College of Business
TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY™

Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems MS Information Systems Program

2021/2022

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Welcome to the Tarleton State University's College of Business: Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems!

We welcome you to Tarleton State University, the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems, and the Master of Science in Information Systems program! We are proud of our school history and the accomplishments of our students, faculty, and alumni. Please use this handbook as your guide to the program but remember that it is not intended to replace the personal feedback and guidance we hope you will solicit from your faculty in the department.[1]

Questions pertaining to the information contained herein can be directed to the Department Head, Program Coordinator, and Program Manager. The provisions of this Handbook have been adopted by the graduate Information Systems faculty as the official procedures for students in the program. This Handbook supersedes any previous guidelines, handouts, and/or brochures. Students are responsible for adherence to the policies in the Handbook edition current during the semester in which the student was admitted.

We are glad to welcome you as a member of the Tarleton State University community and look forward to your development as a graduate student and productive member of the Profession!

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[1] The information presented in this handbook summarizes the current departmental procedures and regulations governing graduate work in the Department of Marketing and Computer Information System's MS-Information Systems program. This Handbook is broad in scope and is intended to supplement and extend the more general University-level requirements. Although this Handbook is designed to serve as a resource, it does not replace or supersede higher-level programs, policies, and procedures of Tarleton State University. Students are required to become familiar with this material, as well as the Tarleton State University's Catalog and Student Handbook, throughout their graduate program.

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Introduction

Greetings from the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems at Tarleton State University! Our Department is comprised of a community of scholars with expertise in both business and academics. While you will find lots of useful information within this handbook, please visit our website for more information where you will discover much more about what we have to offer:

- Departmental Website
- Program Page

As a faculty, we hold our students to the highest of standards. As such, the faculty wants you to know that it is the responsibility of the student to read and become familiar with the information in this student handbook. This information will help you be successful in your graduate student career at Tarleton State University.

COB Mission Statement

The College of Business creates a dynamic learning environment for a diverse student population with a broad range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experience, to develop the knowledge and skills needed to become productive contributors to the global business environment.

COB Vision

The College of Business at Tarleton State University will be a regional leader in business education.

MS Information Systems Program Mission

The mission of the Master of Science in Information Systems (MS-IS) degree program is to provide a relevant, high-quality education that develops students' decision-making skills in the productive and profitable utilization of computer information systems, preparing them for success in their careers and life-long learning.

MS Information Systems Learning Objectives

- Students will design scalable, robust network solutions to address business/organizational needs
- Students will evaluate appropriate information technologies to support strategic and operational goals of an organization
- Students will design scalable, robust database solutions to address business/organizational needs
- Students will develop appropriate solutions to address business/organizational needs utilizing systems development methodologies
- Students will apply project management concepts to solve business/organizational needs
- Students will apply discipline related academic/practitioner literature to support their arguments

Link between the Program and the Industry

The MS Information Systems curriculum is driven by faculty experience, feedback from alumni surveys, advisory board feedback, and model curriculum developed by leading organizations within the field of information systems. Together, a collaborative vision is developed to make sure that students receive a current and relevant education that can be used to advance their careers and develop into life-long learners.

Admissions

To begin the MS-IS program, students must be admitted first to the College of Graduate Studies and then to the College of Business. New students are accepted in the summer, fall, and spring.

Apply to the College of Graduate Studies
(Admission to the College of Graduate Studies does not automatically admit a student to a graduate degree program.):

- Admission Directions from COGS
- Complete and submit the online application

Applicants who have a 3.0 or above GPA will be fully admitted. Applicants with a 2.5 to 3.0 GPA on their overall score or their last 60-hours of classwork will be conditionally admitted. Students admitted under this category are placed on Academic Warning. Students must achieve a 3.0 cumulative grade point average their first semester of enrollment, or they will be placed on Academic Suspension. See "Graduate Student Performance" section.

Course Delivery

The Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems offers program courses online. Occasionally, some classes such as BCIS 5311 are taught at the Fort Worth campus in support of other programs but it should be noted that this does not constitute that the MS in Information Systems is being offered at that campus.

Program Courses and Course Rotation

The MS Information Systems program is a 36-hour program *at a minimum*. Students who choose to pursue a doctoral degree are encouraged to take the Thesis option, which would require at least 2 or possibly 3 additional courses. The following links provide course rotation and Degree Requirements for the MS-IS program:

- Graduate Course Rotations
- Degree Requirements

Transfer Hours

A maximum of 12 hours of graduate work completed at another regionally, nationally, or internationally accredited institution, and that may have been counted toward a completed graduate degree, may be transferred into the MS Information Systems program under the following conditions:

1. The student must submit a transcript and syllabus to the Program Manager when making the request. The course(s) must be equivalent to the MS Information Systems program courses. The Department has the final say if the course is acceptable.
2. Under no circumstance shall BCIS 5304, BCIS 5307, BCIS 5311, BCIS 5351, BCIS 5316, BCIS 5392, and/or BCIS 5398 equivalents be permitted for transfer.
3. Credit for course work submitted for transfer must be shown in semester credit hours or equated to semester credit hours.
4. All courses should be less than 6 years old at the time of graduation.
5. Student must have earned an A or B in all courses transferred.

Class Registration

Review the notes below to register for classes:

- It is important to remember that the availability of classes cannot be guaranteed and ***overrides into closed sections are not always permitted***. You need to access DuckTrax for an accurate source of current class offerings.
- Advance registration for the spring semester is held the preceding fall semester and advance registration for the summer and fall semesters is held the preceding spring semester. Only students who are enrolled in the semester in which advance registration is held are eligible to register early. All others must participate in the regular registration process.
- The MS Information Systems program follows a specific course rotation. Classes fill up quickly, so register in a timely manner. Remember, you can locate classes and view current course availability on DuckTrax.
- **A note of caution!** If payment is not made on time, the university will drop a student's registration. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that payment is made on time. The academic calendar on the Tarleton State University homepage includes payment deadlines for your convenience.

> **Full-time status**. The University defines full-time status as being registered for a minimum of nine (9) semester credit hours during a fall and spring semester, and six (6) semester credit hours during t h e summer semester. Typically, students will take six (6) semester credit hours per semester. International students should contact College of Graduate Studies to determine the minimum number of credit hours required, and the mode of delivery of those classes, depending on the type of visa held.

> **Maximum hours**. Graduate students may enroll for a maximum of 12 (twelve) credit hours during a regular semester and nine (9) credit hours for a 10-week summer semester. Requests to exceed the maximum hours must be made through the Program Director.

Continuation of Enrollment

Students who have been granted admission must register in the term for which admission is granted. Any student who fails to register during any one-year period prior to graduation will be required to apply for re-admission to the College of Graduate Studies and the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems according to the procedures and standards in effect at the time of reconsideration.

Time Limit

All requirements for the MS Information Systems degree must be completed within a period of six (6) consecutive calendar years from the time the student first enrolls in program courses for the degree to be granted.

Degree Plan

All students are required to have a degree plan on file with the College of Graduate Studies. A student will not be permitted to make application for graduation without a degree plan. A student will receive a degree plan upon full admission to the Department. The Department highly recommends a student check with the College of Graduate Studies prior to attempting to register for graduation to assure his or her plan is on file.

Thesis Option

The thesis involves an original research project under the direction of a graduate faculty member and the preparation of a thesis in addition to prescribed course work. *Minimum* requirements for the thesis track are 36 hours above the Baccalaureate. Students will follow the courses listed for their respective degree programs with the addition of at least two thesis courses (6 hours) and possibly a graduate level statistics course. Because of the research emphasis in the thesis track, additional background courses or additional undergraduate leveling work may also be required. In some cases, additional thesis courses may be required to complete the program but will not be counted toward the program credit hours.

Intent to pursue a Thesis

Upon acceptance for graduate study in the College of Business, students must declare their intent to pursue the thesis option with the MS Information Systems Program Director and the Marketing and Computer Information System's Department Head. Suitability for pursuing a thesis option will be determined primarily on the student's undergraduate preparation, undergraduate GPA, the level of success in courses at the graduate level early in their program, and desire to potentially pursue a doctorate in the future. The student will then work with the Marketing and Computer Information Systems Department Head to determine, in very broad or general terms, a focus area or topic of study. Based on the area of interest or topic, the Marketing and Computer Information Systems Department Head will recommend graduate faculty who have experience or interest in that area to act as the Thesis Advisor (Chair). It should be noted, however, that accepting the role as a Thesis Advisor is at the discretion of each faculty member based on their workload, interest in the topic area, and interest in acting as a Thesis Advisor. As such, not every student who expresses an interest in a thesis may be allowed to do so. Faculty members may also recommend students for the Thesis option.

Residency

Due to the fact that a significant amount of personal interaction, mentoring, and guidance is required between the student and faculty members for the successful completion of a thesis, students who pursue a thesis must commit to substantial on-campus or virtual interaction with his or her Advisor and Committee members. Because the MS Information Systems program is predominantly conducted in an online format, Advisors and Committee members will work with students to determine what, if any, specific on-campus requirements during their residency period exist.

Thesis Advisor (Chair) and Thesis Committee

Faculty members who elect to act as Thesis Advisors (i.e., major professor or Thesis committee chair) must be a member of the graduate faculty and must be approved for such assignments by the Marketing and Computer Information Systems Department Head. The Thesis Advisor will work with the student in the development of the specialized area for research and the composition and appointment of a Thesis Advisory Committee. The Thesis Advisor, along with the Thesis Advisory Committee, will guide the student in completion of the thesis during their program. The Thesis Advisory Committee usually consists of the Advisor and two or three other faculty members with interests or backgrounds that will complement the student's thesis topic.

Thesis Proposal

Upon completion of sufficient coursework and under the direction of their Thesis Advisor, students will develop their Thesis Proposal per the College of Graduate Studies Outline for Thesis Proposal. The "Proposal" is generally considered to be the Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology sections of the Thesis. With approval by the members of the Thesis Advisory Committee, each candidate will make a formal presentation of their research topic to their Committee and other invited guests, "proposing" their research study. If the Thesis Proposal is accepted and approved by their Committee, the candidate may continue with their thesis. If the Proposal is not accepted, the candidate will be given feedback on how to improve their Proposal. Candidates may attempt the Proposal once per long semester (fall, spring).

- COGS Thesis manual: https://www.tarleton.edu/graduate/current/thesis-dissertation.html

Thesis Defense

Upon completion of the Thesis and preparation of the final document per the College of Graduate Studies Thesis Manual, and with approval by the members of the Thesis Advisory Committee, each candidate will make a formal presentation to "defend" their research and findings in an open, public forum per the College of Graduate Studies requirements. If the oral examination is not successfully completed on first attempt, the specific area(s) of weakness will be identified to the candidate so that corrective action may be taken before the next attempt.

Ethical Standards

Students are expected to maintain professional demeanor and protocol such as:

- Personal integrity
- Responsibility for one's own behavior, tasks, assignments and life lessons
- Consideration, caring and sensitivity to peers
- Maturity, including the capacity to accept "no"
- Evidence of a continuous process of self-exploration, resulting in enhanced self-awareness
- Practice of ethical and moral professional behavior
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Openness to constructive feedback and willingness to make suggested changes

Integrity Standards

Integrity is a state or condition of being whole, complete, unbroken, unimpaired, sound, perfect condition (Erhard, Jensen, & Zaffron, 2016). This wholeness rests upon an alignment of intention and purpose, that is, a commitment to sound moral principles (Monga, 2016). Empirical evidence demonstrates that integrity is positively correlated with organizational performance (see, for example, (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingalas, 2015) and (Dikolli, Keusch, Mayew, & Steffen, 2019)). Integrity for the MS Information Systems program includes providing assurance to the program's stakeholders that graduates possess the characteristics required to be a successful information systems professional. One of the most valuable assets an information systems professional possesses is his or her reputation for integrity. Unlike many other assets the information system professional may acquire throughout one's career, once one's integrity has been impaired, it is very difficult to rebuild its original value. The MS Information Systems program is designed to prepare students for a successful career in information technology, and therefore it is imperative that only the highest standards of integrity are practiced – even as a student. Therefore, if a graduate Information Systems student has been referred to the office of the Dean of Students, and has been found to have been responsible for an infraction regarding integrity (e.g. academic dishonesty as defined in the Academic Conduct Policy from Student Rules), then the department head must convene a council of three graduate faculty members to consider whether the infraction (or infractions if there is a pattern of infractions) is sufficient to expel the student from the MS Information System program. Those three graduate faculty members cannot include the professor who referred the student to the office of the Dean of Students for the infraction which prompted this council. The decision of the council can range from doing nothing more than what the office of the Dean of Students has imposed to expulsion from the MS Information System program. The decision could also consider suspending the student for any time period determined by the council.

Appeals Process

The student has a right to appeal the decision of the faculty council to the Head of the Marketing and Computer Information Systems. The appeal must be made within 5 business days of the date when the council's decision was delivered to the student. The student must clearly specify the basis upon which the appeal is made (i.e. bias on the part of members of the council, evidence not considered appropriately by the council, new evidence not available to the council, etc.).   If the student wants to appeal the decision of the Head of the Marketing and Computer Information Systems Department, the student has the option to appeal to the Dean of the College of Business. The appeals process beyond that needs to be made to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

Further, all students are expected to understand and practice the ethical codes and standards of conduct of the following:
- Policies and Procedures of the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems
- TSU Student Rules https://www.tarleton.edu/studentrules/code-of-student-conduct.html and
- TSU Rules: http://www.tarleton.edu/policy/

Violations of any of these policies, ethics, or rules could deem a student unfit to continue studies in the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems. Faculty of the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems are the gatekeepers to the Information Systems profession, thus, have an obligation to respond when students are in violation of any of these rules. Further, it is the student's responsibility to read and refer to these rules and policies if a situation should arise.

Students are responsible for their learning. Other responsibilities include:
- Knowing the contents of the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems MS Information System's Student Handbook.
- Regularly checking the Department's website, Go Tarleton email accounts, and Canvas for deadlines and information.
- Reading the TSU Catalog each year to determine if changes impact them.
- Reading and adhering to the Department and University policies, rules, and professional ethical standards.
- Meeting registration and payment deadlines.
- Participating in activities and projects, internal or external to the University, which will enhance their learning experience.
- Participating in academic research beyond the classroom.
- Filing and maintaining a current degree plan.
- Being aware of and adhering to all course prerequisites.
- Preparing for courses by planning to attend regularly scheduled classes, allowing for adequate study time, completing assignments on a timely basis, and taking the exams as scheduled.
- Becoming identified with the professional community by joining professional organizations or association (AITP, AIS, ISSA, etc.)
- Working toward or attaining professional certifications that are relevant towards your career goals (PMP, A+, Network+, CISSP, etc.)
- Maintain at least a 3.0 GPA.

Graduate Student Performance

Every student enrolled in the College of Graduate Studies is required to maintain a high level of performance and comply fully with the policies of the institution. The College reserves the right to suspend any graduate student who does not maintain satisfactory academic standing or fails to conform to University policies, rules, and regulations. The College also reserves the right to impose sanctions beyond those imposed by the University for violation of College or University policies, rules, and regulations (See Student Code of Conduct, Sect. 9.1 Disciplinary Sanctions).

Students who have achieved admission are expected to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA on work completed at Tarleton.

> Note: A student's cumulative GPA is calculated based on coursework attempted at Tarleton State University and a student's overall GPA is calculated based on coursework attempted at Tarleton State University plus any applicable transfer coursework. Undergraduate courses taken for leveling or as undesignated electives are used in the calculation of the semester and cumulative grade point averages and thus determine one's academic standing.

If, in a particular semester, a student's cumulative GPA or overall GPA falls below the 3.0 GPA minimum, he/she will be given notice of unsatisfactory academic performance. To correct this unsatisfactory condition:
- The student must attain a 3.0 cumulative GPA during her or his next period of enrollment.

If, for a second semester during the student's program, a student's cumulative GPA or overall GPA falls below the 3.0 GPA minimum, he/she will be given notice of unsatisfactory academic performance and he/she will be automatically suspended for one semester (fall, spring, or summer). To correct this unsatisfactory condition:
- The student must attain a 3.0 cumulative GPA during her or his next period of enrollment.

If, for a third semester during the student's program, his or her cumulative GPA or overall GPA falls below the 3.0 GPA minimum, he/she will be given notice of unsatisfactory academic performance, will be suspended indefinitely, and will be dropped from the program.

A graduate student is allowed one suspension. If poor academic performance results in a second suspension, the student will be dropped from the program and may be permanently dismissed from the university.

> Note: Graduate students who are on suspension must reapply (including the application fee) to the College of Graduate Studies for reinstatement.

At the end of any grading period, if a student's overall GPA falls below 2.0 he/she will be automatically suspended and dropped from the program.

Monitoring Student Progress

The Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems and COB faculty members continually evaluate student performance (academic and professional responsibility). Some, but not all, criteria used by the faculty to assess students include:

- Adherence to College, Department, and program policies and procedures
- Receiving a grade of C or below
- A cumulative GPA below 3.0
- Faculty's observations of performance (academic or professional responsibility)
- Tarleton State University's Rules and
- Professional Codes of Ethics

APA Writing Format

The Marketing and Computer Information Systems department and the MS Information Systems program adhere to writing standards according to American Psychological Association, 2019, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Students are expected to proof read their papers carefully prior to submission for a grade.

Graduation

It is the student's responsibility to make sure all university requirements regarding final procedures related to degree are followed and completed. Please be aware that the deadline for registering for graduation is early. The following link contains comprehensive graduation information: http://www.tarleton.edu/graduation/index.html. A student must apply for graduation, regardless of whether they plan to attend/participate the commencement ceremony, to have their degree conferred.

Professional Organizations

Students are encouraged to become members of professional organizations in their field. Some of these in Information Systems include:
- The Association for Information Technology Professionals (AITP)
- The Association for Information Systems (AIS)
- The Information Systems Security Association (ISSA)
- The Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA)

References

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