



M.S. in Life Sciences Communication

Program Handbook

Department of Life Sciences Communication

Reference this handbook to learn about the policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for graduate students in the M.S. in Life Sciences Communication.

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Navigating Policy and Resources at UW-Madison

This handbook is one of many sources students should consult as they become familiar with the policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms of graduate education at UW-Madison:



Role of the Handbook

The UW-Madison Graduate School is the ultimate authority for granting graduate degrees at the University. The Department of Life Sciences Communication (LSC) administers the Master's program under the authority of the Graduate School. The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures provide essential information regarding general University requirements. Program authority to set degree requirements beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the LSC program faculty.

The policies described in this handbook have been approved by the LSC Graduate Committee and the LSC Executive Committee. Degrees and course requirements may change over time. However, students must meet the degree and course requirements in effect when they entered the program. In addition, administrative procedures and processes can change over time.

Students are required to follow the procedures and processes listed in the current handbook. The information in this handbook should also be supplemented by individual consultation with the student's advisor and committee so that individual needs/interests and all degree requirements are met.

Who to Contact for Questions

Nan Li – Director of Graduate Programs

scheufele@wisc.edu

608-262-7791

226 Hiram Smith Hall

1545 Observatory Drive, Madison, WI 53706

Lynn Bartholomew – Academic Advising Manager

lbartholome2@wisc.edu

608-262-1241

233 Hiram Smith Hall

1545 Observatory Drive, Madison, WI 53706

Faculty Advisor

Students are assigned an orientation advisor upon entry to the program. A student who later decides that a different faculty advisor would be a more appropriate fit may change advisors. Refer to the "Finding, Selecting, and Changing Advisor" section for details on who can be an M.S. student's advisor, how to change advisors, etc.

Advisor name and contact information can be found on the Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under "Academic Progress" and then "Advisors."

Graduate School Services

For general inquiries and graduate student services from the Graduate School, see the contact information on this web page: grad.wisc.edu/contacts.

Department & Program Overview

The Department of Life Sciences Communication is a world leader in science communication research, education, and practice. We offer a master's degree with the opportunity to pursue either a thesis-track or professional course-based track.

The thesis-track requires a thesis based on original research. The professional track is a course-based program that is designed to prepare students for professional careers in science communication and related fields. Students in this track will not usually pursue a Ph.D. program in the future. In fact, many doctoral programs (including Life Sciences Communication) do not accept a non-thesis master's as a criterion for admission to their Ph.D. program.

Learning Outcomes of the LSC M.S. Degree

Knowledge and Skills Learning Goals:

- Demonstrates knowledge of the theories, concepts, frameworks, empirical findings, and controversies in the field. Articulates research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, and practice within the field of study.
- Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
- Demonstrates understanding of the primary field of study in a historical, social, or global context.
- Selects and/or utilizes the most appropriate methodologies, tools, and practices.
- Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
- Communicates complex ideas effectively across different audiences.

Professional Conduct Learning Goals:

- Recognizes, fosters, and applies principles of ethical and professional conduct.

LSC Core Values

- Global leadership role in science communication research, education and outreach;
- Teaching and research excellence;
- Real-world impact exemplifying the Wisconsin Idea;
- Synergy of theory and practice experienced through theoretical excellence and practical insights;
- Integrity and transparency in all interactions;
- Culture of respect, inclusion, and collaboration among faculty, students, and greater community;
- Interdisciplinary focus enriching student, staff, and faculty experience.

How to Get Involved

Graduate students at UW-Madison have a multitude of opportunities to become involved on campus and in their academic discipline. This involvement often enhances academic, professional, and personal growth through developing advanced leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. It also provides opportunity for professional networking.

UW-Madison offers a wealth of resources intended to enrich students' graduate studies and enhance their professional skills. Starting their very first year on campus, it is expected that students will take full advantage of the career and professional development resources that best fit their needs and support their goals. Since our alumni thrive not only in academia but also in

industry, corporate, government, and non-profit arenas, we strive to be in-tune, holistic, and innovative in our approach to meeting the diverse professional development needs of our students. By actively participating in these professional development opportunities, students will build the skills needed to succeed academically at UW-Madison and to thrive professionally in their chosen career.

Students can find information on opportunities for involvement at UW-Madison on the Graduate School's Current Student Page: grad.wisc.edu/current-students

Check out these important resources which link students to the LSC community:

- **Watch for e-mails from** lsc_grad@g-groups.wisc.edu This listserv is used to reach all of the LSC graduate students as a group. Important announcements including funding opportunities, student job announcements, special events, critical deadlines, and more, are all sent via the listserv. Students should inform the LSC academic advising manager of any desired changes to their preferred email address for the listserv. Please note that all official correspondence from the university will be sent to students' wisc.edu addresses so they are still responsible for checking it regularly or forwarding it to an e-mail they do check regularly.
- **Follow LSC on social media**
Facebook [Facebook.com/UWMadisonLSC](https://www.facebook.com/UWMadisonLSC)
Twitter [@UW_LSC](https://twitter.com/UW_LSC)
Instagram [uwmadison_lsc](https://www.instagram.com/uwmadison_lsc)
Join the LSC LinkedIn group for alumni and current students
[linkedin.com/groups/13716975/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13716975/)

Getting Started as a Graduate Student

The new graduate student checklist can be found on this webpage:
grad.wisc.edu/new-students

In addition to a checklist for all new graduate students, that webpage includes sections with additional steps to take for new international students, students with a disability, student veterans, students with children, or students with funding.

Advising & Mentoring

Advising relationships are a central part of academia, important to both the experience and development of students and faculty members alike. The advisor serves a dual role: first, to assist the student in acquiring the highest level of knowledge and competence in the field that is possible; and second, to chair the committee that will determine whether the student has performed acceptably at each of their degree milestones. Advisors play a role in tracking the student's progress toward degree completion, assisting with course selection and academic planning, and helping students identify possible research mentors, committee members, and opportunities.

Finding, Selecting, and Changing Advisors

Students are assigned an orientation advisor upon entry to the program. Students should discuss roles and expectations with their advisors or prospective advisors. Both the student and the advisor have a responsibility to make their expectations clear to each other.

As the advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement, it may be terminated by either party. If a student decides that they would prefer working with a different advisor, they need to discuss this with their prospective advisor to seek the change.

No faculty member is obligated to accept a student's request to serve as advisor, though invitations are often accepted unless the faculty member judges that a different advisor would serve the student's needs better.

Every graduate student must have an advisor or else they may be suspended from graduate study at UW-Madison by the Graduate School. Be sure to follow procedures to re-select a new advisor (described above) prior to finalizing the termination of the current advising relationship. Students can confirm that the name of their advisor has been updated in the official record by looking in the Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under "Academic Progress" and then "Advisors."

Selection of an advisor, or a change of advisors, should be based on the faculty member's ability to guide the student expertly into the chosen area of interest/research. Any updates to a student's advisor should be shared with LSC academic advising manager and the student should also inform their former advisor of the change.

Advisory Committee

In consultation with their faculty advisor, students will assemble a committee of three members including their advisor and two additional faculty members. The committee will meet at the thesis defense or course narrative presentation (depending on the master's track) to approve the thesis or coursework.

LSC M.S. committees may consist of tenure-track faculty within LSC or in another relevant department. Academic Staff who hold a master's degree and an appointment of 50% or higher may be part of a master's committee but may not serve as chair. Requests for exceptions should be submitted in writing to the Graduate Committee.

Additional Advising Contacts:

Students should always first reference LSC's website (lsc.wisc.edu), this Handbook, the Graduate School's website (grad.wisc.edu), and the Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) for answers on program-related questions. However, when students need further clarification on any of these policies or procedures, their next contact is their faculty advisor.

Mentoring Networks

In addition to a formal advisor, students are encouraged to develop a broad network of individuals who can provide academic and professional mentorship during and beyond their time as a graduate student. Students are encouraged to connect with all faculty and instructional staff in the department to create their mentoring network and facilitate new mentoring connections with alumni, industry connections, and collaborators.

Degree Requirements

The M.S. has two tracks that students can follow: a thesis-track master's degree and a professional-track master's degree. The thesis-based master's degree requires 30 credits (six of which can be LSC 990 Research credits) and a thesis based on original research. The professional track is a course-based master's degree that requires 30 credits and culminates in a course narrative report and presentation. Students in the professional track will usually not pursue a Ph.D. program in the future. In fact, many doctoral programs (including LSC) do not accept a non-thesis master's as a criterion for admission to their Ph.D. program. Students choose their track during the program application process.

Coursework includes a required colloquium in LSC, a science communication theory course, a research methods course, and a graduate-level statistics course. The remaining credits can include classes in science communication and other areas based on a student's academic and career goals. For example, a student wishing to become an environmental reporter might take courses in environmental studies. A student interested in health communication might take a nutrition or preventive medicine course. However, the complete program must have coherence and focus, and students should discuss all courses with their advisor prior to enrollment.

Credit & GPA Requirements

- Minimum credit requirement: 30 credits
- Minimum residence credit requirement: 30 credits
- Minimum graduate coursework requirement: Half of degree coursework (15 credits out of 30 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified with the text "50% graduate coursework requirement" under "course options" in Course Search & Enroll
- Overall graduate GPA requirement: 3.50 cumulative GPA required
- Other grade requirements: Students must earn a B or above in all coursework to count it toward the 30-credit total

Course requirements

Colloquium

LSC 700: Colloquium in Life Sciences Communication 1

Science Communication Theory 3

LSC 720: Introduction to Communication Theory & Research
or LSC 902: Public Opinion of Life Science Issues

Research Methods¹ 3-4

Graduate Level Statistics² 3-4

Electives Based on Academic & Career Goals³ 20

Total Credits 30-32

¹Course to be selected in consultation with advisor. Examples of courses that may fulfill this requirement include: COM ARTS 762, ED PSYCH 719, JOURN 658, JOURN/LSC 811, JOURN 812, SOC/C&E SOC 750, SOC 751, or SOC 752.

²Course to be selected in consultation with advisor. Examples of courses that may fulfill this requirement include: ED PSYCH 760, ED PSYCH 761, LSC 660, SOC/C&E SOC 360, or

SOC/C&E SOC 361 (SOC 361 is preferred for SOC options unless the student has no prior statistics experience).

³Courses selected in consultation with advisor to create a cohesive program of study. Thesis-track students may count up to 6 credits of LSC 990 Research toward their electives to reach the 30 credits required for the program. Students may count up to two colloquia (including one semester of LSC 700) toward the 30-credit requirement for the program.

Prior Coursework Policies

- Graduate Work from Other Institutions
 - No credits from graduate work from other institutions are allowed to count toward the degree
- UW–Madison Undergraduate
 - No credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.
- UW–Madison University Special
 - A student's program may decide to transfer up to six University Special student credits numbered 300 or above. However, these credits would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum or toward courses required by the program. The credits will be noted on the transcript in the graduate career as transfer credits, but the courses will remain in the University Special student career.

Annual Progress Reports

All LSC graduate students are required to complete an annual progress report to assist students will planning their time in the program and ensure students are making satisfactory progress towards graduation. The report outline is sent to students in December and is due in February. In this report, students will outline achievements in the last year and planned milestones in the program. Templates will be provided as part of the call for report submissions in December. Students are required to meet with their advisor to discuss the report and plans for future milestones and obtain their signature before submitting the report.

Thesis or Course Narrative Expectations

Thesis-track students will write a thesis based on original research and defend the thesis to their advisory committee at the conclusion of their time in the program. Students should consult their advisor for details on expectations for the thesis and defense but a basic list of required sections to include in the thesis include: page numbers, abstract, table of contents, main text, tables and figures, appendices, and references. *Students are also encouraged to look at other theses from LSC graduates in the student lounge. Contact the LSC front desk for assistance accessing the thesis library.*

Professional-track students will write a course narrative that summarizes all courses taken towards the degree, reasons for taking each course, and how the courses they have taken will contribute toward their future professional goals. The narrative will be presented to their advisory committee at the conclusion of their time in the program.

Procedures to prepare for graduation

Review the Graduate School's guidelines for degree completion: <https://grad.wisc.edu/current-students/doctoral-guide/>. It is the student's responsibility to confirm that they meet the graduation deadline for the semester they hope to graduate (planning backwards from the

deadline to ensure that there is ample time to make and receive approval on edits, if needed. Refer to the bottom of the degree completion webpage (link above) for a list of deadlines and consult advisor and the academic advising manager with any questions.

Thesis M.S. students:

1. Set regular meetings with advisor and other committee members to track thesis progress and confirm format and expectations for the written thesis. A basic list of required sections includes: page numbers, abstract, table of contents, main text, tables and figures, appendices, and references. *Students are also encouraged to look at other theses from LSC graduates in the student lounge. Contact the LSC front desk for assistance accessing the thesis library.*
2. Get advisor's approval to set thesis defense date. Set a defense date with committee. Summer graduation dates are discouraged as faculty availability is limited for most of the summer months. Consult advisor early to determine an appropriate defense date with this in mind.
3. Once confirmed
 - Send the date and a list of committee members to the academic advising manager asking them to request degree [warrant](#). Students must ask the academic advising manager to request the warrant from the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the defense date.
 - Schedule a conference room for defense with the LSC Front Desk.
 - Apply to graduate in Student Center for name to appear in the commencement program.
 - Watch for additional commencement related emails about cap and gown rentals, etc.
4. Defenses are public meetings, i.e., students, faculty, staff and members of the public are welcome to attend the presentation of the thesis and research. Guests will be asked to leave the room during the closed session portion of the defense.
5. Decide with advisor if thesis should be deposited at Memorial Library
6. In consultation with advisor, submit a draft of thesis to all members of committee 10 days prior to the defense. Failure to adhere to these deadlines may result in a delay in your defense date.

Professional M.S. students:

1. Set regular meetings with advisor to track progress and confirm format and expectations for the written course narrative. Narrative must include page numbers, summarize all courses taken towards the degree, reasons for taking each course, and how the courses will contribute toward future professional goals. Contact the academic advising manager to see previous examples.
2. Get advisor's approval to set narrative presentation date. Set a date with committee. Summer graduation dates are discouraged as faculty availability is limited for most of the summer months. Consult advisor early to determine an appropriate presentation date with this in mind.
3. Once confirmed
 - Send the date and a list of committee members to the academic advising manager asking them to request the degree [warrant](#). Students must ask the academic advising manager to request the warrant from the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the defense date. Schedule a conference room for narrative presentation with the LSC Front Desk.
 - Apply to graduate in Student Center for name to appear in the commencement program.

- Watch for additional commencement related emails about cap and gown rentals, etc.
- 4. In consultation with advisor, submit course narrative to all members of committee 1 week in advance of presentation date.

Defense/Presentation Day and Final Steps

- Defend thesis/course narrative to committee.
- As needed, take feedback from committee and implement edits/changes in consultation with committee members. Re-submit to advisor and all committee members who have requested to see the revised version.
- Once advisor has confirmed that all committee members have approved any final edits, they will let the academic advising manager know they can circulate the electronic warrant for signature from each committee member. Once all signatures are received, they will submit the warrant to the Graduate School for processing.
- Send a PDF copy of your final dissertation to your faculty advisor keep for their records.

Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains a list of steps to complete a master's degree, including deadlines and important things to know as students progress toward graduation: grad.wisc.edu/current-students/masters-guide. Refer to the requirements section of the handbook to confirm completion of program requirements.

Sample Timeline

Semester One:

- Enroll in science communication theory course.
- In consultation with advisor, begin to develop an individual plan of courses (will be re-evaluated each semester, as needed).

Semester Two:

- Check in with advisor regarding progress and any intended changes to course plan.
- Submit annual progress report by February deadline.
- If pursuing the thesis-based option, start discussing research ideas with advisor.

Semester Three:

- Check in with advisor regarding progress and any intended changes to course plan.
- If pursuing the thesis-track, firm up thesis idea with advisor. In consultation with advisor, form a three-person committee made up of advisor and two additional graduate faculty members. See details about committee membership eligibility under the Advisory Committee section of the handbook.
 - If the student has or will have completed 24 credits of coursework, they may enroll for three credits of thesis credits (LSC 990) with their advisor this semester and next semester. Reminder that students may include up to 6 credits of LSC 990 toward their degree. To request permission to enroll in LSC 990, students must email the advisor and cc the academic advising manager.

Semester Four:

- Students must notify the academic advising manager at the beginning of the semester if they will complete the program requirements during this semester so they can request the degree warrant.

- Follow the instructions under the Procedures to Prepare for Graduation section.

Time Constraints

Students who pursue a thesis-track master's degree will have a limit of four semesters (including summers) during which they can enroll in LSC 990 Research/thesis credits. Students who have not defended their thesis at the end of the fourth semester in which they are enrolled in LSC 990 will be awarded a professional track master's degree, assuming they have completed all the requirements for the degree.

Per Graduate School Policy, master's degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

Enrollment Requirements

LSC students are required to follow Graduate School minimum enrollment requirements: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208

The maximum enrollment per semester is 15 credits. Students should only enroll in 15 credits with their advisor's approval. A maximum of 12 credits is recommended. A typical enrollment load for a TA/PA/RA is 6 credits in their first semester and 9 credits per semester for the remainder of their time in the program.

Students are responsible for following Graduate School policies related to course enrollment requirements and limitations:

- Adding / Dropping Courses grad.wisc.edu/documents/add-drop
- Auditing Courses policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1224
- Canceling Enrollment grad.wisc.edu/documents/canceling-enrollment
- Enrollment Accountability grad.wisc.edu/documents/enrollment-accountability

Funding, Employment, and Finances

“Funding” is a term used to describe university employment or support to cover some or all of the costs of graduate education. It varies in kind, amount, and level of guarantee.

Historically, nearly all LSC graduate students have been funded through assistantships — either in our department, working under the direction of one of our faculty members, or in one of numerous other departments and programs that regularly look to LSC to provide them with students with strong communication skills.

Assistantships

Most graduate students who receive support serve as teaching, research, or project assistants.

Assistantships are typically part-time positions that pay a monthly stipend. Additionally, positions that are 33.33% or more (based on a 40-hour work week) provide tuition remission for the student and make the student eligible for comprehensive health insurance coverage (a benefit worth approximately \$4,200 annually).

Graduate students in the Department of Life Sciences Communication will be eligible for full consideration for LSC teaching assistant positions if they are in good academic standing (two years for M.S. students, three years for Ph.D. students). Preference is given to students who have not exceeded those limits, but all students in good standing are welcome to apply. Students pursuing double degrees will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Fellowships

The department also nominates competitive graduate applicants for the [Advanced Opportunity Fellowships \(AOFs\)](#), which provide full tuition and funding to qualified underrepresented minority applicants. The department can nominate current students for [Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships \(WDGF\)](#), which are awarded by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. All nominations are approved and forwarded by the LSC Graduate Committee.

Scholarships

LSC uses the Wisconsin Scholarship Hub (WiSH) to award departmental scholarships. CALS announces the scholarship application “open date” every fall, and the deadline is typically early February. Students *must* complete the application to be considered for any scholarships; students are then eligible to be considered for both LSC-awarded and CALS-awarded scholarships. <https://cals.wisc.edu/academics/graduate-students/scholarships-fellowships/>.

Financial Aid

Students who are U.S. citizens or Permanent Residents can apply for Federal Stafford Loans (subsidized and unsubsidized) and for Federal Work-Study through the [Office of Student Financial Aid \(OSFA\)](#). Eligibility is based on financial need. OSFA also offers information on the cost of attendance. [Short-term loans](#) are available on a limited basis. They are given only to assist in unanticipated emergency situations and must be repaid within the semester in which they are borrowed.

Hourly Employment

Other employment opportunities are available both on campus and in the community. Openings for full and part-time jobs for students are listed on the [Student Job Center website](#).

Travel and Professional Development Grants

Graduate students in LSC can apply for financial support from the department for travel to academic conferences. Pending availability of funds, students can apply for up to \$1,000 for international travel and up to \$500 for domestic travel per academic year. Details on the criteria and application deadline are sent out twice per year. Contact the academic advising manager with questions. Students are also strongly encouraged to apply for funding opportunities outside of the department including opportunities through the Graduate School: <https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/grants-competition/>.

External Funding/Fellowships

We encourage all students to seek out and apply for funding from sources external to the university (e.g., federal agencies, professional organizations, private foundations). The Graduate School supports selected federal/private fellowships through the provision of tuition support and health insurance, a list can be found at kb.wisc.edu/gsadminkb/page.php?id=34761.

The following are some sources of information on external funding:

- External Fellowship Database grad.wisc.edu/funding/external-fellowship-database
- UW-Madison Libraries Grants Information Collection library.wisc.edu/memorial/collections/grants-information-collection

Additional Policies & Resources

The Graduate School maintains policies related to graduate student funding/employment:

- Maximum Levels of Appointments grad.wisc.edu/documents/maximum-levels-of-appointments
- Concurrent Appointments for Fellows/Trainees grad.wisc.edu/documents/concurrent-appointments
- Enrollment Requirements for Graduate Assistants policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208
- Eligibility for Summer RA, TA, PA, and LSA Appointments policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-5089
- Graduate School Policy: Residence for Tuition Purposes grad.wisc.edu/documents/residence-for-tuition-purposes
- Employee Disability Resources employeedisabilities.wisc.edu
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (GAPP) hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp

Professional Development

When students participate in professional development, they build skills needed to succeed academically and thrive in their career. The following are professional development activities that we recommend for consideration.

The Wisconsin Idea is the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom. For more than 100 years, this idea has guided the university's work. In addition to opportunities at the local level, the **Graduate School Office of Professional Development** provides direct programming in the areas of career development and skill building, and also serves as a clearinghouse for professional development resources across campus. The best way to stay informed is to watch for the weekly newsletter from OPD, **GradConnections Weekly**, and to visit the webpage (grad.wisc.edu/pd/events) for an up-to-date list of events. For example, typical topics covered throughout the year are:

- Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
- Planning for academic success
- Dissertation writing support
- Communication skills
- Grant writing

- Teaching
- Mentoring
- Research ethics
- Community engagement
- Entrepreneurship
- Career exploration: academic, non-profit, industry, government, etc.
- Job search support
- Pursuing postdoctoral training

Individual Development Plans

The Graduate School webpage (grad.wisc.edu/pd/idp) offers a collection of Individual Development Plan resources to support graduate students.

As students begin their Graduate School career, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an essential tool to help them:

- Assess current skills and strengths
- Make a plan for developing skills that will help meet academic and professional goals
- Communicate with advisors and mentors about evolving goals and related skills.

The IDP students create is a document they will want to revisit again and again, to update and refine as their goals change and/or come into focus, and to record their progress and accomplishments. It also serves to start – and maintain – the conversation with their faculty advisor about their career goals and professional development needs.

The onus to engage in the IDP process is on the student, although their mentor, PI, or others may encourage and support them in doing so. The IDP itself remains private to the student, and they choose which parts to share with which mentors. Through the IDP process, students may decide to identify various mentors to whom they can go for expertise and advice.

Below are some available IDP tools. Each tool will include a self-assessment of skills, interests, and values; goal-setting guidelines; and reference to skill building and career exploration resources.

- UW-Madison IDP template, which includes instructions and examples, is flexible and appropriate for all disciplines. grad.wisc.edu/pd/idp#mentees
- ImaginePhD: A career exploration and IDP tool for the humanities and social sciences. <https://www.imaginephd.com/>
- DiscoverPD: A competencies framework and planning tool with resources specifically geared toward UW-Madison graduate students. <https://my.grad.wisc.edu/DiscoverPD>

Student Health & Wellness

UW-Madison has a holistic resource for all things wellness called “UWell”. The site includes information and opportunities for wellness for students’ work/school, financial, environmental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and community. Go to uwell.wisc.edu/. Students who pay segregated fees are eligible for University Health Services (uhs.wisc.edu/services/counseling/).

There is no charge to students for many basic services including counseling sessions, because services are paid through tuition and fees. Personal health and wellness services are also available in addition to medical services.

Disability Information

Students with disabilities have access to disability resources through UW-Madison's McBurney Disability Resource Center. Admitted students should first go through the steps to "Become a McBurney Client" at mcburney.wisc.edu/students/howto.php.

Additional non-academic disability campus resources (not found through the McBurney Center) can be found at mcburney.wisc.edu/services/nonmcburney/index.php.

The UW-Madison Index for Campus Accessibility Resources can be found at wisc.edu/accessibility/index.php.

Mental Health Resources On and Off Campus

University Health Services (UHS) is the primary mental health provider for students on campus. UHS Counseling and Consultation Services offers a wide range of services to the diverse student population of UW-Madison. They offer immediate crisis counseling, same day appointments and ongoing treatment. Go to uhs.wisc.edu/services/counseling/ or call 608-265-5600.

UHS service costs are covered for students through tuition and fees.

There are many mental health resources throughout the Madison community, but UHS Counseling and Consultation Services is the best resource for referrals to off-campus providers. Call 608-265-5600 for assistance in finding an off-campus provider.

Academic Exception Petitions

Academic exceptions are considered on an individual case-by-case basis and should not be considered a precedent. Deviations from normal progress are highly discouraged, but the program recognizes that there are in some cases extenuating academic and personal circumstances that may lead to an exception petition. Petitions for any academic exceptions including a leave of absence shall be directed to the LSC Graduate Committee in consultation with the student's advisor. The following procedures apply to all petitions:

1. The specific requirement/rule/expectation pertinent to the petition must be identified.
2. The student's advisor must provide written support for the petition.

Leave of absence

Student in good standing who encounter extenuating circumstances and wishes to interrupt their program of graduate study can petition the Graduate Committee for a leave of absence following the academic exception petition policy above. Leave of absence petitions must be submitted prior to the start of the semester the student wishes to take leave, the reason, and anticipated length of the leave. An approved leave of absence petition guarantees reentry to the program if the student reapplies to the Graduate School during the time period specified.

Students whose petitions are denied may later apply for readmission, but their acceptance cannot be guaranteed.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Continuation as a graduate student at UW-Madison is at the discretion of the graduate program, the Graduate School, and the student's faculty advisor. Any student may be placed on probation or dismissed from the Graduate School for not maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and this can impact their academic standing (detailed below), financial aid (see this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1040), or funding (consult sources of funding, as applicable). Our program has its own definition of satisfactory academic progress and related procedures that supplement Graduate School policy (grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/?policy=satisfactoryprogress), as described in this section.

Graduate students in LSC are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher every term. If a student fails to meet this threshold, they should contact their advisor immediately. Students who do not meet the minimum GPA requirement will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee and may be placed on probation. The student may be suspended if they are not able to raise their GPA to the minimum level over the course of the next semester. The same holds true if a graduate student carries two or more incomplete grades over more than two semesters.

Not Meeting Academic Expectations

Student progress is reviewed annually during the progress report review process.

Students may be disciplined or dismissed from the graduate program for any type of misconduct (academic, non-academic, professional, or research) or failure to meet program expectations regardless of their academic standing in the program. Concerns about infractions of professional conduct expectations may be effectively handled informally between the student and the advisor/faculty member. However, if a resolution is not achieved, the issue may be advanced for further review by the program and – if necessary – other channels in the university. Examples of disciplinary actions could include, but are not limited to written reprimand, imposition of reasonable terms and conditions on continued student status, removal of funding, probation, restitution, removal of student from an in-progress course, suspension, or dismissal.

Personal Conduct Expectations

Professional Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards maintains detailed guidance on student rights and responsibilities related to learning in a community that is safe and fosters integrity and accountability. Students are responsible for keeping aware of their policies and procedures, found at the following page: conduct.students.wisc.edu

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapter 14. For further information on this law, what constitutes academic misconduct, and procedures related to academic misconduct, see:

- Graduate School Policy & Procedure: Misconduct, Academic: <http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#misconductacademic>
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards: <https://students.wisc.edu/student-conduct/>
- University of Wisconsin System: Chapter UWS 14: Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/14.pdf

Non-Academic Misconduct

Non-academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapters 17 and 18. For further information on these laws, what constitutes non-academic misconduct, and procedures related to non-academic misconduct, see:

- Graduate School Academic Policies & Procedures: Misconduct, Non-Academic: <http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#misconductnonacademic>
- Dean of Students Office: Non-Academic Misconduct: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/>
- University of Wisconsin System:
 - Chapter UWS 17: Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17.pdf
 - Chapter UWS 18: Conduct on University Lands: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18.pdf

Research Misconduct

Graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff. Further information about these standards and related policies and procedures can be found at:

- Graduate School Policies & Procedures: Responsible Conduct of Research: <http://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/#responsibleconductofresearch>
- Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education's - Office of Research Policy: Introduction & Guide to Resources on Research Ethics: <https://research.wisc.edu/respolcomp/resethics/>
- Graduate School Office of Research Policy: Policies, Responsibilities, and Procedures:
 - Reporting Misconduct: <http://kb.wisc.edu/gsadminkb/page.php?id=34486>
 - Responsible Conduct of Research Resources: <https://kb.wisc.edu/gsadminkb/search.php?cat=2907>

Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (Bullying)

Hostile and intimidating behavior (HIB), sometimes referred to as “bullying,” is prohibited by university policy applicable to faculty, academic staff, and university staff. For further definition, policy, and procedures related to HIB see: hr.wisc.edu/hib. Students who feel they have been subject to HIB are encouraged to review the informal and formal options on the “Addressing HIB” tab of this website.

Grievance Process

Students who feel that they have been treated unfairly have the right to a prompt hearing of their grievance. Such complaints may involve course grades, classroom treatment, various forms of harassment, or other issues. Any student or potential student may use these procedures except those graduate assistants whose complaint is covered by campus policies for teaching assistants.

Procedures for student grievances:

- The student should speak first with the person toward whom the grievance is directed. In most cases, grievances can be resolved at this level.
- If this conversation does not yield satisfactory results, the student should consult with the Director of Academic Programs in their home department.
- Should a satisfactory resolution not be achieved at that level, the student should contact the program's Grievance Advisor to discuss the grievance. The academic advising manager can provide students with the name of this faculty member, who facilitates problem resolution through informal channels. The Grievance Advisor is responsible for facilitating any complaints or issues of students. The Grievance Advisor first attempts to help students informally address the grievance prior to any formal complaint. Students are also encouraged to talk with their faculty advisors regarding concerns or difficulties if necessary. University resources for sexual harassment concerns can be found on the UW Office of Equity and Diversity website.
- If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction the student can submit the grievance to the Grievance Advisor in writing, within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.
- On receipt of a written complaint, a faculty committee will be convened by the Grievance Advisor to manage the grievance. The program faculty committee will obtain a written response from the person toward whom the complaint is directed. This response will be shared with the person filing the grievance.
- The faculty committee will determine a decision regarding the grievance. The Grievance Advisor will report on the action taken by the committee in writing to both the student and the party toward whom the complaint was directed within 15 working days from the date the complaint was received.
- At this point, if either party (the student or the person toward whom the grievance is directed) is unsatisfied with the decision of the faculty committee, the party may file a written appeal. Either party has 10 working days to file a written appeal to the College.
- Documentation of the grievance will be stored for at least 7 years. Significant grievances that set a precedent will be stored indefinitely.

The Graduate School has established policies governing student conduct, academic dishonesty, and sexual and racial harassment. The Graduate School also has procedures for students wishing to appeal a grievance decision made at the college level. These policies are described in the Academic Guidelines.

Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards

The Graduate Committee ensures that students are meeting the program expectations and imposes sanctions when appropriate. Sanctions could include written reprimand, removal of funding, imposition of specific terms and conditions on continued student status, probation, restitution, removal of the student from a course, failure to promote, withdrawal of an offer of admission, placement on leave of absence for a determined amount of time, suspension from

the program, ranging from one semester to four years, dismissal from the program, denial of a degree.

In addition to the program's disciplinary actions, the Dean of Students Office may also have grounds to issue one or more of the following:

- Reprimand
- Probation
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Restitution
- A zero or failing grade on an assignment/exam
- A lower grade or failure in the course
- Removal from course
- Enrollment restrictions in a course/program
- Conditions/terms of continuing as a student

Incident Reporting (Hate, Bias, Sexual Assault, Hazing, Students of Concern, Bullying)

The Dean of Students Office maintains a portal to report incidents of hate, bias, sexual assault, hazing, dating/domestic violence, stalking, missing students, and students displaying other concerning behaviors at UW-Madison:

Dean of Students Incident Reporting dosso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue

As noted above in “Personal Conduct Expectations,” students who feel they have been subject to hostile and/or intimidating behavior (i.e., bullying) are encouraged to review the informal and formal options for addressing this behavior (including filing complaints when desired) at:

Human Resources Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Website hr.wisc.edu/hib

Reporting Misconduct and Crime

The campus has established policies governing student conduct, academic dishonesty, discrimination, and harassment/abuse as well as specific reporting requirements in certain cases. If a student has a grievance regarding unfair treatment towards themselves, please reference the procedures and resources identified above. If a student learns about, observes, or witnesses misconduct or other wrongdoing, they may be required to report that misconduct or abuse. Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate to consult with their advisor, academic advising manager, Department Chair, or other campus resources (such as the [UW Office of Equity and Diversity](#), [Graduate School](#), [Mc Burney Disability Resource Center](#), [Employee Assistance Office](#), [Ombuds Office](#), and [University Health Services](#)).

Research Misconduct Reporting

The University of Wisconsin-Madison strives to foster the highest scholarly and ethical standards among its students, faculty, and staff. Graduate students are among the most

vulnerable groups when reporting misconduct because their source of financial support and the progress in their careers may be at risk by raising questions of wrongdoing. They are also often the closest witnesses to wrongdoing when it occurs and therefore must be appropriately protected from the consequences of reporting wrongdoing and be informed of their rights. Please find full details at research.wisc.edu/respolcomp/resethics/

Academic Misconduct Reporting

If a student knows a classmate is cheating on an exam or other academic exercise, they should notify their professor, teaching assistant or proctor of the exam. As a part of the university community, students are expected to uphold the standards of the university. They should also consider how their classmate's dishonesty may affect the overall grading curve and integrity of the program.

Sexual Assault Reporting

UW-Madison prohibits sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. These offenses violate UW-Madison policies and are subject to disciplinary action. Sanctions can range from reprimand to expulsion from UW-Madison. In many cases, these offenses also violate Wisconsin criminal law and could lead to arrest and criminal prosecution. Students who experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking have many options and services available to them on and off campus, including mental health counseling, victim advocacy and access to the criminal and campus disciplinary systems. For a list a confidential support and reporting options, please visit <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/prevention/violence-prevention/resources/>.

Faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and others who work directly with students at UW-Madison are required by law to report first-hand knowledge or disclosures of sexual assault to university officials for statistical purposes. In addition, disclosures made to certain university employees, such as academic advisors or university administrators, may be forwarded to the campus Title IX coordinator for a response. For more information, please visit <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/sexual-assault-dating-and-domestic-violence/>.

Child Abuse Reporting

UW-Madison employees (under [Wisconsin Executive Order #54](#)) are required to immediately report child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS) or law enforcement if, in the course of employment, the employee observes an incident or threat of child abuse or neglect, or learns of an incident or threat of child abuse or neglect, and the employee has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur. Volunteers working for UW-Madison sponsored programs or activities are also expected to report suspected abuse or neglect. Please find full details at oed.wisc.edu/child-abuse-and-neglect.htm.

Reporting and Response to Incidents of Bias/Hate

The University of Wisconsin-Madison values a diverse community where all members are able to participate fully in the Wisconsin Experience. Incidents of Bias/Hate affecting a person or group create a hostile climate and negatively impact the quality of the Wisconsin Experience for community members. UW-Madison takes such incidents seriously and will investigate and respond to reported or observed incidents of bias/hate. Please find full details at <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/services/bias-reporting-process/>.