assigns specific objectives to relevant program-level committees for implementation. For example, the most recent committee tasked the Admissions Committee with developing strategies to increase enrollment in the Graduate Certificate in Instructional Communication by 5%, directly supporting one of the plan's enrollment-related goals. Similarly, the Curriculum Committee was asked to create a biannual audit of practical skills developed and assessed in coursework, aligning with objectives focused on career readiness. In each case, the Strategic Planning Committee also identified appropriate forms of evidence to track progress and demonstrate impact, ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the implementation process. These improvements reflect the program's commitment to data-informed decision-making and its responsiveness to feedback from relevant constituents, including students, alumni, employers, and the External Advisory Council.

To further support data-informed decision-making, the Strategic Planning Committee also initiated a faculty survey to gather information about research productivity and engagement with library professionals and other practitioner communities. This data helps evaluate progress toward strategic objectives related to scholarly impact and outreach. In summary, we assess the attainment of program goals and objectives through oversight by the Strategic Planning Committee. This committee guides and directs other committees to undertake specific actions designed to fulfill the strategic plan. Various committees then gather relevant data and share it with the LIS faculty through monthly and annual reporting. The Strategic Planning Committee summarizes these activities over the course of each year.

**Table I.4. Strategic goals and supporting assessment data**

| Strategic Goal | Assessment Data |
|---|---|
| **Foster broader access, representation, and belonging across our curriculum, student body, and research initiatives.** | • Curriculum audit results<br>• Student body data<br>• Admission data<br>• Faculty research areas and output<br>• Exit examination |
| **Further emphasize the uniqueness and strengths of our curricular options** | • Curriculum updates<br>• Special topics courses<br>• Elective clusters |
| **Prepare students to be professionals and leaders in the field and support students' career aspirations with excellent teaching, advising, service, and support.** | • Program learning outcomes assessment<br>• Exit surveys<br>• Student career services<br>• Practicum<br>• Alternative spring break<br>• Practicum data<br>• TCEs |
| **Promote excellence in research that advances discipline knowledge and evidence-based practices in library and information science.** | • Program learning outcomes assessment<br>• Course projects<br>• Faculty research areas and output<br>• Student engagement in research work<br>• Independent studies<br>• SIS Student Conference |

## Standard I.2.3 Improvements to the program

Since the implementation of the strategic plan, the LIS program has made measurable progress in several areas. This section of the chapter will describe some of these improvements, focusing on each of the goals of the strategic plan.

*Goal 1: Foster broader access, representation, and belonging across our curriculum, student body, and research initiatives.*

The LIS Curriculum Committee began this process by surveying LIS faculty about the ways they foster broader access, representation, and belonging across our curriculum, student body, and research initiatives.

To aid with recruitment, SIS recently ran a full-page ad in Innovators at the Intersection magazine. Additionally, the admissions coordinator reached out to contacts across several majors at the University of Kentucky, including African American & Africana

Studies; Elementary Education; Middle Level Teacher Education; Modern & Classical Languages, Literature & Cultures; STEM Education; History; and English periodically to share information about the monthly and individual information sessions offered for prospective students. With assistance from the University, LIS developed a new [promotional video](#), which highlights two faculty members (Cahill and Crawford Barniskis, Ph.D.s.) and three current students (Andrea Cabrera, Lauren Savage and Charlotte Stephens). This is the first professional video the School has used to promote the library science program. This video is used with new prospects, shared on social media, and incorporated into the SIS website. As part of a larger College-wide initiative, the School of Information Science launched an [updated website](#) in October 2023, which provides more streamlined access to information, including content relevant to prospective students. The program continues to explore ways to integrate input from students and professionals from historically underrepresented groups into the planning process, including through advisory council recruitment and targeted survey analysis.

*Goal 2. Further emphasize the uniqueness and strengths of our curricular options.*

One aspect of this goal was to increase enrollment in the Graduate Certificate in Instructional Communication. This certificate expands and improves students' communication skills and is particularly suited to future information professionals who may be leading instruction or teaching. This was accomplished through effective promotion and advising; enrollment went from zero LIS students in 2022 to seven in 2025.

The strategic plan suggested an environmental scan to determine the need and relevance of a second certificate, but the need for the scan faded for two reasons. One, the Integrated Strategic Communication (ISC) department developed a graduate certificate in ISC, and two LIS courses count towards this certificate. Additionally, Director Choi has spearheaded an effort to develop a joint certificate with the College of Social Work. This certificate will prepare both social work students and library science students to work with one another and to incorporate social work into library settings (see [Standard II](#) for more details).

In addition, "concentrations" of electives were renamed "elective clusters." The change was in part to clarify that the courses are not requirements but simply suggestions of a "cluster" of electives in a particular area. There are now eleven clusters which include: academic libraries, data science, health information, information technology and systems, instruction communication, public libraries, school libraries, special libraries, youth services and literature, archives and cultural heritage, and systems librarianship. Archives and systems librarianship were both added in 2025 in response to student interest and faculty expertise.

*Goal 3: Prepare students to be professionals and leaders in the field and support students' career aspirations with excellent teaching, advising, service and support.*

The LIS Curriculum Committee actively audits the use and instruction of practical skills across the LIS curriculum, to ensure that students are taught relevant and timely skills. Following the audit, the LIS faculty discuss which skills are taught, which skills need to be incorporated into classes and how to appropriately measure skill learning. These discussions inform the revision of the curriculum.

The LIS program has also increased collaboration with the College and University career services to offer more resources to LIS students. For the past several years, the LIS program has participated in the GLAM 2025 Career Fair (featuring employers and career tips for galleries, libraries, archives, and museums); this is an online, interactive series led jointly by several iSchools. The LIS program has offered several webinars each semester in AY 24–25 focused on building career skills; topics include: early career librarianship; acing your academic interview; exploring careers in health sciences librarianship; functional librarianship roles; and navigating careers in health sciences libraries. In addition, the UK Graduate School has a person focused on graduate and professional careers who has hosted a webinar for LIS students. All webinars are recorded and made available asynchronously to better serve our students. LIS is supported in these efforts by Brooke Nowicki, the College career specialist. She assists in coordinating career development opportunities for students in the library science program.

In 2022, the library science program launched its Canvas-based student advising hub. This provides a single location for students, faculty and staff to interact with and communicate with one another. Students can also easily locate and communicate with their advisor through the hub.

The Planning Committee was tasked with determining LIS student satisfaction with student support services (see Appendix I.5 Planning Committee Annual Reports AY18-19 to AY24-25). To document satisfaction with student support, the Planning Committee assessed responses to relevant questions from the exit survey graduating students completed in the AY 23–24 academic year (the most recent year for which data was available). Students rated LIS faculty highly in several areas, including advising. Excluding responses of N/A, 81.81% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor provided helpful information for planning classes; 72.88% agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor provided helpful information for succeeding in the library science program; 69.81% agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor provided helpful information for understanding university procedures; and 61.22% agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor provided helpful information for preparing for a career. The support provided by LIS Student Affairs staff was also rated highly.

The program has taken deliberate steps to enhance support for students' learning experiences as discussed. Evidence of these improvements is reflected in alumni survey data, which show a positive trend in graduates' perceptions of program quality over recent years, as presented in Table I.5.

**Table I.5. Alumni perception of the quality of their program experience**

| Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree | 2019 (n=85) | 2021 (n=48) | 2023 (n=20) | 2025 (n=42) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mean** [a] | 4.0 | 4.09 | 4.11 | 4.39 |

[a] Results filtered to show only responses from respondents who graduated after 2014.

*Goal 4: Promote excellence in research that advances discipline knowledge and evidence-based practices in library and information science.*

The LIS faculty have maintained a strong research profile. As a faculty, they have published 40 peer-reviewed articles in 2024 alone and 192 peer-reviewed papers from 2017–2024 (data from the reports compiled by the College Associate Dean for Research). The School maintains an overview of the research conducted by the faculty, which includes areas like human-centered design and interaction, libraries as community hubs, and youth engagement. In fall 2023, faculty launched the Community-Based Applied Participatory Research Group, which strengthens collaborative scholarship and advances evidence-based practices through community-engaged research.

Faculty connections to the practitioner community have expanded, as evidenced by an increase in outreach and research dissemination efforts between 2022 and 2025. In a survey, 11 of 12 faculty reported engaging with practitioner communities: eight collaborated with practitioners on research; seven presented at practitioner-centered conferences; six worked with practitioners on a collaborative project aimed at practice; and five did service work on practice-centered committees or events. For example, Oltmann served on the Board for the Certification of Public Librarians in the state of Kentucky, overseen by the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives; she also offered training for several Kentucky public libraries concerning intellectual freedom. Real is leading a study to investigate the return-on-investment (ROI) of public libraries across the state of Kentucky.

There was also extensive outreach to and collaboration with the practitioner community in developing and hosting the LRS 8 Seminar in fall 2024. This event, themed "Telling Library Stories," was hosted by the library science program in collaboration with the University of Kentucky Libraries. It drew participants from across the country and internationally, many of whom were practicing librarians, as seen on the schedule (available at the above link).

As part of ongoing efforts to enhance communication and accessibility, the School of Information Science completed a comprehensive website redesign which launched in fall 2023. This redesign was undertaken to streamline information about the school, its academic offerings, and essential student resources in a more systematic and user-friendly manner. The updated site more clearly articulates the specific curricular focus of the LIS program, ensuring that prospective and current students can easily navigate degree requirements, course offerings, and areas of specialization. Additionally, redesigning improved access to essential tools, forms and procedural documents, making administrative processes more efficient. The updated platform also highlights faculty research areas, including those of LIS-affiliated faculty, fostering greater visibility for the School's scholarly contributions. By enhancing navigation, organization, and accessibility, the redesigned website serves as a more effective hub for students, faculty, and external stakeholders seeking information about the program.

The School's website features a dedicated page displaying outstanding student work completed through coursework since spring 2024. This showcase not only highlights the quality of learning within our program but also demonstrates our students' academic excellence, which emphasizes the creativity, critical thinking and practical skills that our students are developing.

## Standard I.3 LIS Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

As described above, the LIS program had one strategic plan in place from 2015–2020 and another that is currently in place, spanning 2022–2027. The LIS strategic plan is available for public viewing on our web site on https://ci.uky.edu/sis/about/ala-accreditation-and-ict-program-assessment-information. The LIS program maintains a written strategic plan that outlines its mission, vision, long-term goals and implementation strategies. In the Strategic Planning process (AY 21–22), we conducted a SWOT analysis of the LIS program to ascertain its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This analysis then drove our strategic planning process in terms of bolstering strengths, seizing opportunities and ameliorating weaknesses and threats. This SWOT analysis was heavily informed by faculty insights and integrated inputs from students, the External Advisory Council, and findings from instruments such as the Alumni and Exit surveys. The 2022–2027 strategic plan includes the vision and mission of the LIS program, as described in section I.2.1. It also incorporates four goals, each with several objectives. In addition, the plan describes what evidence can and should be collected to demonstrate that the objectives are being fulfilled.

The LIS strategic plan clearly identifies needs and resources for achieving its mission and goals to ensure the program's continued sustainability. For example, to meet Objective 2, to "further emphasize the uniqueness and strengths of our curricular options," the strategic plan identifies the need for increased enrollment (data supplied by enrollment figures), assessing the viability of further certifications for LIS students (data supplied by an environmental scan, student feedback and analysis of the viability of such certificates), and ensuring the relevance, currency, and thoroughness of concentration-themed coursework (data supplied by analysis of updated

concentrations and student feedback). The annual meetings with the External Advisory Council also help ensure we are supporting the needs of the wider community with curricular and pedagogical choices.

The SIS faculty and administration are constantly seeking feedback from students and other stakeholders through a variety of informal feedback mechanisms. For example, some faculty conduct ongoing, anonymous feedback mechanisms (like surveys) to ensure students can offer feedback to instructors in real-time, instead of waiting until semester-end course evaluations. In addition, the field is constantly surveyed for improvements, shifts, and best practices. This is done informally through faculty and administrators attending conferences such as ALISE, which focuses on LIS pedagogy, through serving the profession (for example, Sean Burns, Ph.D., is currently serving as the president of ALISE) and through keeping abreast of the field through journal articles, seminars, and professional networks, not only through reading current journals but also by supporting publication efforts as peer reviewers, editors and mentors.

The LIS program monitors its program, objectives, and goals continuously to ensure we stay on course with the best services for our stakeholders. Much of this work is done through the Strategic Planning Committee, as outlined above.

## Summary and Future Plans

The LIS program has successfully completed its strategic plan for the period from 2015 to 2020 and has developed a [new strategic plan for 2022–2027](#). Since adopting this new plan in 2022, the program has actively engaged stakeholders to address its strategic priorities and evaluate the achievement of its goals and objectives.

To ensure ongoing planning and systematic assessment of outcomes, the faculty has restructured the program committees to better align with its goals and objectives. The faculty is currently developing a curriculum review procedure and monitoring the program's learning outcomes to respond to the evolving information landscape. The revised committee structure and holistic curriculum review will be implemented starting in AY 25. The program is well-prepared to take the next steps toward excellence.

# Standard II: Program-Level Learning Outcomes and Curriculum

## *Introduction*

The MSLS degree at the School of Information Science (SIS) aims to provide a comprehensive education for graduate students in library and information science (LIS). The curriculum is crafted to meet specific program learning outcomes.

- Describe how communities and individuals interact with/in information ecosystems.
- Analyze the major tenets of information practice and apply them in multiple contexts.
- Connect various communities and individuals with appropriate resources.
- Explain the dependence of information retrieval on the organization of information.

These four learning outcomes specify the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and competencies students are expected to achieve upon graduation, ensuring they are well-prepared to meet the ethical and practical demands of the profession. The curriculum enables students to develop coherent programs of study by providing advising, elective clusters, a concurrent degree program, independent study opportunities, special topic courses, practicums, and other experiential learning options, such as Alternative Spring Break.

To earn the MSLS degree, each student must complete 36 hours (12 courses). Four courses (12 hours) are required: LIS 600: Information in Society, LIS 601: Information Search, LIS 602: Knowledge Organization and LIS 603: Management in Information Organizations. During their final semester in the program, students also complete an exit requirement, which serves as the culminating experience in the Library Science master's degree program. It provides the student with the opportunity for self-reflection, formative self-evaluation and synthesis of program learning outcomes.

The Curriculum Committee spearheads the efforts to develop, review, and revise the curriculum. Course evaluations conducted every semester serve as one method of gathering data on student learning and the fulfillment of course objectives. Furthermore, the curriculum undergoes assessment through an entrance survey, exit survey, employer survey, alumni survey, an exit examination, and program learning assessments. These evaluations are recorded and consistently used to enhance the program and to strategize for the future.

This chapter provides an in-depth examination of the content and systematic review process associated with the LIS curriculum. It highlights the essential components and methodologies involved in evaluating and updating the curriculum to ensure it meets current educational standards and addresses the needs of the field.

## Standard II.1 Ethics and Values

The UK LIS curriculum and program learning outcomes are designed to align with the philosophy, principles, and ethics of the library and information science (LIS) profession. They reflect the American Library Association's (ALA) Core Values as well as the ALA Code of Ethics, and the Library Bill of Rights. These values and key principles of the field are embedded across the curriculum and learning activities. Table II.1 illustrates the alignment of the ALA Core Values with Program Learning Outcomes and LIS Curriculum.

**Table II.1. ALA Core Values with Program Learning Outcomes and LIS Curriculum**

| ALA Core Values | Program Learning Outcomes | Core Courses | Intermediate and advanced courses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Value 1<br>Value 2<br>Value 3<br>Value 4<br>Value 5 | Describe how communities & individuals interact with/in information ecosystems. | 600, 601, 603 | 616, 618, 626, 627, 634, 636, 640, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 659, 665, 668, 672 |
| Value 1<br>Value 2<br>Value 3<br>Value 4<br>Value 5 | Analyze the major tenets of information practice and apply them in multiple contexts. | 600, 601, 602, 603 | 610, 616, 621, 627, 629, 636, 640, 643, 647, 648, 659, 661, 662 |
| Value 1<br>Value 2 | Connect various communities & individuals with appropriate resources. | 600, 601, 603 | 610, 612, 613, 614, 616, 617, 618, 619, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 659 |
| Value 1<br>Value 2<br>Value 3 | Explain the dependence of information retrieval on the organization of information. | 601, 602 | 626, 634, 636, 638, 661, 662, 665, 668 |

Note: ALA Core Values address five areas. We apply a number to each value to fit within the table space.

## Core courses

The core courses, mentioned earlier, introduce students to the historical, philosophical, and social foundations of the LIS field, emphasizing the ethical principles that guide information access, intellectual freedom, privacy, and service to various communities.

- **LIS 600 Information in Society** is designed for students to develop foundational knowledge of LIS values and ethics. The course comprises multiple modules that address these topics, with assignments designed to enable students to apply the principles outlined in the ALA Code of Ethics and the policies outlined in the Library Bill of Rights.

- **LIS 601 Information Search** requires students to "describe methods for providing information services to communities and individuals with appropriate resources," to apply information search strategies, and to critically evaluate information retrieval systems and major theories and models of information behavior.
- **LIS 602 Knowledge Organization** explores multiple aspects of access, including classification systems and discovery tools, as well as ethical considerations related to the organization of information, such as bias in classification, subject headings, and the power dynamics embedded in metadata.
- **LIS 603 Management in Information Organizations** includes modules that integrate ethics, organizational communication, authentic communication, belonging, outreach to underserved groups, partnerships and collaboration, and work-life balance. Additionally, the course requires students to develop a strategic plan based on a real library or information organization, during which they devise an approach to engage with members of the community.

## Electives

The LIS program has several courses that are explicitly focused on belonging and/or addressing the needs and interests of underserved populations. Examples include:

- **LIS 618 Games, Literacy, Meaning and Learning** includes a discussion on "Games and Culture(s)" and another on "Games and Representation."
- **LIS 619 Informal Learning in Information Organizations** includes various readings that focus on how people from different cultures and backgrounds learn, what it means to create the necessary social conditions for learning, and how we can create learning environments where everyone can be smart.
- **LIS 645 Public Libraries** has an assignment to complete a literature review on public libraries and community.
- **LIS 646 Academic Libraries** includes a module on "Underserved and Special Populations."
- **LIS 644 Administration of School Media Centers** includes various assignments that focus on the principles of universal design and learning environment compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **LIS 665 Introduction to Digital Libraries** explores social issues and limitations of digital libraries, including access for underserved populations.
- **LIS 690 Ethical Issues in Information Organizations**, has been developed and offered as a special topics course several times over the past five years.
- **LIS 690 Disability & Access** introduces students to concepts around disability and accessibility in the library context.

The LIS curriculum gives students a solid foundation to understand and uphold the philosophy, principles and ethics of the field. It also offers opportunities to apply core principles throughout the coursework. Just as the core courses integrate the ethics and values of the profession

throughout multiple modules and assignments, many electives, including special topics courses within the LIS curriculum, do the same. Additional examples of curricular integration of core values, can be seen via syllabi for all courses and assignment samples ([Appendix II.13 LIS Course Assignment Examples](#)).

## *Standard II.2 Program-Level Learning Outcomes*

Our curriculum is guided by the [ALA core competencies](#) for librarianship, which provide a useful framework to help us design the curriculum and program-level learning outcomes. The curriculum is designed to enable students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for effectively working with information, both in the context of the end user and the broader community. Students learn to create, communicate, identify, and select resources. They also build skills to organize, describe, store, retrieve, and preserve information. Additionally, they gain the ability to analyze, evaluate, disseminate, use, and manage information resources as well as people. The MSLS program learning outcomes below reflect these expectations and are aligned with the 2022 ALA Core Competencies across nine categories.

**Table II.2. Alignment of program learning outcomes and the 2022 ALA Core Competences**

| Program Learning Outcome | Describe how communities & individuals interact with/in information ecosystems | Analyze the major tenets of information practice and apply them in multiple contexts | Connect various communities and individuals with appropriate resources | Explain the dependence of information retrieval on the organization of information |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [2022 ALA Core Competences of Librarianship](#) | 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1H, 1I, 1K, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4A, 4B, 4D, 4E, 4F, 4G, 6C, 6E, 6F, 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 8F, 9A, 9B, 9C | All core competences | 1D, 1F, 1G, 1H, 1I, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 4F, 5A, 5C, 5D, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 7C, 7D, 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, 9A, 9B, 9C | 2A, 2B, 2C, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 6A, 6D, 9A, 9C |

The program's objectives reflect a commitment to professional standards established by relevant professional organizations in the LIS field. The learning outcomes of the MSLS program are also structured to provide students with the competencies required for success in relevant professional settings. Table II.3 illustrates how the standards and competencies of the following professional associations align with the program's learning outcomes: Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Medical Library Association (MLA), Reference and User Services (RUSA), American Association of School Librarians (AASL), Association for Library Service to

Children (ALSC), the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), Society of American Archivists, and Special Libraries Association.

**Table II.3. Alignment of program learning outcomes and professional competencies**

| Professional competency | Describe how communities & individuals interact with/in information ecosystems | Analyze the major tenets of information practice and apply them in multiple contexts | Connect various communities and individuals with appropriate resources | Explain the dependence of information retrieval on the organization of information |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ACRL Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians | Advocate Coordinator Lifelong Learner Leader Teacher Teaching Partner | All roles and strengths | Instructional Designer Lifelong Learner Teacher Teaching Partner | Teacher |
| MLA Competencies | Competencies 3-6 | All competencies | Competency 1 Competency 2 | |
| Professional Competencies for Reference and User Services Librarians | 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, 5E, 5G | All competencies | 5A, 5B, 5D, 5F, 5G | 5B, 5D, 5F |
| AASL Standards | All standards | All standards | Standards 1–4 | Standard 4 |
| ALSC Competencies | All competencies | All competencies | Competencies 1–5 | Competency 4 |
| YALSA Competencies | Content areas 2–10 | All competencies | Competencies 1, 5, 6, 7, 9 | |
| ACRL/ALA Special Collections Professionals | III.D. III.E, III.C | All competencies | III.A, III.C., III.F, III.G. III.H. | III.B. III.C |
| SAA Core Values and Ethics for Archivists | All Ethics: Social Responsibility; Advocacy | All Values | Selection; Sustainability; Preservation; Responsible Stewardship; Service | Access and Use |

| Special Libraries Association Competencies* | Information Ethics; Enabling competencies | All competencies | Information and Knowledge Resources; Organization of Data, Information, and Knowledge Assets | Information and Data Retrieval and Analysis |
|---|---|---|---|---|

*This report was written before the merger of SLA and ASIS&T. The web page no longer exists.

## Specializations and their competencies

The LIS program offers a variety of specializations that equip students with essential professional skills and a deep understanding of the field's dynamic nature. These specializations, referred to as elective clusters, are detailed on the program's website to assist students with course planning and to help them develop competencies in their areas of interest. After much faculty discussion and analysis of the needs of the field coupled with the interests of our students, our program added two elective clusters: archives and cultural heritage as well as systems librarianship. These clusters are listed on the "Electives" page of the website:

- Academic Libraries
- Data Science
- Health Information
- Information Technology and Systems
- Instruction Communication
- Public Libraries
- School Libraries
- Youth Services and Literature
- Archives & Cultural Heritage
- Special Libraries
- Systems Librarianship

## The evaluation of the attainment of program-level learning outcomes

The LIS program learning outcomes are evaluated with various assessment data gathered from a variety of direct and indirect measures (Appendix I.7 LIS Program Assessment Process), which include:

- Assessment of exit examinations (passing rate and its rubrics): The exit examination assesses students' reflection on their understanding of core concepts and their knowledge changes. Examination results are analyzed after each examination to identify ways for improvement in learning and the examination process.

- Assessment of student learning in core courses: faculty assess student learning outcomes based on the course learning outcomes with course assessments. Those are directly in line with the program-level learning outcomes.
- Assessment of the program learning outcomes in pre- and post-tests.
- Assessment of students' self-perception of obtainment and comfort with each program learning outcome via an exit survey at program completion.
- Surveys of stakeholders (students, alumni, and employers) which help the program evaluate its curriculum offerings and coverage to ensure the integrity and rigor of the MSLS program.
- TCEs provide insights on how to improve teaching and course offerings.
- Course enrollment and grades provide indirect measures to evaluate student competencies and curriculum coverage.
- Feedback from the LIS Advisory Council.
- Practicum supervisor evaluations: Practicum supervisors provide areas and issues for improvement in providing practicum experience.
- Achievements and recognition of students and alumni.

A closer look and examination of the data above will follow in later sections.

## Exit Assessment

At the end of their program experience, our students are required to complete the exit assessment, which is used to demonstrate their mastery level of the program's learning outcomes and to earn the degree. Within the learning outcomes essay of the exit assessment, students synthesize their attainment of each learning outcome. For each learning outcome in turn, the students first describe what they learned in relation to the respective learning outcome within the core courses. Then, using examples from electives courses or any other relevant program experiences, they identify how their knowledge advanced to its present state. Finally, they identify future plans to continue to build knowledge in relation to the respective learning outcome. This essay provides an opportunity to (1) reflect on a student's work in the program, (2) demonstrate what the student has learned, (3) describe how the student's professional knowledge has grown, and (4) detail their goals for lifelong learning.  The criteria for the exam assessment directly correspond to the program learning outcomes. Two faculty readers evaluate each component of the exit assessment using a scale of 0-3: 0 (unacceptable) to 1 (acceptable), 2 (target), and 3 (exemplary). Therefore, rubric data from the exit assessment serves as a source for assessment regarding students' self-reflection on their learning outcomes (Appendix II.12 Exit Assessment Rubric).

Before submitting the final exit essay, students are encouraged to submit a draft for faculty feedback. Drafts are reviewed by one faculty member (first reader), while final submissions are reviewed by two faculty members (the first and second readers). In the fall of 2022, the process changed slightly. Previously, a final submission was assessed, and a grade (pass/fail) was issued. Following the change, if a submission receives only one score of 0 in any rubric category, from either or both readers, the result is "pass." If a submission receives two scores of 0 from one or

both readers in any rubric category, the result is "resubmit." Those are returned to the student with an option to revise the essay within seven days. These intervention processes led to an increase in the success rate of the exit examination to 100%. Not only is the pass rate very high, but as Figure II.1 shows, scores fall mostly between acceptable (one) and target (two).

During the debriefing of the exit examination results, LIS faculty found inconsistencies in scoring across rubric categories. To address this issue, the exit committee organized two workshops led by staff from the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT), scheduled for fall 2024. These sessions aim to help LIS faculty standardize their grading practices and promote consistency in essay evaluation.
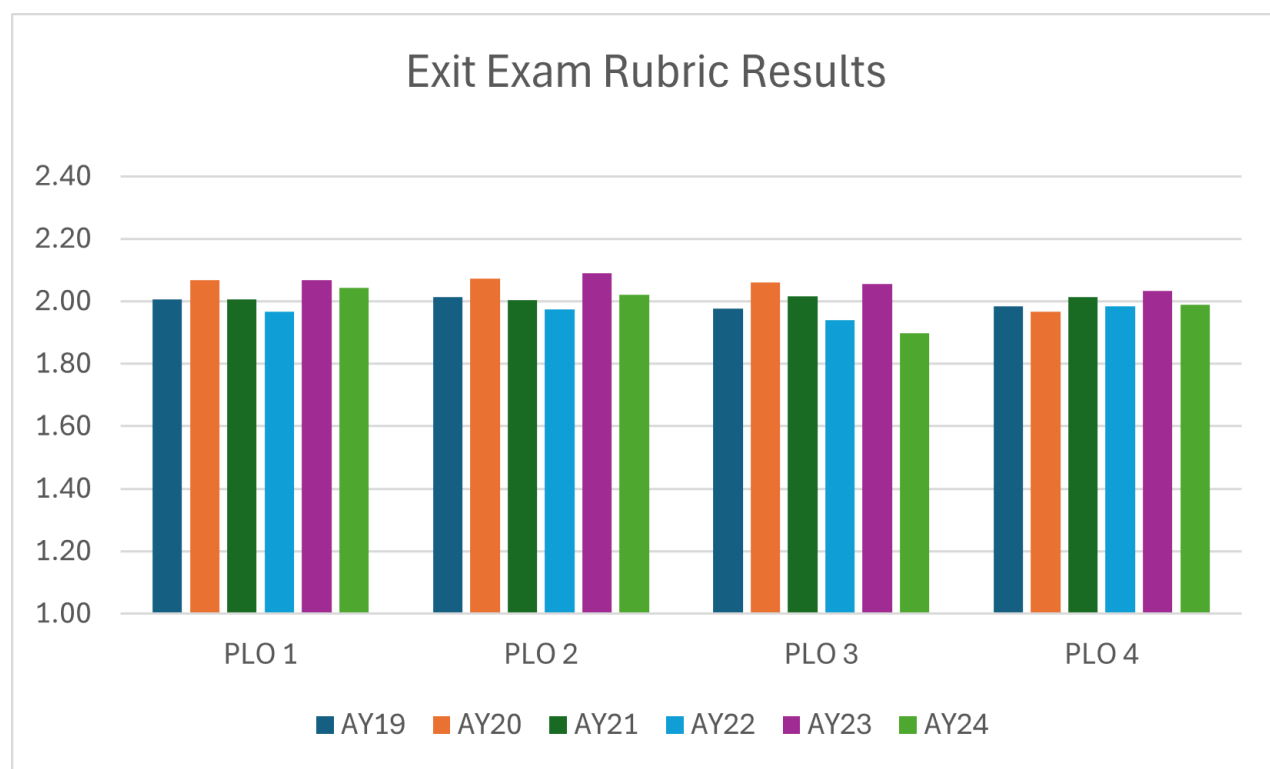


**Figure II.1. Exit exam essay rubric mean scores per program learning outcomes per semester**

## Assessment of Core Courses

Assessments in core courses serve as direct measures of learning outcomes attainment. In the LIS program, instructors of core courses have developed standardized assignments for all sections. These assignments align with the Program-Level Learning Outcomes, as shown in Table II.4. For program-level assessment, each course instructor is required to use a scoring rubric based on a four-point scale. The rubric results are then interpreted and analyzed in relation to the program learning outcomes. For example, the instructor of LIS 601 uses a specific assignment — a final project where students conduct searches across various databases and information systems — and applies a rubric to evaluate the course learning outcomes. The

results from all students enrolled in LIS 601 are analyzed to measure Program Learning Outcomes #2 and #4. In spring 2025, the results showed that 95% of students scored a 3 or 4 for both PLO #2 and PLO #4, respectively. This information helps identify areas that require clarification or additional practice at the course level.

**Table II.4. Core course assignments mapped to program learning outcomes**

| PLO | LIS 600 | LIS 601 | LIS 602 | LIS 603 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Describe how communities & individuals interact with/in information ecosystems.** | Information ecology project | Personas library development, Main Team learning activities and final project | | Leadership paper |
| **Analyze the major tenets of information practice and apply them in multiple contexts.** | Community engagement observation <br><br> Elevator pitch | Resource annotations in final project and Main Team learning activities | Principles Papers Case study | Strategic plan |
| **Connect various communities & individuals with appropriate resources.** | Information ecology project | Team learning activities, social annotations and final project | | Strategic plan |
| **Explain the dependence of information retrieval on the organization of information** | | Team learning activities, social annotations and final project | Omeka Digital Library Crosswalk Authority Control Essay Cast study | |

Currently, all core courses except for LIS 600 have assignment rubrics that directly measure students' mastery of program outcomes. For LIS 600, the program uses a pre- and post-test to evaluate knowledge acquisition. However, collecting course-level assessment data from the required courses has historically been challenging for the School as there was not a primary person in charge of monitoring data collection.

In 2024, the School changed this by establishing a new staff position to better support assessment efforts. This role involves regularly monitoring data collection and reminding faculty of how to collect and report course level data from required courses, creating rubrics within a Canvas shell, and assisting faculty with all aspects of data collection. The LIS program intends to

gather direct measures from core courses each semester and review this data annually with the curriculum committee and LIS faculty to develop strategies for enhancing student learning and fostering curriculum innovation.

The program is required to submit reports on program-level outcomes assessment to the University ([Appendix II.4 University Assessment Reports](#)). Table II.5 presents an example of the program learning assessment evaluation, taken from the assessment reports submitted by the program to the University in summer 2025.

**Table II.5. Assessment Data**

| Measure | PLO1 | PLO2 | PLO3 | PLO4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Exit exam^** | 1.99 | 1.94 | 1.93 | 1.98 |
| **Post test*, LIS 600** | 96% | 85% | 70% | N/A |
| **Assignment, LIS 601~** | N/A | 3.45 | N/A | 3.50 |
| **LIS program post test*** | 97% | 75% | 88% | 64% |

^Exit exam data is scored on a 1-3 scale. 2 is the target score.
*Post test questions are either correct or incorrect.
~The 601 assignment is measured with a rubric on a four-point scale.
Note that while the score of 70% for PLO3 and 64% for PLO4 is relatively low, the other indicators for both PLOs remain relatively high.

As part of its ongoing assessment process, the program uses various indirect measures — mainly survey tools given to students, alumni, and employers — to collect feedback on perceived achievement of program learning outcomes.

**Table II.6. Means of graduating students' agreement on their attainment of the program learning outcomes**

| Program Learning Outcome | 18- 19 (n=24)^ | 19-20 (n=21) | 20-21 (n=99) | 21- 2022 (n=80) | 22- 23 (n=83) | 23- 24 (n=74) | 24-25* (n=29) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PLO1** | 4.58 | 6.21 | 6.57 | 6.13 | 6.10 | 6.54 | 6.48 |
| **PLO2** | 4.50 | 5.95 | 6.33 | 5.98 | 6.12 | 6.47 | 6.45 |
| **PLO3** | 4.54 | 6.35 | 6.58 | 6.09 | 6.25 | 6.36 | 6.39 |
| **PLO4** | 4.63 | --~ | --~ | --~ | 6.12 | 6.26 | 6.38 |

^Score based off 5-point Likert scale question where "strongly disagree" = 1 point and "strongly agree" = 5 points
*Score based off 7-point Likert scale question where "strongly disagree" = 1 point and "strongly agree" = 7 points
~Due to a data collection error, these data were not collected.

As shown in Table II.6, recent graduates strongly agree that they were able to achieve the program learning outcomes after completing the MSLS program, with average responses to this question reaching above 4.00 out of 5 for all four program outcomes.

Tables II.7 and II.8 indicate alumni and employers' agreement with our graduates' ability to perform our four stated program learning outcomes. Overall, the grand mean of all responses was fairly high, above 4.0 out of 5, across the four learning outcomes.

**Table II.7. Means of alumni agreement on their attainment of the MSLS program learning outcomes**

| Program Learning Outcome | 2019 (n=85) | 2021 (n=48) | 2023 (n=20) | 2025 (n=42) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PLO1 | 4.2 | 4.44 | 4.22 | 4.47 |
| PLO2 | 4.2 | 4.44 | 4.17 | 4.51 |
| PLO3 | 4.1 | 4.17 | 3.94 | 4.33 |
| PLO4 | 4.3 | 4.47 | 4.41 | 4.44 |

Results filtered to show only responses from respondents who graduated after 2014 (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree)

**Table II.8. Mean of employers' agreement on the degree of graduates' ability to perform stated learning outcomes**

| Program Learning Outcome | 2020 (n=34) | 2022 (n=37) | 2024 (n=37) |
|---|---|---|---|
| PLO1 | 4.32 | 4.09 | 4.10 |
| PLO2 | 4.10 | 4.36 | 4.10 |
| PLO3 | 4.33 | 4.50 | 4.43 |
| PLO4 | 4.20 | 4.50 | 4.23 |

Source: Employer Survey (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)

## Systematic evaluation process

The standing committees integral to the LIS program — specifically the LIS Planning Committee, the LIS Curriculum Committee, the LIS Strategic Planning Committee, and the Exit Exam Committee — along with dedicated administrative support, play a pivotal role in evaluating and enhancing program-level learning outcomes. At the beginning of each academic year, the LIS faculty typically convene a retreat to assess crucial data and address curriculum-related issues. This annual retreat serves as a venue for meaningful discussions, informed decision-making, and outlining actionable plans for the upcoming academic year. Monthly faculty meetings provide a continuous platform for communication and updates. During these sessions, committee members present their progress and status updates, fostering a culture of transparency and teamwork. The outcomes of these discussions lead to joint decision-making, with faculty members thoroughly reviewing and endorsing proposals put forth by various committees. Furthermore, the Curriculum Committee organizes a dedicated retreat focused on a comprehensive review of the curriculum, facilitating the identification of potential areas for

improvement and innovation regularly. This holistic approach ensures a continuous cycle of evaluation and enhancement to uphold accountability for the program's quality and enrich the educational experience for students in the program. Standard II.3 and Standard II.5 provide further details on evaluating the achievement of program-level learning outcomes.

## Standard II.3 Curriculum

The curriculum is carefully structured to align with and support the achievement of program-level learning outcomes. Each course contributes to the progressive development of knowledge, skills, and professional competencies that are articulated in the learning outcomes. Curriculum maps demonstrate the alignment between course objectives and program-level outcomes, ensuring a coherent educational experience. Table II.9 shows how the four program learning outcomes are thoroughly incorporated across both our core and elective courses.

**Table II.9. Mapping with Program Learning Outcomes and LIS Curriculum**

| Program Learning Outcomes | Core Courses | Intermediate and advanced courses |
|---|---|---|
| **Describe how communities & individuals interact with/in information ecosystems.** | 600, 601, 603 | 616, 618, 626, 627, 634, 636, 640, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 659, 665, 668, 672 |
| **Analyze the major tenets of information practice and apply them in multiple contexts.** | 600, 601, 602, 603 | 610, 616, 621, 627, 629, 636, 640, 643, 647, 648, 659, 661, 662 |
| **Connect various communities & individuals with appropriate resources.** | 600, 601, 603 | 610, 612, 613, 614, 616, 617, 618, 619, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 659 |
| **Explain the dependence of information retrieval on the organization of information.** | 601, 602 | 626, 634, 636, 638, 661, 662, 665, 668 |

### Users

The curriculum thoroughly explores the various needs of information users while delving into a wide array of resources, services, and technologies designed to enhance effective information management and utilization. It emphasizes the importance of adapting these elements to various contexts and communities, fostering a deeper understanding of how information can be effectively organized, accessed, and applied in different environments.

The LIS courses address the needs of user communities and underserved populations (Tables II.1, II.2 and II.3). Program learning outcome 1 directly addresses the needs of communities and users. Many courses are available for students to respond to the information needs of library patrons. In LIS 600, the information ecology project requires students to examine the variety of information needs and the localized contexts within which libraries operate. In LIS 603, students develop a strategic plan for an organization, crafting its mission, values and vision

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statement, as well as conduct a community audit to determine the needs of the library users. Many electives also correspond to PLO #1. For example, LIS 631 Social Media for Information Organizations emphasizes digital platforms to connect with patrons, helping to bridge the gap between the library and the community while promoting real-time engagement. LIS 659 Collection Development entails creating a LibGuide to serve a particular constituent group with their research and information needs. LIS 616 Information Behavior of Children & Youth is another prime example of a course addressing the information behavior of user groups by focusing on the needs and behaviors of children and youth.

Below is a list of courses addressing users in various contexts.
LIS 614 Literature & Related Materials for Young Adults
LIS 616 Information Behavior of Children & Youth
LIS 617 Electronic Resource Management
LIS 619 Informal Learning in Information Organizations
LIS 623 Makerspaces in Information Organizations
LIS 624 Systems Librarianship
LIS 643 Archives and Manuscripts Management
LIS 645 Public Libraries
LIS 665 Introduction to Digital Libraries
LIS 676 School Library Practicum
LIS 690 Advanced Library Management
LIS 690 Special Libraries
LIS 690 Public Programming and Outreach
LIS 690 Moving Images, Audio and Photographs in Cultural Heritage Institutions

## Resources and Services

Program learning outcome 3 addresses the competency of students in developing fluency and expertise in the theory, vocabulary, and best practices related to selection, acquisition, organization, evaluation, and preservation of information resources in various formats. Through a range of courses, students learn how to create and assess resources to ensure effective information management. LIS 601, LIS 602 and LIS 603 are the core courses that foster the development of competency in resources and services. Building on the core courses, many elective courses provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and abilities to manage resources for the community and patrons. LIS 614 Literature & Related Materials for Young Adults focuses on curating materials for young adults, evaluating content for literary merit while considering issues related to authorship and representation. Other relevant electives addressing resource management include LIS 643: Archives and Manuscripts Management, LIS 644: School Library Administration, LIS 646: Academic Libraries, LIS 659 Collection Development, LIS 626 Electronic Information Resources in the Health Sciences, LIS 627 Consumer Health Information Resources, and LIS 690 Moving Images, Audio, and Photographs in Cultural Heritage Institutions.

Many courses prepare students to provide innovative and effective information services in a world that is increasingly multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic. In addition to the four core courses, several electives are pivotal in developing students' ability to assess and design services and programs tailored to the target audience, including LIS 614 Youth Literature, LIS 618 Games, Literacy, Meaning, and Learning, LIS 619 Informal Learning in Information Organizations, LIS 690 Beyond Books, LIS 690 Programming and Outreach, LIS 690 Programming for Adults, and LIS 690 Teen Programming and Outreach.

## Technologies

The information landscape in the 21st century is dynamic and heavily influenced by technology. To meet the demands of information users in this complex environment, it is essential for all LIS students to have a strong understanding of information technologies and the skills to effectively implement these technologies for delivering information services.

For students interested in careers in information technologies, the MSLS program offers a new elective cluster in Systems Librarianship to deepen their knowledge and develop their skills. This cluster includes LIS 617 Electronic Resource Management, LIS 624 Systems Librarianship, LIS 634 Information Architecture and LIS 665 Introduction to Digital Libraries.

Instructors have also incorporated relevant technologies into their teaching practices. The LIS program specifically requests that instructors clearly outline the technologies taught and those used to enhance the teaching and learning experience in their syllabi. The LIS Curriculum Committee conducted a survey of LIS faculty to identify technology use in their instruction. The results show that the MSLS curriculum integrates a range of technologies across various courses:

1. **Library and Information Systems** – systems specific to digital collection content management, metadata and databases for information searching. Examples: Omeka (LIS 602, LIS 665, LIS 690 Public Programming and Outreach), CONTENTdm (LIS 665), MARC, MODS, LCSH, LCNAF, and MeSH (LIS 602), local and online library catalogs (LIS 601, LIS 614), EZproxy, OpenAthens, OpenURL, various ILS/LSPs, electronic resource management systems, LibGuide (LIS 659), and SUSHI protocol (LIS 617).
   - Example 1: A course project site from LIS 665 Introduction to Digital Libraries https://cdm17527.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/about: Students used CONTENTdm, a digital content management system, to create a digital collection by applying best practices.
   - Example 2: Course projects of creating a digital exhibit with Omeka to promote local history or library collections:
     - https://jamiecollins1976.omeka.net/exhibits/show/spotlightonentertainment
     - https://tdbr264.omeka.net/exhibits/show/main
     - https://ashtenestep.omeka.net/exhibits/show/intro/about

2. **Collaboration and Productivity Tools** – tools that facilitate group work, communication and discussions. Examples: Perusall (LIS 601), Google Slides, Google Docs (LIS 614), Trello, Discord (LIS 690 Adv Library MGMT), Canvas, Zoom, Flip and YouTube (LIS 690 Special Libraries).

3. **Web Development and Programming** – technologies related to the creation and management of web applications and programming languages. Examples: WordPress, Linux command line, server administration, virtual machines, cloud technologies, software administration (LIS 624) and R (LIS 662).

4. **Design and Media Production Tools** – tools used for creating and editing content like videos, infographics and prototypes. Examples: Figma (LIS 634), Adobe software (LIS 665), Canva (LIS 614), infographics (LIS 690 Ethical Issues) and makerspace technologies (LIS 623).

5. **Educational Platforms and Learning Management Systems** – systems for delivering, managing and tracking learning progress. Examples: Google LTI (LIS 676), Hypothesis (LIS 618), Canvas (all LIS courses).

## Electives

Our program excels in offering students a wide array of elective courses through which to gain both breadth and depth in various relevant and contemporary aspects of LIS practice. While students are expected to take the four core courses toward the beginning of their learning trajectory, they are encouraged to explore their interests throughout our program. From makerspaces to archives and cultural heritage, from data visualization to information behavior of children and youth, the LIS curriculum offers student electives that are reflective of both longstanding LIS traditions as well as contemporary needs (Appendix II.2 Mapping LIS courses against competencies). In addition, students are also encouraged, if relevant to their career goals, to pursue independent studies and/or practicum experiences, with the support of faculty advisors.

## Specializations

While students in our program do not choose a formal specialization, they can choose to follow any of our elective clusters if it fits their individual interest. The program groups elective classes into thematic clusters to help students choose courses aligned with their interests. These elective clusters include the following: Academic Libraries, Data Science, Health Information, Information Technology and Systems, Instruction Communication, Public Libraries, Special Libraries, Youth Services and Literature, Archives and Cultural Heritage, and Systems Librarianship. In addition, students can also pursue a graduate certificate in Instructional Communication Research or Integrated Strategic Communication. A third certificate in conjunction with the College of Social Work is in the approval process. Listed below are the courses (core and electives) that align with each of the elective clusters.

**Academic Libraries**
- LIS 646 Academic Libraries
- LIS 659 Collection Development
- LIS 665 Introduction to Digital Libraries

**Archives and Cultural Heritage**
- LIS 643 Archives and Manuscripts Management
- LIS 659 Collection Development
- LIS 690* Programming and Outreach of Libraries and Archives
- LIS 690* Moving Images, Audio and Photographs in Cultural Heritage Institutions (*LIS 690 is the course number given to new and emerging electives until the course is formally approved to be added as a regular course)

**Data Science**
- LIS 661 Introduction to Data Science
- LIS 662 Data Analysis and Visualization

**Health Information**
- LIS 626 Electronic Information Resources in the Health Sciences
- LIS 627 Consumer Health Information Resources
- LIS 629 Introduction to Medical Informatics
- ICT 730 Principles of Clinical Informatics*
- ICT 731 Biomedical Information Retrieval*
  (*ICT 730 and ICT 731 are offered in the Master's degree in Information Communication Technology. These are available for LIS students.)

**Information Technology and Systems**
- LIS 634 Information Architecture
- LIS 668 Database Management

**Instructional Communication**
- LIS 618 Games, Literacy, Meaning and Learning
- LIS 619 Informal Learning in Information Organizations

**Public Libraries**
- LIS 631 Social Media for Information Organizations
- LIS 645 Public Libraries
- LIS 659 Collection Development

**School Librarian (note that the school librarian program is a prescribed program with both external and internal requirements)**
- LIS 644 Administration of School Media Centers
- LIS 647 Current Trends in School Media Centers
- LIS 648 Technology in School Media Centers
- LIS 676 School Media Practicum

**Special Libraries**
- LIS 641 Law Librarianship
- LIS 643 Archives and Manuscripts Management
- LIS 665 Introduction to Digital Libraries

**Youth Services and Literature**
- LIS 606 Literature and Materials for Early Childhood
- LIS 610 Library Materials and Literature for Children
- LIS 612 Youth Literature for a Diverse Society
- LIS 614 Literature & Related Materials for Young Adults
- LIS 616 Information Behavior of Children and Youth

**Systems Librarianship**
- LIS 617 Electronic Resource Management
- LIS 624 Systems Librarianship
- LIS 634 Information Architecture
- LIS 665 Introduction to Digital Libraries

**Special Topic Courses**

Full-time and part-time faculty offer special topic courses to cover new developments in the field. After a special topic course has been offered twice, it may be reviewed for regularization. A list of special topics courses offered during the review period includes:

- Advanced Library Management
- Advanced Multimodal Communication Skills
- Applications of Text Analysis for Information Professionals
- Beyond Books: Library Programs and Services for Children
- Community Archives
- Critical Design of Information and Data Visualization
- Digital Analytics and Strategy
- Disability & Access in Libraries
- Electronic Resource Management
- Ethical Issues in Information Organizations
- From Orality to eBooks
- Games Literacy Meaning and Learning
- Government Documents
- ICT and Social Movements
- Intellectual Freedom
- Intro to Makerspaces
- Information Behavior of Children
- Information Ethics
- Informal Learning in Information Organizations
- Intro to Special Libraries
- Library IT Fundamentals
- Literature & Related Materials for Early Childhood
- Moving Images, Audio and Photographs
- Policy Ethics in ICTs
- Programming and Outreach of Libraries and Archives
- Programing Services for Adults
- Research Methods for Librarians
- Search Engine Campaigns
- Social Media for Information Organizations
- Social Media Strategy
- Systems Librarianship
- User Experience Research and Design

## Ongoing Curriculum Revision

Recognizing that all programs and systems can continually improve, the LIS program maintains a strong Curriculum Committee each year, composed of three faculty members and a current MSLS student. Meeting monthly, the Curriculum Committee performs annual curriculum audits and hosts a biennial curriculum retreat where faculty reflect on and discuss pressing practical issues within the courses, along with broader contemporary topics and trends in the LIS field. This ensures that curricular offerings remain relevant, innovative, and aligned with the needs of both the field and our students.

Occasionally, the Curriculum Committee surveys current students to assess their perceptions of course offerings. For example, the committee conducted a brief survey asking students about their satisfaction with the MSLS course offerings in the spring of 2023. Many students (84% or 95 out of 114 participants) reported being satisfied with the MSLS courses. The respondents also expressed a desire for courses in areas such as programming and advanced management (Appendix II.5 the 2023 Curriculum Committee Annual Report AY18-19 to AY24-25). Consequently, the LIS program has introduced two new special topics courses (Advanced Management and Programming & Outreach) beginning in AY 2023–2024. The LIS curriculum committee compiled and analyzed various data to identify challenges and areas for improvement. The decision-making processes can be traced through the curriculum committee's annual reports, meeting minutes and faculty meeting minutes (Appendix I.2 Library Science Faculty Meeting Minutes). Table II.10 highlights examples of curriculum changes and updates over the review period.

**Table II.10. Selected examples of changes and updates based on the curriculum revision evaluations**

| Year | Curriculum revision activities and changes |
|---|---|
| **AY 2018–19** | <ul><li>Adopted Social Media as a regular course in fall 2019</li><li>Offered a special topics course, Games, Literacy, Meaning, and Learning</li><li>Conducted a practical activity survey among courses</li><li>Updated the rubric for the exit assessment</li></ul> |
| **AY 2019–20** | <ul><li>The Committee conducted a curriculum audit in spring 2020.</li></ul> |
| **AY 2020–21** | <ul><li>Developed questions for the alumni survey to capture the perception of skills and knowledge of recent graduates (2020–2021)</li></ul> |
| **AY 2021–22** | <ul><li>Two special topics courses were reviewed and recommended for approval<ul><li>Literature and related materials for early childhood</li><li>Advanced multi-modal communication</li></ul></li></ul> |
| **AY 2022–23** | <ul><li>Revamped syllabi of LIS 600 and LIS 602 to reflect the readings and topics</li><li>Offered two special topics courses, Makerspace in Information Organizations and Systems Librarianship</li></ul> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Decided to offer electives (Academic Libraries and Collection Development) every semester due to an increasing demand of students<br>• LIS 690 Early Childhood Materials & Literature includes programming for kids in response to feedback that there were many literature courses but limited services courses, especially programming for kids.<br>• Adopted it as a regular course (LIS 606 Literature for Early Childhood).<br>• Reviewed the approval process for the LIS special topics courses |
| **AY 2023–24** | • Revised pedagogy in LIS 601<br>• Surveyed for a technology and practical skills audit for MSLS courses<br>• Conducted the curriculum mapping survey based on the 2022 ALA Competencies<br>    o Found that the categories of "information retrieval" and "archives and special collections" were underrepresented in the current curriculum.<br>        o This triggered an offering of a new special topics course, Moving Images, Audio, and Photographs in Cultural Heritage Institutions, and prompted consideration of adding a new cluster in archival studies<br>• Approved two recommended courses (ICT 730 Principles of Clinical Informatics and ICT 731 Biomedical Information Retrieval) for the Health Information cluster<br>• Revamped LIS 636<br>    o Decided to propose a new IT course replacing LIS 636 Foundations of Information Technology and LIS 638 Internet Technologies & Information Services<br>    o From 2024, these courses were no longer offered. Instead, the LIS 690 Special Topics: Library IT Fundamentals course was offered beginning spring 2025.<br>• Offered two special topics courses (Advanced Management and Programming & Outreach)<br>• Changed the "concentration areas" to "elective clusters"<br>• Developed the proposal for LIS 3+2 program<br>    o The University's Graduate Studies added AMP in 2024. LIS 3+2 program is folded into the AMP.<br>• Agreed to provide a one-year course schedule for students |
| **AY 2024–25** | • Offered three new special topics courses<br>    o Library IT Fundamentals<br>    o Moving Images, Audio and Photographs in Cultural Heritage Institutions |

<table>
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- o   Beyond Books
- Approved two new courses
    - o   Introduction to Social Work-Informed Library Services
    - o   Programming and Outreach in Libraries and Archives
- Adopted four courses to the LIS curriculum
    - o   Makerspaces in Information Organizations
    - o   Systems Librarianship
    - o   Multimodal Communication
    - o   Information Policy
- Revisited lists of concentration-themed courses
- Added two new clusters (Archives and Systems Librarianship)
- Updated a course description and title of LIS 655 Organization of Knowledge to "Introduction to Cataloging"
- Approve the graduate certificate of Social Service-Informed Library Services (pending for university approval)
- Reviewed and updated the exit examination assessment process
- Conducted a comprehensive review of the School Librarian Program, providing an overview that included the four key courses, alignment with KTPS and AAASL standards, assessment requirements, and other relevant components.
- Assessed how well the curriculum reflects various perspectives, cultures, and communities

</td></tr>
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## *Standard II.4 Program Completion*

### Course Offerings

The curriculum offers a wide range of educational experiences, ranging from discussion-based classes to experiential and independent learning opportunities. The educational setting is the asynchronous online classroom. The current course listing for the LIS program is presented in Table II.11 and can also be accessed via the Registrar's search page.

**Table II.11. Current courses and schedule**

| Course Name | Course Number | Type | Offered |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Information in Society** | LIS 600 | Required Core | Fall, Spring, Summer[a] |
| **Information Search** | LIS 601 | Required Core | Fall, Spring, Summer[a] |
| **Knowledge Organization** | LIS 602 | Required Core | Fall, Spring, Summer[a] |
| **Management in Information Organizations** | LIS 603 | Required Core | Fall, Spring, Summer[a] |
| **Methods of Research in Library and Information Science** | LIS6 08 | Elective | Spring |
| **Library Materials and Literature for Children** | LIS 610 | Elective | Fall |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Youth Literature for a Diverse Society** | LIS 612 | Elective | Fall, Spring, Summer |
| **Information Resources and Services for Children** | LIS 613 | Elective | Fall |
| **Library Materials and Literature for Young Adults** | LIS 614 | Elective | Spring |
| **Information Behavior of Children & Youth** | LIS 616 | Elective | Spring |
| **Electronic Resource Management** | LIS 617 | Elective | Fall |
| **Games, Literacy, Meaning and Learning** | LIS 618 | Elective | Spring |
| **Informal Learning in Information Organizations** | LIS 619 | Elective | Fall |
| **Information Resources and Services** | LIS 621 | Elective | Spring, Summer |
| **Electronic Information Resources in the Health Sciences** | LIS 626 | Elective | Fall |
| **Consumer Health Information Resources** | LIS 627 | Elective | Spring |
| **Introduction to Medical Informatics** | LIS 629 | Elective | Spring |
| **Social Media for Information Organizations** | LIS 631 | Elective | Fall, Summer |
| **Information Architecture** | LIS 634 | Elective | Fall |
| **Foundations of Information Technology** | LIS 636 | Elective | Fall, Spring, Summer |
| **Internet Technologies and Information Services** | LIS 638 | Elective | Spring |
| **Health Information Resource Services** | LIS 640 | Elective | Every other year |
| **Law Librarianship** | LIS 641 | Elective | Fall, Summer |
| **Oral History** | LIS 642 | Elective | |
| **Archives and Manuscripts Management** | LIS 643 | Elective | Fall |
| **Administration of School Library Media Centers** | LIS 644 | Elective | Fall |
| **Public Libraries** | LIS 645 | Elective | Fall |
| **Academic Libraries** | LIS 646 | Elective | Spring, Summer |
| **Current Trends in School Media Centers** | LIS 647 | Elective | Spring |
| **Technology in the School Media Center** | LIS 648 | Elective | Fall, Summer |
| **Organization of Knowledge I** | LIS 655 | Elective | Fall |
| **Knowledge Management** | LIS 658 | Elective | Spring |
| **Collection Development** | LIS 659 | Elective | Spring |
| **Introduction to Data Science** | LIS 661 | Elective | Fall, Spring |
| **Data Analysis and Visualization** | LIS 662 | Elective | Spring |
| **Introduction to Digital Libraries** | LIS 665 | Elective | Spring |
| **Information Systems and Design** | LIS 668 | Elective | Spring |
| **Practicum** | LIS 672 | Elective | Fall, Spring, Summer |
| **School Media Practicum** | LIS 676 | Elective | Fall, Spring, Summer |

| Special Topics in Library and Information Science | LIS 690 | Elective | Fall, Spring, Summer |
|---|---|---|---|
| Independent Study in Library and Information Science | LIS 695 | Elective | Fall, Spring, Summer |

a The program schedules at least two core courses each summer. The courses offered depend on student interest and instructor availability.

The range of course offerings provides students with numerous opportunities to enhance their understanding of library and information science and to prepare for the professional environment. Throughout these courses, students explore both fundamental principles and practical applications (for example, see Appendix II.5 Curriculum Committee Annual Reports, 2023–2024 Technology and Practical Skill Audit Report), thereby meeting their needs as they work toward their career goals. For instance, while the four core courses focus on preparing students with fundamental concepts in the field, technology-focused elective courses aim to equip them with essential and up-to-date technologies. Other courses, such as LIS 645 Public Libraries, LIS 646 Academic Libraries, LIS 641 Law Librarianship, LIS 643 Archives and Manuscripts Management, and LIS 644 Administration of School Library Media Centers, are specifically designed for certain communities, catering to those interested in working in these areas in the future. Furthermore, LIS 672 Practicum, LIS 676 School Media Practicum, and LIS 695 Independent Study allow students to focus on aspects of library and information science that align with their interests and professional goals. While most elective courses are offered once per academic year, highly popular ones such as LIS 646 and 643 may be scheduled multiple times to meet student demand. Conversely, some courses are available only once every two years. The catalog clearly indicates when additional sections of these in-demand electives are introduced, highlighting our dedication to supporting students in developing structured and timely study plans.

## Experiential Classes

The student practicums for the LIS 672 Practicum course have taken place at various libraries, spanning Kentucky and beyond, as evidenced by the following examples:

- Fairfax County Public Library, Fairfax, VA
- Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library, Cincinnati, OH
- Colorado College Tutt Library, Colorado Springs, CO
- Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA
- Napa Valley College McCarthy Library, Napa, CA
- University of Southern Maine Libraries, Portland, ME
- Kornhauser Health Sciences Library, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
- Maine State Archives, Augusta, ME
- University of Kentucky Law Library, Lexington, KY
- University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Library, Chattanooga, TN

- Harrodsburg Historical Society, Archives & Records Center, Alexandria, VA
- Charles L. Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
- Don and Cathy Jacobs Health Education Center, University of Kentucky Hospital, Lexington, KY

Students are responsible for designing their practicums in collaboration with their site supervisor and faculty advisor, with final approval required from the site supervisor, faculty advisor, and School Director. Throughout the semester, students are required to fulfill 140 hours of work and undertake a final project showcasing their attainment of specified learning outcomes outlined in their contracts ([Appendix II.6 LIS 672 Learning Contract](#)). Topics the students undertook during their practicum include collection development, planning exhibits, developing finding aids, digitizing items, and material preservation. One of the students (Carly Jessup) in the spring 2022 practicum was a prime example of the outcome and impact of the practicum on a local community. She established a free little library at a playground in a local town, providing valuable literacy resources for students and families. Her inspiring story was even [featured in a local media outlet](#).

LIS 672 Practicum, available to all program students, solicits feedback from both the students who complete the course and the site supervisors of our students. Below is a sample of feedback we have received.

From supervisors:

- "He was a delightful addition to our library's team during his internship with us. He quickly demonstrated a genuine desire to help patrons and coworkers at the service desk, behind the scenes and out in the community."
- "She was incredible. She joined our team immediately as a colleague. She jumped into projects and was a leader. She provided our team with useful feedback on projects and initiated several projects. She was dependable and committed throughout her time here. She is already an incredible professional and librarian."
- "She has great ideas. She is innovative, very comfortable with technology, and really values patrons and customer service."

From students:

- "My practicum was at the William S. Webb Museum of Anthropology. I worked under Lisa Guerre, the curator and lab manager for the museum. My work included collection assessments, re-processing and creating finding aids (and a finding aid format) for the WPA Collections at the museum. My goal is to one day work for an archaeological repository, so it was great to get more experience working with the Webb Museum. Most of my learning included getting familiar with creating finding aids (something I did not have experience doing) and reflecting on the differences in collections/finding aids between traditional archives and archaeological repositories."

- "The process of working on the project was something I never thought about doing before. I learned a lot about how to properly research and survey people through an online system that I've never used before, and Jen's supervision helped me get the hang of doing the project as a whole quickly and effectively. The main goal of the project made sense and we were on the right track of doing what we needed to do. The roadblocks that we encountered along the way, however, made it so much more difficult/nearly impossible to get anything we wanted finished that I was afraid I was going to receive an incomplete. Dr. Huber's kindness in allowing me to complete the course despite the incomplete project was very thoughtful. As for the survey project, there's a chance I may continue on with it once the IRB form is fully complete (I need to make revisions) just so I may add it to my portfolio of projects."
- "I worked on a genre-fication project in the library where I have been employed for the past four years. I have worked with my supervisor for the past three years and she was very supportive. I was able to complete the project from start to finish with the assistance of my supervisor, the library assistants and volunteers.  My placement was appropriate as it was in a familiar environment where I had extensive knowledge of the collection. It was great to have firsthand experience with the weeding process and how to manage the anxiety of people who don't completely understand the process. The type of work brought me joy and a sense of accomplishment."

Additionally, students who are in the school librarian program are required to complete 160 hours (10 days) of field-based experiences. All students are required to complete a minimum of 80 hours through two traditional practica experiences, one in an elementary school and one in a secondary school, with each consisting of a minimum of five days. Students have multiple options for completing the remaining 80 hours of field-based experiences either through additional traditional practica days or through a choice of field-based experiences aligned with the ALA/AASL/CAEP (2019) standards. These practica complement the learning done in coursework and prepare students for success in the field. Upon completion of each segment of the practica, supervisors complete an evaluation form. Additionally, students submit a portfolio to demonstrate mastery of the ALA/AASL/CAEP (2019) School Librarian Preparation Standards and the Advanced Indicators of the Kentucky Teacher Performance Standards, which the course instructor then reviews before assigning a final grade. Information regarding enrollment in LIS 672 and LIS 676 for this accreditation cycle is presented in Table II.12.

**Table II.12. Enrollment in LIS 672 & LIS 676 Practicum**

| Academic Year | 18–19 | 19–20 | 20–21 | 21–22 | 22–23 | 23–24 | 24–25 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of students in LIS 672 | 12 | 13 | 12 | 25 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 87 |
| No. of students in LIS 676 | 25 | 11 | 16 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 88 |

## Independent Studies

LIS 695 Independent Study is designed for students seeking to undertake independent research. Under the supervision and guidance of a full-time faculty member, students choose their own topic and finalize their project. It enables students to delve into areas of library and information science that match their interests and career aspirations. Like the practicum course, students engaged in independent study must submit a proposal form for approval ([Appendix II.7 LIS 695 Independent Study Proposal](#)). During the review period, a total of 29 students took the LIS 695. Below are samples of LIS Independent Study Subjects.

- Ella Burns engaged in secondary data analysis of public library baby story time program recordings to investigate the nature of librarian interactions with adult caregivers during baby story time programs (faculty supervisor: Maria Cahill, Ph.D.).
- Christy Boggs developed an online web guide that focuses on one library from Kentucky. The guide/site would contain a SWOT analysis of the institution, a breakdown of their importance to the region they serve, and a statement regarding the patronage and cultural impact, alongside the financial limitations/developments of the facility (faculty supervisor: Shannon Oltmann, Ph.D.)
- Carly Peruccio developed a formalized, cohesive information literacy curriculum for undergraduate students at the Maine College of Art & Design (MECA&D) that can be embedded in existing core academic courses or offered in one-off instructional sessions. As part of this study, she also explored how artificial intelligence (AI) literacy fits into information literacy instruction in academic libraries (faculty supervisor: Daniela DiGiacomo, Ph.D.).
- Brooke Maynard examined how academic libraries develop and manage their digital collections, such as e-books, online journals and databases. She explored how libraries choose and maintain digital materials, balancing print and digital materials, licensing, subscriptions, and access limitations. The project's goals include assessing current practices for libraries with managing digital collections, identifying challenges with licensing, budget and the effect of new technology. It will suggest cost-effective ways to handle budget constraints and improve how libraries meet user's needs. The research will also help develop strategies and policies for digital collection development, addressing current and future challenges with digital materials. (faculty supervisor: Shannon Oltmann, Ph.D.).
- Samantha Betler examined case studies relating to implementing a digital library in a rural public library to be able to implement a digital library for the genealogy department in the public library she worked at. The anticipated outcome included a comprehensive report including the literature review, research into digital library management systems including selection criteria and an evaluation of the options, as well as at least a prototype of the digital library itself (faculty supervisor, Soohyung Joo, Ph.D.).
- Caitlin Taylor focused on developing information literacy frameworks and pedagogy as well as information literacy lesson plans for their curriculum. Informed by my literature review, she prepared a K-12 JCPS Social Studies practitioner toolkit for information literacy instruction, complete with framework and lesson plans that are also aligned

with JCPS' student digital backpack initiative for student learning (faculty supervisor: Daniela DiGiacomo, Ph.D.).

- Sierra Ross conducted a comprehensive case study on LGBTQ+ community archives in the United States to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by these archives and analyze how they may continue to evolve (faculty supervisor: Soohyung Joo, Ph.D.).
- Makaila Offutt researched bibliotherapy and its role in libraries (faculty supervisor, Shannon Oltmann, Ph.D.).
- Andreia Cabrera researched to gain a better understanding of the role of a librarian in biomedical research within academic libraries (faculty supervisor: Beth Bloch, Ph.D.).

**Table II.13. Students Enrolled in LIS 695 Independent Study, 2018–2025**

| Academic Year | 18–19 | 19–20 | 20–21 | 21–22 | 22–23 | 23–24 | 24–25 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students enrolled | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 29 |

## Expedited Option

Some students in the program may opt for an accelerated path to complete their degree in under two years by taking more than a full-time course load. These students are on an "expedited" path. Pursuing an expedited degree plan allows students to finish the program in as little as 18 months. The Expedited MSLS Plan page offers more information about what this path entails.

## Cognate Courses

With advisor approval, students may apply up to six credit hours of graduate courses outside the LIS program at the University of Kentucky toward their degree, enriching their program of study when chosen strategically to complement their professional goals, expand subject matter expertise or provide interdisciplinary perspectives that enhance their understanding of library and information science.

## Concurrent Degrees and Certificates

Students interested in pursuing two graduate degrees simultaneously at the University of Kentucky may share a maximum of nine credit hours of coursework between the programs, with approval from the DGS for both programs. In this review period, students have pursued concurrent degrees with information communication technology, history and classics.

Students might also consider a graduate certificate, such as the Graduate Certificate in Instructional Communication, which comprises 12 credit hours and emphasizes message design within an instructional setting. The program worked directly with the certificate directors to incorporate two LIS courses into the certificate requirements, allowing students to complete both the certificate and the MSLS degree within the same 36 credit hours. This integration supports timely and efficient plans of study by eliminating the need for additional coursework beyond the degree requirements. This past academic year, seven library master's students

were also enrolled in the instructional communication certificate. Similarly, students can complete the graduate certificate in Integrated Strategic Communication. A new graduate certificate in Social Work-Informed Library Services was proposed in the fall of 2024 and is pending review.

## Accelerated Master's Pathways (AMP)

This program is designed to encourage qualified undergraduates to pursue a master's degree in the LIS field by allowing students to take four core courses (12 credits) that count toward the bachelor's degree and the MSLS degree. Upon completion of their bachelor's degree, these students will only need eight LIS courses to complete the MSLS requirements. More details can be found on the University's AMP web page.

## Practice-based Opportunities

A variety of experiential opportunities complement the coursework students complete. These include Alternative Spring Break (ASB), associations and organizations, and the SIS Student Conference.

## Alternative Spring Break

Since 2011, the UK SIS ASB program has partnered with various groups, including the Library of Congress, the Network of National Library of Medicine, and the Smithsonian Libraries. Students work alongside librarians or archivists and contribute to ongoing projects. This unique opportunity provides valuable professional experience, and UK SIS is one of the few library science programs offering it. The school provides interns with scholarships to help cover the cost of participation.

## Associations and Organizations

Students looking to join a student organization can become members of the University of Kentucky's American Library Association student chapter (ALA @ UK). Students are encouraged to join national or local professional associations early in their careers, as involvement and service are vital to help acclimatize students into the profession. Notable associations include the American Library Association, Special Library Association, Medical Library Association, Society of American Archivists, and Kentucky Library Association.

## SIS Student Conference

Since 2014, the UK American Library Association Student Chapter has hosted the annual LIS Student Conference, providing students with a platform to share their work and gain presentation experience. The conference has since expanded to include ICT students as well, offering a low-stress environment for students to present their research, class projects, or other LIS/ICT-related work.
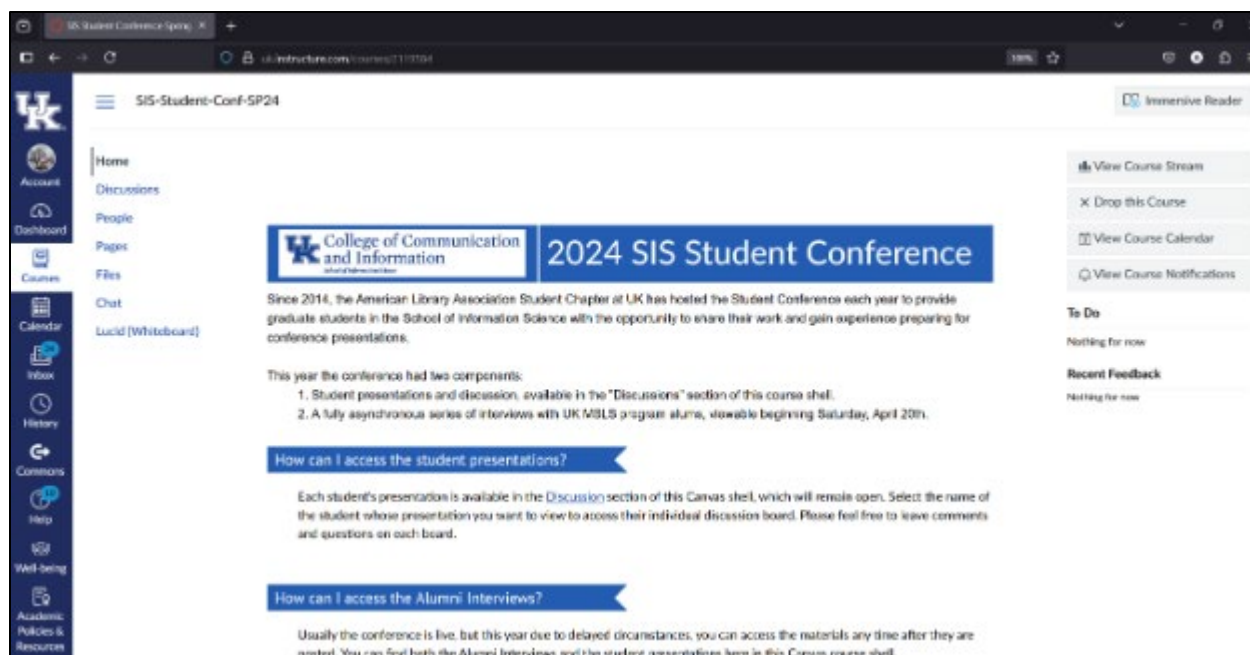
**Figure II.2. Home page of 2024 UK LIS student conference**

## Support Systems

**Scheduling and Advising**

All students are encouraged to complete the four mandatory core courses (LIS 600, 601, 602, and 603) within their initial 18 credit hours of coursework. There is no specified sequence for completing the core courses, thereby avoiding potential bottlenecks or scheduling conflicts for students who commence the program in the fall, spring, or summer terms. However, the faculty continue to discuss the optimal sequence for students to take these core courses. For example, based on recent discussions, students are encouraged to take LIS 602 before LIS 601. Students have the flexibility to structure their programs of study in various ways, accommodating the needs and aspirations of individuals.

The LIS Admissions Coordinator and SIS Student Affairs Officer both help provide interested students with information about the application process, as well as help orient them to the LIS program. When students are first accepted into the program, they are assigned to a faculty advisor. The program further assists students in developing coherent study plans with a course planning form. In 2021, the Student Affairs Team improved course planning by replacing a static PDF form with an embedded Canvas quiz, making updates easier and enhancing mobile accessibility. It enables students to map out their entire curriculum before starting their first semester, helping them stay on track with their time-to-degree goals while guiding future course registration. At the same time, it offers flexibility to update their plans as career interests evolve, or new course options become available. Additionally, the process for school librarian students was updated, allowing certification and practicum forms to be submitted via

Canvas assignments instead of email, improving organization and efficiency. See [Appendix II.8 Student Planning Forms](#) for more details.

Another resource aiding students in constructing their plans of study is the list of elective clusters, formerly known as "academic concentrations." In spring 2024, the faculty decided to replace the term "academic concentrations" with "elective clusters" to clarify that the intent of the list is to serve as recommendations rather than requirements. These clusters recommend elective courses aligned with specific fields of interest, providing students with a program planning tool if they wish to focus their course of study in one or more areas. The [degree requirements](#) page on the LIS website gives students a starting point to plan their program of study. In spring 2025, two new clusters, "Archives and Cultural Heritage" and "Systems Librarianship," were added in response to the growing interest in these areas within the field. In addition, students are encouraged to review their plans and decisions with their advisors throughout the course selection process.

**Advising for the exit examination**

Along with [the exit exam guidelines](#) available on the web, a Zoom session is offered each semester by the SIS Student Affairs Officer, providing students with essential resources and guidance as they prepare for this critical assessment. Before the final essay submission, students are encouraged to submit a draft of their exit essay for comprehensive review and constructive feedback from experienced faculty members. This process allows students to identify areas for improvement and refine their writing.

Once students have finalized their essays, they are submitted for evaluation. A designated pair of LIS faculty members assesses each essay according to a detailed grading rubric that encompasses various criteria structured with the program learning outcomes. If an essay receives two scores of zero from one or both readers in any rubric category, students are asked to revise their work within a seven-day timeframe. This revision process is designed to encourage continuous improvement, ensuring that students can address any deficiencies and better meet the expectations outlined in the rubric. This advising approach not only supports students in enhancing their writing but also fosters a deeper reflection of their learning experience with the LIS curriculum, ultimately leading to a more successful academic experience.

**Website**

Our [website](#) provides the latest information about the program, enabling students to create timely and well-structured study plans, making it their primary resource.

**LIS New Student Welcome Process**

In addition to the website, our Student Affairs Team established a [comprehensive orientation process](#) in 2018, transitioning from a day-long orientation for new students to a shorter synchronous session (recordings offered for those who cannot attend live) along with asynchronous resources students may access at any time. It has undergone several revisions, with major updates including an overhaul of packet materials in 2021 ([Appendix II.1 LIS New Student Welcome Packet Example](#)), an updated course planning process and forms in 2021, and a redesign of the Student Hub in 2022. The transition from a one-day orientation to a more comprehensive and continually updated welcome process provides students with enhanced support as they develop more coherent and timely plans of study aligned with their career needs ([Appendix II.10 New Student Welcome Process Evaluation Report AY23-24](#)).

**Student Hub**

The Student Affairs Team updated the advising system in Canvas to improve information sharing and student interaction. Previously, each faculty advisor had a separate advising shell, requiring updates to be posted individually and limiting student interaction to peers with the same advisor. In September 2022, a centralized MSLS Student Hub was introduced to ensure consistent information delivery, allowing all students to connect and enabling advisors to communicate efficiently with their advisees. The Hub plays a key role in helping students formulate timely and coherent course plans by providing centralized access to essential planning tools and program guidance. It features a video walkthrough for onboarding, dedicated pages for new and school librarian program students, and sections on faculty, resources, financial aid, classes, practicum, and graduation, equipping students with the information and support they need to make informed academic decisions. While any faculty or staff can post to the Hub, the Student Affairs Officer is often the primary updater throughout the academic year. For example, they will post the course schedule in the Student Hub before priority registration begins to assist students in selecting their classes for upcoming semesters. See [IV.2](#) and [IV.4](#) for more details.

## Evidence for Professional Preparation

Two survey instruments are employed to gather feedback on graduates' readiness for their professional careers – the alumni survey and the employer survey. For example, Table II.14 below shares the results of the questions relating to recent graduates' assessment of their professional preparation from the last four Alumni Surveys. All the average scores are close to 4 in the upward trend, indicating that students feel satisfied with how the available classes allow them to plan a coherent course of study aligned with their professional goals. The scores suggest a general sense of improvement in the alignment of the curriculum with student needs, and the steady rise in scores over the years indicates that the program is becoming more effective in helping students achieve their academic and professional objectives. And Table II.15 shows that employers strongly believe students are well prepared for professional work.

**Table II.14. Alumni perception of professional preparation**

| Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree | 2019 (n=85) | 2021 (n=48) | 2023 (n=20) | 2025 (n=42) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The classes available allowed me to plan a coherent course of study that fit my professional goals. | 3.8 | 3.75 | 3.83 | 4.14 |
| The classes available allowed me to pursue a specialization that fit my professional goals. | 3.7 | 3.69 | 3.72 | 3.94 |
| The MSLS program prepared me for my profession. | 3.7 | 3.73 | 3.83 | 4.03 |

Source: Alumni Survey

a Results filtered to show only responses from respondents who graduated after 2014.

**Table II.15. Employer perception of graduates' professional preparation**

| Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree | 2020 (n=34) | 2022 (n=37) | 2024 (n=37) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Well prepared | 4.33 | 4.54 | 4.14 |

Source: Employer survey

## *Standard II.5 Evaluation*

### Input Sources

The program implements procedures and measures for the continuous evaluation of its curriculum. Table II.16 outlines the specific direct and indirect measures employed to evaluate both individual courses and the overall curriculum.

**Table II.16. Direct and indirect evaluation of the curriculum**

| Measures | Individual Courses | Full Curriculum |
|---|---|---|
| **Direct** | <ul><li>Teacher Course Evaluations</li><li>Course-level student learning outcomes assessment</li><li>Exit requirement learning outcomes assessment</li><li>Curriculum Audit</li></ul> | <ul><li>Teacher Course Evaluations</li><li>Exit requirement learning outcomes assessment</li><li>Curriculum Audit</li></ul> |
| **Indirect** | <ul><li>OTIS data for school librarian student certification portfolios</li><li>PRAXIS scores for school librarian students</li></ul> | <ul><li>Graduate Survey data</li><li>Alumni Survey data</li><li>Employer Survey data</li><li>Alumni achievements/awards</li><li>University program review</li><li>Reaffirmation of accreditation</li><li>Informal feedback from constituents, including the External Advisory Council</li></ul> |

As shown in Table II.16 above, the program evaluates both individual courses and the overall curriculum by gathering feedback, both directly and indirectly, from various stakeholders, including students, alumni, employers, and the External Advisory Council.  Most data are collected through formal methods, such as graduate, alumni, and employer surveys, as well as teacher course evaluations. Additionally, informal feedback, like information gained at conferences, through  literature, or at external advisory council meetings, provides continuous insights into developments in the field. The faculty continually analyzes this data, along with other feedback, to identify strengths and areas for improvement within the curriculum. A more detailed description of the main evaluation mechanisms is included below. Information about the curricular review process is available in Standard II.3. Further details on the program's systematic evaluation of students' achievement of program-level learning outcomes, in alignment with its mission and goals, can be found in Standard I.3 as well as Appendix II.14 LIS Program Assessment Procedure Fall 2025. The faculty is also revising its curriculum review process (see Appendix II.15 Draft SIS Curriculum Review Guidelines).

## Systematic and Continual Evaluation

Students are asked to complete TCEs at the end of each semester for all enrolled courses (see Appendix II.9 Teacher Course Evaluation Summary Data). Along with other student feedback, like the exit survey, these evaluations provide immediate and long-term insights into instructor and course effectiveness and curriculum impact. Analyzing student feedback helps identify and address course deficiencies, guiding necessary revisions over time. For instance, based on

student feedback, LIS 602 instructors led a major course revision in 2022, incorporating a clearer textbook, increased hands-on experience, and a semester-long case study. This is just one example — course instructors continuously refine their courses, making both minor and major adjustments based on TCEs and other student feedback.

Additionally, the Curriculum Committee conducts biennial audits on the curriculum, measuring various items like the use of practical skills ([Appendix II.5 Curriculum Committee Annual Reports AY18-19 to AY24-25](#)) during alternating years. (The practical skills component was added in AY23–24 based on suggestions from the LIS Strategic Planning Committee.) After summarizing the audit findings, the committee presents a report to the faculty, and the report guides planning for the subsequent year. For example, the report from the AY23–24 Curriculum Committee "technology and practical skills" audit finds that our curriculum incorporates a variety of technologies across courses, enhancing students' proficiency in both library-specific and general tools, and it suggests maintaining a focus on practical skills and hands-on learning while incorporating various collaboration and communication technologies to enhance the remote learning experience.

During the 18–19 academic year, several new assessment initiatives were implemented at the school level. As part of these initiatives, the LIS program launched a pre- and post-test assessment within LIS 600, along with an entrance and exit survey for the program. Data from these efforts has been instrumental in pinpointing and resolving deficiencies in core courses, ensuring the desired level of learning outcome mastery is met, thereby driving ongoing revisions and improvements ([Appendix II.4 University Assessment Reports](#)). In addition, the Planning Committee annually assesses the learning outcomes essays. The composite scores collected each year help determine how effectively students demonstrate their achievement of program learning outcomes. This enables faculty to evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness in equipping students with the necessary training and knowledge to attain mastery. The assessment also includes checking inter-rater reliability to ensure consistent grading among faculty members ([Appendix I.5 Planning Committee Annual Reports AY18-19 to AY24-25](#)).

Three of our regularly conducted surveys — graduate, employer, and alumni — provide new graduates, alumni and employers with an opportunity to rate either their own or their employee's mastery of learning outcomes and offer feedback on the curriculum, including suggesting new courses or revisions based on trends in the field. This enables faculty to consistently identify strengths and areas for improvement, allowing for timely and necessary adjustments to the curriculum. For example, the most recent Employer survey ([Appendix I.5 Planning Committee Annual Reports AY18-19 to AY24-25](#)) indicates that employers are generally satisfied with the quality of our graduates and recommend that future graduates develop skills in leadership, management, interpersonal communication, and the ability to work with and support a wide range of patrons. As a result, these skills are being emphasized in relevant courses. For another example, the alumni survey administered in 2022–2023 ([Appendix I.5 Planning Committee Year-End Reports AY 18-19 to AY24-25, AY 22–23](#))

recommends continuing to strengthen the curriculum, as well as including specific technologies such as office software, multimedia management, social media, and content management in the curriculum, all of which were closely examined during the relevant audits and curriculum retreat.

The faculty also conducts the Curriculum Retreat biennially, where they discuss various trends, issues, and suggestions related to the curriculum. During the fall 2024 retreat (Appendix II.11 LIS Retreat Minutes August 2024), numerous topics were discussed, including: 1) expanding curriculum offerings in systems librarianship, AI, health librarianship, and archives, 2) strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum, as well as areas for improvement. These discussions were then reflected in our curricular efforts. For instance, AI, health librarianship, and archives emerged as key focus areas for a subsequent faculty hire.

The program also solicits feedback from External Advisory Council members, comprised of leaders and experts from various types of libraries in the region, each year. For example, the spring 2025 meeting (Appendix II.3 LIS External Advisory Board minutes) highlighted several key areas for improving the program over the next five years, including: 1) expanding opportunities for practical, hands-on experience within the curriculum or through other touchpoints to ensure graduates are job-ready, 2) strengthening emphasis on execution, project management, and leadership skills to meet employer expectations, 3) increasing focus on resource management, database management, and other technical competencies, 4) addressing the challenge of attracting professionals to STEM librarianship, a growing field, and 5) exploring effective ways to teach communication and interpersonal skills to remote students nationwide.

As described above, the LIS faculty continually review and revise the curriculum based on input gathered from various constituents. By assessing the curriculum through these ongoing evaluation venues, the program gains a more comprehensive understanding of how well it meets the needs of the constituents it serves.

## Summary and Future Plans

The LIS curriculum is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for professional success in their chosen careers within the library and information fields. This program provides a variety of learning experiences that cover the theories, principles, practices, and values essential for delivering services in libraries, information centers, and other related contexts.

The program's learning outcomes serve as a framework to assess students' mastery of the curriculum. To support these outcomes, the curriculum is reviewed systematically. The LIS faculty regularly collects assessments and feedback through various channels to evaluate the curriculum. This feedback comes from a range of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, employers, and the LIS Advisory Council. The Curriculum Committee leads the efforts in developing, reviewing, and revising the curriculum. This committee identifies issues for faculty discussion, evaluates proposed courses or course changes, and presents recommendations for approval during faculty meetings.

In 2025, the faculty will develop a regular and cyclical curriculum review process specifically focused on both core and elective courses for the upcoming academic year. Additionally, the LIS program plans to revisit the process of conducting program learning outcomes assessments at the course level to establish direct measures for evaluating student progress. As for indirect measures, the faculty will incorporate new questions into the graduate survey to gather feedback on various aspects of the curriculum. These planned updates to the systematic review process will enhance the clarity and execution of program learning outcome assessments in the coming year.

# Standard III: Faculty

## Introduction

As of spring 2025, the LIS program had 13 full-time faculty members, all of whom are well-qualified and experienced in teaching, research, and service activities (see Appendix III.15 Faculty CVs). These faculty hold advanced degrees in library and information science or related fields. They teach courses that correspond with their educational backgrounds, experiences, and research interests, providing valuable knowledge, skills, and abilities across various subject areas that align with the program's mission.

The University of Kentucky has clear policies and procedures in place to ensure the recruitment and retention of faculty from various backgrounds. The Office of Faculty Advancement (OFA) offers detailed information regarding these policies and procedures for systematic faculty evaluations. The LIS program complies with both university and college policies. Additionally, the program actively utilizes the results from faculty evaluations to improve its offerings and plan for future enhancements. Additionally, the university provides a basic framework for regular faculty evaluations throughout their career.

## Standard III.1 Faculty Body

The University of Kentucky is committed to recruiting and retaining exceptionally qualified faculty members from various backgrounds. Guidelines at the University, College, and School levels govern faculty recruitment, retention, development, and advancement. This includes goals, objectives, and strategies related to belonging, which are outlined below. These guidelines emphasize fair hiring practices, support for professional growth, and creating an academic community that is welcoming and responsive to the needs of students and the profession.

### Faculty Recruitment

Recruitment of a wide variety of faculty is among the goals, objectives, and strategies contained within the University's and the College's respective strategic plans.

In line with these goals, objectives and strategies, the university offers training as well as a faculty hiring guide. SIS faculty search committees completed all university-level required training before commencing faculty searches. The University of Kentucky changed this training from mandatory to highly recommended in fall 2024. Guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate questions to ask candidates during interviews have also been circulated to SIS faculty and staff prior to on-campus interviews, as well as guidelines for informal conversation starters (Appendix III.2 UK Interview Guidelines).

The School has always tried to hire the best qualified individuals for open positions. Our strategies have included: 1) posting job ads in appropriate academic journals, newspapers, magazines, professional listservs, etc., 2) connecting with colleagues at universities, alumni, practitioners and UK faculty members and staff, and 3) engaging potential candidates at conferences. In fall 2019, the College initiated a process requiring all unit heads/search committees to broaden faculty recruitment outreach. This included advertising faculty positions through publications included in the university's standard job service, utilizing mailing lists for divisions and interest groups of national organizations, attending conferences to network with faculty and graduate students from a wide range of backgrounds, and connecting with institutions.

Currently, among our 13 LIS faculty, three faculty members are identified as ethnically Asian, while the remaining full-time faculty members are Caucasian. Regarding country of origin, one faculty member is from Canada, three faculty members are from Korea, and the remaining faculty members are from the United States. Regarding gender, four faculty members (31%) are identified as male, while the remaining (69%) are female. During the review period, the LIS hired eight new faculty members and one additional faculty member who will join in the fall of 2025 as an assistant professor.

## Hiring part-time faculty

The LIS program employs part-time faculty who are experienced professionals with specialized knowledge in their fields. These part-time instructors enhance students' overall learning experiences by incorporating real-world expertise and practical skills into their teaching. To recruit potential candidates, we consult with full-time faculty members, leverage our professional networks, and post announcements on appropriate email listservs or web sites. When a potential part-time faculty member is identified, the School Director, the LIS Program Coordinator, and the Assistant Director review the candidate's resume and application documents. This is followed by a Zoom interview (Appendix III.3 Process for Hiring Part-Time Instructors). Following the Director's selection of part-time faculty, the College Dean must approve the candidate's credentials for the final hiring. New part-time faculty members receive an instructor guide (Appendix III.4 UKY SIS Instructor Guidelines), and the LIS Program Coordinator provides guidance and support to them during their first term of teaching. Additionally, new part-time faculty members are required to complete an online training (Canvas Shell) maintained by the College.

## Faculty Retention, Development & Advancement

As with recruitment, retention of faculty is also among the objectives and strategies contained within the University's and the College's respective strategic plans. As faculty development and advancement go hand in hand with retention, these three areas are discussed together here.

**Retention**

For retention and advancement, the university provides [administrative regulations](#) to support faculty success. A College-wide review of pay by faculty rank and discipline began in 2020 and is ongoing. Several LIS faculty members have received adjustments to their salaries because of this evaluation. The College has also initiated the review of policies related to tenure and promotion to ensure that these policies provide fair and consistent support for faculty success. The College has also raised awareness among administrators and faculty serving on promotion and tenure cases about the limitations in Teacher Course Evaluations and provided guidance on incorporating multiple measures of teaching effectiveness in promotion and tenure dossiers.

To support international faculty, beginning in spring 2021, the College has designated a point person to facilitate communication between the university's International Student and Scholar Services and faculty who are immigrants to the United States. Considering ongoing changes to immigration policy and enforcement at the federal level, the university has established a [webpage](#) with relevant information for international students, scholars, and employees that is updated on an ongoing basis. The [University's Associate General Counsel](#) is also available to discuss international travel and immigration concerns with faculty.

**Development**

Development is central to retaining faculty. Several years ago, the School started a formal mentoring program for junior faculty. Each junior faculty member selects or is assigned to a mentor each year. They can meet and discuss any professional issues that may come up, including teaching, research, and service. In 2025, the Promotion and Tenure Committee was renamed and revised. It is now the Faculty Development Committee. One of its charges is to provide mentoring and development opportunities for all faculty in the School, including tenured, tenure track, and lecturers.

The College provides professional development and mentorship opportunities for all faculty. A College-wide license was purchased for [Academic Impressions](#), a library of professional development resources for higher education. The College and/or SIS has also paid for individual faculty to complete various professional development programs, including programs like Navigate: Your Writing Roadmap.

**Advancement**

Tenure-track faculty are reviewed every year by the School Director and in years two and four by the School's senior faculty members, Director, and the Dean, in advance of the tenure and promotion review. Tenured faculty are subject to review every other year. The School has guidelines for promotion to Full Professor. More details about faculty evaluation and development are provided in [Standard III.6](#).

## *Standard III.2 Program Faculty*

As shown in [Table III.1](), the composition of the faculty has undergone several changes during the review period. As of spring 2025, a total of 13 members have served on the faculty, including eight new hires in the past seven years. Since the fall of 2018, four faculty members have earned tenure and been promoted to associate professor; one faculty member has been promoted to full professor, and one lecturer has been promoted to senior lecturer. Jeff Huber, Ph.D., a former School Director, retired in spring 2024. Two faculty members left to take positions at other universities, and one faculty member's appointment as a visiting assistant professor concluded. The School conducted faculty searches twice, in 2023 and 2024, to successfully fill the positions of Huber and Yu Chi, Ph.D. While one additional junior faculty member, Heng Zheng, Ph.D., who specializes in AI, will join as an assistant professor in fall 2025, two additional faculty members, Yvonne Eadon, Ph.D., a new assistant professor who joined the School in fall 2024, and Shannon Oltmann, accepted other faculty positions at different universities. The School has a hiring plan to replace them during AY25–26.

### Full-Time Program Faculty

Throughout the review period, the number of full-time faculty has been sufficient to carry out the major share of teaching, research, and service. Seventy-five percent of courses are taught by full-time faculty. As detailed in [Standard III.4](), all program-level service is carried out by full-time faculty. Additionally, faculty engage in extensive research, as detailed in [Standard III.3]().

For AY25, the faculty in the LIS program was comprised of two full professors, six associate professors, four assistant professors, and one senior lecturer. Twelve of the 13 full-time faculty hold regular-title appointments, and one faculty member holds a special title appointment. One faculty member, Maria Cahill, Ph.D., has a joint appointment in the Department of [Educational Leadership Studies in the College of Education](). Table III.1 shows the rank of each faculty member during the review period.

**Table III.1. Full-time faculty, 2018–2025**

| Faculty | 18–19 | 19–20 | 20–21 | 21–22 | 22–23 | 23–24 | 24–25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barriage | | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Assoc. |
| Bloch | | | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. |
| Burns | Asst. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. |
| Cahill | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Prof. | Prof. |
| Chi | | | | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | |
| Choi, N. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. |
| Choi, Y. | | | | | | Prof. | Prof. |
| Crawford Barniskis | | | | | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. |
| DeWitt | Lect. | Lect. | S. Lect. | S. Lect. | S. Lect. | S. Lect. | S. Lect. |
| DiGiacomo | | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. | Assoc. |
| Eadon | | | | | | | Asst. |
| Huber | Prof. | Prof. | Prof. | Prof. | Prof. | Prof. | |
| Joo | Asst. | Asst. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. |
| Kim | Assoc. | Assoc. | | | | | |
| Oltmann | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. | Assoc. |
| Real | | | | | Asst. | Asst. | Asst. |
| Shapiro | V. Asst. | V. Asst. | | | | | |
| Total | 9 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 13 |

## Distribution of Teaching, Research and Service Responsibilities

As detailed in Standard III.4, all full-time faculty tenured/tenure-track faculty engage in research, teaching, and service. The LIS program employs faculty in the Regular Title Series, Special Title Series, and Lecturer Series (see OFA Policies and Procedures for more information on faculty series at UK). The university relies on individual faculty's Distribution of Effort (DOE), which specifies how much effort is to be put forth into teaching, research, and service, which align with the institution's mission. This DOE provides a guide to each faculty member, ensures that the unit has adequate faculty to fulfill the institution's mission, and is used to evaluate faculty performance in all three areas. The DOE is also used when determining which faculty might serve on which committees. For example, most lecturers in the School have a 100% teaching DOE. Those individuals may not be assigned to serve on School or program committees.

The Regular and Special Title Series are tenure-track/tenured positions. The Distribution of Effort (DOE) for a Regular Title Series position in our Schools is typically 50% research, 45% teaching, and 5% service. According to AR 2:4, Special Title Series positions are "appropriate when the University requires the services of professionally competent faculty employees to meet instructional and service responsibilities in selected areas or positions in which assignments do not necessarily include research or creative work."

Currently, one faculty member is employed in a Special Title Series position with a DOE of 65% teaching, 30% research, and 5% service. According to AR 2:9, Lecturer Series appointments are not tenure eligible, though they can be promoted into a Senior Lecturer position, and typically carry a DOE of 75% teaching and 25% service, though this may vary. Currently, one faculty member is employed as a Senior Lecturer, who primarily teaches undergraduate courses in ICT and handles administrative tasks, including LIS admissions, Alternative Spring Break coordination, and overseeing LIS exit essay examinations. Standard III.4 provides more detail on the equitable distribution of faculty workload.

## Teaching

The standard teaching load for regular title tenure-track faculty is two classes each fall semester and two classes each spring semester. Teaching in the summer is voluntary with additional compensation. Typically, core courses and limited electives are offered in the summer semester. Table III.2 shows the courses taught by each faculty member during the review period.

**Table III.2. LIS courses taught by full-time faculty, 2018–2025**

| Faculty Member | LIS Courses |
|---|---|
| Barriage | 602, 616, 690 |
| Bloch | 602, 629, 646, 659 |
| Burns | 601, 617, 658, 690 |
| Cahill | 610, 644, 647, 690 |
| Chi | 634 |
| Choi, N. | 603, 631, 668, 690 |
| Choi, Y. | 665, 690 |
| Crawford Barniskis | 601, 603, 690 |
| DeWitt | -- |
| DiGiacomo | 600, 619, 690 |
| Eadon | 600, 643 |
| Huber | 626, 627 |
| Joo | 601, 630, 662, 665, 690 |
| Kim | 601, 634, 636, 638, 661 |
| Oltmann | 600, 603, 645, 690 |
| Real | 603, 643, 645, 690 |
| Shapiro | 602 |

[Note: Full-time faculty direct and advise student practicums (LIS 672/LIS676) and independent studies (LIS 695). Those courses are not included in this table.]

Full-time faculty engage in curriculum development and innovation by developing new courses and revising existing ones on an ongoing basis. Faculty have developed several new courses during the review period (Table III.3). Many of these courses have been approved by the faculty

to be listed among the regular course offerings. Special topics courses are typically taught twice before being put forward for approval as a regular course offering. The development of these new courses has enabled the creation of two new elective clusters in AY 2025: systems librarianship and archives & cultural heritage.

**Table III.3. New Courses Developed by Full-Time Faculty, 2018–2025**

| Faculty Member | LIS Courses |
|---|---|
| Barriage | 616 Information Behavior of Children & Youth<br>690 Research Methods for Librarians<br>690 Beyond Books: Library Programs and Services for Children |
| Burns | 617 Electronic Resource Management<br>690 Systems Librarianship |
| Cahill | 606 Library Materials and Literature for Early Childhood |
| Choi, N. | 631 Social Media for Information Organizations |
| Choi, Y. | 690 Programming and Outreach for Libraries and Archives |
| Crawford Barniskis | 623 Makerspaces in Information Organizations<br>690 Advanced Library Management |
| DiGiacomo | 619 Informal Learning in Information Organizations |
| Joo | 690 Library IT Fundamentals<br>690 Applied Text Analytics for Information Professionals |
| Oltmann | 690 Intellectual freedom and core values<br>690 Ethical issues in information organizations |
| Real | 690 Moving Images, Audio, and Photographs in Cultural Heritage Institutions |

Full-time faculty participate in the direction of student research through supervising independent studies and providing opportunities for students to work on faculty-led research. More details about student research, including the number of students who completed independent studies each semester and sample research topics, are provided in Standard II.4 and Standard IV.5. Full-time faculty supervise students in taking a practicum (672 and 676). Those are reported in Standard II.4.

**Table III.4. Faculty and Terms Directing Independent Studies**

| Faculty | Frequency | Terms |
|---|---|---|
| Barriage | 1 | Fall 2021 |
| Bloch | 5 | Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2025 |
| Burns | 1 | Fall 2019 |
| Cahill | 1 | Fall 2019 |
| Crawford Barniskis | 1 | Fall 2024 |
| DiGiacomo | 3 | Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Summer 2025 |
| Joo | 5 | Summer 2020, Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Fall 2021, Fall 2023 |
| Oltmann | 11 | Summer 2019, Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2021, Spring 2021, Summer 2021, Spring 2023, Spring 2025 |
| Real | 1 | Spring 2024 |

Additionally, all full-time faculty engage in student advising, offering guidance on course selection and professional development. Full-time faculty members' DOE typically includes 5% of their effort toward advising (included in the 45% effort generally devoted to teaching). We collected overall satisfaction regarding faculty advising from exit surveys. As shown in Table III.5, students believe that LIS faculty are effective advisors for professional guidance. Additional student perceptions about advising are provided in Standard IV.4 (Table 4.4 and Table 4.5).

**Table III.5. Graduates' Overall Satisfaction with Advisor's Professional Guidance**

| Academic Year<br>Scale: 1=None; 4=All | 18-19<br>(n=24) | 19-20<br>(n=27) | 20-21<br>(n=78) | 21-22<br>(n=80) | 22-23<br>(n=82) | 23-24<br>(n=73) | 24-25<br>(n=66) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Please indicate how many SIS faculty you feel are "Good advisors for professional guidance" | 3.09 | 3.35 | 3.23 | 2.99 | 3.21 | 3.24 | 3.44 |

*Source*: Graduate Survey where 1 = None and 4 = All

## Faculty Specialties

Faculty specialties are mapped onto the Association for Library and Information Science (ALISE) research taxonomies (Appendix III.6 Current Full-Time Faculty Expertise by ALISE Research Taxonomy). As shown in the appendix, current faculty research specialties span all nine areas of the taxonomy. Faculty research and teaching expertise aligns with and supports the program's learning outcomes, as shown in Table III.6.

**Table III.6. Faculty research and teaching by program learning outcome**

| Program Learning Outcome | Full-Time Faculty |
|---|---|
| **Describe how communities & individuals interact with/in information ecosystems** | Barriage, Bloch, Cahill, Eadon, N. Choi, Oltmann, DiGiacomo, Crawford Barniskis, Real |
| **Analyze the major tenets of information practice and apply them in multiple contexts** | Barriage, Burns, Cahill, Eadon, Y. Choi, Joo, Oltmann, Crawford Barniskis |
| **Connect various communities & individuals with appropriate resources** | Barriage, Cahill, Y. Choi, Oltmann, DiGiacomo, Crawford Barniskis, Real |
| **Explain the dependence of information retrieval on the organization of information** | Barriage, Bloch, Burns, N. Choi, Y. Choi, Joo, Crawford Barniskis, Real |

## Part-Time Faculty

The program appoints part-time faculty to balance, enrich, and complement the competencies and expertise of full-time faculty. Part-time faculty typically teach specialized courses related to their professional practice, bringing significant subject matter expertise and professional experience to the classroom. During the review period, part-time faculty taught courses in areas such as academic libraries, archives, collection development, information technology, school library media, special libraries, and youth literature and services. This has enabled the program to offer courses outside the expertise of current program faculty and/or a greater number of courses than full-time faculty teaching loads can accommodate. Although contracted on a course-by-course basis per UK policy, many of them maintain long-term relationships with the LIS program and contribute their time and insights to the development and enhancement of the program.

Most part-time faculty are professionals with master's degrees in library science, and many are full-time information professionals with 10 or more years of experience. Several hold other advanced degrees, including other master's degrees, Ph.D., Ed.D., or J.D. degrees (Table III.7). Vitae of part-time instructors are included in the biennial reports to ALA and are available on our web site.

**Table III.7. UK LIS part-time instructor details**

| Full Name | Class | Years Served | Degree | Affiliation (at time of teaching) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alexander, Ben | LIS 690 Community Archives, LIS 690 From Orality to Ebooks | 2020–2022 | Ph.D., English and American Literature | Director, American Century Project & The China Project, Harvard University |
| Allen, James | LIS 644 | 2023–2025 | M.A., Education, Library Science, Eastern Kentucky University | Statewide School Library Lead, Kentucky Department of Education |
| Betler, Samantha | LIS 618 | 2024–2025 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Director, Casey County Public Library |
| Brodsky, Jackie | LIS 634, LIS 638 | 2021–2023 | Ph.D., Communication and Information Studies, University of Alabama | Director, Lorrie Memorial Library |
| Combs, Rachel | LIS 690 | 2024–2025 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Public Services Manager, University of Kentucky Engineering Library |
| Cooper, Carrie | LIS 646 | 2018–2019 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Southern Mississippi | Dean of University Libraries William & Mary |
| Crawford Barniskis, Shannon | LIS 601 | 2018–2022 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee | Graduate student working on her Ph.D. |
| Gibbons, Judith | LIS 690 | 2018–2021 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Field Services Director, Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives |
| Gilbert, Jennifer | LIS 600 | 2019–2020 | M.S., Library Science, University of Kentucky | School Librarian, Eminence Independent Schools |
| Hurley, Amanda | LIS 614 | 2018–2025 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Library Media Specialist, Henry Clay High School |
| Illichmann, Christine | LIS 600 | 2019–2022 | M.S., Library and Information Science, Wayne State University | English Teacher Express in English |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Keiser, Barbie** | LIS 658 | 2022–2023 | M.S., Library Science, Case Western Reserve University | Independent Consultant |
| **Kim, Youngseek** | LIS 634, LIS 638, LIS 661 | 2020–2021 | Ph.D., Information Science and Technology, Syracuse University | Associate Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Sungkyunkwan University |
| **Kodama, Christie** | LIS 676 | 2024–2025 | Ph.D., Information Studies, University of Maryland | Adjunct Instructor, Towson University |
| **Kohlburn, Joseph** | LIS 621 | 2018–2019 | M.A., Information Science and Learning Technologies, University of Missouri-Columbia | Emerging Technologies Librarian, Jefferson College |
| **Mansfield, April** | LIS 644, LIS 676 | 2018–2020 | M.A., Secondary Counseling, Louisiana Tech University | Library Media Consultant, Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives |
| **Neltner, Heidi** | LIS 647 | 2020–2025 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Teacher Librarian and Media Specialist, Fort Thomas Schools |
| **Noe, Matthew** | LIS 636, LIS 646 | 2018–2025 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Collection Outreach Librarian, Harvard Medical School, Conway Library of Medicine |
| **Oliver, James** | LIS 645, LIS 659 | 2020–2025 | M.S., Librarianship, Western Michigan University | Library Director (ret.), Charlotte Community Library |
| **Olson, Amy** | LIS 610 | 2020–2024 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Illinois | Youth Services Consultant, Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives |
| **Putnam, Nathan** | LIS 690 | 2024–2025 | M.S., Library and Information Science, Wayne State University | Associate Dean of Libraries, Northeastern Illinois University |
| **Reynolds, Lynn** | LIS 644 | 2020–2022 | Ed.D., Leadership Education, Spalding University | Executive Director, Library Media Services, Jefferson County Public Schools |
| **Reynolds, Stephanie** | LIS 600, LIS 603, LIS 610, LIS 659 | 2018–2024 | Ph.D., Information Science, University of North Texas | Independent Consultant |
| **Rogers, Monica** | LIS 662 | 2022–2023 | Ph.D., Information Science, State University of New York | Division Chief, Data and Technology, Tulsa Health Department |
| **Searles, Sarah** | LIS 676 | 2020–2024 | M.S., Information Science, University of Tennessee | District Specialist, Library Media Services, Knox County Schools |

| Steinmacher, Robert | LIS 600, LIS 690 | 2022–2025 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Director, Barr Memorial Library |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strandmark, Matthew | LIS 643 | 2018–2024 | M.S., Library Science, Indiana University | Education Archivist, University of Kentucky |
| Ubelhor, Anthony | LIS 600, LIS 636 | 2019–2023 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | Assistant Professor for Library Services, Columbia Basin College |
| Walter, Theodore | LIS 603 | 2019–2021 | M.S., Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky | College Grants Officer, University of Kentucky |

Table III.8 shows the distribution of courses taught by full-time faculty and part-time faculty for 2018–2025 (including LIS 672, LIS 676, and LIS 695). A trend analysis of part-time faculty shows that the proportion of courses taught by full-time faculty has increased over the time period from 59% in 18–19 to 72% in 24–25.

**Table III.8. Sections taught by full-time and part-time faculty, 2018-2025**

| Academic Year | Sections taught by full-time faculty | Sections taught by part-time faculty | % taught by full-time faculty |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2018–2019** | 30 | 21 | 59% |
| **2019–2020** | 34 | 22 | 61% |
| **2020–2021** | 37 | 26 | 59% |
| **2021–2022** | 39 | 26 | 60% |
| **2022–2023** | 43 | 23 | 65% |
| **2023–2024** | 45 | 18 | 71% |
| **2024–2025** | 46 | 18 | 72% |

## *Standard III.3 Faculty Qualifications*

### Degrees/Education

Faculty appointments are based on rigorous qualifications that include advanced degrees and education in library and information science and related fields. As presented in Table III.9, the full-time faculty members bring a broad range of educational background and academic expertise to support the program's mission and prepare students for evolving professional landscapes. Among the 17 full-time faculty members over the period, 10 hold degrees specifically in library and information science and four in closely related areas, such as information science, informatics, and information studies. In addition, three faculty members have earned doctoral degrees in education-related fields, including literacy education and learning sciences. Two hold degrees in communication. In alignment with the university's standards and best practices in LIS education, future tenure-track faculty recruitment will prioritize candidates with doctoral degrees and relevant research and teaching expertise.

**Table III.9. Full-time faculty highest degrees**

| Faculty | Degree | Year | Area | Institution |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Barriage** | Ph.D. | 2018 | Communication, Information & Library Studies | Rutgers University, New Brunswick |
| **Bloch** | Ph.D. | 2020 | Library & Information Science | University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign |
| **Burns** | Ph.D. | 2013 | Information Science and Learning Technologies | University of Missouri |
| **Cahill** | Ph.D. | 2009 | Literacy Education | University of Tennessee |
| **Chi** | Ph.D. | 2021 | Library and Information Science | University of Pittsburgh |
| **Choi, N.** | Ph.D. | 2011 | Informatics | University at Albany |
| **Choi, Y.** | Ph.D. | 2000 | Library and Information Science | University of Pittsburgh |
| **Crawford Barniskis** | Ph.D. | 2022 | Information Studies | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee |
| **DeWitt** | MSLS | 2014 | Library Science | University of Kentucky |
| **DiGiacomo** | Ph.D. | 2017 | Education: Learning Sciences & Human Development | University of Colorado Boulder |
| **Eadon** | Ph.D. | 2022 | Information Studies | University of California, Los Angeles |
| **Huber** | Ph.D. | 1991 | Library & Information Science | University of Pittsburgh |
| **Joo** | Ph.D. | 2013 | Information Studies | University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee |
| **Kim** | Ph.D. | 2013 | Information Science & Technology | Syracuse University |
| **Oltmann** | Ph.D. | 2012 | Information Science | Indiana University |
| **Real** | Ph.D. | 2015 | Information Studies | University of Maryland |
| **Shapiro** | Ph.D. | 2020 | Communication | University of Kentucky |

## Academic Planning and Assessment

Faculty play an essential role in the academic planning and assessment of the LIS program. The full-time faculty has demonstrated its capacity for academic planning and evaluation, as discussed in Standard I: Systematic Planning (concerning the program's planning efforts) and Standard II (regarding the curriculum planning efforts). The faculty is engaged at all levels and in all aspects of planning for the LIS program. The faculty developed the program's vision, mission,

and goals and objectives. In 2021, the faculty and staff developed, revised, and finalized a new strategic plan. The annual retreat, monthly faculty meetings, and the curriculum retreat that occur within the program ensure that faculty members are continually engaged in planning and continuous review.

The full-time faculty members demonstrate leadership and planning skills by leading the program committees and participating in the School's planning activities. For details of the committee assignment and workload, see section Standard III.4; see Table III.19 Full-Time Faculty University Level Service and Table III.20 Full-Time Faculty College and University Level Service.

The LIS Program Coordinator plays a critical role in leading and monitoring program planning and assessment. For example, the LIS Program Coordinator actively contributed to academic assessment by working closely with the data collection specialist to refine data collection methods and assessment strategies for LIS courses and the overall program. She also collaborated with the Assistant Director and other SIS program coordinators to plan course offerings each semester, ensuring effective scheduling and faculty coordination across programs. In addition, as the convener of the LIS Strategic Planning Committee, Oltmann played a leading role in developing the program's current strategic plan, incorporating faculty input to strengthen curricular assessment, and enhance faculty research visibility across practitioner communities.

## Research and Scholarly Contributions

The faculty's research covers a wide range of contemporary subjects and topics in library and information science. Key research areas include: "Libraries as Community Hubs and Learning Spaces," "Knowledge Management and Information Use," "Youth Engagement and Development," "Information Technology and Society," "Health Informatics and Communication," "Human-Centered Design and Interaction," "Instructional Communication and Education Technology," "Research Methods," and others.

Table III.10 summarizes the academic and professional publications produced by our faculty during the review period. These publications have appeared in various formats, including peer-reviewed articles, professional papers, monographs, edited books, book chapters, conference proceedings, reviews, and other forms. Over the past six years, the LIS faculty published five books, 189 peer-reviewed articles and 134 conference presentations, averaging 2.59 peer-reviewed articles and 1.84 conference presentations per faculty member per year.

**Table III.10. Full-time faculty publications and presentations, fall 2018–spring 2025**

| Faculty | Years Present | Books | Articles (Peer-reviewed) | Articles (Non-peer reviewed) | Chapters | Proceedings | Conference Presentations | Reviews, Editorial Notes, etc. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barriage[a] | 6 | | 19 | | 1 | 2 | 8 | 1 |
| Bloch[a] | 5 | | 2 | | | 2 | 9 | |
| Burns[a] | 7 | | 8 | | | 6 | 1 | |
| Cahill[a] | 7 | 1 | 26 | 10 | 3 | 9 | 66 | 6 |
| Chi | 2 | | 7 | 3 | | | | |
| Choi, N.[a] | 7 | | 9 | | | | | |
| Choi, Y.[a] | 2 | | 8 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Crawford Barniskis[a] | 3 | | 3 | | | | 5 | |
| DiGiacomo[a] | 6 | 1 | 26 | | 4 | 17 | | |
| Eadon | 1 | | 5 | | | 4 | 14 | |
| Huber | 6 | 1 | 3 | | | 2 | | |
| Joo[a] | 7 | 1 | 35 | | | 5 | 22 | |
| Kim | 2 | | 9 | | | 2 | 2 | |
| Oltmann | 7 | 1 | 22 | 5 | 6 | | 20 | 9 |
| Real[a] | 3 | | 10 | | | | 14 | 3 |
| Shapiro | 2 | | 2 | | | | | |
| Total | 73 | 5 | 189 | 19 | 14 | 45 | 134 | 16 |

[a] Current faculty as of spring 2025

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## Quality of research

During the review period, the faculty produced publications in top-ranked journals in the discipline, such as *The Library Quarterly* (LQ), *Journal of the Association of Information Science and Technology* (JASIST), *Library & Information Science Research* (LISR), and *Scientometrics*. The faculty presented at leading conferences in library and information science, such as the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) Annual Meeting, iConference, and ALISE (Association for Library and Information Science Education) annual conference.

The faculty have received several substantial awards specifically for research excellence, granted by various internal and external institutions. Table III.11 highlights significant awards and recognition received by faculty.

**Table III.11. Award achievements for research excellence**

| Faculty | Year | Awards | Institution/Organization |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Barriage** | 2021 | O'Hair Early Career Faculty Award | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| | 2023 | Jesse H. Shera Award for Distinguished Published Research | Library Research Round Table, American Library Association |
| | 2023 | Practical, Methodological, or Theoretical Information & Learning Sciences Paper Award | SIG InfoLearn, Association for Information Science & Technology |
| | 2025 | Best Conference Paper Award | Canadian Association for Information Science |
| **Bloch** | 2025 | Best Conference Paper Award | Canadian Association for Information Science |
| **Cahill** | 2020 | ASIS&T 2020 Annual Meeting Best Poster Award, Honorable Mention | Association for Information Science and Technology |
| | 2021 | 2021–2022 University Research Professor | Office of the Vice President for Research, University of Kentucky |
| | 2022 | Jesse H. Shera Award for Distinguished Published Research | Library Research Round Table, American Library Association |
| | 2024 | College Research Award | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Crawford Barniskis** | 2018 | Honorable Mention, Jean Tague Sutcliffe Doctoral Student Research Poster Competition | Annual Conference, Association for Library & Information Science Education |
| | 2023 | ASIS&T SIG-USE Best Early Career Paper, The Convivial Capabilities Checklist: Translating Makerspace Research into Practice | Association for Information Science and Technology |
| **DiGiacomo** | 2019 | Nominated as the junior faculty candidate for the Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| | 2020 | Early Career Scholar | International Conference of the Learning Sciences |
| | 2021 | Golden Megaphone Award for Research Partner of the Year | Kentucky Student Voice Team |
| | 2023 | Dan O'Hair Early Career Faculty Award | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| | 2025 | College Research Award | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| **Joo** | 2020 | ASIS&T 2020 Annual Meeting Best Poster Award, Honorable Mention | Association for Information Science and Technology |
| | 2022 | Jesse H. Shera Award for Distinguished Published Research | Library Research Round Table, American Library Association |
| **Oltmann** | 2022 | Jesse H. Shera Award for Distinguished Published Research | Library Research Round Table, American Library Association |
| | 2023 | Kentucky Intellectual Freedom Award | Kentucky Library Association |
| | 2024 | 2024–25 University Research Professor ($10,000 award) | Office of the Vice President for Research, University of Kentucky |
| | 2025 | Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award | University of Illinois, iSchool |

In addition, our faculty's scholarly contributions have been reflected in their success in securing research grants. Table III.12 provides a detailed list of external grant awards our faculty has successfully received, totaling over $6,496,106 during the review period.

**Table III.12. External Grant Awards**

| Faculty | Year | Title, Program | Funder | Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Barriage** | 2024–2025 | Abinoonjees Nikanenim: Delivering mental health services to youth living in Island Lake Anishininew Nations | Canadian Institutes of Health Research Project Grant | $1,296,676 |
| | 2019–2023 | Designing a responsive and integrated model of respite care for families of children with complex care needs and conditions through patient-oriented research | Canadian Institutes of Health Research project grant | $458,999 |
| | 2019–2023 | Non-suicidal self-injury among youth: Perspectives of youth who self-harm, their families and service providers | Canadian Institutes of Health Research project grant | $539,324 |
| | 2019–2021 | Library staff and drag queen perspectives and decision-making about drag queen story times | ALA Diversity Research Grant | $2,500 |
| **Cahill** | 2023–2026 | Demonstrating with Data: An Evidence-based Practice Curriculum for School Librarians | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $249,999 |
| | 2021–2024 | Public Library Virtual Storytimes: Meeting School Readiness and Community Needs through a Socially Distant Approach | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $319,563 |
| | 2020–2024 | Services for Children of All Abilities in Libraries: An Exploration (SCALE) | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $499,693 |
| | 2017–2021 | Storytimes for School Readiness and Community Needs | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $393,876 |
| **Crawford Barniskis** | 2024–2027 | The Trustee Project: Understanding Public Library Trustee Selection, Training and Collaboration for Equity, Access, and Civic Engagement | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $410,294 |
| **DiGiacomo** | 2021–2024 | Longitudinal Effects of Community-based Arts Programs | Wallace Foundation | $1,600,000 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2020–2021 | Out-of-School Learning Initiative | Wallace Foundation | $165,000 |
| **Joo** | 2021–2024 | Public Library Virtual Story Times: Meeting School Readiness and Community Needs through a Socially Distant Approach, IMLS National Leadership Grants for Libraries | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $319,563 |
| | 2017–2021 | Storytimes for School Readiness and Community Needs, IMLS National Leadership Grants for Libraries | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $393,876 |
| **Oltmann** | 2023–2026 | Public libraries' response to censorship: Analyzing the implementation and effects of standard practices, National Leadership Grant | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $445,281 |
| | 2019–2021 | Internet filtering, digital literacy, and information poverty: Intersections and challenges, National Leadership Grant | Institute of Museum and Library Services | $54,901 |
| **Real** | 2024–2026 | Intentional Transformation: AMIA Pathways Fellowship, submitted by Association of Moving Image Archivists; Evaluation researcher | Institute of Museum and Library Services | Subgrant Amount: $5,000 |
| | 2025 | The Value of Kentucky's Public Libraries: A Return-on-Investment Study | Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives | $50,000 |
| | 2021–2023 | Effecting Transformational Change: AMIA Pathways Fellowship, submitted by Association of Moving Image Archivists; Evaluation researcher | Institute of Museum and Library Services | Subgrant Amount: $5,000 |

In addition to external funding, faculty also secured internal research grants from various units at the university.

- Bloch received $9,640 from the College of Communication and Information (CI) for the Translational Efficacy, Research, and Creative Activities Grant.
- Cahill was awarded $20,000 for the Together We Can! project (2024) from the UK's Martin Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and $3,808 for the Math Talk in Public Library Storytime Programs project through the Research and Creative Activities Program (RCAP). The RCAP program, newly renamed CURATE program, is to support faculty in conducting pilot research for future external grant submissions.

- Chi secured $50,000 for the AID-Bot: AI-Enhanced Chatbot for Alcohol Use Disorder Early Awareness and Support project through the SUPRA Pilot Grants, as well as $5,000 and $1,620 for studies on opioid recovery self-disclosure and social support via Reddit, funded by CI.
- Crawford Barniskis and Oltmann were awarded $9,253 in the School's internal funding for research on public library trustees and their appointment processes.
- Oltmann received $6,680 for research on York book censorship, $1,865 for a study on Louisville Latinx immigrants' use of social media and $7,200 for an investigation into LGBTQ-themed website access, all funded by CI.
- Real was awarded $7,327 for the Film Archives and Federal Public Policy: An Historical Analysis project through RCAP.
- Burns and DiGiacomo received the SIS internal research award ($10,000) for a research project on ungrading practice.
- Barriage and Bloch received the College Research Activity Award grant for a pilot project focusing on undergraduate students' perceptions of librarians and information professionals ($2,000).

## Quality of teaching and service

The faculty's excellence in teaching and service has been recognized through course evaluations by students as well as numerous awards and accolades. LIS courses have consistently achieved high scores on TCEs. During this period, LIS courses received strong average ratings of 4.5 for course quality and 4.5 for instructor quality on a 5-point scale, reflecting a high level of instructional excellence. The School Director reviews all TCE reports and addresses any concerns with the appropriate Program Coordinator and faculty member. For example, LIS 601 Information Search had unexpectedly lower TCE scores over the course of the academic year 2024-2025. The Director had several discussions with the primary faculty responsible for the course and together they worked on revising the approach to the course and some of the assignments, taking the student feedback into account.

**Table III.13. Mean student evaluations of courses (5-point scale)**

| Course | 2018 | 2019 | | 2020 | | 2021 | | 2022 | | 2023 | | 2024 | | 2025 | Avg |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | |
| LIS | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 4.5 |
| College | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4.4 |
| University | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.2 |

**Table III.14. Mean student evaluations of instructor (5-point scale)**

| Instructor | 2018 | 2019 | | 2020 | | 2021 | | 2022 | | 2023 | | 2024 | | 2025 | Avg |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | Fall | Spring | |
| LIS | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.3 | 4.5 |
| College | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 |
| University | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 |

Evidence of instructional excellence is further supported by findings from student exit surveys in which students were asked to rate the overall quality of their classes using the question, "How would you rate the overall quality of classes?" (Figure III.1). The data reveals consistently high ratings, averaging above 4.0 on a scale where 1 represents "poor" and 5 represents "very good." While there is a relative dip in the scores for AY21-22 and AY22-23, they still score above the School's goal of a score of 4.0. Additionally, there has been a steady increase in these ratings over the past four years.
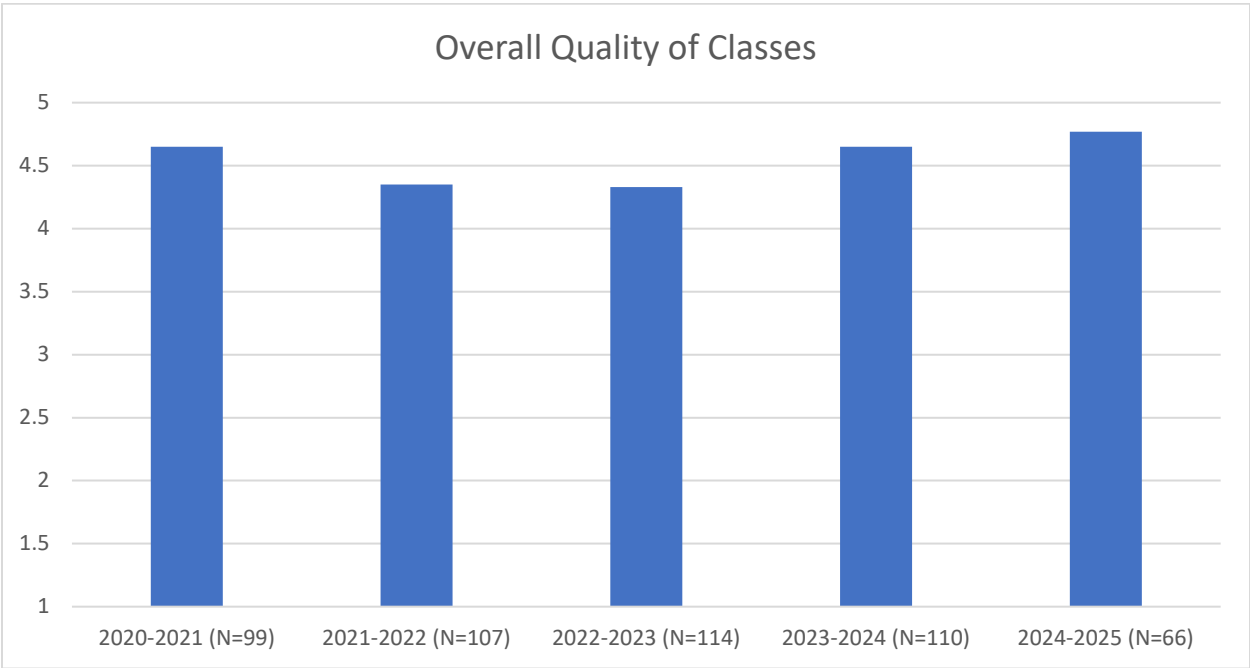


**Figure III.1. Student Perception on the Quality of Classes from exit surveys**

Furthermore, faculty members have received significant recognition for their exceptional contributions in various teaching and service areas. Table III.15 provides notable examples of several awards.

**Table III.15. Award achievements for teaching and service excellence**

| Faculty | Year | Awards | Institution/Organization |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Bloch** | 2023 | Nominated Faculty Teaching Excellence Award | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| **Burns** | 2020 | Teachers Who Made a Difference Award | College of Education, University of Kentucky |
| | 2019 | Teachers Who Made a Difference Award | College of Education, University of Kentucky |
| **Cahill** | 2020 | Teachers Who Made a Difference Award | College of Education, University of Kentucky |
| **Crawford Barniskis** | 2024 | Teaching Innovation Institute Fellow | Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | (CELT),University of Kentucky |
| **DiGiacomo** | 2022 | Service in Excellence Award for Faculty | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| | 2021 | Golden Megaphone Award for Research Partner of the Year | Kentucky Student Voice Team |
| | 2020 | Early Career Scholar | International Conference of the Learning Sciences |
| | 2019 | Nominated as the junior faculty candidate for the Andrew Carnegie Fellows Program | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| **Huber** | 2023 | Leadership Award, College Excellence Awards | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| **Joo** | 2020 | Outstanding Reviewer, The Electronic Library Journal | Emerald Publishing |
| | 2024 | Outstanding Reviewer, The Electronic Library Journal | Emerald Publishing |
| **Oltmann** | 2019 | Outstanding Advisor Award | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| | 2021 | Faculty Service Award | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| | 2023 | Nominated for the College of Communication & Information Award for Access, Opportunity, and Representation | College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky |
| | 2023 | Kentucky Intellectual Freedom Award | Kentucky Library Association |

## Ongoing Skills Development

The faculty's expertise in a supportive and welcoming learning environment is demonstrated through their leadership roles, research projects, and active participation in professional development opportunities. These collective efforts contribute to advancing access, dialogue, and best practices in academic and professional settings.

The faculty have engaged in various professional development activities, including workshops, symposiums, and research presentations, to enhance their teaching practices and expand their perspectives on emerging issues in the field (Appendix III.7 Faculty participation in PD). Below are a few examples.

- Crawford Barniskis participated in international reading groups, symposiums, and workshops from 2019 to 2024, focusing on trauma-informed teaching, open pedagogy, and critical conversations in LIS.
- DeWitt participated in various webinars and symposiums with organizations like ALISE, ACRL, and University of Kentucky CELT.
- DiGiacomo focused on promoting safe educational spaces through collaborations with the University of Kentucky CELT and Kentucky Humanities in 2024.
- Burns has attended multiple LIS Pedagogy Chats.
- Cahill actively participates in the Disabilities in LIS SIG of ALISE.

Beyond professional development, faculty members have assumed leadership roles and contributed research that promotes fairness.

- Oltmann actively contributed to advancing her leadership in university-wide initiatives by participating in several professional development opportunities like Chairs Academy I and Chairs Academy II. Oltmann was also a member of the Culture of Conversation Steering Committee (18–19), where she helped facilitate discussions that encouraged open dialogue on issues of belonging in the academic community. She has also served on the ALA-ALISE task force for the Committee on Accreditation, with the goal of infusing belonging throughout the accreditation standards.
- Cahill's research strengthens the program's commitment to fairness by focusing on the intersection of libraries and underserved communities. Her funded research project explored ways to support families of children with disabilities, emphasizing the role libraries can play in providing accessible resources and services. In addition, Cahill's work investigates the extent to which libraries incorporate books with differing representations in their programming. In collaboration with a social work professor, she has also examined how libraries might better serve families who are not currently engaging with library services, identifying barriers, and proposing strategies for greater accessibility.

## Continuing liaison to relevant areas of professional practice

Faculty members have actively engaged with professional practice through collaborations, research, and leadership in various organizations, which has continued to have a strong connection between our program and the professional field. Faculty involvement encompasses regional and national levels, contributing to the advancement of library and information services fields (Appendix III.8 UK SIS Faculty Professional Service).

- Bloch worked with Julia Proctor, Library Director at Mount Aloysius College, on a study that examined indexing interdisciplinary biomedical research in scholarly databases.
- Burns engaged in two projects: an open educational resources research initiative with Amanda Goodsett, a librarian at Cleveland State University, and a usability study in collaboration with Jennifer Pusateri (CELT) and University of Kentucky librarians.
- Cahill has maintained strong connections with professional associations at multiple levels and regularly participated in practice-focused conferences and meetings. Through

her research, she has observed children's library services and programs in public libraries, offering insights and recommendations to enhance these services. In her role as an instructor of school library program courses, she has directly connected with school librarians, gaining valuable perspectives on their practices. As a member of numerous doctoral committees, she has actively engaged with P-12 school contexts, supporting practice-based dissertation research.

- Crawford Barniskis has been part of several collaborative projects, including the Public Library Collaboratory and research initiatives addressing the evolving role of public librarianship. These projects have facilitated networking between public librarians and researchers, encouraging discussions on digital literacy, public engagement, and library services. In addition, Crawford Barniskis mentors practitioners in the research context through the ALA Library Research Roundtable research mentorship program and is an active consultant for Kentucky makerspace librarians through a monthly meetup program sponsored by the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives. She is a member of the Kentucky State Board for the Certification of Public Librarians (2025–present). She is also collaborating with local librarians in participatory action research on makerspaces.

- DiGiacomo has worked with the Kentucky Department of Education on research concerning school librarians' evidence-based practices.

- Joo has collaborated with data scholarship librarians, publishing research on library data services and digital scholarship trends.

- Oltmann has supported connecting professional practice and academia through her leadership and mentoring. She has been a member of the Kentucky State Board for the Certification of Public Librarians (2014–2018; 2021–present). Oltmann also served as a mentor for the ALA Library Research Roundtable (23–24).

- Real has collaborated closely with the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives (KDLA), contributing to projects that address the department's needs. His involvement includes serving on the interview panel for the new Kentucky State Archivist and overseeing a study to assess the return on investment that public libraries in Kentucky provide to their communities. Real also served as the research liaison for the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA). He led the AMIA Salary and Demographics Survey in 2020 and 21–22, analyzing workforce differences in audiovisual archives. As part of the AMIA Pathways fellowship program, an IMLS grant-funded initiative that supports young professionals from different backgrounds, Real interviewed fellows after each cycle to provide data that helps refine the program.

## Standard III.4 Faculty Workload

### Distribution of Effort

Regular tenure-track faculty in our School typically allocate 50% to research, 45% to instruction, and 5% to service. Crawford Barniskis, a special-title position, has 30% to research, 65% to instruction, and 5% to service. DeWitt, a senior lecturer, has 70% dedicated to instruction, 5%

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to service, and 25% to administration. The School Director, Choi, Y., is assigned 49% to administration.

The standardization of DOE across faculty, with adjustments made when appropriate, ensures that teaching, research, and service responsibilities are equitably distributed among full-time faculty. For teaching effort, a 10% DOE for a tenured/tenure-track faculty member typically corresponds to a 3-credit hour course. For example, a 45% instruction effort generally involves four 3-credit hour courses (two courses per semester), with the remaining 5% devoted to advising. Teaching loads may vary based on faculty titles and appointments every year. The typical teaching load for regular-title, full-time faculty is four courses per year and six courses per year for a special-title faculty, consistent with the teaching load for the faculty in the College of Communication and Information. Faculty members may have the option to buy out courses using external funds, subject to approval by the Director, Dean, and University (Appendix III.1 SIS School Rules Spring 2024-2025). Newly hired faculty may receive a one-course release during their first year of appointment. Full-time faculty members teach in the fall and spring semesters. Summer teaching is optional, and faculty members receive additional compensation for summer courses.

For advising, typically 5% of DOE is allocated. The school administration generally assigns student advisees for a balanced distribution among full-time faculty for incoming students, while the office attempts to lower the advising load of junior faculty. Advising responsibilities include guiding course selection, monitoring students' progress, guiding graduation requirements, and others. Faculty are also expected to supervise students' practicum along with the on-site supervisor.

**Table III.16. Number of advisees per faculty, Spring 2025**

| Faculty | Number of advisees |
|---------|--------------------|
| Barriage | 24 |
| Bloch | 27 |
| Burns* | 0 |
| Cahill | 29 |
| N. Choi | 30 |
| Crawford Barniskis | 36 |
| DiGiacomo | 26 |
| Eadon** | 0 |
| Joo | 28 |
| Oltmann | 26 |
| Real | 34 |

*Burns has advised undergraduates and graduates in the ICT and directs the required internships for them. Thus, he has been exempted from having advisees in LIS.
**As new faculty member, Eadon didn't have advisees in her first year.

For service, faculty typically allocate 5% of their DOE.  Program-level service assignments are established at the beginning of each academic year, taking into consideration service assignments at the University, College, and School levels. Faculty can provide input on the distribution of service assignments and adjustments are made as needed. As an example of such an adjustment, each semester, faculty members are assigned to review and provide feedback on first drafts of the exit assessment essays. At the beginning of this review period, faculty were assigned to review drafts written by their advisees. Faculty would also serve as first reader of the exit assessment for grading purposes, with a second faculty member serving as second reader. The number of each faculty member's advisees graduating each semester was highly variable, resulting in some faculty members being assigned as first reader to substantially more exit assessment essays than others. Effective fall 2024, both first and second reader assignments are distributed equally across all faculty. This change is outlined in the LIS Exit Requirement Faculty Review Process document that was approved in the Feb. 26, 2025 LIS faculty meeting (Appendix III.9 LIS Exit Requirement Faculty Review Process).

In addition, faculty may engage in college-level and university-level services (see Table III.19 and Table III.20 below). The school administration works to assign faculty to committees, making sure the service work is shared equally among all faculty. Committee assignments are announced before the first School Council meeting of the year in the fall. To further support fairness in workload distribution, the school administration office circulates a spreadsheet detailing faculty assignments across program, school, college, and university-level committees. Each faculty member is typically assigned to three or four committees. Newly hired faculty have a lighter committee load in their first year of appointment. This approach supports both fairness and creating a manageable workload, allowing faculty to allocate adequate time to teaching, advising, research, and other duties.

**Table III.17. Full-time faculty MSLS program level service, 2018–2024**

| Service | Faculty |
|---|---|
| **Planning Committee** | Barriage, Bloch, Cahill, Chi, Choi N, DeWitt, DiGiacomo, Joo, Real |
| **Curriculum Committee** | Cahill, Chi, Choi N, DeWitt, DiGiacomo, Joo, Oltmann |
| **Admissions Committee** | Barriage, Bloch, Cahill, Choi N, Crawford Barniskis, DeWitt |
| **Strategic Planning Committee** | Barriage, Bloch, Burns, Crawford Barniskis |
| **Accreditation Committee** | Barriage, Burns, Bloch, Choi N, Crawford Barniskis, DeWitt, Real |
| **Exam Committee** | Barriage, Bloch, Burns, Cahill, Choi N, Crawford Barniskis, DiGiacomo, Joo, Oltmann |
| **Ad-hoc Strategic Planning Committee** | Barriage, Bloch, Burns, Joo, Oltmann |
| **American Library Association Student Chapter, Advisor** | Barriage, DeWitt |
| **Other Ad-hoc Committee** | Cahill, DeWitt |

**Table III.18. Full-time faculty school level service, 2018–2024**

| Service | Faculty |
|---|---|
| **Executive Committee** | Barriage, Burns, Choi N, DeWitt, Joo |
| **Curriculum Committee** | Barriage, Bloch, Cahill, DeWitt, Oltmann |
| **Committee for Culture, Collegiality and Belonging** | DiGiacomo, Joo, Oltmann, Crawford Barniskis |
| **Promotion and Tenure Committee** | Burns, Cahill, Choi N, Joo, Oltmann |
| **Faculty Search Committee** | Burns, Bloch, Cahill, Choi N, DeWitt, Joo, Oltmann |
| **Director Search Committee** | Cahill |
| **Other Ad-hoc Committee** | Burns, Cahill |

Table III.19 presents LIS faculty members' participation in university-level services during the review period. These roles reflect alignment with individual faculty's expertise and experience, the need of the MSLS program and specialization, and the broader goals of the program. They also demonstrate faculty engagement in academic planning, campus-wide collaboration, and professional development, consistent with the expectations in Standards III.3 and III.4.

**Table III.19. Full-time faculty university level service, 2018-2024**

| Faculty | Year(s) of service | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Barriage** | 2022–2023 | University of Kentucky Education Abroad Scholarships, Reviewer |
| | 2022 | UNITE Community Engagement Pilot Grants, Reviewer |
| **Burns** | 2020–present | Member, ITS Advisory Council |
| | 2025–present | Member, Graduate Council |
| **Cahill** | 2021–2022 | Office of the Vice President for Research; Research Leadership Academy, Application Reviewer |
| | 2020 | CURE COVID-19 Core 3 Social Science Internal Research Grants, Reviewer |
| **Choi, Y.** | 2023 | UK Online Steering Committee, UK Assessment Council, |
| **Choi, N.** | 2019–2022 | Graduate Council Member |
| | 2016–2018 | University Senator |
| **Crawford Barniskis** | 2025–present | University-wide Advisory group for the Universal Design certificate offered by the School of Interiors (College of Design) and the Human Development Institute |
| **DeWitt** | 2019–2021 | Graduate School, New Graduate Student Orientation Working Group |
| **DiGiacomo** | 2019–present | Faculty Affiliate, Social Theory Group |
| | 2019–present | Faculty Affiliate, P20 Motivation and Learning Lab |
| | 2019–present | UNITE RPA Research Member |
| **Joo** | 2023–2024 | University Senate, Member |
| | 2024–present | Advisory Board, The Stacks, UK Digital Scholarship Services |
| **Oltmann** | 2023–present | University Joint Committee on Honorary Degrees (appointed by President) |
| | 2021–2022 | Post-COVID Fall Planning Committee (nominated by peers) |
| | 2021–2022 | University Senate Council (leadership team) member (elected by peers) |
| | 2021–2022 | Senate ad hoc sub-committee Faculty Oversight of Courses |
| | 2020–2022 | University Faculty Senate (elected by peers) |
| | 2020–2022 | University Faculty Senate Distance Learning and eLearning Committee |
| | 2020–2021 | Reopening Campus Human Resource Workstream (faculty representative, appointed by leadership) |
| | 2017–2020 | Roundtable of Community, Culture, and Collegiality Officers |

| | 2018–2019 | Culture of Conversation Steering Committee |
|---|---|---|
| | 2018–2019 | Graduate Council |
| | 2017–2019 | Alternative member, Institutional Review Board |

Table III.20 presents the faculty's participation in College-level services. Faculty members have contributed to the College Faculty Council and standing committees such as the Promotion & Tenure Committee and the College Research Advisory Committee. In addition, Cahill served on committees in the College's Graduate Program, and Oltmann was appointed to the College Search Committee for a new Dean.

**Table III.20. Full-time faculty college level service, 2018-2024**

| Faculty | Year(s) of service | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Barriage** | 2023, 2024–present | College Faculty Council, member |
| | 2020–2022 | Community, Culture, and Collegiality Committee, member |
| **Burns** | 2021–present | College Research Advisory Committee |
| | 2023–2024 | Promotion & Tenure Committee |
| | 2022–2023 | College Faculty Council, Vice Chair |
| | 2021–2022 | College Faculty Council |
| **Cahill** | 2024 | Graduate Program in Communication, Admissions Committee |
| | 2024 | College Faculty Council |
| | 2018–2024 | Graduate Program in Communication, Graduate Faculty |
| | 2021–2022 | College of Education, Undergraduate Recruitment and Retention Committee |
| | 2021 | College of Education, Educational Leadership Studies Chair Search Committee |
| | 2018–2020 | College of Education, Undergraduate Recruitment and Retention Committee |
| | 2019–2020 | College of Communication and Information, Strategic Planning Council |
| | 2019–2020 | College of Education, Department of Instructional Systems Design, Faculty Search Committee |
| | 2018–2019 | Graduate Program in Communication, Admissions Committee |
| | 2018 | College Faculty Council |
| **Choi, Y.** | 2023–present | The College Dean Leadership Council |
| **Choi, N.** | 2020–2022 | Promotion and Tenure Committee |
| | 2019–2020 | College Faculty Council |
| **Crawford Barniskis** | 2024–present | Committee for Culture, Collegiality and Belonging, member |

| Joo | 2020–2021 | College Faculty Council, member |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | 2024–present | College Research Advisory Committee |
| **Oltmann** | 2018–2019 | College Search Committee for new Dean (appointed by leadership) |
| | 2018–2020 | College Faculty Council (elected by peers) |

Beyond the University of Kentucky, faculty have made significant contributions to a variety of regional, national, and international professional organizations. These efforts reflect a strong and sustained commitment to the LIS community and the field of practice, supporting the program's relevance and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the LIS professions. Through leadership, service, and active engagement, faculty maintain close and ongoing connections with key professional communities, which is an essential component of Standard III.3 and III.4. These service activities also align closely with faculty members' competencies and expertise. Contributions are based on individual expertise, interests, and areas of specialization, thus professional service meaningfully supports the ongoing enhancement of the program.

First, faculty have actively contributed to numerous professional organizations, especially leading library professional organizations and information science societies, for example: American Library Association (ALA — Barriage, Oltmann, and Crawford Barniskis: Mentor for the ALA Library Research Round Table), Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T — Barriage: Chair of the Awards & Honors Committee; Bloch: ASIS&T's Health Informatics SIG; Crawford Barniskis: Secretary, US South Chapter ASIST), Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE — Burns: President-Elect/Board Member; Co-Chair of the Conference Programming Planning Committee; Member of the Programming Committee; Chair of the Service to ALISE Committee; Member of the Service to ALISE Committee; Chair of the ALISE/Norman Horrocks Leadership Award Committee), American Association of School Librarians (AASL — Cahill: Director at Large on the Board of Directors), Association of Moving Image Archivists (Real: the Advocacy Committee of the Board), and several others.

Second, faculty have demonstrated leadership or engagement in editorial roles and services across various academic journals, such as *Library & Information Science Research* (Barriage), *Library Quarterly* (Barriage, Oltmann), *School Library Research* (Cahill), *Aslib Journal of Information Management* (Chi, Joo), *Library and Information Science Research* (Choi, Y), *Asian Journal of Information Science and Technology* (Choi, Y.), *International Journal of Knowledge Content and Development & Technology* (Choi, N.), *Public Library Quarterly* (Crawford Barniskis, Real), *Journal of Children, Youth & Environments* (DiGiacomo), *Journal of Information Policy* (Oltmann), *Journal of Intellectual Freedom and Privacy* (Oltmann), and *The Moving Image* (Real).

Third, faculty have engaged in organizing various academic and professional conferences, such as ASIS&T, ALISE, Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR), AASL, International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS), GLAM Career Jam 2023, iSchool Conferences, and others. Additionally, Burns, Cahill, Crawford Barniskis, Oltmann, and Real planned and

organized [Library Research Seminar VIII](#), which was hosted by the School on the UK campus in September 2024. This conference is sponsored by the ALA's Library Research Roundtable and is designed to appeal to both LIS academics and practitioners in libraries, archives, and affiliated institutions. The event involved over 140 attendees at sessions and workshops over the course of three days.

Moreover, faculty have contributed to various professional services, including serving as reviewers for grant proposals, reviewers for academic journals and conferences, consultants for public libraries and other institutions, and advisory board members for a range of organizations.

## Standard III.5 Faculty Support

## Compensation for faculty

The school offers salaries to the LIS program faculty according to the University guidelines. Each year, the University determines merit raises, which have ranged from 1.5% to 4%. The Director recommends raises for individual faculty members based on their performance evaluations. The College Dean makes the final decision on merit raises, considering the fairness of salaries and performance reviews within the allocated budget for the College. For AY 25–26, the University awarded a flat 1.5% increase for all eligible employees which took effect July 1, 2025.

As Table III.21 below shows, the School of Information Science has successfully increased the salaries during the review period. From fall 2019 to fall 2024, the average salary for an assistant professor primarily responsible for library science instruction rose by 11.7% percent. Associate professors' average salaries increased by 12.9% percent. In previous years, the College Dean also measured salary adjustments twice — once in 2021 and again in 2024 for lecturers and assistant professors. The Dean is seeking to continue to raise salaries, pending university approval.

**Table III.21. UK SIS library science faculty salary averages (9-month Base)**

| Year | Assistant | Associate | Full | Lecturer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 2019-2020** | $70,563.38 | $78,691.41 | $162,206.64 | $46,271.88 |
| **AY 2024-2025** | $78,787.49 | $88,837.50 | $130,410.00 | $67,875.03 |

Salaries for library science faculty are comparable to those of other faculty in the College (Table III.22). Compared to the average salaries of Southeastern library and information science faculty at peer institutions, associate professors earn slightly less than regional averages, assistant professors are on par, and full professors earn more than regional averages.

**Table III.22. Local and national faculty salary averages in library and information science 2023**

| Region | Assistant | Associate | Full |
|---|---|---|---|
| UK LIS faculty | $76,901 | $86,486 | $156,752 |
| UK CI faculty | $73,863 | $87,419 | $124,108 |
| National*^ | $90,022 | $98,042 | $147,157 |
| Region IV *^ | $76,039 | $90,187 | $134,444 |

*2023-2024 Faculty Salary Survey of Institutions Belonging to the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities

LIS program faculty members have the option to teach during the summer and to take on an overload. Based on student enrollment, faculty would receive an additional salary. According to College policy, all full-time faculty are paid a base rate of 10% of their base nine-month salary up to a maximum of $7,500 ([Appendix III.10 CI Special Terms Pay](#)).

**Start-up Packages**
Newly hired faculty members have been provided with start-up funds ranging from $10,000 to $15,000 to support the establishment of their research programs.

**SIS Professional Development Funds**
The School has committed to providing each full-time faculty member with $1,500 in annual faculty development funds. This fund covers research-related expenses, including travel to conferences, as well as books, memberships, and specialized software. Depending on other research-related activities and budget availability, faculty may apply for additional funds to support conferences where they are presenting a paper. The Director strives to assist the faculty financially whenever possible through the school's discretionary funds.

**School Internal Research Funds**
The School provided internal research funds of up to $10,000 for research projects designed to gather pilot data in support of a larger project in 2023 and 2024. The award recipients were Crawford Barniskis and Oltmann in 2022 and Burns and DiGiacomo in 2024. Recipients were expected to submit a proposal for external funding to support the larger project. As a result, Crawford Barniskis applied for and received the early career IMLS grant in 2024.

**SIS Faculty Hub**
The School of Information Science provides an online hub in Canvas that provides various information and resources for faculty. This is meant to help new faculty become acclimated to the school, university, and Lexington area, while also acting as a resource for existing faculty who need to refresh themselves on specific procedures. Core sections of this resource include Institutional Structure, Teaching and Advising, Service, Research, Work Life, and Campus and Lexington. The school also developed a new faculty onboarding checklist to streamline the onboarding process. This checklist is available in the Faculty Hub.

**College Support**

The College provides a budget to replace employees' computers on a rotating basis, purchasing a new computer at least every five years. The College provides start-up funds for all new faculty hires as well. The College also provides funding for the newly hired faculty with its Summer Faculty Research Fellowship program. The College also provides funds for hiring any part-time instructors the school needs. Additional research funds are available for faculty to apply for, including College Research Activity Awards and the international travel fund. The University also offers internal research grants, including CURATE Research Support Program, UKinSPIRE, and Igniting Research Collaborations, as well as a research award program, University Research Professors. Additionally, the College maintains a Canvas shell dedicated to onboarding new faculty — full and part-time. This tool provides information on the hiring process, provides background on the College, covers syllabus requirements, and more.

**College of Communication and Information Technology Services (CITS) Faculty Support**

CITS provides IT support for faculty and students across the college. This includes standard services, such as support with faculty computers, classroom and online teaching technologies, and other core needs. However, CITS staff also provide more advanced services, such as assistance with research software, including Qualtrics and Dedoose; development of custom applications, such as conference registration systems; and equipment that goes beyond standard instructional and research technology, such as sound systems for large-scale public events and video recorders.

**Sabbaticals and Leave of Absence**

A sabbatical leave is granted to eligible full-time, tenured faculty to encourage academic and institutional revitalization. A sabbatical leave is not automatically granted. A faculty member may apply for one year's sabbatical leave at one-half salary or six months' sabbatical leave at full salary. After three years of continuous eligible service, an appointee may apply for six months' sabbatical leave at one-half salary.

The sabbatical leave process is competitive. The School abides by the University Sabbatical Leave Policy and the College of Communication and Information's Sabbatical Request Process (Appendix III.11 CI Sabbatical Leave Process).  A call for applications typically goes out in the fall. All leave requests are reviewed at the unit, college, and campus levels. An applicant who has demonstrated success in all significant areas of work, as evidenced by the results of the individual's faculty performance reviews, who presents a clear and well-conceived sabbatical leave proposal, and who does not intend to be involved in paid outside activities to an extent that will unduly interfere with the execution of the sabbatical objectives, will be seriously considered.

Table III.23 below shows the LIS faculty members who obtained paid sabbaticals over the course of this accreditation period. Upcoming AY 2025–2026, two faculty members (Barriage and DiGiacomo) will take a sabbatical leave.

**Table III.23. LIS faculty paid sabbaticals**

| Faculty Member | Academic Term |
|---|---|
| Choi, Namjoo | Spring 2019 |
| Burns, Sean | Spring 2021 |
| Oltmann, Shannon | Fall 2022 |
| Joo, Soohyung | Spring 2023 |
| Cahill, Maria | Fall 2023 |

University of Kentucky faculty employees are entitled to paid temporary disability leave (TDL), as well as protections under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993. Its policies and procedures are available at the OFA website. These policies and procedures apply to all faculty.

**UK Office of Faculty Advancement**
The OFA mission is to "provide support and resources for the promotion and tenure programs and process, offer faculty development opportunities, foster recognition of faculty achievements in both scholarship and teaching, partner with units to recruit, retain, and support a broad faculty, and promote leadership development of faculty into academic positions." Beyond providing general information to help new faculty to become acclimated to the campus and Lexington area, OFA also oversees the development of policies and corresponding documentation related to faculty expectations and support, including the UK Faculty Handbook. The OFA conducts a required orientation for all new faculty each semester.

OFA supports a wide range of training programs to help faculty at various stages of their careers. This includes the University of Kentucky Emerging Leaders Academy, which is meant "to encourage mid-career faculty and professional staff to consider leadership career paths and to guide them in developing the essential skills for effective institutional leadership," as well as the Chairs' Academy, for "faculty new to leadership roles such as department chair, division chief, director, associate dean and similar, or those who aspire to such roles." School Director Young Choi and the LIS Program Coordinator Shannon Oltmann completed the Chairs' Academy I and II in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

**UK Research**
UK Research manages several offices to support the research activities of faculty, staff, and students. It offers resources and training on human subject research, grant proposal development, sponsored project services, and more. For faculty seeking extramural research funding, the Proposal Development Office conducts funding searches. The office distributes funding alerts, assists in the preparation of competitive grant applications and honorific nominations by providing critical reviews of proposal drafts, providing descriptions of UK facilities, contributing narrative sections of proposals when appropriate, assisting in building research teams, and offering project management services. The Office of Sponsored Project Administration works directly with faculty to administer extramural grants and contracts awarded through the University of Kentucky Research Foundation. Its services are available to

all university faculty and staff and include: advice and assistance with budget preparation and other administrative requirements of proposals; review, negotiation and acceptance of awards; information regarding sponsor policies and regulations; and preparation of subcontract documents.

**Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) and UK Online**

CELT and UK Online offer extensive assistance to faculty in the creation, enhancement, and innovation of their courses. Their services encompass training designed to aid instructors in meeting course development standards and integrating engaging media into their teaching practices. They provide personalized consultations to facilitate continuous instructional improvement and offer a mid-semester course feedback service that allows faculty to collect and address student feedback. Considering the increasing use of generative AI in education, they have created standard guidelines and templates to assist faculty in formulating clear course policies regarding student utilization of AI tools. Furthermore, CELT and UK Online organize various events, training sessions and symposia, and they maintain a broad array of resources focused on effective teaching methods and pedagogical growth.

**Academic Ombud**

The University of Kentucky Academic Ombud offers a confidential environment for students and faculty to address academic challenges. Faculty members may inquire about concerns, discuss difficulties, and seek assistance in resolving academic disputes. This office provides clarity on pertinent university policies, aids in addressing issues that lack established procedures, advocates for fair practices, and recommends policy modifications designed to enhance fairness in teaching and learning.

**Accommodation for Disabilities**

The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) provides a range of training programs focused on various equal opportunity topics and offers valuable resources for faculty and staff. The University is committed to supporting employees with disabilities by offering reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## *Standard III.6 Faculty Evaluation and Development*

The University of Kentucky provides information on the policies and procedures for systematic faculty evaluation. As a unit within the School of Information Science, the LIS program closely follows the policies of the University and the School to ensure that evaluation is comprehensive and considers accomplishments and innovations in teaching, research, and service.

**Retention**

Faculty are evaluated through several regularly scheduled means. For assistant professors, this includes an annual review that is overseen by the Director of SIS and Dean of CI. This is a separate process from faculty's two- and four-year reviews, which are more thorough processes still overseen by the SIS Director but have more rigorous documentation submission processes (Appendix III.13 Director's email on faculty performance review; Appendix III.14

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[Provost's memo on faculty performance](#)). Additionally, all tenured faculty in SIS also review and provide input into the faculty member's performance. This allows tenure-track faculty to have an experience similar to school-level tenure review prior to applying for tenure and promotion, which is typically completed in the sixth year of employment. The tenure and promotion process is guided by regulations at the School, College, and University levels. When a faculty member achieves tenure or is promoted to Senior Lecturer, they are shifted to a biennial review cycle. The Director of SIS is primarily responsible for this review, with additional feedback provided by the Dean.

**Mentorship for Assistant Professors**

Assistant professors are provided mentorship to ensure that they can succeed in their evaluations, including their eventual promotion and tenure. Policies related to mentoring these junior, tenure-track faculty are detailed in Appendix XI of the School Rules, which states that "the role of the faculty mentor is to give ongoing advice to Assistant Professors (hereafter, "mentees") on all elements of their DOE that will ultimately build a tenure dossier and be used in a promotion and tenure decision" (p. 56, [Appendix III.1 SIS School Rules Spring 2024-2025](#)). Additionally, the School Rules explain that:

> The mentor and mentee will discuss, at least once per semester, either face-to-face or virtually as agreed upon by the mentor and mentee, progress toward tenure and promotion in the three areas of evaluative criteria: research, teaching, and service. For this purpose, the mentor may be supplied, with permission of the mentee, the mentee's annual evaluation and student course evaluations (p. 57).

At the beginning of each semester, assistant professors are provided with a list of senior faculty who are willing to serve as mentors for that academic year. Assistant professors may select a faculty mentor from any program in SIS, not just LIS, thereby giving junior faculty the option to learn from colleagues in ICT and ICR. Although assistant professors are not required to change mentors each year, they are encouraged to do so, since this allows them to receive a range of advice, feedback, and perspectives as they develop their careers. A junior faculty member may also request a change in mentor at any time in an academic year for any reason.

Additionally, each faculty member receives ongoing mentorship from the Director of SIS. This mentorship relationship is established through several means, with the first-year review setting expectations for the years to come and the path to tenure.

**Student Course Evaluations**

The School Director uses student responses in course evaluations to discuss any issues with faculty members. To support the challenges that faculty may face in developing and teaching online courses, UK Online and CELT offer relevant support and training for online course instruction and evaluation. In 2025, the School Director developed online teaching guidelines for part-time instructors to assist them in maintaining high teaching quality ([Appendix III.4 UKY SIS Instructor Guidelines](#); [Appendix III.5 UKY SIS instructor checklist for teaching online courses](#)). The LIS faculty also shared and addressed issues or concerns related to online teaching and student matters during the monthly faculty meetings.

**Tenure & Promotion Review**

[Promotion and tenure](#) reviews are conducted according to the policy and procedures approved by the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees. Chapter 2 of the [Administrative Regulations](#) describes the process and criteria for faculty promotion and tenure. Since the last accreditation visit, four faculty members (Barriage, DiGiacomo, Joo, and Burns) were promoted to Associate Professor and received tenure. One faculty (Cahill) was promoted to a full professor in 2023 (see [Standard III.2](#)).

Tenure-track assistant professors are expected to submit materials for their first-year review in January of their first academic year. Documents for this review include narratives and supporting documentation related to three core areas: 1) Instruction and Teaching, 2) Scholarship and Research, and 3) Service. Supporting documentation includes the faculty member's CV, along with syllabi, teaching evaluations, and recent research publications. Faculty members are also expected to submit a list of goals for the coming academic year, which serves as a point of conversation that allows the Director to discuss any potential adjustments to the faculty member's priorities. This process is repeated annually in the years prior to tenure.

Faculty are evaluated based on their DOE. In the evaluation process, the Director of SIS ranks the faculty member on a five-point scale for each category and provides an overall score on a five-point scale that is weighted according to their DOE.

Meanwhile, two- and four-year reviews constitute a separate process for each assistant professor. This process is meant to mimic the tenure application process at the school level. As such, while faculty members can be selective in the materials they include for their annual review, they are expected to develop full dossiers for the two- and four-year reviews. The file is not reviewed at the University level or sent to outside reviewers, as would be the case for a full tenure packet. However, all senior faculty within SIS write evaluation letters based on the review packet. This process provides each faculty member with practice towards developing a full tenure packet, provides them with feedback from colleagues that allows them to improve their performance and focus their priorities, and creates a body of documentation that they can build upon iteratively as they move toward the development of their tenure packet. A timeline for annual reviews and both two- and four-year reviews is available in Figure III.2. [The entire promotion and tenure process flowchart is available at the OFA website](#).

**Figure III.2. School-level Faculty-Review Timeline**

The School level committee, Promotion and Tenure, was reshaped in 2024 into the Faculty Development Committee, focusing on faculty development for those in tenured/tenure-track and lecturer positions. In spring 2025, the school committee on Faculty Development conducted a series of Zoom meetings and a survey to identify the desired areas of faculty development (Appendix III.12 Faculty Development Committee Annual Report 2024-2025).

## Summary and Future Plans

The faculty in the LIS program have collectively demonstrated strong academic and professional qualifications, ensuring quality education for students and robust support for the MSLS program. They are active researchers, regularly publishing peer-reviewed work and securing grants that contribute significantly to the LIS knowledge base. Faculty members have shown ongoing growth in critical areas and engagement with library professionals. They maintain strong connections to library practice through partnerships with libraries, schools, and professional organizations, which ensures that their teaching and research remain both relevant and impactful. The LIS program systematically uses the results of faculty evaluations to enhance the program and plan for the future.

The program has experienced faculty departures. To ensure continuity in program operations and maintain educational quality, it is essential to prioritize faculty retention and fill current vacancies. Timely hiring will not only help restore balanced workloads but also support the ongoing growth and innovation of the LIS program. The school plans to hire two faculty positions starting in fall 2025 to secure qualified replacements and demonstrate the LIS program's commitment to operational stability and long-term effectiveness. Furthermore, the existing tenure and promotion guidelines will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the field.

# Standard IV: Students

## *Introduction*

To ensure students receive a quality education and have adequate support throughout their time in the MSLS program, the LIS faculty frequently review the processes, systems, and services involved in recruiting, retaining, and supporting students. One of the most impactful changes instituted since the last accreditation cycle is the creation of a central hub within the institution's learning management system. Built in response to student feedback, this hub facilitates student/faculty interaction and co-locates information and resources to support students. The program also continues to support students through extracurricular opportunities, like the SIS Student Conference and Alternative Spring Break Program, effective academic advising, and ongoing professional development events.

The LIS program evaluates the processes of recruitment, retention, and support for students in a systematic and regular manner. The Admission Committee monitors the recruitment and retention processes. Various surveys are conducted by LIS committees to review and evaluate these processes. The faculty applies the results of these evaluations and input for decision-making along with other evaluation data. The following chapter provides additional details about these resources and opportunities, which help the program uphold its mission and program goals.

## *Standard IV.1 Student Body*

To reach a wide range of potential students, the program takes a broad approach to recruitment and supports various means of accessing information on demand. Through these efforts, students can learn about the program at the time and in the method best suited to their needs.

Recruitment efforts include Google ads, ads in relevant professional publications, in-person recruitment at professional events like conferences and graduate school fairs, synchronous online information sessions for groups and individuals (Appendix IV.1 Recruitment examples), and institutionally supported websites like the UK Online webpage for the Library Science program, which provides an easy point of access to sign up for more information. The program also has a dedicated admissions coordinator who is a member of the faculty and is well-versed not only in program specifics but also in institutional admissions policies and procedures.

**Table IV.1. LIS Recruitment Activity**

| Event | Timeframe |
|---|---|
| **Alabama Public Library Division Mini-Conference** | 2025 |
| **ASIS&T Annual Conference** | 2018, 2022, 2023 |
| **Berea College Grad & Professional School Fair** | 2019 |
| **CyberCon** | 2024 |
| **Eastern Kentucky University Job/Internship & Grad School Fair** | 2020, 2021, 2022 |
| **Georgetown Grad School Fair** | 2018, 2019, 2022 |
| **Georgia Libraries Conference** | 2018, 2020 (online), 2022 |
| **Indiana Library Federation Conference** | 2018, 2019, 2020 (virtual), 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| **iSchools Annual Conference** | 2018, 2019, 2025 |
| **Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives Youth Services Retreat** | 2018 |
| **Kentucky Library Association** | 2018–2025 |
| **Kentucky Public Library Association** | 2018, 2019, 2020 (registered but cancelled); 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 |
| **Kentucky State University Grad & Professional School Fair** | 2020, 2021 |
| **Kentucky Wesleyan Career Fair** | 2019 |
| **Midway Career Fair** | 2025 |
| **National Conference on Undergraduate Research** | 2019, 2020 (registered but cancelled); 2021 (virtual) |
| **Nevada Conference** | Spring 2025 |
| **Ohio State Grad & Professional School Fair** | 2020, 2021, 2023 |
| **Spotlight Career Fair** | 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 |
| **Tapia Conference** | 2018, 2019, 2022 |
| **University of Kentucky Graduate School Fairs** | 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 |
| **Undrcvr Lex** | 2018, 2019 |
| **Union College Career Expo** | 2019 |
| **University of Louisville Grad Fair** | 2020 |
| **University of the Cumberlands Career Fair** | 2018 |
| **Virginia Libraries Conference** | 2018, 2019, 2022, 2023, 2024 |

**Student Body Characteristics**

In accordance with the University's nondiscrimination policy, the LIS program welcomes students from all backgrounds. The average enrollment was 225 during the past review period. LIS students come from Kentucky and other states as the learning mode of the program is online and asynchronous. At the University of Kentucky, international students living in the United States are not permitted to enroll in online programs if they have a F-1 or J-1 Visa. UK

Online works with various other units on campus to determine the legality of international students enrolling in online courses while living abroad. UK Online has information available online explaining who can and cannot enroll in online programs at UK.

Table IV.2 presents residency information on the LIS program students from fall 2018 to fall 2024. Regarding location, the percentage of students from Kentucky and out-of-state students has been roughly split, but enrollment of Kentucky students has been declining. In response to this evaluation, the School Director, Dr. Youngok Choi, analyzed enrollment patterns and developed a targeted recruitment plan focused on increasing in-state enrollment and strengthening the program's visibility among Kentucky communities. The proposed plan submitted to the College (see Appendix IV.10 MSLS Recruitment Strategies) outlines several strategic actions, including offering scholarships for incoming students, expanding partnerships with Kentucky libraries and archives, strengthening outreach to regional employers, and increasing the program's presence at statewide professional events. Based on this plan, the program began offering a $1,000 scholarship to admitted students who are Kentucky residents starting in Fall 2025. These steps demonstrate the program's intentional use of evaluation to guide continuous improvement for recruitment.

**Table IV.2. LIS student residency**

| Fall Semester | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (n=181) | (n=249) | (n=295) | (n=291) | (n=250) | (n=230) | (n=227) |
| Kentucky resident | 55.8% | 45.4% | 43.4% | 43.3% | 41.6% | 50.9% | 52.4% |
| Non-resident | 44.2% | 54.6% | 56.6% | 56.7% | 58.4% | 49.1% | 47.6% |

Most LIS students pursue their master's degree part-time (Table IV.3), and a majority of them (82.7%) are female (Figure IV.1).

**Table IV.3. LIS Students Full-Time/Part-Time**

| Fall Semester | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (n=181) | (n=249) | (n=295) | (n=291) | (n=250) | (n=230) | (n=227) |
| Full time | 24.6% | 40.0% | 45.5% | 34.2% | 40.2% | 33.5% | 33.5% |
| Part time | 75.4% | 60.5% | 54.5% | 65.8% | 59.8% | 66.5% | 66.5% |
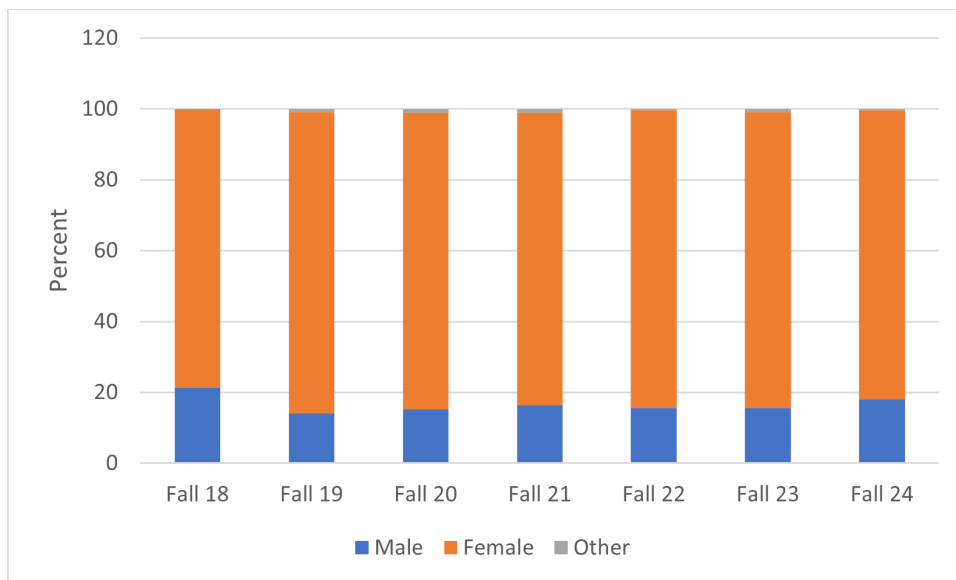
**Figure IV.1. LIS Program Students by Sex**

As Table IV.4 shows, the student body in our program has stayed largely consistent when it comes to age distribution. Enrollment tends to be younger with 52% of all students across the time period being in the 20–29 age range. There has been some movement in the 50+ age group, as that has increased from 1% in 2018 for the two categories (50-54 and 55+) to 10% in 2024.

**Table IV.4. Students by Age Groups**

|  | **Fall 2018** | **Fall 2019** | **Fall 2020** | **Fall 2021** | **Fall 2022** | **Fall 2023** | **Fall 2024** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **20–29** | 89 | 125 | 154 | 148 | 128 | 116 | 119 |
| **30–39** | 60 | 77 | 79 | 80 | 67 | 63 | 56 |
| **40–49** | 30 | 32 | 39 | 39 | 35 | 29 | 29 |
| **50–54** | 1 | 11 | 14 | 15 | 11 | 12 | 14 |
| **55+** | 1 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 9 |
| **Total** | 181 | 249 | 295 | 291 | 250 | 230 | 227 |

Data on student ethnicity reveals that, on average, 9% of students identify as non-white. Although enrollment from various ethnic backgrounds remains low, the trend shows an increase in recent years, particularly from 2020 to 2022.

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**Figure IV.2. Ethnicity of Students**

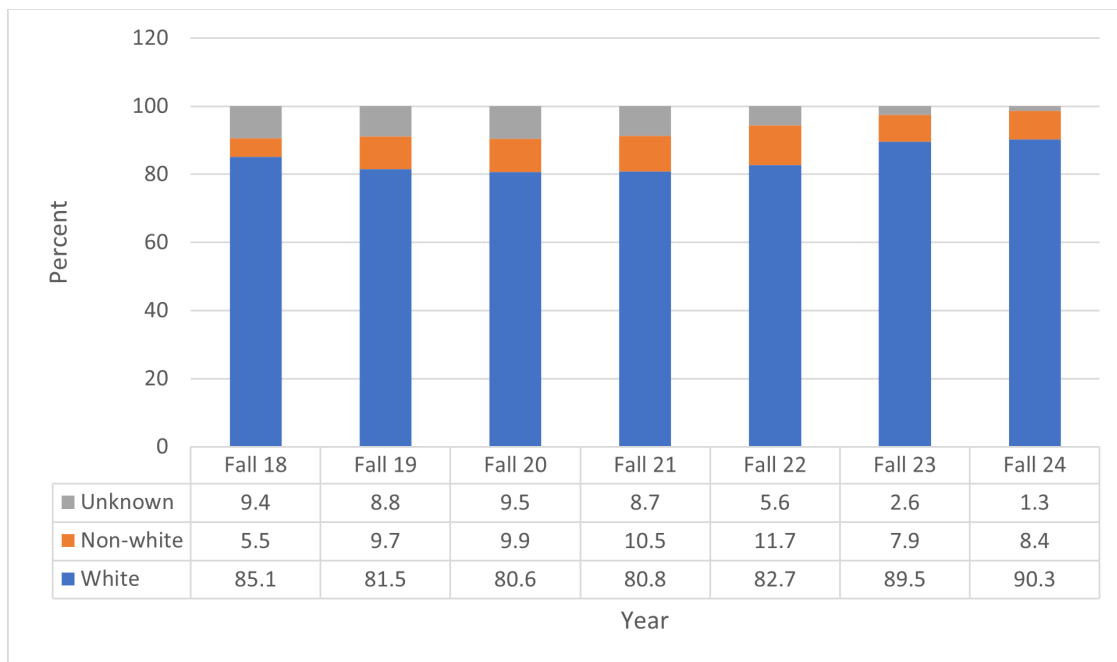The enrollment statistics for the LIS program reveal a growing trend in the representation of first-generation students, despite an overall lack of ethnic backgrounds. Data presented in Table IV.5 indicates a significant increase in first-generation student enrollment, which has risen from 3.7% in fall 2018 to 28.8% in fall 2024. This upward trend enhances the program's student body, fosters social mobility, and contributes to a more welcoming educational environment. Supporting first-generation students is essential for promoting educational fairness and aligns with the broader mission of the University of Kentucky to create an accessible learning community.

**Table IV.5. Percent of First-Generation Students in the Program**

| Fall semester | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **First-generation** | 3.7 % | 4.0 % | 4.1 % | 4.5 % | 6.0 % | 14.4 % | 28.8 % |

To support a welcoming learning environment, student affairs staff work collaboratively to build onboarding resources following accessibility best practices. Students receive onboarding information in both print and electronic formats, both of which have been optimized for accessibility. The MSLS Student Hub, which will be discussed in more detail throughout this chapter, follows the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)'s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to develop accessible content, including but not limited to videos with accurate transcripts and captions, images with alternative text, documents with appropriate structure and contrast, and a variety of options for interaction and participation within the hub. As the program creates additional resources for the MSLS Student Hub to support incoming and returning students, it continues to do so with accessibility in mind to ensure all students are welcomed and supported.

To aid retention and bolster support systems and services outlined below in Standard IV.4, the School's Student Affairs Officer works closely with LIS students to provide ongoing support for them and their faculty advisors. The SIS Student Affairs Officer assists with the paperwork and processes leaves of absence and withdrawals, creates resources and provides guidance and assistance with course planning and registration, develops a newsletter shared each semester to reiterate important dates and events, and helps to connect students with support services like the Disability Resource Center and Counseling Center. With access to the Admissions Coordinator, SIS Student Affairs Officer, faculty advisors, and program administration, students in the LIS program can reach out to multiple people at the program level who are familiar with them and their needs for assistance in addition to the support they receive at the institutional level.

## *Standard IV.2 Public Information*

Information about the program is provided across a variety of online platforms, including websites and other web resources the School of Information Science maintains as well as institutional sites.

### School of Information Science Resources

**SIS Website**

The School of Information Science website provides a convenient public access point for information that prospective and current students and other program constituents seek. Of particular note is the page that details many student success metrics, the LIS strategic plan, and degree requirements. (During the 22–23 academic year, the College of Communication and Information began redesigning the College's website as well as the sites for each unit within the College to ensure cohesion, accuracy of information, and ease of navigation. The School's new website launched in October 2023.)

**Figure IV.3. SIS Website**

From the landing page for the Library Science program, individuals can access information about the program in general, degree requirements, the Alternative Spring Break program, exit requirements and assessment, and means of connecting with the program. The Explore LIS page provides an overview of the program and outlines its vision, mission, goals, and instructional objectives. The page also contains a Frequently Asked Questions section. The Student Resources page provides links to additional resources, including those supporting academics, wellbeing, and career readiness. The Degree Requirements page provides clear course outlines and related information for the standard MSLS program and for the school librarian program. Individuals interested in information about financial resources can consult the scholarships page, which covers scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, and additional external financial resources. The Graduate Admissions page outlines the admissions requirements and deadlines, provides a link to the application portal, and contains contact information for a point of contact for questions. The ALA Program Assessment Information page provides data related to retention and graduation, School Library Praxis scores, employment after degree completion, and time to degree.

Additional information relevant to current and prospective students is available within the Students menu option of the website, which provides links to pages dedicated to student resources including the School of Information Science's Student Handbook, independent studies, practicums, and student organizations. We recently added a student work page which showcases work submitted by faculty across the School.

Prospective and current students and other constituents seeking information about the School itself can consult the Our School and People pages. Articles relaying news related to the school and upcoming events are also available on the website.

**MSLS Student Hub**

In addition to the publicly available information resources outlined above, the program developed the MSLS Student Hub in Canvas, the learning management system where students also complete their coursework. Launched in September 2022, the Student Hub co-locates information tailored specifically to meet the needs of current students. The Hub is organized into eight main pages: New Students, Our Faculty, School Librarian Students, Resources, Financial, Practicum & Independent Study, Classes & Canvas, and Graduation. The Student Hub also serves as a repository for videos from webinars, guest lectures and other events and provides a direct means of sharing important information with current students through the Announcements and Inbox features.
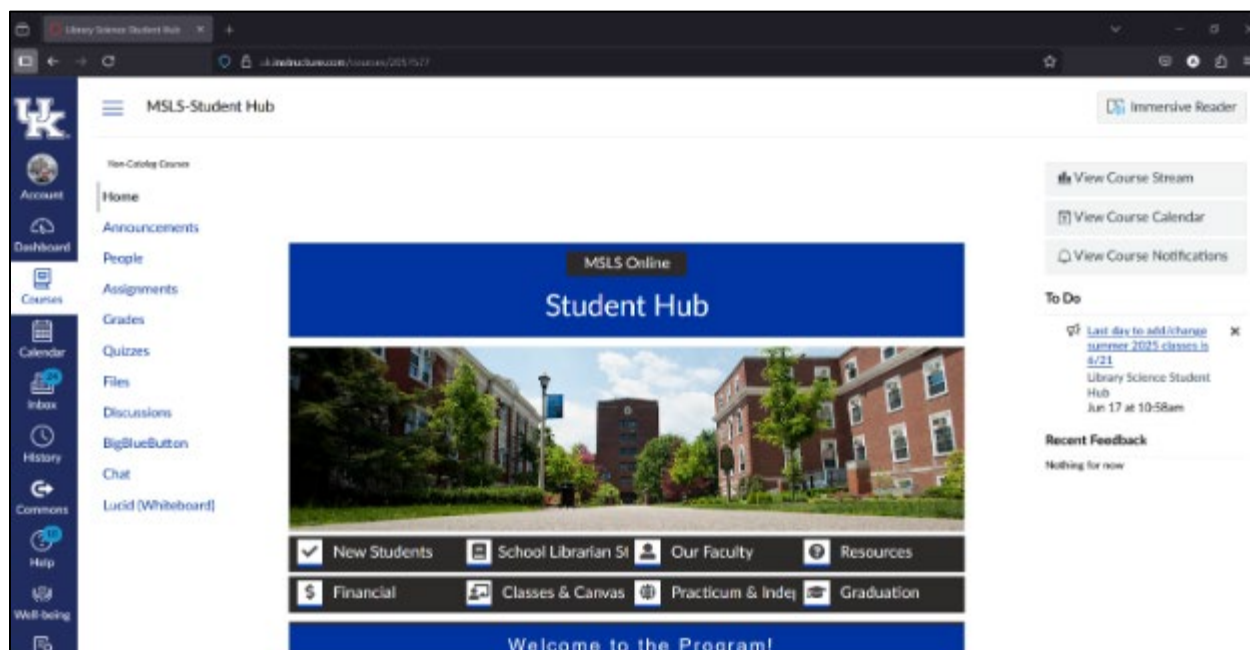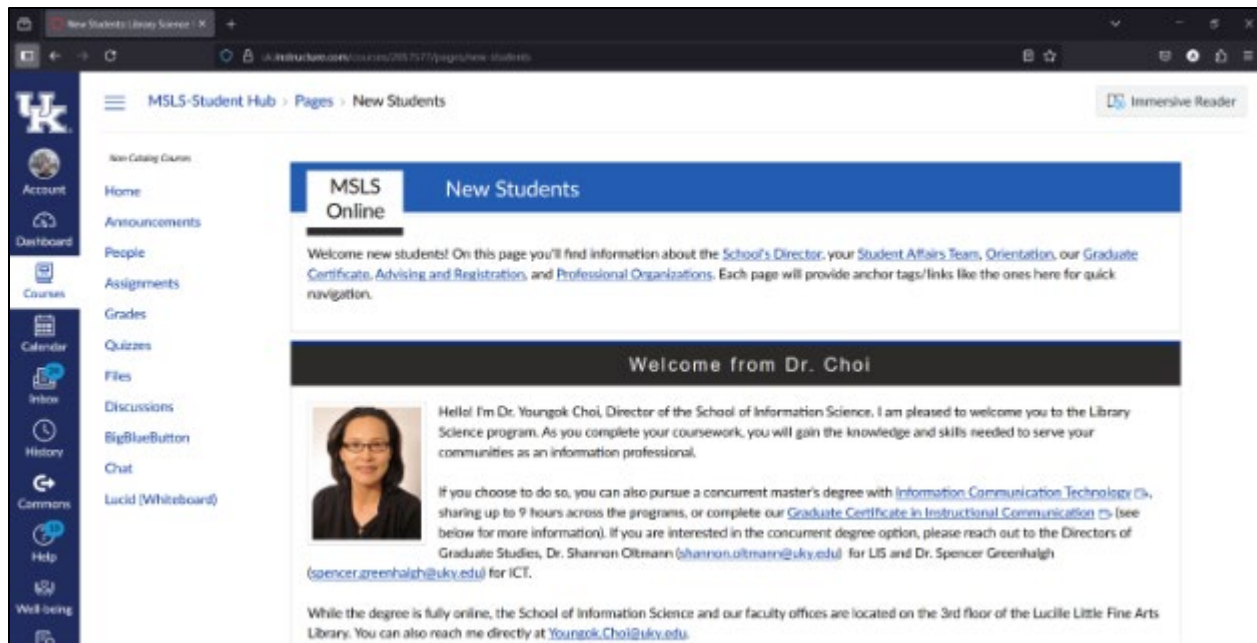


**Figure IV.4. LIS Student Hub**

**Figure IV.5. Student Hub: New Students Page**

The New Students page contains information about the School's Director, the SIS Student Affairs Officer, orientation, myUK walkthrough video, the Instructional Communication Graduate Certificate, advising, registration, and professional organizations. The Our Faculty page provides a high-level overview of LIS advisors and other SIS faculty. LIS faculty have separate welcome pages to provide additional information. Much like the page for New Students, the School Librarian Students page contains information specific to their requirements while in the program, including state authorizations, advising, the Advanced Level Educator Packet, required School Media Practicum (LIS 676), and the certification process and paperwork. Under the Resources page, students find links to technology, library, career, university, and program resources available to them throughout the program. The Financials page covers scholarships and funding, tuition, financial aid, and information about which office to contact if students have questions. The Practicum and Independent Study page outlines the requirements for each course, including information about paperwork and ideas for identifying placements/sites. The Classes & Canvas Resources page provides additional information about registering for class, taking a leave of absence or withdrawing, course information and syllabi, learning online, and how to interact with Canvas. Finally, the Graduation page outlines graduation requirements, information about the exit requirement for the program, graduation paperwork, commencement, degrees and diplomas, and school library certification.
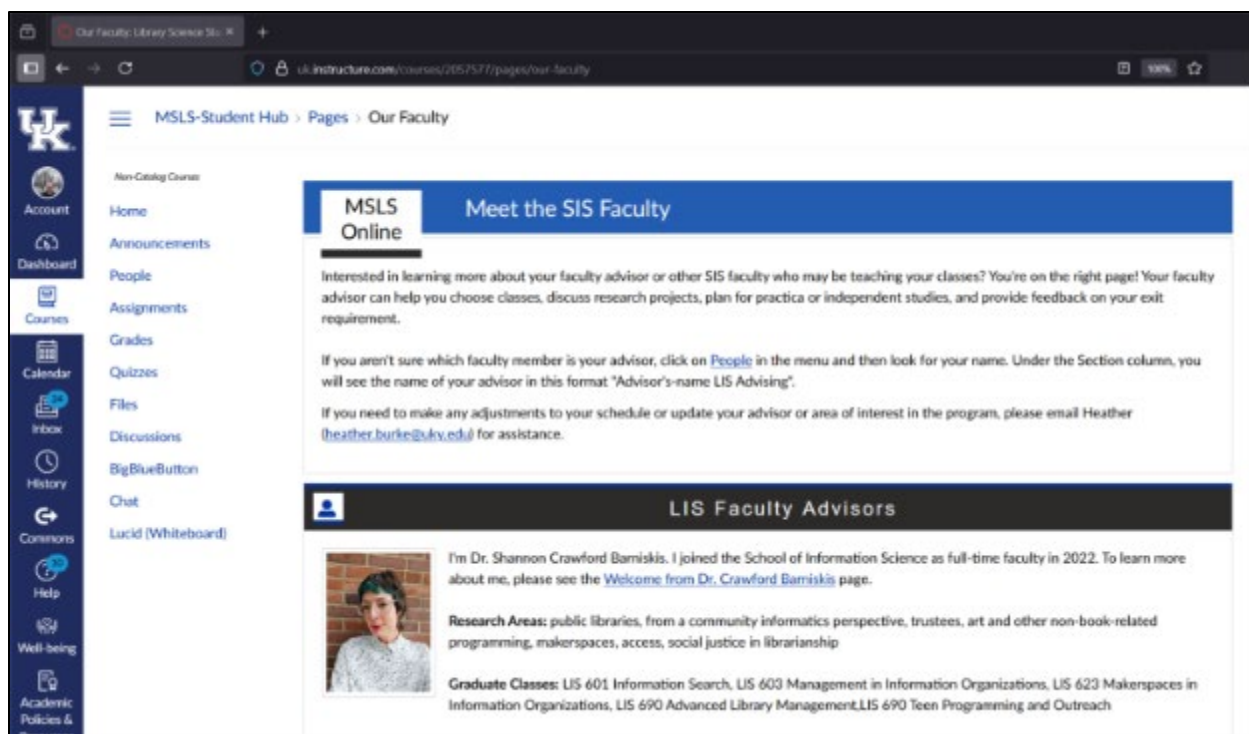
**Figure IV.6. LIS Student Hub: Our Faculty Page**

## Institutional Resources

Beyond the information resources the school maintains, prospective and current students and other program constituents can also consult institutional pages for information relevant to the program. Standard IV.4 below describes other institutional resources available to students.

### UK Online Website

In addition to the information available on the School's website, prospective students, and other constituents can also consult the Library Science program's page on the UK Online website. This page covers admissions deadlines, credits and tuition, general program information, application requirements, frequently asked questions, licensure and authorization, student support, and program contact information.

### Financial Unit Websites

Students and constituents seeking information regarding financial aid, payment options, and current tuition and fees can consult the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships website and Student Account Services website.

### Scholars@UK Website

Individuals interested in the research activity of the program's faculty can consult the Scholars@UK website. The College of Communication and Information directory pages for faculty engaged in research also contain a direct link to each person's Scholars@UK page.

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## *Standard IV.3 Student Qualifications*

### Application Process

While prospective students find specific instructions for the admissions process on the program's website and more general instructions on the Graduate School's website, they complete the program application externally via the Slate application portal. From 2018 through 2022, the Graduate School used the ApplyYourself portal. Beginning in January 2023, the Graduate School shifted to the Slate portal for the summer and fall 2023 admissions cycles. To apply to the MSLS program, students submit one application, which both the program and the Graduate School can access for review. Students planning to complete any graduate certificates or other degree programs submit additional applications to be considered for admission to those certificates or programs.

The program shares responsibility for the admission process and standards with the Graduate School. The Graduate School sets and maintains its own minimum requirements for admission, finalizes and issues admissions decisions, determines residency, and collects and houses any required documents, such as transcripts. The library science program may set additional requirements for admission.

When the application is complete, the Admissions Coordinator routes the application to the Assistant Director to begin the review process. At the end of the internal review process, the Assistant Director submits the admission recommendation — a) admit, (b) admit conditionally, (c) petition to admit conditionally or (d) deny admission — through the online application system and triggers the Graduate School's final review.

Graduate School admission staff then review the application to ensure it meets the Graduate School's requirements and consider the program's admission recommendation. An admission staff member then officially admits or denies admission to the applicant and attaches a decision letter to the application.

### Admissions Requirements

The Graduate School's admissions standards are shared on its website and are as follows:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
- At least a 2.75 GPA on 4.0 scale for undergraduate work
- At least a 3.00 GPA on 4.0 scale for graduate work

To ensure applications are assessed based on academic, intellectual, and other relevant criteria and to support the program's goals "to produce competent information professionals who can facilitate the flow of information in a rapidly changing society", the program's admissions requirements, which are also available on its website, are as follows:

- Transcripts confirming an earned bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a GPA greater than or equal to a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Transcripts confirming a GPA greater than or equal to 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for any graduate work, if applicable.
- A personal statement to allow the program to gauge the intellectual interests of the applicant and assess their potential fit within the program.
- Two recommendations to provide additional information on an applicant's preparedness, both for graduate-level work and a career in the information professions.
- A resume or curriculum vitae that relates relevant experience to student success in graduate-level coursework and the profession.
- A valid teaching certificate, Teacher Internship Statement of Eligibility or an equivalent credential required for applicants seeking to join the school librarian program to ensure that they have the necessary qualifications for certification.

Applicants may also choose to include additional supplemental materials, such as a writing sample, if they feel the materials will add to their application.

As reflected in the Oct. 5, 2018, faculty meeting minutes (Appendix I.2 Library Science Faculty Meeting Minutes 2018-2025), effective for admission for the fall 2018 semester, the program removed the requirement to submit GRE scores, recognizing the additional financial burden taking the exam places on students and in response to a growing body of literature demonstrating the limited predictive power of GRE scores. Previously, only applicants with earned Ph.D.s were automatically exempt from the GRE score requirement.

Effective for admission for the summer and fall 2025 semesters, the program requires two letters of recommendation for applicants. Previously, applicants had to submit three letters of recommendation to be considered for admission. The faculty discussed the merits and disadvantages of changing the requirement from the previous three letters of recommendation to two at the Jan. 21, 2025, faculty meeting (Appendix I.2 Library Science Faculty Meeting Minutes 2018-2025). To help mitigate the burden placed on students during the admissions process and remain competitive with benchmark programs, the faculty voted in favor of the change. Our application process is a blind process and ethnic identity is not considered in the admission process. Admission decisions are made based on the applicant's academic record and professional experience. We aim to admit students with a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds.

## Alternative Routes to Admission

If an applicant's GPA does not meet the program's requirement (3.0), the program requests that the applicant provide an additional GPA statement to explain (a) the circumstances leading to the lower GPA and (b) why the applicant feels prepared to succeed in a graduate level program. There is no minimum or maximum length requirement for the statement, and the applicant needs to include however much information they feel comfortable sharing with the program. Writing the statement does not guarantee admission, but it does help provide additional context for the program to consider as it decides whether to petition for conditional admission when the GPA does not meet the standard requirement.

When an applicant's GPA falls below the program's minimum requirement (3.0) but at or above the Graduate School's minimum requirement (2.75), the program may recommend regular admission or conditional admission. The program uses the information in the application as well as the GPA letter to determine which admission decision to recommend. Students who are conditionally admitted must meet the requirements stated in their admissions letter to remain enrolled in the program. Typically, the requirements involve completing nine hours of coursework and earning final grades of B or better in those courses.

In the event an applicant's GPA does not meet both the program's and the Graduate School's requirements, the program may petition the Graduate School to waive the GPA requirement and consider admission for the applicant. In such cases, the program uses the information in the application as well as the GPA letter to provide evidence in support of the petition. Successful petitions usually point to years of service in the information professions and/or demonstrated success in more recent academic pursuits. Students admitted through this process are always conditionally admitted and must complete nine hours of coursework and earn final grades of B or better in those courses to remain enrolled in the program.

In some cases, an applicant's GPA is significantly below the requirements for both the program and Graduate School such that a petition would not be successful, regardless of experience. In these instances, the program may reject the application or, with support from the Graduate School, recommend that the student begin as a post-baccalaureate or non-degree seeking student. Students admitted in post-baccalaureate status are admitted to the Graduate School only. They have no official standing in the library science program until they are admitted as degree-seeking master's students.

As a post-baccalaureate student, students can complete up to nine hours of library science classes and have those count toward the MSLS degree, provided they earn a final grade of B or better. Pursuing this route allows those students to begin the required coursework for the MSLS degree while also establishing a graduate GPA, which they can point to as evidence of their ability to succeed in a graduate-level program when they apply to the MSLS program. Post-baccalaureate students who are successful must then reapply for formal program admission.

The admissions criteria and process have provided the program with the necessary framework to develop and maintain a body of students who have the interest, skills, and potential that are critical for success in the program and the information professions. Table IV.6 Mean Undergraduate GPA for Admitted Students, 2018-2025, relays the mean undergraduate GPAs for admitted students since the previous accreditation review.

**Table IV.6. Mean Undergraduate GPA for Admitted Students, 2018–2025**

|  | AY18–19 | AY19–20 | AY20–21 | AY21–22 | AY22–23 | AY23–24 | AY24–25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GPA** | 3.42 | 3.43 | 3.39 | 3.45 | 3.54 | 3.48 | 3.50 |

Graduation and retention data is available on the School's website.

## Standard IV.4 Student Advising, Services, and Support

Library Science students may access numerous support services for academic and program support as well as physical and mental well-being. These services exist at the program, college, and university levels. The Student Affairs Officer and faculty advisors refer students to services they may find helpful, and information regarding resources and support services is published in syllabi and in the MSLS Student Hub.

### Health and Safety Resources

Students have access to a variety of health and safety resources to support their well-being during their time in the program. These include the Counseling Center, Disability Resource Center, Health Services, Recreation, and Veterans Resource Center.

**Counseling Center**

The Counseling Center offers a variety of services to support students. Students living anywhere in Kentucky can access therapy services either in-person or virtually as well as other services offered through the center. Students seeking mental health services from the Counseling Center should first make an appointment with the TRACS (Triage, Referral, Assistance, and Crisis Support) office. Other members of the university community can also submit a TRACS form if they are concerned about a student. Students living outside of Kentucky can access therapy through Talkspace, a free online service, as well as Wellness Workshops. All UK students have access to several apps using their institutional login information: Welltrack Boost (self-help tools), Togetherall (peer support), Stressbusters (stress management tools for either Apple or Android users), and Headspace (meditation).

**Disability Resource Center**

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides services to all University students, whether online or on-campus, as well as resources for students, faculty, and staff. Services include trainings, alternative texts and course materials, and academic accommodations, such as extended time for examinations or flexibility with attendance and due dates. Students seeking

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accommodations complete an online intake form available on the DRC website and provide documentation of their disability based on provided requirements. Students who are unable to provide documentation may be eligible for provisional accommodations for up to one academic year.

After reviewing the form submissions, the DRC matches each student with a Disability Resource Center Consultant. Through email communication, the student and consultant work together through the interactive process to identify the appropriate resources and accommodations, which are outlined in an Instructor Notification Letter. At the beginning of each semester, the Disability Resource Center provides instructors with access to their students' Instructor Notification Letters through their secure AIM Student Portal. Instructors who have questions about how to provide accommodations can reach out to the DRC for support.

**Health Services and Recreation**
While online students are exempt from paying the Student Health and Campus Recreation fees, which are typically mandatory, they can access these services by opting in or purchasing a membership. The Student Health fee entitles students to unlimited visits to University Health Service (UHS), including primary care, routine exams and telehealth. As funded graduate students, LIS students selected as Graduate Assistants are automatically enrolled in the Student Health Plan (SHP) at no cost to the student as part of their total compensation. If they choose to, these students may waive the coverage each semester. Students who purchase Campus Recreation memberships have access to all campus recreation facilities, including several gymnasiums, an aquatic center, outdoor recreation spaces, group fitness classes, and equipment checkout, among other benefits.

**Veterans Resource Center**
The Veterans Resource Center provides support for active military members, veterans, and military-connected students. Students can reach out to the center's academic coordinator for personalized guidance regarding VA benefit eligibility and assistance with paperwork.

## Academic Resources

To support their academic pursuits, students can receive support from various offices, individuals, and resources. Institutional support includes the Academic Ombud, Information Technology Services, LMS guides (requires login), library liaison, UK software downloads (requires login) and writing center. At the program level, students receive support from both their faculty advisor and the SIS Student Affairs Officer.

**Academic Ombud**
The Academic Ombud serves as a neutral and confidential mediator to assist both students and faculty in resolving academic conflicts and disputes and helps both parties understand university policies and procedures related to academic work. Students can email or phone the Ombud's office to ask questions and schedule an appointment.

**Information Technology Services**

Students experiencing issues with their login credentials, access to institutional systems or technology can receive assistance from Information Technology Services (ITS). ITS has built a robust online Technology Help Center to guide students through solutions for common technical issues. Students who need assistance with non-urgent matters can submit an online assistance request form. Students who need immediate assistance can also reach ITS directly via phone.

**Learning Management System (Canvas) Guides**

To ensure students are comfortable using the institution's chosen learning management system, the University developed a Canvas Student Video Orientation. Library science students are provided with instructions for accessing that material and are encouraged to review it during their onboarding process. In addition to the institutional resource, Canvas itself provides a support hotline and 24/7 chat line students can access within the site as well as comprehensive student guides, including those tailored to specific mobile operating systems, on their website.

**Library Liaison**

The UK Libraries liaison for the School of Information Science provides ongoing support for students. Students can reach out for individual guidance or take advantage of resources the liaison builds and curates, including the Library and Information Science Research Guide. Students are introduced to the liaison in their welcome packet materials after admission to the program, and the liaison sends a welcome message over the program listserv and in the MSLS Student Hub at the beginning of each semester.

**Software Downloads**

ITS also supports the UK Downloads site, where current students can download a variety of software to complete their academic work. Current downloads include Adobe Creative Cloud, EndNote, and Microsoft 365.

**Writing Center**

Students needing additional guidance to develop written and oral communication skills can work with consultants at the Robert E. Hemenway Writing Center. Both online and face-to-face assistance is available to all students, faculty, and staff of the University of Kentucky.

**Advising**

Faculty advisors provide guidance related to course planning and professional development. The SIS Student Affairs Officer also serves as a secondary advisor for all program students, providing additional information about course selection, relevant policies and procedures, and required paperwork.

Upon admission to the program, students complete a new student form where they describe their professional goals and interests. The SIS Student Affairs Officer then assigns new students to advisors based on interest while also maintaining equitable advising loads across faculty.

Faculty advisors are notified by the SIS Student Affairs Officer when they have been assigned any new advisees.  Advisors choose how to interact with their advisees. Some faculty prefer setting up phone or Zoom calls while others prefer using email or Canvas messaging. Students can also request a new advisor at any time for any reason by contacting the SIS Student Affairs Officer.

## Course Planning

For standard MSLS Students, the SIS Student Affairs Officer encourages students to reach out to their advisors to discuss their interests prior to completing the course planning form in the MSLS Student Hub in Canvas (Appendix II.8 Student Planning Forms). Upon completion of the form, students receive a comment and Canvas message from the SIS Student Affairs Officer with commentary on their selections as well as confirmation of their initial registration. Students continue to have access to their submission throughout their time in the program, so they can refer to their plan during subsequent semesters.

Students in the school librarian program follow a different planning process due to requirements for educator certification, though the process is still facilitated through the MSLS Student Hub in Canvas. These students must complete and update a curriculum contract several times throughout the program. To begin, the school librarian program advisor engages in course planning with each student during an initial advising meeting, and then the student uses that information to complete the curriculum contract, which they submit in the MSLS Student Hub. Prior to enrolling in the LIS 676 School Library Practicum course, the student and advisor revisit and update the curriculum contract. Finally, the student and advisor review the curriculum contract a final time at program completion as part of the educator certification application process.

## Canvas Hubs

To facilitate communication between students and advisors and the sharing of resources, the program developed several course shells in Canvas. From 2018–2022, each faculty member had an individual advising hub. From fall 2022 to the present, all students join the central MSLS Student Hub that includes the advising aspect from the previous advising shells as well as additional content relevant to their success in the program. Students who are graduating also join a Canvas shell specific to that semester that provides guidance on the exit requirement for the program as well as career resources and information about commencement.

## Advising Hubs (2018–2022)

Prior to fall 2022, LIS students received an invitation to join their faculty advisor's Canvas advising shell after being admitted to the program. With assistance from the SIS Student Affairs Officer and Admissions Coordinator, each advisor maintained their own shell, customizing the content as they saw fit. The shells included information specific to new students as well as those who planned to graduate. For new students, the shells contained a course planning form as a PDF form from 2018–2020 and then as an activity built within the Canvas shell beginning in fall 2021. Appendix IV.4 Advising Shells and MSLS Student Hub provides two examples of the

content and organization of these previously used advising hubs as well as the initial version of the MSLS Student Hub from October 2022 and the current version of the MSLS Student Hub from May 2025.

## MSLS Student Hub (2022–present)

In fall 2022, the SIS Student Affairs Officer and Admissions Coordinator launched a single, central hub to replace the individual advising hubs. As described previously in Section IV.2, the MSLS Student Hub co-locates a variety of resources and helpful information specifically tailored to support students. A central hub offer several advantages: all students and faculty are in the same space, thereby streamlining communication and offering more opportunities for connection; updating content requires changes made to one Canvas shell rather than 10–12, allowing faculty and the SIS Student Affairs Officer and Admissions Coordinator to spend that time serving students in other capacities; data gathered within the hub through assignments and activities can be downloaded as single files, preventing the need to merge data from various shells which could result in errors; and students have clear points of access for various program and institutional resources and services, ensuring they can seek assistance or learn about available resources at their time of need and without having to find and navigate a variety of institutional websites.

The central advising hub uses various sections to allow all students to see each other, the SIS Student Affairs Officer, Admissions Coordinator, and their faculty advisor. The use of sections also allows the central shell to mimic the view faculty had when they each had an individual advising shell (i.e., they see only their advisees and can easily contact them all simultaneously by sending a message to their section). Students and faculty can also easily include the Student Affairs Officer and Admissions Coordinator in conversations in Canvas should they need assistance or clarification, as they are members of every section in the hub.

## Exit Assessment Shells

As students prepare for graduation, they join a Canvas shell specific to their semester of graduation, allowing the SIS Student Affairs Officer and Admissions Coordinator to communicate easily with graduating students about deadlines and requirements. To help the students, the shell contains the current guidelines for their exit requirement, the Exit Assessment, in addition to other resources to assist them as they prepare to graduate. Students also submit their drafts and final Exit Assessments in the shell, mirroring the process they are used to from their classes.
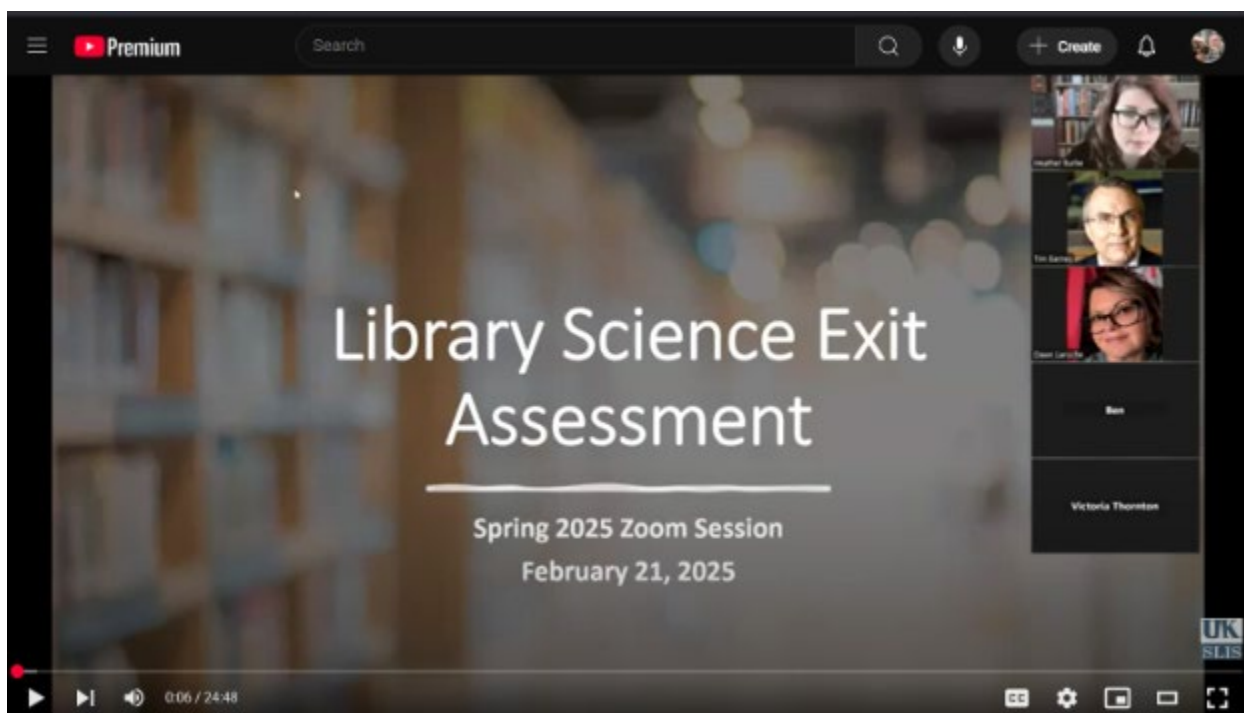
**Figure IV.7. Exit Assessment Review Session**

## Progress Appraisal/Timely Completion of Program of Study

Students have multiple options for receiving feedback regarding their progress in the program: one institutional and two internal to the program.

## Institutional Appraisal

The myUK student portal, in addition to serving as the point of access for registration, financial information, and transcripts, also includes a feature called a degree audit. Students who view this feature can see an immediate report regarding the program requirements they have and have not completed. At present, the institutional degree progress check provides accurate information for students who do not have any special circumstances (such as transfer credit, course substitutions, or participation in the school librarian program), but the system itself and the output it generates can be confusing for students, which is why the program encourages students to use the degree progress checks built into the MSLS Student Hub, as described below.

## Program-level Appraisal

To ensure students have accurate and timely access to progress appraisal, the program built its own degree progress checks in the MSLS Student Hub: one for standard MSLS program students and one for school librarian program students. The output students receive (a completed rubric and commentary from a program representative) provides more straightforward guidance on the requirements students have completed and how they can fulfill any incomplete requirements. Appendix IV.5 Degree Progress Checks provides a sample degree progress check.

**Figure IV.12. Degree Process Check**

Whether they complete the institutional or program-level degree progress check, students have on-demand access and can submit the audit or check as many times as they want, thereby ensuring timely access to progress appraisal. In addition to the degree progress checks, students can also contact their faculty advisor and the SIS Student Affairs Officer for additional feedback and support in completing program requirements.

## Timely Completion of Program of Study

The ALA Program Assessment Information webpage provides statistics regarding time to degree and degree completion. As of December 2024, the average time-to-degree for graduates was 2.2 years and the median was 1.9 years, indicating that most students complete their degrees in a timely manner.

## Professional Resources

**Career Guidance** ───────────────────────────────────────────────────────

### Stuckert Career Center

By visiting the Stuckert Career Center, students can receive assistance in various aspects of their academic and career journey, such as crafting a career path by meeting with a career advisor. The Center offers individual appointments for various career preparation activities, such as career exploration, interview strategies, job search strategies and mock interviews. In

addition to the general resources available on their website, the Center has curated a page tailored to the needs of graduate and professional students. Additionally, the Center organizes multiple career fairs and leverages Handshake, an online platform for job and internship opportunities, to connect students, alumni, and employers.

### Office of Graduate Student Professional Enhancement

Within the Graduate School, the Office of Graduate Student Professional Enhancement serves as a central resource to foster "scholarly and professional growth, pedagogical and career success, and holistic wellbeing." Students can attend events or set up an individual meeting for career guidance. The program hosted a webinar in fall 2024 to introduce students to the Office and its staff.

### CI Career Coordinator

The College of Communication and Information employs a dedicated Career Coordinator, who develops resources, organizes events and meets individually with students to discuss career plans and opportunities. While many resources and events target the College's undergraduate students, the Career Coordinator became more involved in career services for the Library Science students in the 23–24 academic year as the program's representative for GLAM. The Career Coordinator also began organizing the program's professionally focused webinar series as of the 24–25 academic year. Additional details about GLAM and the webinar series are included in following sections.

### Resources In Canvas

On the General Resources page of the MSLS Student Hub, students have access to links for a variety of career resources including various job lists, links to recordings of program-coordinated career events, the Stuckert Career Center, and CI Career Coordinator, as well as resources from the field, like the American Association of School Librarians Interview Question Matrix and various CV and resume writing resources, such as the ALA New Members Round Table Resume Review Service and Resources. The co-location of these resources in a single location in the hub helps students access the support they need on demand.

**Figure IV.11. LIS Student Hub Resources**

Many of the same resources are also built into a page titled "Commencement and Career Prep" in the Canvas shells students join the semester they are graduating to submit their exit requirement. The duplication of content provides another avenue for access for students who are at the end of their program and may be more focused on career readiness as a result.

**Career Exploration and Preparation Events ─────────────────────────────────────**

### Program Listserv

To help students identify potential areas of the field for exploration and employment, the program regularly shares job postings and information about professional events like trainings and conferences on the program's email listserv.

### GLAM

Beginning in 2022, the Library Science program began contributing to the Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums (GLAM) Virtual Career Fair, currently headed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The program has continued to contribute each year since 2022. As one of the host institutions, the UK Library Science program provides funding and dedicates one faculty or staff member to assist in the planning and advertisement of the event so that students from our program can participate free of charge. The fair itself is a combination of pre-event webinar panels focused on various specialties within the field of Library Science along with a multi-hour event comprised of information and interview sessions from participating employers. Students sign up for the sessions of interest to them. The GLAM Career Fair allows students to learn about various aspects of the field from working professionals and begin networking and interviewing to begin or advance their career.

## Collaborative events with local partners

The program also plans and hosts events in collaboration with local partners to enrich students' experiences and provide career support. To encourage participation and respond to students' interests, the program hosts both online and in-person events. One example is the online event, "Navigating Careers in Health Sciences Libraries" organized by our College Career Coordinator, Brooke Nowicki.

## UK Libraries/SIS webinar series

Beginning in fall 2023, the program partnered with Stacey Greenwell, Ph.D., an alumna of the program and current UK Libraries Coordinator of Education Services, Instructional Design Librarian, and Liaison to the College of Communication and Information and Lewis Honors Collage, first to conduct a survey about what students wanted for career focused events (Appendix IV.6 Student Ad Hoc Survey Results) and then to plan a career focused webinar series in spring 2024. The partnership is ongoing, and the events continued in spring 2025.

**Table IV.7. Webinar Dates and Topics**

| Date | Topic |
|---|---|
| **Feb. 20, 2024** | Interviewing for Academic Library Positions |
| **March 19, 2024** | Managing Your Data |
| **April 15, 2024** | Introduction to Open Educational Resources. |
| **Sept. 25, 2025** | Early Career Librarian — Gina Genova and Courtney Shareef |
| **Oct.15, 2025** | Ace Your Academic Interview — Rob Detmering and Amber Willenborg |
| **Nov.13, 2024** | Exploring Careers in Health Sciences Librarianship |
| **Jan. 29, 2025** | Virtual Career Fair Prep Panel |
| **March 3, 2025** | Functional Librarianship Roles |
| **April 23, 2025** | Where Information Meets Medicine: Navigating Careers in Health Sciences Libraries |

The University of Kentucky Graduate School provides numerous career development and planning services. It offers graduate students access to comprehensive career services with a particular focus on utilizing these resources as advanced degree holders. The Graduate School provides webinars for graduate students to learn how to effectively explore these services and enhance their career development, spanning from early exploration to advanced job search strategies.

## UofL Libraries/SIS career programming series

As a result of connections made during the 2024 GLAM Jam, the Associate Dean for the University of Louisville Libraries reached out to the UK Library Science program to express interest in collaborating with the program on career focused events. The CI Career Coordinator headed these efforts and offered a webinar series in fall 2024, involving not only librarians at the University of Louisville but also the University of Kentucky. The partnership is ongoing, and additional events will be available in the future.

## In-person events

To meet the needs of students interested in in-person events, the program arranged a variety of visits to local libraries, archives and related organizations, including the Keeneland Library, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, and Kentucky Underground Storage (KUSI), a former limestone quarry that now serves as offsite storage for materials from UK Libraries and other organizations. These events helped the program by providing a unique opportunity for students to connect socially with peers in person and foster a sense of belonging, which is often missing in fully online programs.

**Table IV.8. Attendance at Selected Events**

| Event | Attendance |
|---|---|
| **UK Library Tour** | 22 |
| **Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives** | 18 |
| **Keeneland Library** | 27 |



**Figure IV.8. Keeneland Library Tour**

Additionally, LIS faculty members often invite guest speakers to their classes. When faculty arrange such talks, they typically invite other faculty and students to the guest speaker's talk, making it a public event. Furthermore, these guest lectures can be recorded and posted to the Guest Lectures Series discussion board in the Student Hub.

In September 2024, the UK Library Science program hosted Library Research Seminar 8: Telling Library Stories.  The program offered free registration for Library Science students and those who attended were able to attend sessions and network with faculty, alumni and other professionals in the field. Four MSLS program students served as session chairs during the event.



**Figure IV.9–10. Images from Library Research Seminar 8: Telling Library Stories**

## Socialization

In addition to the events mentioned above, the program also provides other means to support students' socialization in the field. These opportunities allow students to interact with a variety of professionals and help them develop a habit of professional service and lifelong learning.

### ALA Student Chapter

The ALA@UK Student Chapter plans a variety of events, including the SIS Student Conference outlined below, as well as events that are more social in focus. Each group of officers sets their priorities and determines the goals for the year. For example, the 2020–2021 officers sought to increase engagement with their peers by hosting several virtual social hours and with the faculty by conducting interviews and posting the answers on the chapter's social media. The 21–22 officers continued hosting the social hours and completing the faculty spotlights but also held a T-shirt fundraiser. The 22–23 officers opted to host a monthly game night in the fall semester and a themed book club in the spring semester and added an additional professional event where a panel of program alumni shared their experience and advice about the field. Additional information about the chapter's activities is available in Appendix IV.7 ALA@UK Student Chapter Meeting Minutes and Reports.

### SIS Student Conference

Started in 2014 by the ALA@UK Student Chapter, the SIS Student Conference is an annual event to promote students sharing their work and engaging with each other in more professional spaces. Originally, the event was hosted in-person and was limited to LIS students. During this accreditation cycle, the event has shifted first to a hybrid model and then to a fully online model and is also open to master's students in the Information Communication Technology

program. To encourage additional participation and establish a repository of presentations, the chapter decided to host the asynchronous portion of the event via Canvas beginning in 2020. The Canvas shell houses pre-recorded student presentations, which are made available one week prior to the synchronous keynote and live discussion. Doing so allows students, faculty and other attendees to access and share feedback on the presentations even if they cannot attend the synchronous discussion.

### MSLS Student Hub Special Interest Groups

The program helps prepare students to engage with professional organizations by including Special Interest Groups (SIGs) as part of the MSLS Student Hub. Launched in December 2024 in response to informal student feedback and suggestions made during focus groups (conducted over the summer in 2024 and 2022) for the Welcome Process Evaluation, the SIGs are a student-driven space within the MSLS Student Hub. The program provided initial structure as a starting point and the students who self-select for each SIG can then continue to build content and share resources while enrolled. Table IV.11 Student Enrollment in Program Special Interest Groups, 2025, below provides enrollment data for each of the 11 SIGs.

**Table IV.9. Student Enrollment in Program Special Interest Groups, 2025**

| Interest Group | Number of students |
|---|---|
| Archives | 12 |
| Children's Services | 7 |
| College & University Libraries | 11 |
| Intellectual Freedom | 0 |
| Medical Libraries | 3 |
| Public Libraries | 12 |
| School Libraries | 1 |
| Social Responsibility | 2 |
| User Services | 0 |
| Young Adult Services | 8 |

### Alternative Spring Break

First available in 2011, the Alternative Spring Break program allows Library Science graduate students to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained in the MSLS program in the service of leading libraries and information institutions though a week-long internship. Working under the supervision of a professional librarian or archivist, students contribute to larger, ongoing projects or work on more discrete, short-term projects during the internship week. At the hosts' discretion, students may also be included in relevant meetings, trainings, or other work events.

While the program was traditionally completed with on-site placements, the COVID-19 global pandemic necessitated delivery changes from 2020–2023. In 2020, the program was scheduled to run just as lockdown measures began to be implemented. Some host sites were able to pivot quickly to offer a virtual internship week while others needed to cancel their participation in

the program. For the 2021 and 2022 programs, students continued to complete their placements virtually, either due to university or site institutions travel and visitor restrictions or both. For similar reasons, some partners could not host students at all. In 2023, all students continued to complete their internships virtually, though some host institutions offered them the option of an in-person experience. The 2024 program included the first in-person placement since the pandemic in 2020. Table IV.10 Alternative Spring Break Participants, 2019–2025, provides an overview of the placements and hosts for each year of this accreditation review.

**Table IV.10. Alternative Spring Break Participants, 2019–2025**

| | National Library of Medicine | Smithsonian Libraries & Archives | Library of Congress | Network of the National Library of Medicine | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2019** | 4 | 4 | -- | -- | 8 |
| **2020** | 2 | 6* | -- | 1 | 9* |
| **2021** | 6 | -- | -- | -- | 6 |
| **2022** | -- | -- | -- | 8 | 8 |
| **2023** | 3 | -- | -- | 3 | 6 |
| **2024** | 3 | -- | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| **2025** | -- | -- | 1 | 4 | 5 |

*Due to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the students selected for internships at the Smithsonian Libraries & Archives were unable to participate.

## Financial Aid and Resources

**Office of Student Financial Aid**

Students who have questions about financial aid awards, submitting the FAFSA, or available institutional scholarships and other forms of aid (grants, federal work study, and loans) should reach out directly to the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships.

Students can call, email, or set up online appointments. Contact information and the appointment form are available on the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships website.

**Student Account Services**

Students who have questions about the cost of attendance or how they have been billed should reach out directly to Student Account Services. Student Account Services can also help students set up installment payment plans, guest access, and sponsor billing. Students can call, email or set up online appointments. Contact information and the appointment form are available on the Student Account Services website.

**Scholarships and Funding**

The institution supports students through a variety of funding mechanisms, including fellowships, graduate assistantships and scholarships. The Graduate School manages the application and selection process for fellowships. Information about requirements and applications deadlines is shared on the Graduate School's website. During this accreditation cycle, one MSLS student was awarded an institutional fellowship. The student received the James Still Fellowship for Graduate Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences for AY 22–23. A second applicant was awarded the Otis A. Singletary Fellowship but ultimately chose another program.

In cooperation with the Graduate School and UK Libraries, the School of Information Science also supports students through graduate assistantships. Students selected for a graduate assistantship provide 20 hours of service per week in an on-campus library. During the height of the pandemic, virtual placements were arranged to ensure students could still gain practical experience while following public health guidelines and institutional safety measures. Students' work is compensated with a full tuition scholarship for the fall and spring semesters, student health coverage, and a stipend, which UK Libraries funds.

Some faculty have also secured grants that have been used to support research assistantships. Table IV.11 Assistantships Awarded to MSLS Students, 2018–2026, provides a summary of the assistantships awarded to MSLS students during this accreditation review cycle.

**Table IV.11. Assistantships Awarded to MSLS Students, 2018–2026**

|  | Graduate Assistantships | Research Assistantships | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 18–19** | 8 | 0 | 10 |
| **AY 19–20** | 9 | 1 | 10 |
| **AY 20–21** | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| **AY 21–22** | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| **AY 22-23** | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| **AY 23–24** | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| **AY 24–25** | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| **Grand Total** | 37 | 5 | 42 |

A final source of funding available to students in the LIS program is school-sponsored scholarships. All students enrolled in the program are eligible to apply for scholarships. Information about the scholarships available and the application process is available on the MSLS Scholarships page of the SIS website. Students who are selected to participate in the Alternative Spring Break program also receive a scholarship. Table IV.12 MSLS Student Internal Scholarships Awarded, 2018–2026, provides an overview of the scholarships awarded to program students during this accreditation review cycle.

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**Table IV.12. MSLS Student Internal Scholarships Awarded, 2018–2026**

| | Students supported with academic scholarships | Students supported with ASB scholarships | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 18–19** | 7 | 8 | 15 |
| **AY 19–20** | 27 | 9 | 36 |
| **AY 20–21** | 20 | 6 | 26 |
| **AY 21–22** | 12 | 8 | 20 |
| **AY 22–23** | 12 | 6 | 18 |
| **AY 23–24** | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| **AY 24–25** | 17 | 5 | 22 |
| **Grand Total** | 106 | 49 | 155 |

*For AY 2019–2020, the program received one-time additional scholarship money from the Graduate School in the form of an Allocated Tuition Scholarship, which covered full-time tuition and fees for one student for the fall and spring semesters ($12,330).

The program also uses the program listserv and MSLS Student Hub announcements to share additional external funding opportunities, including scholarships from the Kentucky Library Association and American Library Association, conference scholarships, and paid internships.

## Standard IV.5 Student Engagement

Students can "participate in the formulation, modification and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs" in several ways. All students are invited to provide both instructor and course feedback on each course through the TCE survey. Providing feedback on the graduate and alumni surveys allows students to give anonymous feedback that can contribute to the modification of policies. Students can also provide more direct feedback by participating in smaller-scale initiatives, such as the focus groups the SIS Student Affairs Officer and Admissions Coordinator host in alternating summers to assess the Welcome Process. A final avenue through which students can contribute to the total learning experience in terms of policy formulation, modification, and implementation is through participation as a member of program committees. Interested students can serve as student representatives on the Planning and Curriculum Committees. These students provide a valued and much-needed perspective as the faculty continue to assess the program and seek means for improving it. Policies are detailed in the Student Handbook which is available on the School's website. Changes in degree requirements or exit procedures are also reported to students via the program listserv and in the MSLS Student Hub. Course additions, description changes, and other course-related data is provided in the bulletin prepared by the UK Registrar.

## Academic and Student Affairs Policies

Library Science students can participate in the formulation and modification of academic and student affairs policies through a variety of means.

### Committee Membership (Curriculum and Planning)

Each year, the conveners of the Library Science Curriculum and Planning Committees invite students to serve as the student member of their committee. The convener and committees then select the student representative if multiple students express interest. As members of the committees, students attend meetings, weigh in on actions and decisions, share their perspectives, and act as the representative of their peers in the program. Student members of the committees are recognized in meeting minutes and in each committee's year-end report.

### Welcome Process Assessment

Students can participate in assessing and enhancing the onboarding process for the program by completing a survey and/or participating in focus groups. Every other summer, the program also hosts a series of focus groups to provide students with an additional opportunity to offer suggestions for enhancing the welcome process. Announcements about participating in the focus groups are shared over the program listserv and through the MSLS Student Hub. While the survey is anonymous, students who participate in the focus groups can choose to be recognized in the Welcome Process Evaluation Reports or remain anonymous (Appendix IV.8 Admissions Committee Annual Reports). The results of students' feedback are discussed in more detail in Standard IV.6.

### Ad-hoc Surveys

Periodically, the program will also ask students to participate in ad-hoc surveys to gather additional information to inform the curriculum and overall program experience (Appendix IV.6 Student Ad Hoc Survey Results). For instance, in spring 2023, the program asked students to complete a survey about elective courses and interests, which informed the discussion of that year's curriculum retreat. In fall 2023, the program collaborated with Stacey Greenwell, the College of Communication and Information's library liaison and program alumna, to design the Professional Development Events Survey, which gathered students' perspectives on professional development activities. Based on the survey results, the program continued to offer in-person library visits and developed a professionally focused webinar series, which was first offered in spring 2024.

### Other Avenues for Feedback

In addition to the formal feedback channels outlined above, students can also share feedback to help shape academic and student affairs policies more informally through conversations with personnel, such as their faculty advisor, SIS Student Affairs Officer, the LIS Program Coordinator or the School of Information Science Director.

## Participating in Research

Students can participate in research either by partnering with faculty to work on faculty-led or student-led research projects or through the completion of an independent study. Table IV.14 Students Enrolled in LIS 695 Independent Study, 2018–2025, notes the number of students who have completed independent studies during this accreditation review cycle.

**Table IV.13. Students Enrolled in LIS 695 Independent Study, 2018–2025**

| Academic Year | 18–19 | 19–20 | 20–21 | 21–22 | 22–23 | 23–24 | 24–25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fall | 2 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Spring | 0 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Summer | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 |

Faculty have demonstrated a strong commitment to engaging students in research activities, offering various opportunities for experiential learning beyond coursework. By inviting MSLS students to participate in research initiatives, faculty have provided students with hands-on experiences that deepen their understanding of library practices, information services and research methods. Faculty also support students financially through internal and external grants from research projects.

Faculty have contributed to scholarly work that includes MSLS students as co-authors, as shown below in Table IV.15 Student & Faculty Co-Authored Publications, 2018–2025. For example, students worked with Sarah Barriage, Ph.D., to co-author multiple studies, including a content analysis of picture books read during drag story times in public libraries. In collaboration with Maria Cahill and Soohyung Joo, Ph.D.s, students have contributed to numerous research articles exploring story time programs in public libraries. In 2020, Cahill and Joo along with an MSLS program student won a Best Poster Award, Honorable Mention, at the ASIS&T Annual Conference. In 2022, a publication from that same group was awarded the Jesse H. Shera Award for Excellence in Published Research. Students have also joined Daniela DiGiacomo, Ph.D., in research related to information literacy in K-12 and higher education contexts. Finally, students participated in research with Shannon Oltmann, Ph.D., to address inequality issues in U.S. online court record system.

**Table IV.14. Student & Faculty Co-Authored Publications, 2018–2025**

| Academic Year | 18-19 | 19-20 | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Co-authored Publication | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

*Includes works not yet published but currently accepted or in process.

## Student Organizations

As described above, the program has supported a student chapter of the American Library Association throughout this accreditation period. The group has always had a faculty advisor available, but there were brief periods of inactivity to allow the group to gather the necessary student officers.

## Professional Organizations

The MSLS Student Hub encourages students to join and participate in professional organization on the New Students Page, which provides information about ALA Joint Student Membership and links to the ALA division pages as well as the webpages for a variety of other professional organizations, including the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Medical Library Association (MLA), and Society of American Archivists (SAA).

The program also advises students to take advantage of resources available through professional organizations on the Commencement & Career Prep page of each Exit Assessment Canvas shell. When additional funding is available, students can also apply to the School for financial assistance to attend professional events, such as conferences and workshops.

## *Standard IV.6 Evaluation*

As reflected in the institution's strategic plan, the University of Kentucky places great importance on putting students first and bringing all members of the university together as a unified community. The Library Science program's mission and program goals reflect the aim of the institution and drive the evaluation of the processes and systems supporting the MSLS students:

- o We prepare the next generation of information professionals to be leaders in the field through innovative curriculum, research, and professional services. We conduct high-quality research that impacts the information fields and aids practitioners.
    - o To develop further a culture that builds a strong and open community, fosters effective research, and advances our teaching and learning missions.
    - o To produce competent information professionals who can facilitate the flow of information in a rapidly changing society.
    - o To recruit, develop, support, and retain a talented and promising body of faculty, staff, and students.

Within the Library Science program, students have opportunities to share their perspectives through formal surveys, serving on committees as student representatives, submitting course evaluations, sharing feedback via more informal channels like emails and conversations, and participating in focus groups. The program also invites former students to share their feedback during the biannual Alumni Survey.

During this accreditation cycle, the program has made significant improvements to the onboarding process and overall support students receive while enrolled. These improvements were only possible due to the involvement of students throughout the process and the program's desire to support retention through innovative approaches to student support.

## Welcome Process Evaluation

To onboard new students effectively, an academic program must identify which information and supports students need to be successful, a process that involves both input from the students themselves and a nuanced understanding of common stumbling blocks and points of confusion based on students' questions and observations of their behaviors.

To ensure students receive sufficient onboarding, the MSLS program regularly requests feedback about the welcome process through surveys and focus groups. The program reviews this data each academic year and adjusts the welcome process as necessary. Additionally, the program invites students to participate in a series of focus groups every other summer to gather more detailed feedback and encourage students to help shape the next iteration of the welcome process.

As reflected in the New Student Welcome Process Evaluation Results and Update Plan, August 2021 document, available in Appendix IV.8 Admissions Committee Reports, students found the onboarding process to be satisfactory overall but identified a few areas for improvement in their comments, including that content in the synchronous welcome sessions was sometimes redundant. The students participating in the focus groups offered similar positive feedback on the onboarding process overall and as well as suggestions for improving the process, including ways to address the dispersal of information across a variety of media and delivery methods. To address those specific concerns, the SIS Student Affairs Officer and Admissions Coordinator developed updated content for the welcome sessions to avoid redundancy, modified the content and delivery of welcome packet materials, and created the MSLS Student Hub to address both the issue of dispersed information and the students' desires to have more opportunities to interact with their peers and program faculty. Additional changes based on student feedback during that cycle of review are outlined in the report.

As reflected in the New Student Welcome Process Evaluation Results and Update Plan, August 2023 document, also available in Appendix IV.8 Admissions Committee Reports, the program has continued to adjust the onboarding process and student-facing resources in response to student feedback. Per the suggestions students shared between 2021 and 2023, the SIS Student Affairs Officer and LIS Admissions Coordinator planned and executed additional updates, including the following:

- A video walkthrough of the institution's student portal for financial aid and registration.
- A dedicated discussion board for new students to introduce themselves and engage with their peers.
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in which the students can self-enroll to interact with peers who share their professional interests.

Additionally, the content of the welcome sessions now includes an introduction to the institution's learning management system and a call to action for students to engage with professional organizations, and the welcome packet materials include a new handout explaining the process for accepting admission.

The program will continue to solicit feedback from incoming students through the evaluation plan outlined in the reports shared in [Appendix IV.8 Admissions Committee Reports](#) and use those suggestions to improve the process and resources.

## Evaluation of Advising

The LIS program gathers feedback on the program experience and advising through graduate surveys. Results from surveys conducted between 2018 and 2025 show a trend of increasing satisfaction with both the quality of instruction and the overall program experience ([Appendix IV.3 Student Exit Survey Summary](#)). In the 24–25 academic year, these areas achieved their highest ratings to date, with scores of 4.77 for overall class quality and 4.72 for the program experience (see Table IV.15 below). This reflects the program's commitment to academic excellence.

In contrast, feedback regarding academic advising and career preparation has consistently received lower ratings, demonstrating a noticeable decline over time. Specifically, guidance on class planning, understanding university procedures, and career preparation has shown a downward trend, with career preparation receiving its lowest rating of 2.70 in the 2024–2025 period. These results underscore the urgent need for improvements in advising infrastructure and professional support services. To address these concerns, the LIS faculty has developed new resources designed to enhance engagement between faculty and students and support student success beyond the classroom ([Appendix IV.2 Faculty Advising Engagement Suggestions](#)). The low satisfaction with career services is both discouraging and surprising, given the program's recent efforts to enhance support for student career readiness. While various resources and services are outlined above, the program will take further action in the coming year to better understand students' needs and challenges in career planning and to develop targeted strategies that improve career support and outcomes.

**Table IV.15. Graduates' Perception of Advising Quality**

| Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree | 18–2019 (n=24) | 19–20 (n=27) | 20–21 (n=99) | 21–22 (n=107) | 22–23 (n=114) | 23–24 (n=110) | 24–25 (n=66) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall quality of classes** | 4.46 | 4.67 | 4.65 | 4.35 | 4.33 | 4.65 | 4.77 |
| **Overall quality of program experience** | 4.38 | 4.48 | 4.55 | 4.25 | 4.18 | 4.64 | 4.72 |
| **Planning my classes** | 4.05 | 4.24 | 3.37 | 3.68 | 3.93 | 3.14 | 3.23 |
| **Succeeding in the library science program** | 4.00 | 4.38 | 3.66 | 3.77 | 4.10 | 3.22 | 3.12 |
| **Understanding university procedures** | 3.00 | 4.33 | 3.54 | 3.76 | 4.10 | 2.89 | 3.02 |

## Updates to Exit Requirement Resources

In addition to responding to formal feedback channels, the program also implements changes in response to informal feedback. This can include emails from students as well as issues identified by staff and faculty. The program's Exit Assessment Canvas shells provide one example of such changes. Feedback from various groups (including students, faculty, and staff) led the program to improve the clarity of the guidelines provided to students and the scope of the resources shared.

As a result, the LIS Admissions Coordinator, who also oversees the logistics of the Exit Assessment each semester, redesigned the Exit Assessment Canvas shell in January 2023. The previous versions, while functional, did not address all student concerns nor provide additional useful information. The new exit assessment shells provide more information about the paperwork required for graduation, registering for commencement and ordering regalia, professional and career resources, and a checklist to help students ensure their submission will fulfill all requirements. In addition to the guidelines, which are also shared in the Exit Assessment Canvas Shell, students also have access to a submission template, which provides additional guidance as they craft their learning outcomes essay. Appendix IV.9 Exit Assessment Canvas Shells provides a static version of the former and current versions of the Exit Assessment shells.

## Alumni Feedback

The program collects alumni feedback on their perception of the quality of their program experience every other year. Faculty review these data to evaluate program effectiveness and alumni perspectives post-graduation. As shown in Table IV.16, graduates' perceptions of various aspects of their program experience have improved over the past seven years, while perceptions of opportunities for interaction with peers have remained steady at an average rating of 3.75. One alum reflected positively on the school's efforts: *"Even though I was an online student, there were plenty of opportunities for me to connect with the school, my peers, and the faculty and staff. Everyone I reached out to at UK was kind, helpful, and made me feel welcome. I always felt supported."* (2015–2024 alumni survey). Another respondent noted, *"I wish there was more emphasis on pathways or concentrations."* In response, LIS faculty updated the Elective Clusters during the Spring 2025 Curriculum Retreat. This change demonstrates the program's commitment to continuously enhancing services that support the student learning experience.

**Table IV.16. Alumni Perception of the Quality of their Program Experience**

| Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree | 2019 (n=85) | 2021 (n=48) | 2023 (n=20) | 2025 (n=42) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The quality of the virtual community of the school (opportunities facilitated by MSLS for interaction with peers) | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.7 |
| The quality of MSLS support services (admissions) | 3.9 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 4.2 |
| The quality of MSLS support services (academic advising) | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.9 | 4.0 |

ᵃ Results filtered to show only responses from respondents who graduated after 2014.

## Summary and Future Plans

Throughout this accreditation cycle, the program has improved prospective and current students' access to information through the School's website update and the creation of the MSLS Student Hub, improved experiences such as the welcome process to provide better support for new students and continued to support valuable extracurricular activities like the ASB program to enhance students' experiences.

Moving forward, the program will explore new recruitment opportunities to reach a wider audience of prospective students and continue to work with campus units, like UK Online, to support the recruitment process. The program will also continue to solicit student feedback and gather data from other constituents as described above and in Chapter 1 of this self-study to improve "processes and systems to recruit, retain, and support students and prospective students." Faculty will also work on addressing the relatively lower scores received in advising.

Additionally, the program voted in spring 2025 to expand the role of the former Admissions Committee to include additional responsibilities related to student support and retention. Renamed the Student Affairs Committee, this new committee will be responsible for conducting student interest surveys as needed, assessing retention and developing strategies to support it, and evaluating and updating the new student welcome process, among other tasks. By expanding the scope of this committee, the program can review and improve the "processes and systems to recruit, retain, and support students and prospective students" more comprehensively and consistently.

# Standard V: Infrastructure

## *Introduction*

School administration and its management of available resources — including financial, technological, information, and human resources — play a key role in the continued success of the LIS program at the University of Kentucky (UK). The School of Information Science (SIS) administration's role in the organizational context of the University is as follows: the University is led by a President; the President reports to the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees; the Provost reports to the President; academic units fall under the direction of the Provost; academic units are organized by college and headed by a dean and, within colleges, subunits are organized as schools or departments.

The School of Information Science currently possesses the resources and services to maintain a quality master's degree in library science. Internally, we have the administrative support of a School Director, an Assistant Director, a Program Coordinator and staff support (currently the School Director, Youngok Choi, is also serving as the LIS Program Coordinator). Our School has over 45 full-time faculty positions with 10 with majority teaching in library science (note: the School currently has a search for two additional LIS faculty lines) and several other faculty who offer occasional courses in the program. Externally, the College supports our program by providing funds for part-time instructors, approving new faculty or staff lines, and providing office space and technology to full-time employees. The University supports the program by offering a campus-wide learning management system, free software for all students and employees, and providing budgetary support. This chapter provides detailed information about the resources available to the school and the evaluation of resources with an eye toward continuous improvement.
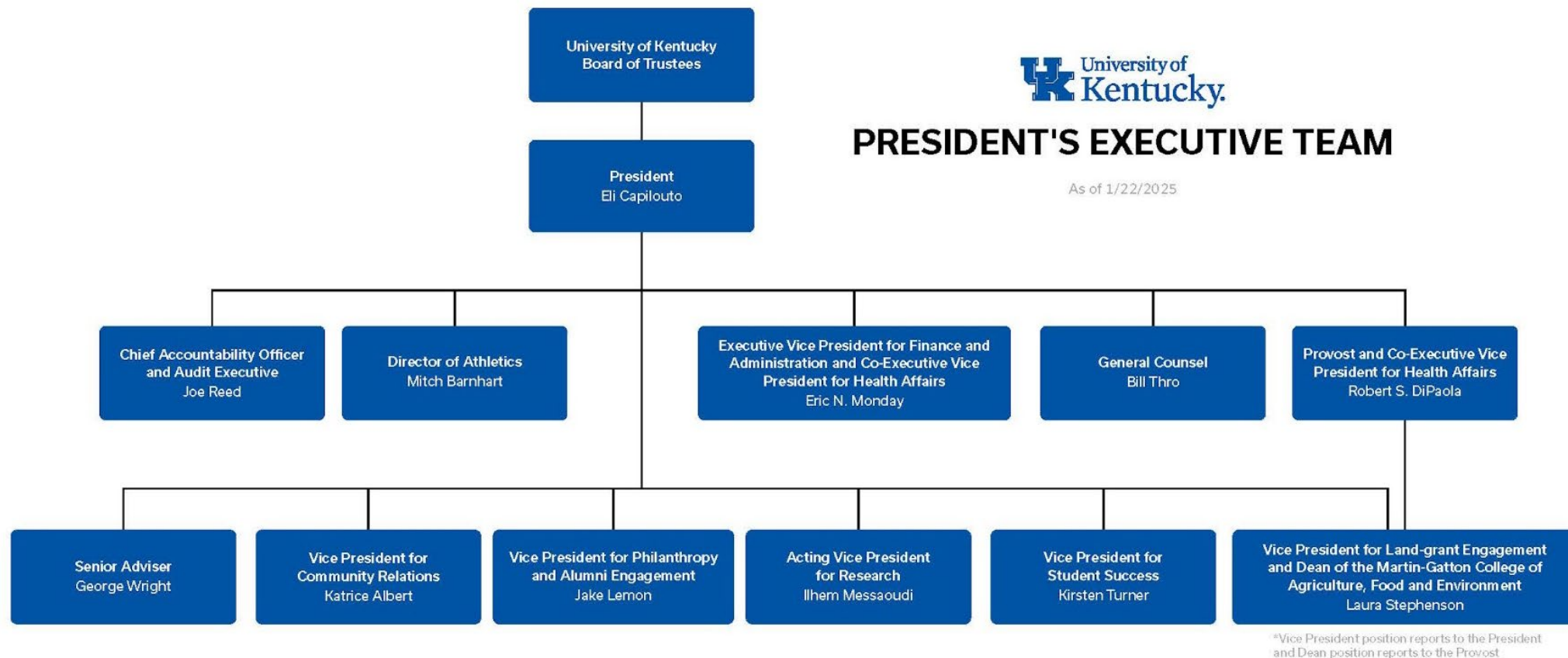
**Figure V.1. Presidents Executive Team taken from https://pres.uky.edu/presidents-executive-team**

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## Standard V.1 Values Underlying Infrastructure

The school has always striven to provide all full-time employees with adequate physical resources, including technology, in a fair and equitable manner. As an example, when the school was responsible for maintaining technological equipment, equipment was replaced on a regular four-year schedule. The school allowed employees to choose the type of device as well as the operating system. Beginning in the fall of 2023, the CITS group assumed central management of all computing devices. CITS has continued the four-year replacement plan and allows end users to select their preferred device and operating system. Employees are encouraged to use university funding to purchase laptop devices, given that all faculty may work remotely most of the time and most staff are afforded at least one remote day each week.

The School provides faculty development funds which are distributed across all faculty, regardless of position. If faculty have requests over the initial allotment, they can make a request with the school for additional funding. Faculty members planning international travel can request funding from the College Research Office. For these travel funds, the school is required to contribute matching funds to the faculty member's international travel funding request. Additionally, the College and the University provide various sponsored research grants, which can be found in Standard III. New faculty hires are also provided with a start-up package of support and funds during the hiring process. Staff are encouraged to request development funds through the school for any professional development opportunities that might arise.

The University offers various resources and services for the professional development of faculty and staff, including Chairs' Academy I & II, Faculty & Staff leadership Development Program, the UK Engagement Academy, and professional coaching. Two SIS faculty members (Young Choi and Shannon Oltmann, Ph.D.s) completed Chair's Academy I and II in AY 2024 and AY 2025. In 2024, the Office for Faculty Advancement began offering a new academy, Emerging Leaders Academy for both faculty and staff. Assistant Director Will Buntin, Ed.D., completed the inaugural Emerging Leaders Academy. Maria Cahill and Jessalyn Vallade, Ph.D.s, also completed the UK Engagement Academy in the fall of 2023 and 2024, respectively.

The LIS program is a fully online graduate program. The University of Kentucky Online department serves as a central hub to support the development, growth, compliance, and quality of online courses and programs. The School Director and Assistant Director are members of the UK Online Program Director's group. The School Director currently also serves as a member of the UK Online Steering Committee. UK Online introduced the UK Online Course Quality Pilot program as faculty development training to enhance the quality of online instruction. Five SIS faculty members applied for the program. Two faculty members were accepted as the first cohort.

The University of Kentucky offers benefits and family medical leave. Beginning July 1, 2025, the University also offers paid parental leave and elder care leave to eligible employees (https://hr.uky.edu/work-life-and-well-being/working-parents/parental-leave).

The University of Kentucky is an equal opportunity institution. The [Office of Equal Opportunity](#) (OEO) offers training on various equal opportunity topics and provides resources. The University also offers reasonable accommodations under the ADA for employees with disabilities. Detailed information on the ADA is available at [https://administrativeservices.uky.edu/campus-accessibility-and-ada/ada-compliance](https://administrativeservices.uky.edu/campus-accessibility-and-ada/ada-compliance). Faculty and staff may request reasonable accommodation through the OEO. OEO ensures that employees receive the same benefits and privileges of employment, as well as program participation, as non-disabled employees and participants under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The University makes several software packages available to all campus employees and students free of charge. IBM SPSS is one such package and is a software that many researchers might use to analyze quantitative data. However, the University does not offer a package to aid researchers working with qualitative data. Faculty in the School, primarily in the library science area, began the conversation about having centrally available qualitative data analysis software, and in fall 2024, the College was approved to purchase [Dedoose](#) for any employee or student in the College. In the past, the University partnered with national organizations to allow faculty to participate in faculty development programs. LIS faculty have taken advantage of those offerings, supported by the School and the College for the costs.

Resources and services extend to our students and curriculum as well. For example, [Canvas](#), our LMS, has built-in tools to help instructors make their courses more accessible. Zoom, our main online conferencing tool, has built-in [live captioning](#) available to all users. The program also offers other services to our students, like the student Canvas hub. More details are available in [Standard IV](#).

## *Standard V.2 Autonomy and Administrative Infrastructure*

The school exists as one unit in the College of Communication and Information. As such, the school has its own Director. The Director is the primary administrator for the school and is responsible for working with the faculty and staff in the school to carry out its mission. This structure allows the unit to determine, within University guidelines, its intellectual content, selection and promotion of its faculty, selection and support of its students, and support of the academic unit.

To enhance the school's effectiveness and align its operations with strategic goals, the Director has exercised administrative autonomy to implement a structural reorganization for the 2023–2024 academic year. This reorganization includes the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the creation of a new position: a program coordinator for each program (ICR, ICT and LIS). These coordinators support key functions and improve internal coordination. This decision was based on an internal assessment of operational needs and was made independently, within the

authority granted to the School by the College. This structural change illustrates the unit's ability to make autonomous decisions regarding staffing, organization and resource allocation, reinforcing its capacity to proactively address programmatic needs and meet institutional expectations.

The school has established its own rules to maintain its autonomy and ensure effective administration. There are four school-level committees to support decision-making as part of shared governance: the Executive Committee, the Community, Collegiality, and Belonging Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Faculty Development Committee (formerly the Promotion & Tenure Committee). The composition of each committee includes three faculty members, excluding lecture faculty whose efforts are fully devoted to teaching. An exception is for the School Curriculum Committee, consisting of three program coordinators to represent each program. The school's new strategic plan exemplifies its commitment to shaping priorities that foster a dynamic learning environment and enhance intellectual interaction between faculty and students. And within the School, each subgroup operates largely independent of the other groups. Those faculty who primarily teach in the library science program regularly attend library science faculty meetings, and serve on program specific committees, like the Library Science Curriculum Committee, to build a curriculum that best serves the students, the program and the faculty. See Appendix V.1 Administrative Structure for a simple view of the administrative structure of the University, College, and School.

## Intellectual Content of the School

The school has three primary intellectual areas — library science, information communication technology, and instructional communication. Each group has its own faculty and processes for determining the intellectual content of its respective programs. The faculty guide and approve the school rules, which govern various processes across the school. Two programs, ICT and LIS, are currently beginning to develop program-specific documentation for their own respective processes.

The library science faculty meet monthly to discuss any issues related to the LIS program. There are also additional sub-committees to help administer the program. The focus and structure of the sub-committees is left to the discretion of the program faculty. Current sub-committees include Admissions, Curriculum, Planning, and Exam. (Note that beginning in fall 2025, the committee structure for the library science program has been revised.) The Curriculum committee is charged with reviewing and revising the curriculum, reviewing new curricular proposals from the faculty, and contributing to the assessment process. The Curriculum Committee has primary oversight of the program curriculum, in conjunction with the full program faculty. For example, if an instructor wanted to develop a new course, they might initially work with the LIS Curriculum Committee to determine if the topic would be of interest and appropriate for the students. Once the course syllabus has been completed, it is sent to the Curriculum Committee who can vote to recommend the full faculty approve the course, vote to recommend the full faculty deny the course, or continue working with the instructor to develop

the proposal further. The full faculty must vote to approve a new course at the program level. If the vote is successful, the course then proceeds through the University approval process. Additionally, faculty may review results from the exit requirement, alumni and employer surveys for library science graduate students to help inform curricular changes.

The faculty of the library science program are charged with overseeing, maintaining, revising, and improving the curriculum of the program. If faculty want to make a curricular or program change, they initiate the process and vote, as a group, on all changes. Once that happens, several other groups, starting with the SIS Curriculum Committee and ending with the University Registrar, review the proposed changes. The purpose of this external review is to ensure that any changes are within university rules and regulations, meet the requirements of our accrediting agency, and do not infringe on any other academic unit on campus.

Both the library science program and the School have their own strategic plan. At both levels, the development of the plans was driven by faculty and staff.

## Selection and Promotion of Faculty

When the School has open faculty lines, a School-wide search committee is established. This committee is responsible for conducting the bulk of the search activities as laid out in the School Rules. The faculty are invited to offer their input on the job description prior to it being posted. Again, toward the end of the process, the school faculty is invited to provide feedback on the candidates. Feedback may be informal feedback directly to the Search Committee or through our feedback surveys, which are distributed at the end of a candidate visit (Appendix V.2 Sample Faculty Candidate Feedback Form). While faculty candidates who are invited to campus have always made a research presentation, those invited starting spring 2025 were asked to also do a short teaching presentation. All employees of the school are welcome to attend these presentations either in person or through Zoom. The Search Committee then makes a recommendation to the program faculty who then make a recommendation to the School's Director. Faculty input is integral to the search and selection process.

The University sets forth basic guidelines for promotion and tenure in the Administrative Regulations AR 2:1. Within that framework, the School has adopted its own guidelines for promotion and tenure and for the promotion of faculty in the lecturer series (Appendix III.1 SIS School Rules). The faculty developed these guidelines jointly to meet the needs of all faculty in the school.

The School's faculty adopted a senior faculty mentoring program several years ago. In this program, junior faculty select a senior faculty mentor each year. This allows the junior faculty member to learn from a variety of professionals with different backgrounds as they build their case for tenure. Additionally, the School's Faculty Development Committee (previously the Promotion and Tenure Committee) holds regular meetings of interest for all faculty even though they are typically focused on issues junior faculty might be experiencing. The fall mentoring meeting typically consists of an informal discussion with opportunities to ask questions about specific aspects of the promotion and tenure process and expectations. Recent

topics of meetings for all faculty include an overview of the institutional infrastructure, support, and process for seeking, preparing, and submitting extramural funding; and why tenured faculty should go up for promotion.

Tenure-track faculty have an annual performance evaluation during the probationary period. Additionally, they have both a two- and four-year review in preparation for the full dossier review for tenure and promotion. In the sixth year, faculty submit their dossier for promotion and tenure consideration. Tenured faculty are evaluated every other year. More details about this process are available in Standard III.6.

New lecturers also have an annual performance evaluation. During their fourth year of continual service, lecturers must either be granted a two-year rolling contract or a terminal contract. Lecturers who receive a two-year rolling contract may be considered for promotion to Senior Lecturer after five years of service. Senior lecturers then move to a review cycle of every other year, like tenured faculty. Details on faculty promotion and tenure guidelines are included as an appendix in the School Rules (Appendix III.1 SIS School Rules Spring 2024-2025).

## Student Selection and Support

Selection of students for the LIS graduate program rests with the program, with input and guidance from the UK Graduate School, as well as guidance established by UK Online. UK Online advises all online programs on issues related to admissions (particularly international students) and admissions to programs that lead to licensure (school media librarian certification), internationally as well as within the United States. If a case arises where an applicant does not meet University requirements, the program can make a case for conditional admission, allowing the student some time to demonstrate they are academically capable of succeeding in the program. Additionally, the university expects the application to be a blind process where an applicant's ethnic identity is not a factor considered in the admission process. Admission decisions are made based on the applicant's academic record and professional experience. Our student selection process aims to admit students with a wide variety of undergraduate majors and professional experience. To meet these goals, the program has expanded our recruitment strategies by advertising in various venues and taking part in professional conferences and career fairs at various campuses and reaching out to colleagues and graduates.

LIS faculty have, in the past, adjusted entrance requirements including no longer requiring the GRE for admissions as of spring 2019. In AY 24–25, LIS faculty voted to change the number of required recommendations to two (previously it had been three). No other significant changes to admissions criteria have been made during this program review period. Please refer to Standard II for more information about student resources, like our student Canvas hub and exit assessment resources we have built internally to help support our students.

## Academic Program Support

**Administrative Infrastructure**

Until AY 2025, the School's administrative support consisted of a Director, an Assistant Director and three staff positions. Beginning fall 2024, the school established 3 program coordinators, one each for library science, information communication technology and instructional communication. This change was made to help focus more resources on each program, disperse institutional knowledge, and provide opportunities to develop faculty. Dr. Shannon Oltmann served as the first program coordinator for library science. Dr. Oltmann left UK to pursue other opportunities at the end of 2024-2025 academic year. Dr. Young Choi stepped in to serve as interim program coordinator and will be issuing a call for applications for a new program coordinator in spring 2026. Rather than bringing in an existing faculty into a brand new position to potentially serve for just one year, Dr. Choi's service allowed for increased continuity and maintained the three-coordinator two-year appointment cycle to remain the same.

The College also provides administrative support to each unit. The Dean's Office assists with space needs, funds to hire part-time instructors or to cover the costs of faculty overloads, philanthropy, and coordinating student scholarships.

The College also provides consolidated business, marketing, and IT support for the College. The College employs five full-time business office employees, two full-time marketing staff members and five full-time IT employees. The College also has a student success unit; however, they are mostly focused on undergraduate students and help support our undergraduate program. One exception is the College Career Coordinator who helps support LIS graduate students by providing resume review services and helps coordinate events like the GLAM Career Fair. Overall, the College's move to centralized services has resulted in the same or better service for employees and students. We now have access to a larger IT support group which allows us to do new things like receive in-house server support and we have access to staff positions we never had at the School level, like the Career Coordinator. This position helps us provide better and more focused career support services, like GLAM and resume review, directly to our students. Note that beginning AY 2025-2026, the University began consolidating some services at the University level. Initial groups to be moved into a central group include undergraduate advising, philanthropy, IT, and marketing services. Going forward, it is not known how these changes might impact the School or LIS program. Currently, all levels of support have remained the same.

The College pays for all part-time instructors to support instruction in the School and library science program. The School also has access to more staff support for marketing and IT needs. And while staffing levels for the School are currently sufficient, the Director regularly discusses staffing needs with the Dean so adjustments can be made when needed. For example, the School was able to revise a staff position to provide more support for assessment activities.

When the School hired our Administration Associate, we updated the job description, removing responsibilities that were now consolidated at the College level and adding more support to the School. Currently the LIS program, and School as well, has access to sufficient resources for teaching, administration, and support.

Within the School and the program, the faculty work as whole bodies as well as structured committees where labor is divided. This allows maximum participation while reducing the work of any single faculty member.

**University Financial Support and Resources**

The University offers a range of support systems and resources, including libraries, legal services and facilities management. In terms of direct support, the University provides an operating budget based on multiple factors including a net-tuition revenue model. Additional budget money can come from other incentives like retention and time-to-degree performance. At the College level, the Dean, working with the Assistant Dean of Finance, and with input from each of the units, determines the budget allocation for each unit. The University offers significant financial support to the School. The table below shows the school's budget and the percent increase or decrease over the previous year.

**Table V.1. LIS/ICT Annual Budget and Expenditures**

| Academic Year | 18-19 | 19-20 | 20-21 | 21-22 | 22-23 | 23-24 | 24-25 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Annual budget (state fund)** | $2,847,479.29 | $2,566,135.31 | $2,021,219.87 | $2,186,082.20 | $2,502,380.29 | $2,656,453.46 | $2,893,113.65 |
| **Salaries** | $1,684,944.51 | $1,665,456.31 | $1,382,006.11 | $1,538,018.47 | $1,794,693.23 | $1,901,038.39 | $2,120,726.36 |
| **Benefits** | $475,714.10 | $459,281.55 | $342,249.10 | $451,609.92 | $522,039.95 | $547,498.00 | $678,899.13 |
| **Operating expenses** | $234,736.25 | $192,123.23 | $161,208.53 | $142,460.27 | $187,534.52 | $162,362.66 | $144,868.14 |

Note: This table represents budget and expenditures for the library science and information communication technology programs. Budget for the instructional communication group is handled through a separate account.

An average of two-thirds of state funding is allocated to faculty and staff salaries. The Director determines how to distribute the remaining funds to meet the current needs of the School.

The School has maintained financial support for the LIS program, ensuring that faculty numbers and salaries remain stable. However, it has lost two key staff positions in marketing and IT support, with their tasks shifting to central administration, potentially impacting outreach and efficiency. Given the decline in enrollment for the MSLS program, the School is considering hiring a dedicated staff member for recruitment and student support to attract more students.

The School has eight scholarships designated for library science students. It also runs an alternative spring break program and provides a small stipend to each selected student as a scholarship. Over the last seven years, a total of $172,000 in scholarship funds has been awarded to the 155 students.

**Table V.2. Student Scholarship Support**

|  | Academic Scholarships | Alternative Spring Break Scholarships | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 18–19** | $4,000 | $8,000 | $12,000 |
| **AY 19–20** | $40,830 | $9,000 | $37,500 |
| **AY 20–21** | $27,000 | $6,000 | $33,000 |
| **AY 21–22** | $11,500 | $8,000 | $19,500 |
| **AY 22–23** | $11,500 | $6,000 | $17,500 |
| **AY 23–24** | $14,000 | $7,000 | $21,500 |
| **AY 24–25** | $25,000 | $6,000 | $31,000 |
| **Total** | $133,830 | $50,000 | $172,000 |

As mentioned earlier (V.1), employees are on a four-year replacement plan for their primary computer by the College. The University also funds a variety of resources that are used by SIS employees and students. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The University library system
- Free software like MS Office, Adobe suite, Endnote, IBM SPSS and others
- Canvas, the campus learning management system
- Zoom, the campus electronic meeting system

**Administrative Head**
The administrative head of the School of Information Science is the Director of the School. The Director's appointment is for a term of four years. Jeff Huber, Ph.D., served as director for several years, including 2018–2023 during this review period. Youngok Choi, Ph.D., was appointed in fall 2023 and is the current director. Similar positions exist in the other three academic units in the College, with those units using either the title Department Chair or School Director. As Director of the School, Choi reports to the Dean of the College of Communication and Information, who sets the Director's salary. Until fall 2024, the Director of the School also served as the DGS for both graduate degrees and managed most of the day-to-day operations

for all programs within the School. Effective fall 2024, the School now has three program coordinators, one each for library science, information communication technology and instructional communication. The program coordinators for library science and information communication technology also serve as the DGS for their respective programs. This allows for more focused attention for each program while allowing the School Director to focus on the overall administration of the School.

Huber was appointed to the position of Director in fall 2008 and served until spring 2023. He received his MSLS from the University of Kentucky in 1987 and earned his Ph.D. in Library and Information Science in 1991 from the University of Pittsburgh. Huber returned to the faculty in fall 2023 and retired in spring 2024.

Choi holds a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh (2000) and a master's and a bachelor's degrees in library science from Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, South Korea. She was a Professor at the Department of Library and Information Science at the Catholic University of America, where she also served as Associate Dean for the School of Library and Information Science (2012–2013) and as Department Chair (2016–2020 and 2022–2023). During her service at the Catholic University of America, she had extensive leadership experiences in curriculum development (Cultural Heritage Information Management and Digital Libraries), program growth, strategic planning, program outcomes assessment, and accreditation. In particular, she established an annual lecture series in 2019 in which leading scholars like Nicole Cooke (University of South Carolina), Beth Patin (Syracuse University) and Bharat Mehra (University of Alabama), Ph.D.s, were invited to deliver their research and scholarly endeavor in LIS fields. She completed a series of leadership training, including the Chair's Academy I and II, and Supervision Certificate Program offered by Academic Impression, during AY 2023–2024.

The primary role of a School Director is specified in the University of Kentucky Governing Regulations VII.F.2c-2d. This document defines the Director as follows:

> The director of a school serves as chair of the faculty of the school in the performance of its assigned functions and is an ex officio member of all committees of the school. The director's administrative responsibilities shall be those delegated by the dean of the college of which the school is a part. In connection with the above administrative functions, the director shall seek the advice of the faculty of the school: (1) individually, (2) as a whole, (3) through the elected school faculty council or (4) through faculty advisory committees. In addition to the roles and responsibilities described above, the director of a school without departments shall have any other roles and responsibilities which are delegated to a department chair as set forth in Part VII.B.5. Staff employees shall be consulted by the school director (or associate director), when appropriate, in the development of administrative policies and decisions that directly affect staff

employees. The director shall speak for the school. If the director believes it necessary to depart from the recommendations of the school faculty, the director shall communicate the school faculty's recommendation as well as the director's recommendation, stating reasons for differing from the school faculty's opinion, and notify the school faculty of such action.

The document states that the Dean of the College may delegate additional duties to the Director. The Dean of the College has delegated additional duties to the School Director, including curriculum, instruction, recruitment, administrative duties, and service. Areas where the Dean of the College is involved in School activities include faculty performance reviews, salaries, college-level promotion and tenure reviews, and budgeting.

Our first library science program coordinator was named in fall 2024. That position was held by Shannon Oltmann, Ph.D., who joined UK in 2012 and was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 2018. She earned her Ph.D. in library and information science from Indiana University Bloomington in 2012. She is a well-respected instructor and researcher focusing on intellectual freedom, censorship and ethics. Oltmann was a member of the University's Culture of Conversation Steering Committee from 2018–2019. The role of the program coordinator is to provide leadership experience for a faculty member, oversee many day-to-day operations of their program, and assist the Director with long range planning. A program coordinator is appointed for a two-year term. They are allowed to serve no more than two consecutive terms.

Oltmann accepted an associate dean position at a different institution starting in July 2025, before completing the two-year term of the LIS Program Coordinator. The school is planning to identify an LIS program coordinator to replace her. Until that time, Choi will serve as acting Program Coordinator.

## *Standard V.3 Participation*

All University staff and faculty have opportunities to serve on various University level committees. (More details about which committees our faculty have served on are available in Table III.18). At the College level, tenured and tenure-track faculty are elected to serve on the College Faculty Council and staff can serve on the College Staff Council. Six LIS faculty members have served on the College Faculty Council.

- Sarah Barriage (2024–2025)
- Sean Burns (2021–2022, 2022–2023)
- Maria Cahill (2018–2019, 2023–2024)
- Namjoo Choi (2019–2020)
- Soohyung Joo (2020–2021)
- Shannon Oltmann (2018–2020)

Within the department, tenured and tenure-track faculty serve on all program and school committees. The school is also fairly distinct in that it is one of the few units on campus (if not the only) to extend some voting rights on School issues to School staff employees. Additionally, LIS students are invited to sit on the LIS Planning and Curriculum Committees. Refer to Table III.17 and Table III.18 for information about faculty service on program and school-level committees.

In 2020, the Integrated Strategic Communication (ISC) department approached the school to work together as they developed courses to support an online graduate certificate. Working together, the ICT program offered several Integrated Strategic Communication courses as special topics as the faculty finalized the courses for the certificate. Their certificate was approved in 2023 and includes two SIS courses. Additionally, library science promotes the graduate instructional communication certificate to its program students. That certificate is offered by the CI graduate program in communication.

In 2024, the library science program began working with the College of Social Work to build a graduate certificate for social work in libraries. Students in either program will be able to complete the 12 hours and earn a certificate spanning knowledge from both disciplines. The idea is to better train social workers to enter the library space and to better train librarians to be aware of clients who may need additional assistance through social service programs. This program is a response to different inputs including a growing number of journal articles discussing both the current shift of employing social workers in libraries and the growing need for even more social services being accessible through libraries.

One LIS faculty member, Maria Cahill, Ph.D., has a joint appointment with the College of Education in the Education Leadership Department. This appointment allows Cahill to work with her colleagues in Education to administer the school media program in LIS as certain aspects, such as the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Program (AAQEP) accreditation and processes for school media practicum, fall under the College of Education.

## *Standard V.4 Administrative Support*

Two staff positions in SIS (one focused on marketing and the second focused on IT support) were eliminated. Marketing and IT services were consolidated at the College level in accordance with the College strategic plan. The current staff includes an Assistant Director, two student affairs positions, and one office support position. Additionally, the College has hired a staff person to handle student professional development programming which has increased what we can offer to our students. The School also makes use of the University work study program and frequently employs a work study student to assist with any ongoing projects.

All staff are provided with the necessary technology to perform their job. The University conducts an orientation session to onboard any new staff employees. Additionally, the School provides its own onboarding for staff.

**Table V.3. Staff Details**

| Position | Highest degree | Program goals |
|---|---|---|
| **Assistant Director** | Doctoral | Oversees and supports staff, supports the Director, supports faculty |
| **Business Officer (1)** | Bachelor | Assists Director and Assistant Director, provides support for faculty |
| **Student Affairs Officers (2)** | Each student affairs officer has a master's-level degree | Supports students, assists with registration, helps orient new students, supports graduating students, assigns advisors, builds course schedule, helps students access appropriate University offices/resources |

The program also relies on a senior lecturer, Ashley DeWitt, to provide additional administrative support in the admission process, the exit examination process and the coordination of the alternative spring break placement. Over the past few years, until spring 2024, DeWitt led several initiatives to streamline student support for the LIS program, utilizing a high allocation of administrative efforts. Due to an increase in enrollment in UK Core undergraduate courses offered by the School, her efforts in instruction increased, while her administrative efforts decreased.

UK Online also provides administrative support in terms of marketing, re-marketing and general promotion of online programs. Their website serves as the first look at our program, allowing interested prospective students to learn more about the program, sign up for additional information via email or sign up for an online information session — either in a scheduled group session or a one-on-one session.

Table V.4 presents results of exit surveys for the last seven years, demonstrating that most students agree that the School staff and office provide a high level of service.

**Table V.4. Perception of Graduating Students on School Administrative Services**

| Mean (5 Likert scale) | 18–20 (n=24) | 19–20 (n=27) | 20–21 (n=99) | 21–22 (n=107) | 22–23 (n=114) | 23–24 (n=110) | 24–25 (n=66) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School administrative services | 4.53 | 4.39 | 4.59 | 4.36 | 4.42 | 4.61 | 4.76 |

Compensation is largely controlled at the University level based on position requirements, position responsibilities, and current salary of similar positions. Performance evaluations are mandated at the University level and conducted by the manager each calendar year.

The University offers "myUK Learning," an online system to deliver trainings to all University employees. In some cases, trainings are required by a supervisor or job duties. In other cases, employees may opt for training courses of interest. Topics covered in training courses include organizational ethics, leadership development, and practical skills, such as cybersecurity.

Employees also have free access to LinkedIn Learning. This service supplements staff development and offers sessions on mastering communication as a leader, organizational culture, and others.

Table V.5 below presents the results of exit surveys conducted over the last seven years, demonstrating a high level of satisfaction with the university's administrative services.

**Table V.5. Perception of Graduating Students on University Administrative Services**

| Year | 18–19 (n=24) | 19–20 (n=27) | 20–21 (n=99) | 21–22 (n=107) | 22–23 (n=114) | 23–24 (n=110) | 24–25 (n=66) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LMS** | 4.63 | 4.62 | 4.65 | 4.46 | 4.46 | 4.68 | 4.72 |
| **UK IT Help Desk** | 4.44 | 4.08 | 4.35 | 4.32 | 4.42 | 4.39 | 4.56 |
| **UK Libraries** | 4.59 | 4.50 | 4.81 | 4.61 | 4.65 | 4.78 | 4.91 |
| **Distance learning library services** | 4.59 | 4.31 | 4.71 | 4.48 | 4.52 | 4.76 | 4.92 |
| **Graduate School services** | 4.56 | 4.44 | 4.39 | 4.23 | 4.52 | 4.55 | 4.71 |

Scale: 1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree

In spring 2024, staff member Sarah Jane Kaelin was awarded funds to pursue a certification in data analysis. In 2025, staff member Dan Moon was approved to attend the College Business Management Institute. This is a one-week "intensive course of study in business and financial management for administrators of colleges and universities."

Based on position, staff are eligible for up to one remote day each week. One staff position qualifies for one day every other week. Two staff positions are approved to work one remote day each week. One position has been given special permission to work remotely full-time. Current staffing levels are adequate for the library science program.

## Standard V.5 Physical, Technological and Information Resources

**Facilities**

The LIS program is located entirely on the third floor of the Lucille Little Fine Arts Library.  This provides office space for all full-time faculty, two conference rooms, and four classrooms. A fifth classroom was converted into additional office space and currently houses employees from both the College and from the School. This space allows for all School faculty to have the opportunity to engage with each other, to discuss organizational, research, and pedagogical issues. Two staff are located on the floor as well, with all staff having some level of remote work available. For more information, you can also view the online floorplan for Lucille Little Library.

Since the last review, the College has repurposed space on the third floor. Suite 310 was turned into a new "front door" for the College, including a new Dean's suite. This did temporarily

displace some of the lecturers in the instructional communication group. However, six new offices were constructed using space from a classroom (303) and some existing offices were renovated to house multiple lecturers in one office. Currently, all SIS employees who want an office are housed on the third floor of Lucille Little.

The College moved several offices into [Pence Hall](#) in fall 2025. SIS will now be able to utilize additional space as needed on the third floor. One remote faculty member has requested an office for fall 2025, and we were able to accommodate that request. SIS is also renovating some previous current cubicle space into a communal SIS space to continue building relationships across the School. Additionally, the School will be updating our main meeting room, LCLI 314, by adding modular furniture and video conferencing, to better accommodate employee needs. Currently, the School has the necessary office space needed as well as additional space in the 310 suite for hires that are occurring during this academic year.

The University provides nearly all software and electronic services necessary for working, teaching, and research. The University uses SAP for many of its internal business and student data needs. Through the SAP system, either the main or web-based interface, employees can process work documents, enter time worked, register students for courses, build course schedules, and more. The University also offers most Microsoft Office applications as well as Google Workspace to employees and students at no cost. Canvas serves as our online learning management system. Additional software is available for employees as needed (includes software like Adobe applications, statistical analysis software, etc.). As previously mentioned, College employees now also have access to qualitative analysis software (Dedoose).

As part of the [College Strategic Plan](#), some services are now consolidated at the College level. This includes marketing and information technology. The CI Marketing Communications team provides marketing support for all programs in the College. This includes website support, developing advertisements, writing PR articles, and developing and distributing communication pieces with current and former students. Note that beginning AY 2025-2026, the University began consolidating some services at the University level. Initial groups to be moved into a central group include undergraduate advising, philanthropy, IT, and marketing services. Going forward, it is not known how these changes might impact the School or LIS program. Currently, all levels of support have remained the same.

CITS provides technology support including purchasing new equipment or software, handling Canvas issues, and administering servers to support education. For example, our course LIS 602 uses Omeka for instruction. CITS is responsible for maintaining the server, creating student accounts and ensuring security.

**Online Services and Support Units**
The University maintains Canvas as the campus-wide learning management system. It also provides Zoom for use as the primary electronic meeting platform. Additionally, the University has several services on campus that support online services. One example is the main library

which provides many services that are beneficial to the library science program. This includes [distance learning services](#), [research assistance](#), and [teaching support](#).

The University offers many other services used by most programs across the campus. Three of particular note to SIS include CELT, DRC, and UK Online. CELT "support(s) engaging, innovative, and effective learning environments in which all students and instructors have the opportunity to succeed." They have provided workshops to SIS faculty on various topics like decolonizing syllabi. We, in turn, have also partnered with them as our faculty developed several video tutorials to help faculty make the quick change to online instruction when the University closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

The DRC is the resource students, campus or remote, use whenever they might need an academic accommodation. DRC staff evaluate each student's situation and prepare an accommodation letter that the student then shares with their faculty. Faculty can also use the DRC to gain clarification on how they can best accommodate the student while maintaining the same or similar learning environment for all the students. [Collaborative Grant Services](#) provides several services to faculty as they work on grants to help support their research agendas. DRC supports all UK students including undergraduate, graduate, on campus, and online.

UK Online provides marketing and recruitment resources for online programs. They have developed a rather complete catalog of all online programs available at UK. They work to market these programs through our website, social media, and communication with potential students.

## Standard V.6 Evaluation

### Administrative Evaluation
The University provides resources for evaluating employees across the University.
- [The President of the University is evaluated by the Board of Trustees on a regular basis](#).
- The Dean of the College is evaluated annually by the Provost on a regular basis.
- The School Director is evaluated by the Dean on a regular schedule. Input from employees in the school is solicited to help inform that evaluation.
- Faculty are evaluated on a regular schedule that varies based on whether the faculty is tenure-track, tenured or a lecturer. [The performance review, tenure and promotion process is outlined by the University](#).
- [All University staff are evaluated on an annual basis](#). The University provides an online system for supervisors to manage position descriptions and evaluations for staff.

### Financial Evaluation
Financial evaluation takes place mainly at the University and College level. Currently, funding is largely impacted by credit hour production. If a college's credit hour production trends higher, that college receives additional funds. If their credit hour production trends lower, the college receives reduced funds. In our College, the Dean, with input from the College Leadership Team,

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helps to determine how best the College can spend its funds. All new hires, even for existing positions, must have the Dean's approval to move forward. The Dean also works with each unit to try to help maximize credit hour production to ensure funding levels can, at a minimum, be maintained. As part of this transition to a credit hour-based budget, the Dean also centralized several expenses that had previously been managed at the unit level. This includes, but is not limited to, hiring part-time instructors and purchasing computers and technology. This helps limit risk to the individual units and provides the Dean with a central fund to help offset any budget cuts.

## Physical Evaluation

The College continually monitors space for all units and works to ensure adequate workspace for all its employees. Recently, the College moved several offices into Pence Hall which opened up office space in the Lucille Caudill Little Fine Arts & Design Library. There are four classrooms on the third floor, and SIS has priority scheduling in those classrooms, which are primarily scheduled by our undergraduate core courses and undergraduate ICT courses. SIS is also renovating some open space and an existing meeting room.

Space remained a challenge through the review period. During AY 24 and AY 25, SIS had four full-time faculty members and one staff member who chose to work entirely remotely. One of these faculty members has an accommodation to work remotely approved by OFA. In one case, the school hired a remote instructor to teach online synchronous dual credit courses to high school students across Kentucky. This means they do not have a dedicated office space on campus. A remote faculty member later requested to return to campus for fall 2025, and we were able to accommodate that request.

The Dean's office has consolidated all space to the Dean's office to better distribute resources across the College. Space is reviewed continuously, and changes are made as they are necessary. For instance, we had a remote instructor who was going to be responsible for teaching an on-campus course. There were no private offices on the third floor of our building, but the Dean's office had other spaces on campus where we were able to house our faculty member. This allows each of the unit's in the College to access space that would have previously been unavailable. And while there are no additional offices in the 320 suite, the College will be making offices available in the 310 suite fall 2026 to accommodate new hires in the School.

Similarly, the University manages additional space that is available, by reservation, to the broader University community. SIS regularly reserves other spaces for our School-wide meetings, special events, and other occasions. Spaces can be reserved [online](online).

## Technological Evaluation

Technology purchases and evaluation have been centralized in the College's IT unit. SIS purchases a computer when a new employee begins working for the School. After that, equipment is put on a regular four-year cycle. Employees can report any equipment issues to IT

([CI IT support web page](#)). If necessary, those issues may be corrected with either equipment repair or replacement.

Additionally, faculty may have access to start up funds, research funds, or development funds to purchase additional technology, such as tablets. If those funds are not available, employees can make an argument for technological upgrades or new purchases before the four-year time period has elapsed.

## Belonging and Community

The School has maintained a committee focused on community and organizational culture for over 10 years. This committee consists of three full-time faculty members and examines issues, suggests solutions, and monitors results related to school climate, collaboration, and community engagement. In spring 2025, the committee proposed an audit plan to be used to "assess the dynamics of our School's culture, as well as the experiences of collegiality and belonging within our community." The table below summarizes our main infrastructure items and information about how items are evaluated.

**Table V.6. Infrastructure Detail**

| Item | Detail | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| **Administrative** | School Director — provides overall administration of the School and programs; School Assistant Director — supports the Director, faculty and staff in the School; Program Coordinator — focuses on the library science program specifically, supporting faculty and students; Admissions Coordinator (faculty) — works with potential students to help them through the application process; 3 staff positions — provide general financial, scheduling, and marketing support; All administration and staff - work to support faculty in teaching and research, and students as they progress through the program | Staffing needs are regularly discussed and evaluated by the Director in conjunction with the Assistant Director and Dean; all administrative positions undergo regular performance evaluations |
| **Financial** | University and College provide funds for faculty and staff employees' salaries. The College provides funds to support hiring part-time instructors. | Dean regularly reviews faculty lines across the College balancing new positions with enrollment growth. |

| | Endowments/scholarships | Dean regularly reviews endowment and scholarship numbers with appropriate School staff; works with the college philanthropy officer to secure new funding. |
|---|---|---|
| **Physical** | Offices in Lucille Little Fine Arts Library | Dean regularly reviews available College office space and consults with University leadership on needs. |
| | University libraries | University libraries provide physical and electronic access to all employees and students; LIS courses rely heavily on materials through UK Libraries for instruction. |
| **Technological** | General software (including our online learning management system, MS Office applications, research software, student lifecycle systems, and others) is provided by the University. | University reviews software needs regularly; recently an option for qualitative analysis software was added in large part due to feedback from our School. |
| | Hardware as well as technology support is provided by the College. | Employees' hardware is regularly replaced. |

## Summary and Future Plans

The School of Information Science has experienced significant growth and change since the last review period. The school has grown considerably. A long-serving Director retired, and a new Director was hired. Additionally, new program coordinator positions were established. In terms of growth, the number of majors in the school across all programs has increased 47% from 368 in the fall of 2017 to 544 in the fall of 2024. The College has made efforts to provide the necessary resources for our School, employees, and students. The school has fared well when it comes to both space and budget allocations. The school maintains its unique identity within a larger College setting and continues to determine its own best practices regarding hiring new employees, admitting students and guiding its curriculum. Going forward, the library science program expects many challenges to present themselves. From the current political climate to the often mentioned "enrollment cliff," maintaining current enrollment levels will prove challenging. Resources will continue to be at a premium as the College aims to expand both its budget and available office and teaching space. The school will continue to focus on its curriculum, such as developing a certificate with the College of Social Work, and on student

opportunities like Alternative Spring Break. Additionally, it will prioritize marketing and recruitment efforts to attract future students.

# Conclusion

## Synthesis and Overview

The School of Information Science at the University of Kentucky offers an undergraduate minor in information science, a major in information communication technology, and two master's degrees in information communication technology and library science. The Master of Science in Library Science program at SIS has been continuously accredited since 1942 and has a long history of excellence in innovative teaching, research, and professional service. The self-study covers the academic years from 2018 through 2025 and provides evidence demonstrating how the program meets the American Library Association's five Standards for Accreditation, adopted in 2023.

The LIS program at the University of Kentucky has made considerable progress in many areas since the last accreditation cycle. The program revamped its planning and assessment systems. The evaluation process emphasizes the vital contributions of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other stakeholders, all of whom play a crucial role in enhancing the program's quality to maintain a well-structured and responsive curriculum, ensure the presence of dedicated and highly qualified faculty, and cultivate a supportive learning environment. We have undertaken extensive curricular development, expanded academic and career support services, refined assessment procedures, and increased student engagement through co-curricular opportunities. Many of these improvements stem from deliberate, data-driven decision-making and a culture of continuous growth. The program has outlined a set of strategic priorities that build upon existing strengths while systematically addressing current challenges. These priorities include promoting belonging across the curriculum, student body, and research initiatives; emphasizing the uniqueness and rigor of the curricular offerings; preparing students for professional practice and leadership through exemplary instruction, advising, and support services; and fostering research excellence to advance disciplinary knowledge and inform evidence-based practices in library and information science. Each of these priorities is guided by our mission and shaped by the evolving needs of our students and the field.

This section summarizes the key insights from each chapter and outlines our future plans.

## Standard I: Systematic Planning

This chapter outlined the ongoing planning process for the LIS program, emphasizing stakeholder involvement to effectively assess the program goals and strategic priorities in line with the strategic goals of the College of Communication and Information and the University of Kentucky. The program developed and implemented a new strategic plan for 2022–2027. To ensure ongoing planning and systematic assessment of outcomes, the faculty restructured program committees to better align with the program's goals and objectives. The LIS Planning Committee, which will be renamed the Assessment Committee, is dedicated to guiding assessment and future planning efforts. With this change, the program will commit to annual assessment practices embedded into the program's operations, instructional innovation,

student service enhancement, and program effectiveness. Simultaneously, the Curriculum Committee focused on enhancing pedagogy and revising the curriculum to better meet the needs of students. The faculty is currently developing a regular full curriculum review procedure to respond to the evolving information landscape. The revised committee structure and holistic curriculum review will be developed and implemented in the coming years.

## Standard II: Program-Level Learning Outcomes and Curriculum

This chapter provides an overview of the LIS curriculum and the methods used to assess its outcomes. It highlighted how the curriculum aligns with the ALA Core Values and widely recognized professional competencies in its content. The Curriculum Committee plays a pivotal role in the ongoing development, review, and revision of the curriculum. Feedback on student learning and course objectives is systematically gathered through evaluations conducted regularly. The curriculum has been enhanced and improved by introducing 32 special topics courses and updating the existing content of core courses to reflect changes in the field. During the 2025 academic year, faculty introduced two new elective clusters: Archives and Cultural Heritage and Systems Librarianship.

However, there is a need to strengthen the collection of direct measures from core courses for program learning outcomes assessment. To facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of both the curriculum and program learning outcomes, the LIS faculty plans to enhance the curriculum review process and the assessment of core course outcomes moving forward. This approach will ensure continuous improvement and alignment with current trends and standards in the program.

## Standard III: Faculty

The program's faculty has a rich mix of academic and professional backgrounds, which plays a vital role in providing excellent education and strong support to graduate students. In recent years, full-time faculty involvement in teaching has increased significantly, showing the program's dedication to student success. Their active participation in research projects and grant activities also highlights their commitment to advancing the LIS discipline. Additionally, they participate actively in committee work at the program, school, college, and university levels, as well as in broader professional fields and community initiatives, demonstrating their dedication to collaboration and service.

As of spring 2025, a total of 13 faculty members have served, including eight recent hires over the past seven years, in the LIS program. Since fall 2018, four faculty members earned tenure and were promoted to associate professor; one was promoted to full professor, and one lecturer advanced to senior lecturer. The year 2023 saw the highest number of LIS faculty members. However, from 2018 to 2025, the LIS program lost five faculty members, in addition to the retirement of Jeff Huber, Ph.D., a former School Director. The School welcomes one additional junior faculty member, Heng Zheng, Ph.D., as an assistant professor in fall 2025.

The School plans to hire two LIS faculty members during the 2025–2026 academic year. Faculty retention remains a challenge due to relatively low salaries for LIS faculty compared to national and regional trends, which impacts the ability to maintain continuity and uphold educational excellence.

## *Standard IV. Students*

This chapter offers an overview of the student body and the support available for students pursuing a master's degree in library science. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the program saw a decline in enrollment. We mainly attribute this decline to the growing availability of other online library and information science (LIS) programs nationwide, which often feature lower tuition costs. The student profile is mostly female and primarily white, but it is notable that enrollment of first-generation students has increased. The program also successfully attracts students from states other than Kentucky.

During this accreditation cycle, the program has improved access to information for prospective and current students through an updated school website and the creation of the MSLS Student Hub. We have also enhanced the welcome process to better support new students, while continuing to promote extracurricular activities that enrich their experiences. However, we have noticed low levels of engagement and interaction among students, especially regarding their perception of the program's advising and career support, which has declined over time.

Moving forward, the program will address these concerns to find more effective ways to support students. Recruitment remains another challenge, and we plan to explore new recruitment strategies to reach a broader audience of prospective students. Additionally, we will continue to collaborate with campus units, such as UK Online and the Graduate School, to enhance the recruitment process.

## *Standard V: Infrastructure*

This chapter describes resources and procedures that govern the School's access to institutional support. These resources include dedicated funding for tenure-track and instructional faculty positions, research support, technology infrastructure, and essential administrative and student services. The allocation of these resources follows formal processes that align with the School's academic mission and strategic priorities.

The School functions as a distinct academic and administrative unit within the university's college. The School has maintained financial support for the LIS program, ensuring that faculty numbers and salaries remain stable. While the School collaborates within the broader college and university context, it retains substantial control over the day-to-day management and long-term planning of the LIS program. Key examples of this independence include the development of the school's strategic plan for 2025–2028 and the creation of three program coordinator positions to support each program's instructional function in 2024.

The School previously had staff roles dedicated to IT support and marketing/career assistance for its graduate programs until 2023. These roles were integrated into the College. Due to the worrying decline in enrollment in the MSLS program, it could be beneficial for the School to reintroduce a dedicated staff position focused on recruitment and student support. This strategic step could help revitalize the program and make it more appealing to prospective students, fostering a brighter future for the LIS program.

## *Wrap Up*

In conclusion, this self-study has identified the key strengths that shape our program's identity and strengths. As we move forward, we are fully committed to a set of strategic priorities aimed at leveraging these strengths and effectively tackling upcoming challenges. Our targeted initiatives will improve outcome assessments, enhance student services, boost student recruitment, strengthen faculty retention, and optimize staffing practices. Each of these initiatives addresses the changing needs of our students and the evolving landscape of our profession. We are dedicated to reaching these goals and elevating the program to new levels of excellence.