



SCHOOL OF  
PROFESSIONAL  
STUDIES

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

Northwestern University School of Professional Studies  
Graduate Programs and Advanced Graduate Study Certificate Programs

2016–17

## *Degree Programs*

Clinical Research and Regulatory Administration  
Creative Writing  
Global Health  
Health Informatics  
Information Design and Strategy  
Information Systems  
Liberal Studies  
Literature  
Medical Informatics  
Predictive Analytics  
Public Policy and Administration  
Quality Assurance and Regulatory Science  
Regulatory Compliance  
Sports Administration

## *Certificates of Advanced Graduate Study*

Advanced Data Science, American Literature, American Studies, Analytics and Business Intelligence for IT Pros, British Literature, Chicago Studies, Clinical Research, Comparative and World Literature, Database and Internet Technologies, Film, Literature, and Visual Culture, Fundamentals of Medical Informatics, Global Policy, Healthcare Compliance, History, Information Systems Management, Information Systems Security, Medical Informatics for Clinicians, Medical Informatics for IT Professionals, Public Administration, Policy Analysis, Public Policy, Quality Systems, Religious and Ethical Studies

## Northwestern University School of Professional Studies Graduate Student Handbook

Welcome to Northwestern University School of Professional Studies (SPS).

This Graduate Student Handbook is your guide to your SPS graduate program of study and Northwestern University. It will provide you with information about various practical aspects of graduate life and is intended to help you navigate through your program and its administrative procedures. The handbook is your reference tool for a wide range of student concerns, from course registration to your culminating project. In many cases, it is the quickest path to an answer. If, after consulting the handbook, you still have questions or unresolved issues, please contact your [academic and career adviser](#) or the appropriate resource.

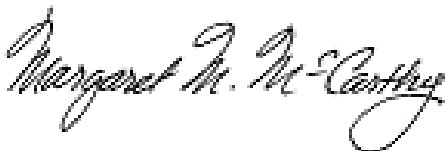
If you are looking for your certificate of advanced graduate study or graduate degree program's academic requirements, please refer to the [curriculum maps](#) — selecting the year you first enrolled in courses.

In addition to the policies set forth in this handbook, you are also expected to be familiar with University-enacted rules and regulations, which are found in the Northwestern University [Student Handbook](#). Please familiarize yourself with the scope and the specifics of the University's [Student Code of Conduct](#).

The Graduate Student Handbook can also be found on the [SPS website](#), where all updates and new information will be posted. SPS reserves the right to change programs of study, academic requirements, teaching staff, class meeting times and other published information without prior notice and in accordance with University procedures.

SPS hopes this handbook will help you plan your studies effectively, provide you with useful information and direct you to the resources you need.

Sincerely,



Margaret M. McCarthy  
Associate Dean for Student and Alumni Services  
Northwestern University School of Professional Studies

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# Getting Started

## New Student Orientation

An online orientation session is available in an asynchronous format to accommodate the busy schedules of working adults. All students must schedule time to view the orientation session before beginning their studies at SPS. Students are encouraged to contact their [academic and career advisers](#) with any follow-up questions or concerns. To access the online orientation, click [here](#).

## Identification Card

The University provides all students with a seven-digit identification number (typically starting with a 2) known as a student or “empl” ID. This student number is used by the registrar and student accounts. SPS recommends that students obtain a WildCARD, a picture ID card bearing the student ID. The WildCARD allows access to University libraries and use of Northwestern shuttles, including the intercampus shuttle. Students obtain their WildCARD from the Evanston or Chicago WildCARD office. For more information, click [here](#).

Online students who are unable to visit the Evanston or Chicago campuses to have a WildCARD created may email a digital photo of themselves to [Student Services](#). The photo must be taken in front of a white background from a distance of two to three feet. No other photos will be accepted. In addition, please send a notarized copy of a valid photo ID to Northwestern University School of Professional Studies; Wieboldt Hall, Sixth Floor; 339 East Chicago Avenue; Chicago, IL 60611-3008. Please mark this to the attention of Student Services.

Online students will receive their WildCARD barcode number, which provides access to certain library resources, during the first week that courses begin.

## NetID

Northwestern also issues each student an electronic identification user name known as a “NetID.” The NetID will take the format of three letters and three numbers (i.e., abc123). A NetID enables students to access email, view electronic course materials, see grades and use online reference materials from the University libraries. An assigned NetID and temporary password are included in admissions materials distributed upon program admittance. Students will need to activate their account by changing the password. For more information, click [here](#).

## Email Account

As a condition of taking classes with SPS, students must maintain an active Northwestern email account. Email is the University’s mechanism for official communication with students, and Northwestern expects that students will read official email in a timely fashion. All communication

from students to University administration should be conducted with a Northwestern email account. If a non-Northwestern email account is a student's primary email, he or she may choose to forward Northwestern email to the primary email account. However, students still need to maintain the Northwestern account by periodically updating the password. For more information on Northwestern email, click [here](#).

## **Name and Address Changes**

Students who change a permanent or local street address or email address must update their address information online by logging onto CAESAR (see the [Using CAESAR](#) section for more information on the purpose and uses of CAESAR) and clicking on Personal Portfolio in the Student Enterprise Menu. Essential communications such as billing statements, convocation tickets and diplomas require up-to-date contact information. Students who change their names must provide documentation at the SPS Registrar's Office to effect a name change.

## **Student Loans and Financial Aid**

For questions regarding financial aid, please contact the [Chicago Office of Financial Aid](#) online or at 312-503-8722. SPS recommends that students schedule an appointment with a financial aid adviser two to three months before the beginning of the loan period to review procedures and to discuss their application.

## **Tuition and Refunds**

Tuition information is adjusted annually and can be found on the Tuition page for each [graduate program](#) or [certificate program](#).

Students who withdraw from SPS for the term may be eligible for a partial tuition refund, less any nonrefundable fees. The tuition refund policy is applied as of the date the request is received. For more information on refund policy when a course is dropped or for a withdrawal from SPS, contact [Student Financial Services](#).

## **Parking**

### ***Chicago Campus***

When attending classes on the Chicago campus, students may park in several garages for a reduced rate if they receive validation of the parking ticket on the fourth or fifth floor lounges of Wieboldt Hall. On-campus parking permits for the Chicago campus are available through the Parking Office in Abbott Hall, Room 100, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. For more information about parking on the Chicago campus, click [here](#).

### ***Evanston Campus***

Students may park without a permit in most lots on the Evanston campus after 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and in all lots during the weekend. For additional information about parking in Evanston, click [here](#).

## **Required Proof of Immunization**

All on-campus students taking two or more classes per quarter are required by Illinois state law and University regulations to provide proof of immunizations, in English. For more information about required documentation, please visit the [University Health Services](#) website.

## **Health Insurance**

SPS on-campus students are eligible to enroll in Northwestern's health insurance plan if they show proof of continuing registration in at least two classes per quarter in a degree-seeking program. University Health Service is the primary provider under the plan. To use University Health Service, SPS students must pay the health clinic use fee each quarter. For details about the health plan, enrollment instructions and information about adding a spouse or dependents, visit the website of the [Office of Risk Management](#).

## **Global Safety and Security**

Northwestern University encourages its students to participate in a wide variety of educational experiences abroad. To minimize health and safety risks, the University has adopted policies and procedures to govern undergraduate and graduate travel for international opportunities and experiences. Those policies and procedures are detailed at the website of the [Office of Global Safety and Security](#).

SPS students considering travel related to credit-bearing educational experiences, or with non-credit experiences related to their study at Northwestern should visit the Global Safety and Security website to become familiar with the policies related to international travel for Northwestern students. Students in the Global Health degree program should also refer to the Practicum section of the Program-Specific Policies section of the handbook and further details. Any questions regarding eligibility for academic or extracurricular experiences abroad should be directed to the student's [academic and career adviser](#).

## **Service Animals in Wieboldt Hall**

Wieboldt Hall welcomes trained and tethered service dogs and miniature horses. No other animals



are allowed on the private building premises. Owners will be asked to immediately remove nonservice animals brought on the premises.

## Program Tools and Resources

### Academic and Career Advising

#### *Student Services Philosophy*

The Student Services team supports our adult students in their academic and career development, provides access to Northwestern University resources, and fosters networking and community within programs. Advisers work collaboratively with students while empowering them to develop and implement academic plans that achieve their scholarly and professional goals. The Student Services team is invested in preparing students to apply their Northwestern education to their next step of professional success.

#### *Additional Information on Academic and Career Advising*

Students with academic or career questions or concerns should turn first to their [academic and career adviser](#). Academic and career advisers encourage students to take full advantage of their help in:

- Academic planning and course selection
- Career resource education
- Résumé and cover letter guidance
- Supporting the student experience
- Preparing for the thesis

A meeting with an [academic and career adviser](#) is encouraged for new students. Appointments are available by email, phone, in-person on the Chicago campus, or online via Blue Jeans conferencing service. At this first meeting, a student will review course options for the quarter with an eye toward creating a plan the entire academic career at Northwestern. Follow-up advising meetings are recommended at these milestones:

- After completing approximately a third of the curriculum
- At the start of the academic year in which graduation is expected
- Before registering for an independent thesis research project

Advisers may refer students to an SPS staff member, faculty director, or faculty member if appropriate.

To schedule an appointment, please contact the appropriate [academic and career adviser](#).

## Learning Management System (Canvas)

[Canvas](#) is Northwestern University's Learning Management System. Canvas is a cloud-hosted system that allows Northwestern instructors and students to deliver course materials, submit assignments and tests, view grades, and create learning activities.

Canvas course sites should be available to registered students two weeks prior to the start of the quarter. If a student registers for a class in the two weeks prior to the start of the quarter, it typically takes up to 24 hours for the Canvas course site to become available. Students who are unable to view a course site should email the course instructor.

To access Canvas and view frequently asked questions and tutorials, click [here](#).

## Using CAESAR

CAESAR provides student web access to Northwestern's Student Enterprise System. Through CAESAR, students can register for classes, get an unofficial transcript and grades, see financial aid and student account information, update address and telephone numbers, check course enrollment levels and more. The [CAESAR help and how-to page](#) provides the information needed to navigate CAESAR confidently and easily and includes tip-sheets and tutorials.

For the most part, students may register for courses online through CAESAR; however, some courses do require paper registration. These include [independent studies](#), [590 registrations](#), [MCW practicums](#) and [courses taken outside a student's program](#).

Before registering for classes on CAESAR, students should consult the [official course schedule](#) on the SPS website. The SPS website is typically updated more quickly than CAESAR and in case of discrepancy will be regarded as the official schedule.

## Bookstores

Students are responsible for checking bookstores, either on campus or online, to see what materials their instructors have ordered. Books and coursepacks are generally available one to two weeks before classes begin. If no books are available at the stores listed below, students should contact the instructor by email; he or she may have ordered them at another store or copy shop. Books are usually listed on the course syllabus, which may be obtained from the instructor and is normally available two weeks before classes begin. Instructors using Canvas are required to post the syllabus on the course site.

### **For classes taught on the Evanston campus**

[Norris Center Bookstore](#), 1999 South Campus Drive  
847-491-3990

**For classes taught on the Chicago campus and all online courses**

[Abbott Hall Bookstore](#), 710 North Lake Shore Drive, Room 140  
312-503-8486

## **The Library System**

Northwestern University maintains an extensive library system to support its programs of study and research. This system includes the University Library and a number of special libraries on the Evanston and Chicago campuses, also accessible online. The library holdings constitute a collection of approximately 6 million volumes, 3.9 million microfilms and nearly 38,000 periodicals and serials.

## Writing Support

The Writing Place is a free tutorial service provided to currently enrolled SPS students who feel that they need extra help with writing assignments. In-person consultations are available for on the Chicago and Evanston campuses, or can take place by phone or Skype. All appointments must be made online. Please visit [The Writing Place website](#) to view resources or schedule a consultation appointment.

## Math Support

[The Math Place](#) is a free tutorial service provided to currently enrolled SPS students who feel that they need extra help with their math assignments. Appointments are available by phone, in-person on the Chicago campus, or online via Blue Jeans conferencing service. All appointments must be made online.

Tutor assistance includes help with precalculus, algebra, calculus and statistics. Sessions are most productive when the student seeks help on a specific assignment or subject and attempts an assignment before seeing the tutor. Students should bring all relevant materials, such as the course syllabus, class notes, handouts, assignment sheets and workbooks.

## Policies and Procedures

SPS makes every effort to create graduate programs that meet the needs of working adults. SPS therefore allows students to manage their own course schedules, to determine how many courses they can successfully complete each quarter and to take a quarter off when needed.

Although SPS programs are flexible, there are several policies that students must adhere to in order to maintain adequate academic progress and successfully complete a program. Students should familiarize themselves with the following policies governing all graduate programs.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

Federal and state regulations require recipients of financial aid to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) in their programs of study. The University expects that students will make progress toward completion of the degree or professional development program in which they are enrolled. The following requirements apply to all students for all terms of enrollment within an academic year, including those terms for which no financial aid was granted.

For additional information on SAP requirements please contact the [Chicago Office of Financial Aid](#).

## Academic Probation

Graduate students at SPS are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (B) throughout their studies and to successfully complete all classes taken each quarter.

### Academic Probation

Academic probation is a warning status applied to students who do not meet these minimum expectations. Students will be placed on academic probation if they have received any of the following:

- a cumulative GPA under 3.00
- received an F grade in a course in that term
- two or more incomplete (Y) grades

Students receiving a notice of academic probation must carefully follow the instructions in the notice and contact their [academic and career advisers](#) for additional help or guidance. Students on academic probation may be dismissed from their program for consistently poor academic performance.

### Additional Policies on Academic Probation

- Students who have two or more incomplete grades will have an academic hold placed on their account, preventing them from taking additional classes until they have successfully completed at least one of the incomplete courses.
- A student's academic performance may affect eligibility for federal financial aid programs. For more information, please refer to the [SAP policy](#) or contact the [Student Financial Aid Office](#) regarding SAP requirements.

## Dismissal from Program

Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 (B) average. Students will be dismissed from their program immediately under the following circumstances:

- After taking two courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 1.50
- After taking three courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.00
- After taking four courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.50
- After taking five courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.60
- After taking six courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.70
- After taking seven courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.80
- After taking eight or more courses, they have a cumulative GPA of less than 2.9\*

\* A cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) or greater is required in order for a student to complete their academic program and receive their degree or certificate.

Students may also be dismissed for:

- Violating academic integrity

- Violating the student code of conduct

### Petitions

If a student feels that extenuating circumstances may merit an exception to any of the above policies, he or she should submit a Student Affairs Petition outlining the reasoning and attach any relevant supporting documentation.

## **Degree and Certificate Requirements**

To receive a graduate degree or a certificate of advanced graduate study from SPS, students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Completion of the program-specific curriculum, as outlined in the [curriculum map](#), with
  - a. Adherence to policies and procedures outlined in this handbook (more information may be found in [Curriculum Policies and Procedures](#));
  - b. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (more information may be found in the [Grade Requirements and Academic Progress](#) section).
2. Adherence to policies on [student conduct](#) and [academic integrity](#) to the satisfaction of SPS.
3. Timely completion of the program and submission of graduation or certificate forms. More information may be found in the [Completing the Degree or Certificate](#) section.

## **Student Affairs Petition**

Students who feel that they have an extenuating circumstance related to the enforcement of school policy and procedures may request an exception to stated policies and procedures through the Student Affairs Petition process. A petition must be submitted within 1 calendar year of the academic quarter in which the issue occurred (e.g. a student must submit a petition by no later than the end of the fall quarter of 2016 to request an exception for an issue that arose in the fall quarter of 2015).

To submit a Student Affairs Petition, use the electronic form found on the SPS website on the [Forms and Documents page](#).

Students must include all relevant documents and evidence in the initial submission. Electronic supporting documents (doctors' notes, etc.) may be emailed to [onlinereg@northwestern.edu](mailto:onlinereg@northwestern.edu) or delivered to the SPS Registrar's Office on the Chicago campus. All petitions should include an explanation of the issue in question and requested outcome, legible documentation from a credible source, and an accurate timeline of their actions within the situation (e.g. last date of attendance).

Students should not use the petition process frivolously. The committee will be most understanding of cases in which the student could not have reasonably foreseen the circumstances.

## Student Affairs Appeal

Students may appeal a petition decision made by a Student Affairs committee. The decisions of the Student Affairs Appeal process are final.

To submit a Student Affairs Appeal, use the electronic form found [here](#). Students must include all relevant documents and evidence to support their appeal. Electronic supporting documents (doctors' notes, etc.) may be emailed to [onlinereg@northwestern.edu](mailto:onlinereg@northwestern.edu) or delivered to the SPS Registrar's Office on the Chicago campus.

## Curriculum Policies and Procedures

### *Curriculum Requirements*

Before students select courses, they must meet the [curriculum requirements](#) in place at the time of initial enrollment into the degree or certificate program.

### *Course Registration*

Students should consult the [graduate course listings](#) for the most up-to-date information. Course descriptions, instructor information, day/time and campus information, term start and end dates and course prerequisites are listed.

Students may register for all courses through [CAESAR with the exception of the below courses](#). More information may be found at the [Using CAESAR](#) section of the student handbook.

- Independent Studies (499)
- Practicums (579/580)
- Thesis Research (589/590)
- Courses outside one's program

[Room assignments](#) are posted one week prior to the beginning of the quarter.

### *Course Registration Deadlines*

Students may register for courses from the time registration opens approximately six to eight weeks before the quarter starts until the add/drop deadline near the end of the first week. Exact dates for these events are found on the [graduate calendar](#).

Students are responsible for adhering to registration deadlines. It is the student's responsibility to register and, if necessary, drop classes by the posted deadlines. No one will complete this for the student, except in cases where a class is cancelled.

SPS encourages students to register for courses at the earliest possible date. Early registration helps SPS serve its students more effectively. Some courses fill up quickly, and early registration will let SPS staff know whether an additional section (where possible) is needed. Students who delay registration may find that an under-enrolled course has been cancelled due to apparent lack of interest.

If registration questions or problems arise, students may contact the SPS Registrar's Office at [onlinereg@northwestern.edu](mailto:onlinereg@northwestern.edu) or 312-503-6951.

### ***Continuous Enrollment Requirement***

Students who do not register for during the registration period for four consecutive quarters are considered to have “discontinued” their study at SPS and withdrawn from their program and deactivated by the CAESAR system. In order to be reactivated and take courses again, students must submit the [SPS Request for Readmission](#). If readmitted, students may be subject to new curriculum requirements and a readmission fee.

### ***SPS 512***

SPS 512 is a placeholder registration course for students to use in order to maintain continuous enrollment in their program in a quarter where they do not enroll in any credit-bearing courses (e.g. during continued work on a thesis project).

Registration in SPS 512 will allow students to:

- Maintain an active Net ID and email account.
- Access University facilities such as libraries, labs and sports facilities.
- Avoid readmission requirement for longer leaves of absence.

Students register for SPS 512 in exactly the same way that they would for any other course, via CAESAR.

### ***Additional Policies and Information on SPS 512***

- There is no cost to register for SPS 512.
- SPS 512 does not carry any units of credits, so it cannot be used to defer loans or maintain international residency requirements.

### ***Time Away from Studies at SPS***

If students need to take time off from their program, they should register for the placeholder course, SPS 512 Continuous Registration, in order to maintain active student status and avoid discontinuation. More information on SPS 512 Continuous Registration may be found below.



- Students should register for SPS 512 for each quarter that they are away from their academic studies.
- The five year master's degree completion deadline still applies to students utilizing the SPS 512 placeholder course.
- Students on an F-1 or J-1 visa must consult with the [International Office](#) regarding their registration requirements and leave policies.

### ***Deferring Entry into the Program***

Students have the option to delay the start of their degree program or certificate of advanced graduate study by one to three quarters.

Students may defer by sending an [email](#) to the SPS registrar.

### ***Important Information and Policies on Deferred Entry***

- Students may defer a maximum of three quarters from their term of admission. For example, a student admitted for a fall quarter may defer fall, winter and spring quarters but must start the certificate of advanced graduate study or degree program by the summer term.
- Students who do not start their certificate of advanced graduate study or degree program within this time must apply for readmission.

## **Voluntary Medical Leave of Absence**

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of a voluntary medical leave of absence (MLOA) is to provide students time away from academic studies, for treatment of a physical or mental health condition that impairs a student's ability to function safely and successfully as a member of the Northwestern University School of Professional Studies (SPS) community. The authority to grant a MLOA and permission to return from a MLOA resides with the Associate Dean of Students at SPS. Each leave is individualized based on the needs of the student and handled on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Deadlines***

Students can apply for a voluntary MLOA at any time; however, in order for a MLOA to take effect during an ongoing quarter, **the process must be completed before final exam date or final coursework is due;** whichever happens first. In addition, a MLOA cannot be processed if a student has taken a final exam or final coursework for any of their classes in the given quarter.

A voluntary MLOA lasts at least two full academic quarters. If a MLOA lasts for longer than an academic year, students are expected to adhere to curriculum changes in their program of study during their absence.

Requests for reinstatement from a voluntary MLOA must be submitted no later than six weeks before the term in which the student wishes to start. Applications for reinstatement will NOT be considered after the deadlines.

<b>Quarter of Leave</b>	<b>Request for Reinstatement from MLOA Deadlines</b>
Fall quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of summer term
Winter quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of fall term
Spring quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of winter term
Summer quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of spring term

Exact deadlines are indicated on the [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#) Academic calendar as “Application for Readmission” due dates.

### ***MLOA Request Process***

To begin the process of applying for a MLOA, students must complete a Request for a Medical Leave of Absence form through the SPS Office of the Registrar. The form and all required documents must be emailed to [sps-mloa@northwestern.edu](mailto:sps-mloa@northwestern.edu).

Students should be prepared to submit a signed statement from your current treatment provider(s) verifying the need for leave and the estimated duration of treatment. The information should be submitted to [sps-mloa@northwestern.edu](mailto:sps-mloa@northwestern.edu) to be included in the student’s petition for a voluntary MLOA.

### ***Registration During MLOA***

While on MLOA, a student may not register for classes at Northwestern until the student has been reinstated by the Associate Dean of Student Services and the Leave hold preventing registration in courses has been removed from their student account.

All incompletes must be resolved before applying for reinstatement from MLOA.

Students on medical leave are strongly encouraged to consult with Student Services in advance and have an academic plan in place, to allow registration to occur once the hold is removed.

### ***Taking More than Two Courses in a Quarter***

SPS graduate programs are designed to be completed part-time to accommodate the busy schedules of working adults. If a student’s schedule allows, he or she may take up to four courses in a quarter;

however, as programs are designed for part-time study, SPS cannot guarantee the scheduling of courses to accommodate the equivalent of full-time study.

CAESAR limits self-service registration to two courses. To register for more than two courses, students must contact the SPS registrar at [onlinereg@northwestern.edu](mailto:onlinereg@northwestern.edu) to request that their enrollment capacity be lifted. This request must be made before students attempt course registration on CAESAR or they will have to register for their third and fourth classes by submitting a paper registration form.

### ***Prerequisites***

Prerequisites indicate the expected background for a course. If no prerequisite is noted, none is required. Students are responsible for discussing course requirements with their academic advisers. They should look carefully at the requirements for each program or certificate and plan early how to sequence courses to take care of prerequisites.

### ***Course Tuition and Billing***

Please see the applicable SPS graduate program website for the most up-to-date tuition information. Students should consult [Student Financial Services](#) for more information about how to pay tuition.

### ***Dropping Courses and Course Refunds***

Dropping a course refers to the student removing him- or herself from enrollment. Students who drop all their courses for a given quarter are sometimes referred to as “withdrawing” from the academic quarter. At SPS, this simply indicates that an active student is not enrolled for that quarter, not that the individual is no longer a student.

#### *How to drop a course during the Registration Period*

Students can drop a course via self-service in CAESAR until the end of the registration period for the term (until roughly the end of the second week of the term, exact dates found on the [SPS Graduate Academic Calendar](#)). Dropped classes prior during this time will not appear on the student’s official transcript.

#### *How to drop a course during the term*

After the end of the registration period, students may request to drop a course until the drop deadline (roughly at sixth week of the term, exact dates found on the [SPS Graduate Academic Calendar](#)). To drop a course after the registration period and prior to the drop deadline, students must submit a [Change of Registration form](#) to the SPS Registrar’s Office in order to withdraw from the course. The SPS Registrar’s Office will accept this form by email at [onlinereg@northwestern.edu](mailto:onlinereg@northwestern.edu), providing it is sent from the student’s Northwestern email account. Dropped classes prior during this time will not appear on the student’s official transcript.

### Requesting to be withdrawn from a class after the drop deadline

In rare cases, a student may request to be removed from a course after the drop deadline. Requests to be removed from a class after the drop deadline is considered a withdrawal. Students may initiate a request for withdrawal by submitting the [Change of Registration form](#) to the SPS Registrar's Office until the Friday of the week before finals (prior to the date of final exam, project or paper in the particular course has been reached), a date that we will confirm with your instructor. The SPS Registrar's Office will accept this form by email at [onlinereg@northwestern.edu](mailto:onlinereg@northwestern.edu) providing it is sent from the student's Northwestern email account.

All withdrawals after the drop deadline will result in a "W" (withdrawal) grade being posted to the student's official transcript. Graduate program students may have up to two W's on their SPS transcript. Requests for withdrawals that exceed this limit will be denied.

### Additional policies regarding dropping a course

- If a student needs to drop a course, he or she must officially drop through CAESAR or through the SPS Registrar; it is not sufficient to simply notify the instructor, speak with one's adviser, or cease attending to class.
- Students may drop courses without academic or financial penalty during the registration period each quarter. If a student drops a course before the end of the registration period, the classes will not appear on the student's transcript and he or she will be eligible for a full refund. Please check the [SPS Graduate Academic Calendar](#) for registration period dates.
- After the registration period has ended, students may still drop a course without academic penalty until the drop deadline (check the [SPS Graduate Academic Calendar](#) for drop deadline dates). Courses dropped during this time will not appear on the student's transcript; however, students will only be eligible for a partial course refund if dropping all courses in the given quarter. For specific information on refunds, contact [Student Financial Services](#).
- CAESAR will not allow a student to drop all of his or her classes in a given term. If a student would like to drop all classes in a given term, he or she should use the [Change of Registration form](#) to request that the SPS Registrar make this change on his or her behalf.
- After the registration period has passed but before the end of the sixth week of the quarter, students may still drop courses without academic penalty. These courses will not appear on transcripts; however, students will not be eligible for a full tuition refund. For specific information on refunds, contact [Student Financial Services](#).
- Students who feel that extenuating circumstances may merit an exception to any of the above should submit a [Student Affairs Petition](#) outlining the reasoning and attach any relevant supporting documentation.

## ***Independent Study***

An independent study is a customized course of study undertaken by a single student under the guidance of an instructor. Denoted by the course number 499, independent studies are comparable in their demands to other graduate-level courses.

To register for Independent Study, a student must:

1. Identify an SPS faculty member to supervise the independent study. To ensure compliance with Northwestern's academic policies and standards, all independent study instructors must be preapproved by SPS administration. If the proposed instructor was the sole instructor for a graduate-level course in the student's program during the two years prior to the intended quarter of registration, there is no need to seek prior approval from SPS. Leadership instructors are not preapproved to lead independent study classes. SPS reserves the right to reject any independent study instructor who does not have the requisite content expertise in the student's area of study. Students with questions or concerns about choosing an independent study instructor should contact their [academic and career adviser](#).
2. Develop a syllabus, in consultation with his or her instructor that includes a list of readings, assignments, assignment deadlines and assessment criteria as well as a breakdown of how the grade will be calculated. Please note, Independent Study courses cannot duplicate regular courses offered by SPS Academic Programs. The purpose of an Independent Study is to investigate topics not covered by regular courses offered in the curriculum.
3. Submit a completed [Intent to Register form](#), along with the course of study or syllabus, to the student's academic and career adviser by the deadlines given in the SPS [SPS Graduate Calendar](#). Once registration is approved, the SPS registrar will register the student.

### *Additional Policies on Independent Studies*

- Students who drop an independent study course must tell their academic and career adviser immediately. The same deadlines and policies that apply to other courses apply to independent studies.
- Students should check their program's [program-specific policies](#) section for the number of independent study courses allowed and any additional requirements.
- An independent study can only be undertaken if an equivalent course is not offered by SPS once within four consecutive quarters. Required courses in a program's curriculum may not be taken as independent study courses. Students should contact their [academic and career adviser](#) for guidance on the independent study approval process.

## ***Internships***

Internships can provide a great opportunity for students to gain paid or unpaid workplace experience. While SPS does not actively place students in internships, the school encourages students to seek out internship opportunities, either as a supplement to their graduate program or as part of an independent study (499).

Students in the MA and MFA Programs in Creative Writing interested in registering for a practicum should check the [Program Specific Policies](#) below.

While an internship alone cannot be directly counted for credit towards one’s degree, a student can take advantage of the internship’s experience and resources as the foundation of an independent study. To incorporate an internship into an independent study, students should follow the independent study registration procedures and additional policies listed above. In addition,

1. Students should check their program’s [program-specific policies](#) section for any internship requirements.
2. Students should determine specifically what they will be doing, what resources they will have access to at the internship and who will be supervising the internship.
3. Near the close of the internship, the internship supervisor should email a written evaluation of the student’s performance to the instructor. This evaluation should be based on clearly defined tasks and will factor into the student’s final grade.

### ***Capstone Classes and Independent Thesis Research Projects***

In all programs, students must complete a culminating project: a capstone or thesis. For all programs this can be achieved by undertaking an independent thesis research project (590), and in some programs this may be achieved by completing a capstone class (498). Students should check their [curriculum requirements](#) to see whether 498 is an option available in their program.

Students in the MFA program should see [program-specific policies](#) section for thesis policies and processes unique to that program.

The table below outlines the differences in very broad terms. Individual programs may have specific policies regarding each of these.

	<b>498 Capstone Course</b>	<b>590 Thesis</b>
What work is required?	A student will work individually and in some programs may also be required to participate in a group project or case study.	Individually, a student will work independently under the guidance of a faculty adviser on an original project.
How long does it take?	10-week class.	Students register for 590 once only (with the exception of MFA) and have one year to complete the thesis research project.
When can a student register?	A student registers for 498 during or after his or her last quarter of classes.	A student registers for 590 during or after his or her last quarter of classes.

How does a student register?	Students register themselves in CAESAR after obtaining a permission number from their academic adviser.	Students must submit a proposal and Intent to Register form. The process in full is outlined below.
How will the final project be assessed?	A student is individually assessed and graded throughout the duration of the class and is given a final course grade that is factored into his or her cumulative GPA.	Multiple drafts of the thesis are submitted until the thesis meets both readers' approval, at which time a grade of P (pass) is given. Does not affect cumulative GPA.
How much is tuition?	Tuition is the cost of one unit of graduate credit.	Tuition is the cost of one unit of graduate credit.

### Registering for the Capstone Class or Individual Thesis

Students may register for 498 or 590 courses in the same quarter as their last remaining course but not before. Students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to register, and are not carrying any outstanding incomplete grades (Y grade) on their SPS graduate record, to be eligible to enroll in the 498 capstone class or 590 thesis research. Students who hold a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or below after completing 498 must contact their academic and career adviser immediately. The student will be required to take an additional course, and the graduation date will be adjusted.

Students registering for 498 should contact their adviser for a permission number to register in CAESAR. If a student's program does not offer a 498 option, a student must complete an individual thesis research project with a 590 registration.

### Important Policies Related to an Independent Thesis Research Project (590) Registration

- Deadlines for the completion of this process, for each quarter, may be found in the [SPS graduate calendar](#). SPS is not obliged to accept any proposals received after the designated deadline.
- Once a student has been informed by the academic and career adviser that the proposal has been approved, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the registration is correctly entered into CAESAR. This should be visible in the student's CAESAR profile before the term starts.
- It is only necessary to register for 590 once. (MFA in Creative Writing students have two thesis registrations; for more information, see [program-specific thesis guidelines](#).)
- Students who have not completed their thesis within the quarter of their 590 registration will be given a K (work in progress) grade, which will be changed to a P (pass) after both reader approvals are received.

The table below gives a brief overview of the independent thesis research project (590) registration process. Further detail on each step may be found below.

Step	Description
1.	Review thesis process and policies specific to the program.
2.	Identify a topic for the thesis. Draft a proposal, following the guidelines on the Intent to Register form and the program-specific guidelines in this handbook.
3.	Identify and approach a member of the program's faculty to be the first reader. A second reader will also be required to approve the final draft of the paper.
4.	Submit the <a href="#">Intent to Register form</a> , written proposal and reader's written approval of the proposal to the student's <a href="#">graduate adviser</a> by the deadline (posted at the <a href="#">SPS graduate calendar</a> ) for the intended quarter of registration.

### 1. Review the thesis process and program-specific guidelines

It is the student's responsibility to review the processes, policies and guidelines in this handbook. Additional questions may be directed to the student's [academic and career adviser](#).

### 2. Identifying a Thesis Topic

It is the student's responsibility to identify a topic for his or her thesis.

### 3. Readers

#### *The role of the first reader*

The first reader has two main roles: adviser and assessor. As an adviser, the first reader may lend assistance and guidance to a student's proposal, research and analysis. The extent of this involvement will vary and is largely up to the reader's discretion. As an assessor, the first reader determines whether the thesis has reached a sufficient standard of quality, befitting the culminating project of a master's degree. The first reader may continue to request corrections until he or she feels this standard has been met.

The first reader must approve the thesis proposal and, as such, must be selected prior to submission of the proposal to SPS.

#### *The Role of the Second Reader*

The second reader may also act in an advisory role if he or she and the student so wish, but the principal expectation is that the second reader will act as an assessor in the manner described for the first reader above.

The second reader must approve the thesis proposal and, as such, must be selected prior to submission of the proposal to SPS.



### *Rules on Reader Eligibility*

To ensure compliance with Northwestern's academic policies and standards, all thesis readers must be preapproved by SPS administration. If the proposed reader was the sole instructor for a graduate-level course in the student's program during the two years prior to the intended quarter of registration, there is no need to seek prior approval from SPS. Leadership instructors are not preapproved to be thesis readers. SPS reserves the right to reject any thesis reader who does not have the requisite content expertise in the student's area of study. Students with questions or concerns about choosing their thesis reader should contact their [academic and career adviser](#).

### *Outside Readers*

All other potential readers, including those who have taught as co-instructors in SPS graduate programs, must be vetted and approved prior to their substantial involvement in an independent thesis research project. Potential readers will be evaluated for their academic and professional expertise and experience as it relates to the student's topic.

To request to work with a non-approved reader, a student must submit a copy of the proposed reader's CV or resume, along with a basic outline of the intended topic of the student's thesis, to the program's [academic and career adviser](#). A student should allow at least one to two weeks for the evaluation to be completed.

4. Registering for an independent thesis research project (590) and developing the thesis proposal  
Students registering for 590 must submit the following documents to their academic adviser:

- [Intent to Register form](#)
- Written proposal (guidelines for this are below)
- First reader's written approval of the proposal (email is acceptable) and agreement to serve as the student's first reader
- Second reader written approval of the proposal (email is acceptable) and agreement to serve as the student's second reader
- Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or waiver, if applicable

### *The Thesis Proposal*

(This description of proposal requirements is relevant to all programs except the MA and MFA in Creative Writing. Students in those programs should consult the relevant [program-specific policies section](#).)

The proposal is a one- to two-page summary of what the student plans to do for the thesis. Far more than just an administrative obstacle, the proposal is an important part of the thesis process and must convince the first reader that the student has a clear idea of the question that is going to be

addressed and a reasonable sense of how to do so. It is not expected that the student will have the answer to the question at this point.

The proposal must contain the following elements:

- **Title:** A working title that adequately describes the purpose of the paper or project.
- **Guiding research question:** A statement of the question that the student will attempt to answer or of the problem the student hopes to solve with his or her research.
- **Significance:** A description of the intended audience and how it will benefit from the project or paper.
- **Methodology:** Students must describe (1) the information and resources needed to develop their argument and complete their project, (2) how they plan to collect the relevant data, (3) their plan for analysis and (4) how the analysis relates to the topic or research question.
- **IRB approval:** If students plan to conduct interviews or surveys or to involve other people in their research in any way, they must contact [Northwestern's Institutional Review Board](#) before finalizing their proposal. The student's final proposal should include a statement indicating IRB approval or waiver.
- **Preliminary bibliography:** A properly formatted bibliography listing the student's key research sources. The bibliography must include at least four peer-reviewed sources. If uncertain about whether an article is peer-reviewed, students should consult Ulrich's International Periodical Directory through the Northwestern Library website.

### Proposal Approval

SPS will vet all submitted proposals to ensure that they meet these guidelines. SPS reserves the right to refuse thesis registration to any student who does not adequately meet these guidelines. Where appropriate, SPS will seek further information from the first reader if aspects of the proposal are unclear. This may result in requiring partial or complete rewrites of the proposal.

### Completing an Independent Thesis Research Project (590)

1. Research and write the thesis, in consultation with the first reader; revise until first reader is satisfied.
2. Give the approved thesis to the second reader; revise, if necessary. Students must allow at least three weeks for the second reader to read and approve the final version of the thesis.
3. Submit the final thesis, formatted in compliance with the program-specific guidelines (found in the appendices of this handbook), along with a signed [degree completion form](#), to their [academic and career adviser](#) prior to the deadline for graduation (posted in the [SPS graduate calendar](#)).

### 1. Research and Write Thesis

This process is completed by the student. Readers may be consulted for advice and guidance, but the extent of this is negotiable.

Students should consult the program-specific policies below for the thesis's required length. Guidelines for referencing, formatting and structure are available from the student's program site on Canvas.

### 2. Identify and Secure Approval for Second Reader

In consultation with the first reader, a second reader should be identified at time of thesis registration. This reader must be pre-approved by the student's [academic and career adviser](#). See section above on [selecting a thesis reader](#).

### 3. Readers' Approval

Once a student feels the thesis is complete, he or she must submit it to the first reader in its final state. As ensuring integrity in academic work is a joint enterprise involving both faculty and students, students are required to submit a Turnitin (plagiarism-checking software inside the assignments area of Canvas) report with the final draft of their thesis to their first reader upon final review.

Step-by-step instructions on how to use Turnitin with Canvas are available in the [Canvas Learning Center](#).

First readers should be given three weeks to review a thesis and may request as many corrections as they feel are necessary. This process is repeated until the first reader is satisfied that the thesis is of sufficient quality.

Once the project is approved, it should be submitted to the second reader, who also should be given three weeks to review it. As with first readers, second readers may request as many corrections as they feel are necessary to bring the project to a satisfactory quality.

### 4. Thesis Submission

#### *Required Documents*

Two steps are required for submission of the thesis:

1. Students must submit a complete, correctly formatted electronic copy of the thesis to their academic and career adviser, in a single electronic document, before the graduation deadlines listed in the [SPS graduate calendar](#).

Papers must have a cover sheet with the title centered on the first line, followed with the word “by” on the second line, the student’s name on the third line and then the words below:

[Title of project]

By

[Name]

Thesis Project

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of

Master of [Arts, Fine Arts or Science] in [program name]

[month and year, i.e. December 2016, March 2017, June 2017, August 2017]

[first reader name], First Reader

[second reader name], Second Reader

Further guidelines for most but not all graduate programs are listed in the relevant program Canvas sites.

2. Students must forward readers’ approvals in one of the following two ways:

- The [SPS Graduate Thesis Completion Form](#) may be signed by readers and posted, or faxed, to the contact details on the form. Alternatively, students may scan and email it to their academic and career adviser.
- The student must ask the first and second readers to send an email, copying the student, to the student’s [academic and career adviser](#), with “[student’s last name] thesis approval” in the subject line and the following text in the body of the email:

I, [reader’s name here], certify that I have read [student first and last name]’s master’s thesis, [Title], and find that, in scope and quality, it satisfies the requirements for the [program name] degree as described in the SPS graduate student handbook.

[reader name, title and contact information]

Please remember that it is the graduating student’s responsibility to ensure that the readers send the necessary email approval.

### After Submission

As a final step, SPS administration will review the thesis project to ensure it satisfies all University requirements for formatting and academic integrity. All theses submitted to SPS will be passed through plagiarism-checking software.

### Additional Policies and Information Related to Completing the Independent Thesis Research Project (590)

- Students who have not completed their thesis within the quarter of their 590 registration will be given a K (work in process) grade. Every quarter following, the student must register for SPS 512 Continuous Registration to maintain active-student status.
- Completed theses are graded only as P (pass) or N (no pass); no letter grades are awarded.
- Students are expected to complete their independent thesis research project or thesis within one year of their initial registration. Students who do not complete their thesis within one year may find that their original thesis reader cannot continue to supervise their project.

### ***SPS 588 Residential Master's Study***

SPS 588 Residential Master's Study is a placeholder class that confers full-time status for international students on student visas. Students should contact their [academic and career adviser](#) to help facilitate registration.

### Additional Policies and Information Relating to SPS 588

- SPS 588 is a special registration that applies only to students who are in the United States on a student visa; students who are not on a student visa cannot enroll in SPS 588 under any circumstances.
- Students on an applicable visa must be registered for their final curriculum requirements.
- Please note that SPS 588 is not in and of itself sufficient to extend a student's visa. Students should contact the International Office for information regarding visas.
- Tuition for SPS 588 is listed on the tuition page.

### ***Taking Courses outside a Student's Program***

If a course is not listed in the student's program [curriculum requirements](#) or designated as an elective for that program in the [course description](#), then it is considered "outside a student's program."

### Registering for a Class outside a Student's Program

If a student wishes to take a course that is not listed in his or her certificate of advanced graduate study completion requirements or a graduate program's degree requirements, he or she must complete the following process, whether or not the course will be counted towards the certificate or degree:

1. A student must check if the course is preapproved for credit towards his or her degree by checking the program's Canvas site.
2. If it is not, the student must secure the documented permission of his or her [academic and career adviser](#) at least two weeks before planning to register.
3. The student must secure documented permission of the department offering the course.
4. The student must secure documented permission from the course instructor.
5. Once the above permissions are secured, the student must submit the [Graduate Online Change of Registration form](#).

#### *Additional Policies and Information Related to Registering for a Course outside a Student's Program*

- Students taking courses outside their program will be charged tuition at the same rate as if they were taking courses in their certificate or degree program. Financial aid or loans may not cover the cost of any classes that do not count as progress toward the student's declared certificate or degree.
- Students may incur additional fees associated with taking a class in another program.
- Not all programs or courses will allow outside students to enroll.

#### ***Taking Additional Courses beyond those Required by the Curriculum***

Additional courses are elective courses that are not required for a student's degree completion. Students who wish to take additional courses beyond their necessary degree requirements are highly encouraged to continue their studies at SPS in a certificate of advanced graduate study program.

#### *Taking Additional Courses*

SPS highly recommends that students contact their [academic and career adviser](#) to discuss applying for a certificate of advanced graduate study or before registering for additional courses as a degree student.

#### *Additional Policies and Information Relating to Additional Courses*

- If a student takes additional courses, the grades will count towards the student's degree grade point average and cumulative grade point average.
- For more information on grade requirements, see the section on [grade requirements and academic progress](#).
- Financial aid or loans may not cover the cost of any classes that do not count as progress toward the student's declared degree or declared certificate of advanced graduate study.

### ***Double Specializations***

Only one specialization can be displayed on a student's transcript. Students interested in completing two specialization requirements should consider pursuing a [Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study](#) following graduation from their program.

### ***Auditing Classes***

Any degree-seeking student in a graduate program may request to audit most graduate courses without paying tuition. No credit is offered for auditing graduate courses.

#### Students interested in auditing a class should:

1. Check the policies below to ensure auditing is an available option.
2. Consult with their [academic and career adviser](#) to confirm that auditing will be possible for the class selected.
3. Obtain written permission to audit from the instructor.
4. Forward that permission, along with a request to audit, to their academic and career adviser at least two weeks before the quarter starts.

#### *Additional Policies and Information Relating to Auditing*

- Students are not allowed to audit the following courses:
  - workshops or project-based classes
  - courses that are full
  - courses that are required for the student's degree
  - distance-learning format courses
- Please note that auditing students may not turn in work to be graded or participate in discussion.
- An audited course will not appear on a student's transcript.

### ***Course Substitution***

A course substitution refers to coursework completed for credit within a SPS graduate program at Northwestern that is counted for credit toward another Northwestern graduate program. A course that meets all of the following criteria is eligible for consideration for course substitution:

- The course was completed at the graduate level at Northwestern University
- The course was not counted toward a program for which a degree or certificate was awarded. Courses may not be transferred between an SPS graduate degree program and an SPS certificate of advanced graduate study program.
- A passing grade for the course was obtained.

If a student completed a similar course at another university, he or she may consider applying for a [course waiver](#).

#### Applying for a Course Substitution

To request that a course substitution be applied toward a student's current degree program, the student must submit a copy of the course syllabus, along with a brief statement addressing which course requirement he or she believes the course substitution may satisfy, to his or her [academic and career adviser](#).

#### Additional Policies and Information Relating to Course Substitution

- Course substitution may substitute for core requirements or electives.
- Limits on the number of course substitutions that may be used towards a degree may be applied.
- All decisions on course substitution are made on a case-by-case basis.
- Program-specific policies may include additional policies.

### **Course Waivers**

In rare situations a student's prior academic experience may be assessed as equivalent to the mastery of the course content, a course waiver may be granted.

#### Applying for a waiver

To apply for a waiver, a student must submit a [course waiver request form](#). This request must include the following supporting documentation:

- brief statement describing the prior coursework and why it should be considered equivalent to the required SPS course
- syllabus of the previously taken course
- transcripts from previous coursework

#### Additional Policies and Information Relating to Course Waivers

- Waivers are granted for equivalent credit-bearing coursework completed at an accredited university.
- Waivers will only be considered for courses taken within the last 10 years in which the student earned a grade of B or better.
- In situations where a course waiver is granted, the student, in consultation with his or her academic and career adviser, must replace the course with an elective. It is important to note that a course waiver only changes which courses are required for the student to graduate – not the number of courses the student needs to graduate.



### ***Transferring to a New Program within SPS***

Students attempting a transfer between two graduate degree programs or between two certificates of advanced graduate study programs within the same field that are:

1. both administered within School of Professional Studies
2. not addressed in the “[Changing Program Status](#)” section

are transferring to a new program.

To apply to transfer from one SPS graduate program to another, students must submit the following to [SPS Admissions](#) by the [admission deadline](#):

- [Application for Program Transfer form](#)
- most recent SPS transcript
- new statement of purpose
- updated resume/CV
- updated letters of recommendation
- possible writing samples and other materials (please check the [admissions requirements](#) for the respective programs)

### ***Transferring to a New Program***

- Transfers between programs are reviewed by the admissions committee during the application period.
- Students who transfer will have their coursework evaluated to see if any classes can count toward the new program requirements. Students should check the [Course Substitution section for eligibility](#).
- Students may not transfer between certificate and degree programs or visa versa. Instead, they must complete a new application for the desired program.

### ***Changing Program Status***

Any of the following are considered changes in a student’s program status:

- Transferring from on-campus to online delivery of the same program
- Transferring from online to on-campus delivery of the same program
- Transferring from one specialization to another in the same subject area

Follow the Steps below for a Change in Program Status

1. SPS students who wish to change their program status within SPS must complete the [Application for Program Transfer form](#).
2. The transfer application must include a student's unofficial SPS transcript and a brief statement as to why the transfer is being requested.

Policies on Changing Program Status

- Any allowable course substitution will be determined at the time of admission. Students should check the [Course Substitution section for eligibility](#).
- Visiting scholars wishing to earn graduate credit must complete a full Application for Admission, which can be found on the SPS website under the relevant program.
- Please note that any courses taken as a visiting scholar or certificate student will not transfer to degree programs.

***Transferring into SPS Programs from Other Northwestern Graduate Programs***

Students who wish to transfer into a graduate program within SPS must submit all application materials, including the application form and fee, outlined on the [admissions pages](#) of the SPS website.

Policies on Transferring into SPS Graduate Programs from other Northwestern Graduate Programs

- Any transfer credit will be evaluated after admission to the program. Students should check the [Transfer Credit section for eligibility](#).

## Program-Specific Policies

### Clinical Research and Regulatory Administration

#### Independent Studies

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

#### Capstone/Thesis

- Students should refer to [Program Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

### Creative Writing (MA and MFA)

#### Independent Studies

- Creative writing students who wish to do an independent study may do so under the supervision of either a creative writing faculty member or a faculty mentor.
- A maximum of two independent studies may be applied towards the degree.

#### Transferring between Genres

- A student admitted into one genre may apply to switch to another genre if the student has taken at least one writing workshop in the genre to which he or she was admitted. To do so, the student must submit a new writing sample (not included in original application) reflecting his or her ability in the new choice of genre to the SPS Graduate Admissions Office no later than the application deadline for a given quarter. No formal application is required, but a cover letter should accompany the sample.
- Applications to switch genres will be reviewed at the quarterly admissions meeting. Students switching genres may be allowed to count workshops taken in the previous genre as electives toward the degree. Students should consult with their academic adviser before applying to switch genres in order to review all the potential consequences of making such a change.

#### Workshops outside a Student's Genre

- Students may petition to take one workshop outside their genre as an elective by emailing their [academic and career adviser](#) with a writing sample in that genre. Students must complete this process at least two weeks before they intend to register.

#### Registering for Five or More Courses with One Instructor

- Creative writing students are strongly encouraged to check with a program faculty director before enrolling in five or more courses with any one faculty member.

#### Registering for MCW 579/580: Practicum in Teaching or Publishing

- Students in SPS's Creative Writing Programs (MA or MFA) may earn credit for internships or other positions involving teaching, writing or working in the publishing industry. To register for a practicum course, students should:
  1. Find and set up the placement first before registering. For help securing a position, students may contact their [academic and career adviser](#). This must be done well in advance of registration to allow time to secure a position.

2. Develop, in consultation with his or her practicum supervisor, an academic course of study, including readings, assignments and a breakdown of how grades will be calculated.
3. Submit the faculty-approved proposal and an [Intent to Register form](#) to their [academic and career adviser](#) by the deadlines in the [SPS graduate calendar](#).

#### Transferring to MFA from MA

- With the exception of MCW 590, all credit (up to nine classes) will automatically transfer to the MFA upon admission. Students should contact their [academic and career adviser](#) for more detail.

#### Thesis — MA and MFA Students

- To satisfy the requirement, students must receive a P (passing grade) in both MCW 589 in one quarter and MCW 590 in a subsequent quarter.
- Students may register for MCW 589 following [How to Register for an Individual Thesis](#) process.
  - Students work with only one instructor during their enrollment in 589.
  - The instructor for MCW 589 is not automatically the reader for the final product, though the student may ask the 589 instructor to serve as a reader for his or her MCW 590.
  - MCW 589 and MCW 590 are graded P (pass) or N (no pass)
- In a quarter subsequent to the MCW 589 registration, students register for MCW 590 using the [How to Register for an Individual Thesis](#) process.
- Students complete 590 using the [How to Register for an Individual Thesis](#) process
- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Thesis](#).
- Students may not take workshops alongside thesis work. All workshops should be completed prior to registering for thesis work.

### **Global Health**

#### Independent Studies

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

#### Capstone/Thesis

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

### **Information Systems**

#### Independent Studies

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

#### Capstone/Thesis

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Liberal Studies**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of two independent studies may be applied to the degree.

### *Courses outside a Student's Program*

- Students who plan to take more than two Graduate School classes must arrange their course of study with the [academic and career adviser](#). For more information, see [Taking Courses Outside a Student's Program](#). MALS students may take any classes offered in the MALit program without requesting special permission.

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Literature**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of two independent studies may be applied to the degree.

### *Courses outside a Student's Program*

- MALit students may petition their [academic and career adviser](#) to take one class in the MALS program. These courses begin with the "IPLS" prefix. Please refer to [Taking Classes Outside a Student's Program](#) for details.
- Students who plan to take more than two Graduate School courses must arrange their course of study with the [academic and career adviser](#). For more information, see [Taking Classes Outside a Student's Program](#).

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Health Informatics and Medical Informatics**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- Students should refer to [Program Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Predictive Analytics**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- MSPA 498-DL Capstone class must be taken by itself or alongside one specialization course.
- For additional information, students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Public Policy and Administration**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

### *On-campus students*

- On-campus students can take online courses as their schedules allow.

### *Online students*

- Online students can take on-campus courses as their schedules allow.

### *Courses outside a Student's Program*

- On-campus students may take a maximum of one course from the Kellogg School of Management.

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Quality Assurance and Regulatory Science**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Regulatory Compliance**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## **Sports Administration**

### *Independent Studies*

- A maximum of one independent study may be applied to the degree.

### *Capstone/Thesis*

- Students should refer to [Program-Specific Guidelines for Capstones/Theses](#).

## Grade Requirements and Academic Progress

Students must pass all courses required by their curriculum. Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 (B) average to demonstrate mastery of the program content. Students must achieve a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00 before they are allowed to graduate or complete a certificate of advanced graduate study.

### *Grades for Graduate Credit*

Each instructor determines his or her own guidelines and expectations for grades, including how attendance and participation are graded. In general, however, students are expected to commit the time and effort to attend all class meetings. The faculty member may lower a student's final grade due to absences, so students likely to miss classes for any reason should not register for the course, since it may not be possible to earn a passing grade.

The following grades may be awarded for graduate courses at SPS.

Grade	Grade Description	Grade Point Value	Awarded In
A	Passing Grade	4.0	All courses except 589 and 590
A-	Passing Grade	3.7	All courses except 589 and 590
B+	Passing Grade	3.3	All courses except 589 and 590
B	Passing Grade	3.0	All courses except 589 and 590
B-	Passing Grade	2.7	All courses except 589 and 590
C+	Passing Grade	2.3	All courses except 589 and 590
C	Passing Grade	2.0	All courses except 589 and 590
C-	Passing Grade	1.7	All courses except 589 and 590
F	Failing Grade	0.0	All courses except 589 and 590
Y	Incomplete	No grade points awarded	All courses except 589 and 590
P	Pass	No grade points awarded	Only in 589 and 590
N	No Pass	No grade points awarded	Only in 589 and 590
K	In Progress	No grade points awarded	Only in 589 and 590

### *Passing Grades*

All grades of C- and above are considered passing grades. Students receiving one of these grades are deemed to have satisfied the corresponding course requirement. No Ds are awarded for graduate work.

### *Failing Grade*

Grades of F may be awarded for failing work. Courses graded with an F do not count toward one's degree. Students who fail required non-elective courses must retake them. A student who retakes

any class should be aware that both the grade for the original class and the retaken class are calculated in the cumulative GPA.

### *Incompletes*

In rare circumstances, students may be granted a grade of incomplete, which is designated with a grade of Y. A student must get advance permission from the instructor to receive a grade of incomplete. When an instructor grants an incomplete, he or she determines the amount of time the student has to finish the work, which must not exceed the official time of one year determined by the University.

Students are not allowed to carry more than one incomplete (Y) grade at a time. After one calendar year, a grade of Y will be converted to an F. The incomplete work is due before the start of the quarter the Y was received in the previous year (e.g., a fall 2016 Y must be completed by the end of summer 2017). Students who have two or more incomplete grades on their record will be placed on academic probation and prevented from registering for additional classes until the incomplete work is turned in with a grade entered in CAESAR.

### *Pass/No Pass Courses*

With the exception of 589 and 590, pass/no pass courses do not count towards degrees or certificates.

All 589 and 590 registrations are taken on a pass/no pass basis. A grade of K is given while the project is in progress and is later changed to a P when satisfactorily completed.

### ***Calculating a Student's Cumulative Grade Point Average***

At the end of each course students receive a letter grade that has a corresponding number of grade points associated with it. These are listed in the [grade table above](#). A student's grade point average is calculated by dividing the total grade points earned by the number of courses attempted. All courses attempted are included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA, including courses for which a failing grade was received.

It is important that students are aware of their cumulative GPA, since the University uses this number to determine their academic status and continued participation in their programs. A student's quarterly and cumulative GPA is listed on his or her unofficial transcript, which can be viewed in CAESAR.

### ***Grade Concerns***

SPS follows Northwestern University practice which gives faculty members complete grading authority in their sole academic discretion. Accordingly, a course grade may be changed only to



correct a clerical or computational error. It is not appropriate for students to seek grade changes for reasons of financial reimbursement by an employer, because the student is unhappy with a grade, or to seek to submit new or revised work after grades have been submitted to the Registrar's Office.

Students are entitled to an explanation of how their final course grade was determined and how the component parts of that grade were weighted. If a student seeks further clarification of a final course grade, he or she should discuss that matter directly with the faculty member.

Students are reminded to adhere to the [University's Student Code of Conduct](#) in all their interactions with faculty members and staff.

If, after consulting with the faculty member, a student believes a clerical or computational error has not been rectified or the student has not been given a reasonable explanation of the final grade, he or she should submit a [Student Affairs Petition](#). Students are required to provide detailed documentation as evidence to support their petition.

All members of the Northwestern community – including students, faculty, and staff – must adhere to the university's policy on discrimination and harassment. If you believe you have been discriminated against or harassed, carefully review the [university's policy on discrimination and harassment](#) and contact your academic and career adviser for guidance. As appropriate, your adviser may refer you to Northwestern's Equal Opportunity Office (847-491-7458 [eeo@northwestern.edu](mailto:eeo@northwestern.edu)).

## Completing a Degree or Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study

Degrees and certificates are conferred quarterly for students who have met all of their [degree requirements or certificate requirements](#).

Only students who have met all of their [degree requirements](#) (e.g. successful completion of required courses and achievement of cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater, and the submission of the application for graduate degree or certificate) may graduate or be awarded a certificate.

### *Program Completion Deadlines*

All degree-seeking students must complete their program within five years of their admission to their program or request special permission to extend this program-completion deadline. All certificate students must complete their program within 5 years or 10 quarters.

Students who are approaching the five-year deadline and wish to request an extension must submit a [Degree Deadline Extension Petition](#). When requesting a degree extension, students must demonstrate a valid reason and must provide a timetable for completion of the program.

Students whose deadline has passed and who do not submit an acceptable degree deadline request will not be allowed to graduate. Any SPS student granted an extension may be subject to additional requirements.

### *Completing the Degree or Certificate*

The process for graduating or completing a certificate of advanced graduate study depends on [which school confers the student's degree](#) and how a student fulfills [the capstone requirement](#).

1. SPS students who complete an independent thesis (590) must:
  - a. submit an [Application for Degree or Certificate form](#) to the SPS Registrar by the deadline posted in the [SPS calendar](#).
  - b. submit a [Graduate Thesis Completion form](#) to their [academic and career adviser](#), along with a copy of the thesis and the readers' approvals, by the deadline posted in the [SPS graduate academic calendar](#). [Click here for more details on formatting for thesis and approvals](#).
2. SPS students who take a capstone class (498) must
  - a. submit an [Application for Degree or Certificate form](#) to the SPS Registrar by the deadline posted in the [SPS calendar](#).
3. SPS students who are completing a certificate of advanced graduate study without an independent thesis (590) or a capstone class (498) must

- a. submit an [Application for Degree or Certificate form](#) to the SPS Registrar by the deadline posted in the [SPS calendar](#).

## Graduation Ceremonies

Northwestern University hosts a number of graduation ceremonies each spring. All degree-seeking students who have completed their degree during that academic year are invited to participate in the University-wide commencement ceremony, usually held in Ryan Field. Additionally, each school holds its own convocation ceremony, where graduates are recognized by name by the Dean of the school or the faculty director. Staff and faculty, fellow students, friends and family have the opportunity to join in the celebration. A student may participate in more than one ceremony, so he or she should make sure to RSVP for each ceremony individually. Click [here](#) for Commencement information.

Here are the things to remember about the graduation ceremonies:

- Graduation ceremonies are held once a year only, in June, for all completion dates.
- All diplomas are mailed to students approximately two months following degree conferral.
- Students are allowed to participate in the convocation ceremony only when all coursework and the capstone class or individual thesis project are complete.
- Only degree-seeking students may participate in the convocation and Commencement ceremonies.
- [Rental arrangements](#) for caps and gowns must be made online no later than the first week of May. Students should be sure to select the appropriate school of enrollment and degree.
  - a. Candidates from School of Professional Studies MA programs must select a white hood for Master of Arts and a white tassel.
  - b. Candidates from School of Professional Studies MS programs must select a gold hood for Master of Science and a white tassel.
  - b. Candidates from School of Professional Studies MFA program must select a brown hood for master of fine arts and a white tassel.

## Student Conduct

All course participants are expected to behave in a manner conducive to a successful and enjoyable learning experience. Sometimes, relatively harmless things can spoil the classroom dynamic; for example, some students are so eager to participate that they unintentionally dominate class. Students must think about their role in class as an individual student but also as an integral part of a group experience. Some disruptions are of a more serious nature and cannot be tolerated. These policies extend to student interaction with administrative staff. Please review the [Rules and Regulations of Student Conduct](#) in the appendices of this document. Students with questions about these policies should contact the SPS Associate Dean for Student and Alumni Services.

## Academic Integrity and Ethics

Academic integrity is fundamental to every facet of the scholarly process and is expected of every student in the School of Professional Studies in all academic undertakings. Integrity involves firm adherence to academic honesty and to ethical conduct consistent with values based on standards that respect the intellectual efforts of both oneself and others.

Ensuring integrity in academic work is a joint enterprise involving both faculty and students. Among the most important goals of graduate education are maintaining an environment of academic integrity and instilling in students a lifelong commitment to the academic honesty that is fundamental to good scholarship. These goals are best achieved as a result of effective dialogue between students and faculty mentors regarding academic integrity and sensitivity to the nuances of ethical conduct in scholarly work. SPS strongly encourages students to visit the University's Writing Place, which provides a wealth of information about avoiding issues that could lead to failure in maintaining [academic integrity](#).

Standards of academic honesty are violated whenever a student engages in any action that jeopardizes the integrity of scholarly work. Such actions include cheating in the classroom or on examinations, including master's final examinations and papers; the intentional and deliberate misuse of data in order to draw conclusions that may not be warranted by the evidence; fabrication of data; omission or concealment of conflicting data for the purpose of misleading other scholars; submitting identical or nearly identical work for two different courses; use of another's words, ideas or creative productions without citation in either the text or footnotes; paraphrasing or summarizing another's material in such a way as to misrepresent the author's intentions; and use of privileged material or unpublished work without permission. Academic dishonesty is a serious matter for graduate students committed to intellectual pursuits, and it will be adjudicated in accordance with procedures approved by the School of Professional Studies.

It is the responsibility of every member of the academic community to be familiar with these procedures and to bear in mind relevant policies governing activities not directly addressed herein,

such as internships, specific graduate programs and University research. Students are responsible for knowledge of the information provided by the [Undergraduate Academic Conduct Committee](#), by which SPS graduate students are governed.

## **Academic Integrity Violation Procedures**

Instructors may require students to submit their work electronically in addition to or in place of printed form. All student work may be analyzed electronically for violations of the University's academic integrity policy and may also be included in a database for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content.

Should the issue of academic dishonesty arise, the following procedure will be followed.

### ***Initiation of a Complaint***

All cases of alleged academic dishonesty by students in graduate courses in the School of Professional Studies must be referred to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs. Cases should be referred within one month of the date of the alleged incident, or within one month of the date the reporting individual becomes aware of the alleged incident, whichever is later. However, no action will be taken on any case if more than one year has elapsed since the alleged incident. Once a matter has been referred to the Assistant Dean, it may not be withdrawn without his/her approval, nor may the referring faculty member resolve the case without the Assistant Dean's approval.

The Assistant Dean shall review the facts of the alleged incident, including statements of the reporting individual, the instructor(s) and any supporting material. The review process may include electronic searches of plagiarism resources, websites, computer network traffic logs and other databases. If, after the review, the Assistant Dean determines that there is cause for further investigation, he/she shall notify the student by letter of the date of the incident (if known), the course and instructor and the nature of the alleged violation. A copy of the current procedures will accompany the letter.

The student will be asked to make an appointment with the Assistant Dean to discuss the case within seven working days of the date of the letter, at which time the student may present any relevant material or statements on his/her behalf. The student will have the right, prior to meeting with the Assistant Dean, to review relevant original materials in SPS, to obtain copies of such materials if desired and to discuss the matter with an adviser or other relevant individual. Review of original materials must take place by appointment during normal working hours at SPS and within seven working days of the date of the Assistant Dean's letter.

If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within seven working days, the Assistant Dean may make his or her determination on the basis of the evidence present at that time. The

Assistant Dean may grant reasonable requests for an extension of this time deadline at his/her sole discretion.

In certain cases where timely notification is important, verbal notification of the alleged violation may be made, but such verbal notification will be followed by a letter.

### ***Meeting with the Assistant Dean***

In meeting with the student, the Assistant Dean will describe the charges made and detail the evidence supporting those charges. At this initial meeting, the student may decline to discuss the matter and/or request that the Assistant Dean defer making a determination until after a subsequent meeting between the student and the Assistant Dean, at which the student may present relevant information or evidence. This second meeting must be requested at the initial meeting and must be scheduled for a time within seven working days of the initial meeting.

The Assistant Dean has the authority to determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence available to him/her, whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred.

After his/her review, the Assistant Dean shall inform the student by letter of his or her decision and the sanction, if any, to be imposed.

### ***Sanctions***

Sanctions which may be imposed by the Assistant Dean include, but are not limited to, a letter of warning; a defined period of probation with the attachment of conditions; disqualification for academic honors; a defined period of suspension with or without the attachment of conditions; permanent exclusion from the University; notation on the official record; revocation of an awarded degree; or any combination of the previously listed sanctions. In all cases of permanent exclusion from the University, a notation shall be entered on the student's official transcript.

Any grade entered for a student in a course in which an allegation of academic dishonesty is pending against him/her, whether for the course as a whole or for a piece of work submitted in the course, is subject to modification after all proceedings and appeals are concluded. Should the student be found to have violated academic integrity, the course instructor is empowered, at his/her sole discretion, to determine the effect this violation will have on the student's grade in the course. Possible actions range from disregarding the incident in calculating the grade to failing the student in the course.

### ***Appeals to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee***

The Assistant Dean's decision and/or sanction may be appealed to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee by filing a written notice of appeal within 10 working days of the date of the letter of notification. The student's written notice of appeal must state what is being appealed — whether the finding of academic dishonesty, the sanction imposed or both — and must describe in detail the

grounds for the appeal. The student's written notice of appeal should also state whether the student desires to present the appeal in person to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee.

If the student so requests, he or she will be granted an opportunity to appear to present his or her case to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee and to hear and respond to any testimony provided by the Assistant Dean or witnesses appearing before the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee. Likewise, the Assistant Dean may be present to hear and respond to testimony of the accused student or any witnesses appearing before the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee. If the student wishes to present witnesses before the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee, s/he must inform the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee at least seven working days before the appeal is to be heard of the names of the proposed witnesses and of the nature of the evidence they are prepared to present. However, the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee has sole discretion to determine what witnesses other than the accused student and the Assistant Dean it will hear, if any. The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee shall review the appeal as soon as practical after it has been filed.

Following its review, the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee may sustain or reverse the finding of academic dishonesty, if that portion of the Assistant Dean's decision was appealed, and may, if a finding of academic dishonesty stands, sustain or modify (but not increase) the sanction, if that portion of the decision was appealed. The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee shall inform the student by letter of its decision.

### ***Appeal to the Provost***

The student may appeal the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee's decision within 10 working days to the provost of the university. Such appeals must be in writing and include a detailed statement setting forth the grounds for the appeal. Appeals to the provost will be limited to alleged errors in procedures, interpretation of regulations or alleged manifest discrepancies between the evidence and a school finding and/or sanction. The provost will receive appeals only after a sanction has been specified for the alleged violation; an appeal to the provost may concern the finding and/or the proposed sanction.

### ***Cross-School Cases***

In instances where a student registered in another school is alleged to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in a School of Professional Studies course, the authority of SPS will extend only to determining whether or not the alleged action constitutes academic dishonesty and, if so, to the imposition of any grade penalty by the instructor in the course. If the finding is affirmative and all appeals have been exhausted or the time for appeals has expired in SPS, the case will be formally referred to the appropriate authority of the school in which the student is registered for whatever further sanction that school deems appropriate.

In instances where a student registered in SPS has been found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in a course offered by another school, the Assistant Dean will notify the student in writing of the formal referral of the matter to the School of Professional Studies for determination of a sanction, if any. Such notification will inform the student that he/she should schedule an appointment with the Assistant Dean, to take place within seven working days, to present any evidence of mitigating circumstances but not on the underlying question of guilt or innocence. If the student does not schedule an appointment within the allotted time, or within such extension of time as the Assistant Dean may grant at his/her sole discretion, the Assistant Dean will make a decision regarding any sanction based on the available information.

The Assistant Dean will inform the student in writing of any sanction imposed and of the student's right to appeal that sanction (but not issues of guilt or innocence) to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee.

### ***General Considerations***

A student charged with academic dishonesty may not change his or her registration in the course(s) in which a charge is pending or in which a finding of academic dishonesty has been made. Nor may such students receive a University degree while a charge of academic dishonesty is pending or a suspension imposed pursuant to a finding of academic dishonesty is in effect.

At any stage of the proceedings described above, the student may be accompanied by a fellow student, a faculty member or another individual of the student's choosing, but not by an attorney. This person may not, however, take part in the proceedings; the student must speak on his or her own behalf.

Sanctions specified by the Assistant Dean for graduate programs, as modified by the School of Professional Studies Academic Integrity Appeals Committee or the provost (if an appeal has been filed), shall take effect at the expiration of the period for appeal of a decision if an appeal has not been filed, and after a decision has been reached by the School of Professional Studies Academic Integrity Appeals Committee or the provost if an appeal has been filed. If the appeal is not granted, the sanction will be applied retroactively to the date specified by the Assistant Dean, and if necessary, current registrations may be canceled.

All materials relating to an allegation of academic dishonesty will be kept in the School of Professional Studies Office of Registration and Records for up to 10 years after the incident.

All references to the Assistant Dean for graduate programs in these procedures include the Assistant Dean's designee, whom the Assistant Dean may appoint at his or her discretion.



If circumstances (e.g., departure of the faculty member) prevent the instructor of the course in which the violation is alleged to have occurred from participating at any stage of these procedures, the Assistant Dean may act on the instructor's behalf.

## **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

Under the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA), all students have certain rights with regard to their educational records. A copy of Northwestern's student records policy is available at the above link. FERPA grants students the rights to inspect and review their educational records at Northwestern University; request an amendment of their records to ensure the records are not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of privacy or other rights; consent to release or to restrict disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in their educational records, except under certain limited circumstances when, by law, consent is not required; and file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Northwestern University to comply with FERPA requirements.

## **Northwestern University's Rules and Regulations of Student Conduct**

All SPS graduate students are subject to University-enacted rules and regulations, which are found in the [Northwestern University Student Handbook](#). Students are expected to be familiar with all policies in that Student Handbook.

SPS students, like all members of the Northwestern community, are expected to conduct themselves maturely. Physical or verbal abuse of any person, theft of or damage to University property, unauthorized entry of University facilities, disruption of teaching or administration, misuse of University documents or knowingly furnishing false information to the University shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. A student who violates any of the University's rules or regulations may be subject to probation, suspension or dismissal.

For questions about the policies in the Northwestern University Student Handbook, please contact SPS's Associate Dean for Student and Alumni Services.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Northwestern University is committed to the maintenance of an environment free of discrimination and all forms of coercion that impede the academic freedom or diminish the dignity of any member of the University community. The University emphasizes this policy specifically as it pertains to the prevention of sexual harassment and to the obligations of all students, faculty, administrators and staff in this regard.

It is the policy of Northwestern University that no member of the Northwestern community of any gender identity — students, faculty, administrators or staff — may sexually harass any other member of the community. Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute harassment when

- Submission to such conduct is made or threatened to be made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment or education
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used or threatened to be used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating what a reasonable person would sense as an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment, educational or living environment

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

Northwestern University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, genetic information or any other classification protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates.

Harassment, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based on any of these characteristics is a form of discrimination. This includes harassing conduct affecting tangible job benefits, interfering unreasonably with an individual's academic or work performance, or creating what a reasonable person would perceive is an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Prohibited sex discrimination includes sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Examples of discrimination and harassment may include

- Refusing to hire or promote someone because of the person's protected status
- Demoting or terminating someone because of the person's protected status
- Jokes or epithets about a person's protected status
- Teasing or practical jokes directed at a person based on his or her protected status
- Displaying or circulating written materials or pictures that degrade a person or group
- Verbal abuse or insults about, directed at or made in the presence of an individual or group of individuals in a protected group

For more information on discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment policies and to get help and advice, please visit the [Sexual Harassment Prevention Office website](#) or contact

University Sexual Harassment Prevention Office  
Rebecca Crown Center  
Room 2-636 (East Tower)  
633 Clark Street  
Evanston, Illinois 60208-1117  
847- 491-3745  
[sexual-harassment@northwestern.edu](mailto:sexual-harassment@northwestern.edu)

## **General Resources/Directory**

### **[SPS Student Services Page](#)**

The central location for all SPS student resources.

### **Office of Distance Education**

Contact [distanceeducation@northwestern.edu](mailto:distanceeducation@northwestern.edu) for information related the tools utilized in distance-learning courses.

### **[Human Resources, Benefits Division](#)**

Evanston: 847-491-7513

Chicago: 312-695-8134

### **[International Office](#)**

Assistance for international students with questions about visas and other requirements.

847-491-5613

### **[Sports and Athletic Facilities](#)**

Memberships and daily fee rates are available.

Crown Sports Pavilion/Norris Aquatics Center

2311 Campus Drive

Evanston, Illinois 60208

847-491-4303

### **[Student Financial Services](#)**

Tuition bills are available online through CAESAR. For questions, contact

Evanston: 847-491-5224; [studentaccounts-ev@northwestern.edu](mailto:studentaccounts-ev@northwestern.edu)

Chicago: 312-503-8503; [studentaccounts-chicago@northwestern.edu](mailto:studentaccounts-chicago@northwestern.edu)

## University Police

Evanston: 847-491-3254

Chicago: 312-503-8314

Emergency: 911

## Students with Disabilities

Northwestern University and [AccessibleNU](#) are committed to providing a supportive and challenging environment for all undergraduate, graduate, professional school, and professional studies students with disabilities who attend the University. Additionally, the University and [AccessibleNU](#) work to provide students with disabilities and other conditions requiring accommodation a learning and community environment that affords them full participation, equal access, and reasonable accommodation. The majority of accommodations, services, and auxiliary aids provided to eligible students are coordinated by [AccessibleNU](#). Students with disabilities should seek assistance from [AccessibleNU](#), 847-467-5530, located at Suite 130, 2122 Sheridan Rd, 2122 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201 and Suite 500, Abbott Hall, 710 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611 AccessibleNU staff

## **Additional Information for Online Students**

### *The Course Environment*

Distance Learning courses are presented using Northwestern's Course Management System ([Canvas](#)). Courses that include synchronous components also utilize web-based conferencing software.

Each course with optional synchronous sessions will typically follow the meeting date listed in the catalog. The listing will look similar to the example below:

**Graduate Course Listings**

**Program:** Master of Science in Medical Informatics  
**Department:** Any  
**Campus:** Any  
**Day:** Any  
**Course No:** 407-0  
**Term:** Fall 2008

**Important note for MMI Online students:**  
The course description and schedule for [CIS 313](#) and [CIS 317](#) may be found [here](#).

The course description and schedule for PUB HLTH 302 Introduction to Biostatistics can be found at <http://www.publichealth.northwestern.edu/mphcurriculum.htm>.

**Master of Science in Medical Informatics**  
**MED INF 407-DL ( Core Course )**  
**Legal, Ethical, and Social Issues**

This course addresses the legal, ethical, and social issues in health care informatics and will equip students with the knowledge and analytic tools needed to spot those key issues, thereby better protecting students and their employers in the medical informatics field. The health care industry is highly regulated, and this course also covers regulatory informatics requirements as they apply to work with health care data and information management systems. The course will also cover topics such as HIPAA privacy and security, fraud and abuse, confidentiality, antitrust law, intellectual property, the Joint Commission, disclosure, and compliance programs.

**Fall 2008**  
**ONLINE**                      W                      7:00 - 9:00 PM                      Sec. 51  
9/24/08 - 12/3/08    Instructor: [K. Lindgren](#)

In the above example, the last two lines provide the relevant information regarding synchronous sessions. For the example class, the “W” indicates that optional real-time sessions will be held on Wednesdays. The rest of the information shows that the synchronous sessions will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (all times are given in U.S. Central time) in the period between 9/24/08 and 12/3/08. Each instructor’s syllabus will specify the weeks in which optional synchronous session will be held.

Northwestern’s web conferencing software combines interactive audio and video conferencing. Students will need a web browser, a high-speed broadband Internet connection (DSL, cable or higher) and a phone. To access the audio and visual components of the web conference, students log on to the conferencing system through the Canvas course site. If technical issues prevent the session from taking place, students may access support listed on the website, and faculty may provide alternate learning content (e.g., prerecorded lecture).

***Proctored Exams***

Participation in SPS’s distance learning programs requires online, proctored final exams in selected courses. Detailed instructions are provided in the Canvas Course Management course sites. Students may contact [SPStesting@northwestern.edu](mailto:SPStesting@northwestern.edu) for support with proctored testing and may also view the [Proctor U](#) website.

### ***Strategies for Successful Distance Education Learning***

Each student will undoubtedly find his/her own methods for success in their program. Below are a few tips that may help students better navigate the challenges associated with online learning environment.

To work effectively in a distance education course, students should:

- Carefully read the course syllabus at the beginning of the term; review the syllabus frequently as the quarter progresses; be mindful of deadlines; begin work on large projects early in the quarter.
- Email the instructor with any questions about the course, the syllabus or any assignments.
- Check Canvas for announcements and participate actively in courses several times per week.
- Manage time appropriately and set aside specific times each week to work on the class. For each course taken, most students spend on average 10 to 15 hours per week out of the classroom working on projects, researching and studying. However, this can vary greatly, depending on personal and professional circumstances.

For group projects, students should:

- Clearly understand what is to be turned in as an individual and as a group.
- Schedule group work well in advance to ensure that all members are available to work together.
- Take individual responsibility for team projects.

In threaded online discussions on Canvas, students should:

- Keep messages brief yet informative.
- Appropriately credit the source of any ideas presented.
- Write and save responses in a word processing application and then copy and paste the response into the discussion board.
- Read a response several times before sending it.
- Understand how the instructor participates in the discussions, whether as an active participant, facilitator or reader.
- Share resources and news related to the course with classmates.

### ***SPS Symposium***

SPS encourages all distance-learning students visit campus at least one time during their program so that they have the opportunity to meet program faculty, SPS staff and their fellow students. To facilitate these meetings, SPS hosts on-campus symposium once a year, during the fall quarter. The symposium includes networking opportunities as well as advanced research workshops or presentations from industry experts, alumni and faculty. Students may attend as many workshops as they wish. There is no fee for attending the workshops; however, students must pay for their travel

and hotel expenses. Northwestern provides discounted rates for area hotels. Students should contact their [academic and career adviser](#) for more information about the annual symposium.

## **Program-Specific Guidelines for Individual Thesis Projects**

### ***MA in Creative Writing***

The MA thesis is an original creative work of high literary merit (judged on the basis of art as well as craft). Prose work should be at least 75 double-spaced pages and no more than 100 pages. Poetry should be 25 single-spaced pages and no more than 35 pages, with each poem beginning on a new page. The project may be one long piece or a series of shorter pieces. This final project may be an expansion of work begun during a previous course, but it must be a project of greater scope than work done during a normal workshop or independent study. It should be a culmination of work achieved during the entire program, and students should strive to produce a publishable project. The project is subject to review and revision until the final product represents work of publishable quality.

Students work on their theses throughout their program, using workshops and independent study courses to write and revise their stories and poems. By the time students register for the thesis, they should have a substantial draft. In the thesis class, students work with their adviser to polish and refine the stories or poems until they are of publishable quality.

### ***MFA in Creative Writing***

An original creative work of high literary merit (judged on the basis of art as well as craft). Prose work should be at least 140 double-spaced pages and no more than 170 pages. Poetic work should be between 35 and 50 single-spaced pages, with each poem beginning on a new page. The project may be one long piece or a series of shorter pieces. This final project may be an expansion of work begun during a previous course, but it must be a project of greater scope than work done during a normal workshop or independent study. It should be a culmination of work achieved during the entire program, and students should strive to produce a publishable project. The project is subject to review and revision until the final product represents work of publishable quality.

Students work on their theses throughout their program, using workshops and independent study courses to write and revise their stories and poems. By the time students register for the thesis courses, they should have a substantial draft. In the thesis class, students work with their adviser to polish and refine the stories or poems until they are of publishable quality.

MFA students complete their thesis with two registrations: MCW 589 and MCW 590. These registrations should be the last courses in their degree program, and students have up to one year

after the 589 registration to work on the project before they need to register for their 590. The instructor of the 590 is considered the committee chair and first reader of the student's final MFA thesis.

### ***MA in Liberal Studies and MA in Literature (MALS and MALit)***

An essay or research project that is at least 40 pages in length, double-spaced; most thesis projects generally reach up to 60 double-spaced pages. This project may be an expansion of a seminar paper from a previous course but must be more than just a long term paper; students research and explore a topic thoroughly, drawing on and integrating perspectives from various courses. The thesis is subject to revision until the final product represents the highest standards of the reviewers.

Students, especially in MALS, may want to consider thesis projects that engage a topic as part of a public intellectual discourse. Such projects encourage a discussion of the role of ideas in shaping our society and directly address the relevance of liberal studies today.

Students interested in pursuing a PhD are encouraged to write a thesis in the form of a scholarly article. Students should review articles published in scholarly journals in their field of interest and should discuss their plans with their thesis adviser at the beginning of the thesis process.

### ***MS in Clinical Research and Regulatory Administration (MCRRA)***

The thesis project is an opportunity to apply learning from the entire program and demonstrate mastery of the curriculum in a single project. The project is a distinctly individual effort where a student either conducts research, creates a new system or analyzes the effect of an event or set of events on the clinical research enterprise. If a research topic that involves human subjects is selected, all requirements for IRB approval at Northwestern University must be met when the proposal is submitted. If a topic related to a student's place of employment is identified, one of the two readers must be from outside the workplace and the student's role in the project must be clearly described. The thesis must be written entirely by the student. Thesis projects must be approximately 50 to 75 pages, including documentation. The thesis project documentation must conform to one of two formats: journal article submission or thesis submission.

**Journal Article Submission.** This format includes the development of a manuscript that is written and formatted for a particular journal. The overall format for the thesis includes

- **Abstract:** One page or less, giving the reader an overall description of what was done and what was found.
- **Table of Contents:** Use headings and provide page numbers. Include separate List of Tables and List of Figures with Table/Figure number, Title and page number.



- **Introduction**: Include an overview of the format and describe each section included in the thesis project. Provide an introduction to the topic and introduce the concepts and theories that apply to this project. Describe the statement of the problem/research question that is being explored and justify why this topic is important and worthy of study.
- **Literature Review**: Provide a thorough review of the literature, particularly peer-reviewed articles, germane to the topic/problem/research question. The review should provide evidence of critical thinking and demonstrate understanding/analysis of the current literature that shows the current state of the problem/research question and the approach the student will address in the manuscript. Separate reference sections are included for the literature review and manuscript sections. The citation style should be that which is used by the journal where the manuscript will be submitted. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.
- **Manuscript**: A manuscript written for the original contributions or similar section of a scholarly publication in clinical research or regulatory administration. The manuscript should conform to the journal's style guide and guidelines for authors. A typical manuscript will include a title, abstract, introduction/literature review, methods, results and discussion. The journal's style guide will dictate the actual sections included in the manuscript.
- **Thesis Summary**: This is a short section used to summarize lessons learned during the thesis project and recommendations to others who are considering similar projects.
- **Appendices**: Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as original source materials, surveys, expanded data tables and other data collection sources.
- **Vita**: Include a one-paragraph vita that describes the student's background.

**Thesis Submission.** This format includes the development of the thesis project using a traditional thesis-style format.

- **Abstract**: One page or less, giving the reader an overall description of what was done and what was found.
- **Table of Contents**: Use headings and provide page numbers. Include a List of Tables and Figures with Table/Figure number, Title and page number.
- **Introduction**: Provide an introduction to the topic or event and questions the project sought to answer. Introduce the concepts, regulations and theories that apply to this project.

- Statement of the Problem/Research Question: Describe the issue or topic being explored. For projects involving the creation of a unique quality system, students should describe the problem they are trying to solve.
- Justification: Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study in the field.
- Review of the Literature: Literature includes relevant regulations, past inspections, litigation and related scholarly articles and books. Through a review of the literature germane to the topic, answer questions and provide guidance on the importance and developments of previous or related research. These sources are defined as refereed research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions, legal reviews and results of past FDA inspections. Avoid using documents that are not in the public domain. Research pieces published in journals or recent books that provide theory and practical application and that clearly explain the history of the relevant regulations along with the intent of the regulating agencies are recommended. A synthesis of the literature should take the form of a scholarly summation of the issues presented across the readings directly related to the topic or project and must be properly cited using an appropriate format for the field of study. The review should demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives on the topic, including the regulating agency, the industry and the end consumer of a product. Students should strive to have a balance of articles addressing all affected parties and should address possible pitfalls or loopholes in the current regulated environment. For projects involving the creation of a product such as a training program or set of best practices, the review of available literature must define the state-of-the-art options and introduce a possible solution path.
- Analysis, Interpretations and Findings: This is the heart of the project or paper. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data the student has researched or collected. This is best done in a narrative format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting tables/charts/graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Analyze and interpret the findings from the applied project. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to address whether the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. Discuss the revelations discovered and defend or justify the findings in the analysis.
- Conclusion and Implications: Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project's significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of quality assurance and regulatory science.
- References: In collaboration with the readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study. The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. Request help at the

Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

- Thesis Summary: This is a short section used to summarize lessons learned during the thesis project and recommendations to others who are considering similar projects.
- Appendices: Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as original source materials, surveys, expanded data tables and other data collection sources.
- Vita: Include a one-paragraph vita that describes the student's background.

### ***MS in Information Design and Strategy (MSIDS)***

The thesis research project in the MSIDS program represents an opportunity to conduct original applied research under the supervision of a thesis project adviser or supervisor. Students completing the individual thesis demonstrate their mastery of the interdisciplinary curriculum by addressing a contemporary problem in the field. The project can begin from a question arising in a student's work setting that could be appropriately addressed by material learned in the program. The project must consist of original intellectual analysis but need not consist of primary research from the student.

The thesis should include 35 to 50 double-spaced pages with additional pages of appropriate supporting materials in appendices. The thesis answers four basic questions relating to the project: Why? How? What? And, so what? MSIDS theses should adhere to the following format:

- Abstract One page maximum, giving the reader an overall description of what was done and what was found.
- Table of Contents Use headings and provide page numbers.
- Introduction Provide an introduction to the topic and questions the project sought to answer. Show how this is an integrative work that applies the concepts and theories in the field.
- Statement of the Problem Clearly state the issue or topic being explored.
- Justification Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study.
- Review of the Literature Through a review of the literature germane to the topic, answer questions and provide guidance on the importance of previous or related research. For the literature review, which is expected to be between 5 to 15 pages of the thesis, students should read and synthesize no fewer than seven pieces of scholarly literature related to the topic. Scholarly literature is defined as refereed research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions. MSIDS recommends research pieces published in journals or recent books that provide theory as well as practical application. A synthesis of the literature should take the form of a scholarly review of the issues presented across the readings directly related to the topic or project. At least four references should be to works published within the last ten years. The literature review should demonstrate an

understanding of multiple perspectives on the research topic. Students should strive to have a balance of articles, some which support their analytical approach and others that offer contrasting evidence and perspectives. Taken together, the introduction, statement of problem, justification and literature review answer the question “Why?” They explain why the student did this research.

- **Methods** This section should contain a description of the methods used in executing the project. This would include a description of how the scholarly articles were identified and the details for the applied project completed as part of the final project. Students might include underlying statistical theory and methods, measurement techniques, database and data management tools, algorithms and software systems. The methods section answers the question “How?” It tells how the research was conducted.

- **Results** Here students describe the project analysis and findings. This is the heart of the project or thesis. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data researched. This is best done in a narrative format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting tables, charts and graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Discuss, analyze and interpret the findings. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to discuss how the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. The results section answers the question “What?” What were the findings of the research?

- **Conclusions** Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project’s significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of information design and strategy. The conclusions section answers the question “So what?” It explains why this research is worthwhile.

- **References** In collaboration with the team of readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study. Acceptable styles are APA journal style (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association) and Chicago style (The Chicago Manual of Style). The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. Students who are not familiar with academic writing style should consult with a reference librarian to obtain manuals and guide sheets. Request help at the Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

- **Appendices** Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as annotated bibliographies, original source materials, charts, graphs, photocopied work samples or other data sources.

### ***MS in Global Health (MSGH) Practicum Course***

#### ***What is a practicum?***

All students in the MSGH program are required to engage in at least four weeks of non-clinical work in a health delivery setting, which may include rotations abroad, working remotely on projects abroad, or working in your own community on “glocal” projects. Practical fieldwork experience is considered a valuable complement to the program curriculum, earning students academic credit in the 580 Practicum project as approved and overseen by MSGH faculty.

	<b>580 Practicum Course</b>
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What are the prerequisites to registration for MSGH 580?	A student registers for MSGH 580 after completing a minimum of four core courses in the program, including MSGH 405, MSGH 408, MSGH 410, MSGH 417, MSGH 419, and LEADERS 481.
When can you register?	Students may only register for MSGH 580 during the open registration period for Summer or Winter term.
How do you register?	Students register themselves in CAESAR.
How much is tuition?	Tuition is the cost of one unit of graduate credit. Students may also have to secure their own additional funding for components of the practicum, including travel expenses.
How long does it take?	MSGH 580 spans four academic terms beginning every Summer term or Winter term, with the fieldwork component taking at least four weeks during the fourth term. The course ends the final week of the following Spring term (for Summer start) and Fall term (for Winter start).
What work is required?	A student will work in a health delivery setting, participate in core didactic group discussions with fellow students, work individually on practicum reports, and present a final report with defense to faculty and classmates.
How will the practicum be assessed?	A student is individually assessed and graded throughout the duration of the practicum by the practicum instructors and is given a grade of P (pass) or F (fail). Does not affect cumulative GPA.
Can I take other classes concurrent to the MSGH 580 practicum course?	Students may take the remaining two core courses (MSGH 421 and MSGH 427) during the first two terms of the practicum course. Students may also take any and all remaining electives courses required for degree completion during any of the non-travel terms of MSGH 580. Student cannot take any courses during their term of travel.

*When may a student register for the practicum?*

For the MSGH practicum course, students must first complete at least four core courses in the program (MSGH 405, MSGH 408, MSGH 410, MSGH 417, MSGH 419, LEADERS 481). MSGH 421 and MSGH 427 may be taken concurrently to the practicum course in non-travel terms of the four-term practicum. All eight core courses must be completed by the third term of the practicum course.

The MSGH practicum course spans four academic terms, beginning in the summer or winter term and ending in the following spring or fall term. Students are encouraged to register for their MSGH

580 practicum course at the earliest opportunity upon meeting prerequisite requirements, as the practicum may be taken concurrently to other courses in the program. Delay of registration for the practicum course until all other coursework is completed may extend the length of time needed to complete the degree.

How do students register for the practicum course (580)?

Registration for 580 is the same as with any other class. It can be completed in CAESAR.

***MS in Health Informatics and Medical Informatics (MHI and MMI)***

Thesis projects (590) are intended as opportunities to conduct applied research under the supervision of a practitioner in a health care-related environment. Students doing a computer project will consult with their faculty adviser for prototype specifications regarding the design and architecture of the computer project. Thesis project documentation should include 35 to 50 double-spaced pages with appropriate supporting materials. This final project should be viewed as an opportunity to apply specific skills gained through sustained independent study on a topic that draws on and integrates a number of different perspectives introduced in various courses. The project must consist of original intellectual analysis (but need not consist of primary research from the student) that addresses a contemporary healthcare information technology problem and an applied approach to a specific aspect of the problem and may be an extension of work done for a previous course. The project may begin from a question arising in the student's work setting that could be appropriately addressed by material learned in the program. The project is subject to revision until the final product represents the highest standards of the reviewers. If an applied approach is not possible to support the chosen topic, the thesis should instead address two distinct but related topics. The thesis should adhere to this format:

Abstract One page or less, giving the reader an overall description of what was done and what was found.

Table of Contents Use headings and provide page numbers.

Introduction Provide an introduction to the topic and questions the project sought to answer and how this is an integrative work that applies the concepts, theories and interdisciplinary curriculum in the field.

Statement of the Problem/Research Question What is the issue or topic that is being explored?

Justification Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study in the field.

Review of the Literature and Methods Through a review of the literature germane to the topic, answer questions and provide guidance on the importance and developments of previous or related

research. In the literature review, students should read and synthesize no fewer than seven pieces of scholarly literature related to the topic. Scholarly literature is defined as refereed research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions. MMI recommends research pieces published in journals or recent books that provide theory as well as practical application. A synthesis of the literature should take the form of a scholarly summation of the issues presented across the readings directly related to the topic or project. The readings should be relatively recent, unless there is a seminal work or works in the area that are key to the topic. The review should demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives on the topic. The objective here is not to prove that a particular point of view is correct; rather the goal is to demonstrate that the student has read, understood and synthesized a variety of perspectives/research around the topic. The student should strive to have a balance of articles, some which support the position and others that offer contrasting evidence and perspectives. The methods section should contain a description of how the scholarly articles were identified for the literature review and describe the details for the applied project completed as part of the final project.

Analysis, Interpretations and Findings This is the heart of the project or paper. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data researched or collected. This is best done in a narrative format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting tables/charts/graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Analyze and interpret the findings from the applied project. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to address whether the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. Discuss the revelations and defend or justify the findings in the analysis.

Conclusion and Implications Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project's significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of medical informatics.

References In collaboration with the readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study (for MMI, this is typically APA). The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. For students who are not familiar with this academic writing style, the library has manuals and guide sheets. Request help at the Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

Appendices Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as annotated bibliographies, original source materials, charts, graphs, photocopied work samples or other data collection sources.

### ***MA in Public Policy & Administration (MPPA)***

The thesis project is designed to provide an avenue for students to demonstrate to faculty their mastery of the interdisciplinary curriculum and the conceptual implementation of the theories and practices in the field of public policy and public administration. The thesis is a research project of approximately 50 to 75 double-spaced pages with appropriate supporting materials. The final project should be viewed as an opportunity to engage in sustained independent study on a topic that draws on and integrates a number of different perspectives that students have been introduced to in various courses and may be an extension of work done for a previous course.

The project must consist of original intellectual analysis (but need not consist of primary research from the student) that addresses a contemporary policy or administrative problem defined and developed in concert with an extensive literature search. The project can begin from a question arising in a student's work setting that could be appropriately addressed by material learned in the program. The project is subject to revision until the final product represents the highest standards of the reviewers. MPPA theses should adhere to this format:

Abstract One page or less, providing an overall description of what was researched/found.

Table of Contents Use headings and provide page numbers.

Introduction Provide an introduction to the topic and questions the project sought to answer and how this is an integrative work that applies the concepts, theories and interdisciplinary curriculum in the field.

Statement of the Problem/ Research Question Clearly state the issue or topic being explored.

Justification Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study in the field.

Review of the Literature Through a review of the literature germane to the topic, answer questions and provide guidance on the importance and developments of previous or related research. In the literature review, students should read and synthesize no fewer than seven pieces of scholarly literature related to the topic. Scholarly literature is defined as refereed research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions. MPPA recommends research pieces published in journals or recent books that provide theory as well as practical application. A synthesis of the literature should take the form of a scholarly summation of the issues presented across the readings directly related to the topic or project. The readings should be relatively recent, unless there is a seminal work or works in the area that are key to the topic. The review should demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives on the topic. The objective here is not to prove that a particular point of view is correct; rather the goal is to demonstrate that the student has read,



understood and synthesized a variety of perspectives/research around the topic. Students should strive to have a balance of articles, some which support the position and others that offer contrasting evidence and perspectives.

Analysis, Interpretations and Findings This is the heart of the project or paper. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data the student has researched or collected. This is best done in a narrative format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting tables/charts/graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Analyze and interpret the findings. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to address whether the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. Discuss the revelations and defend or justify the findings in the analysis.

Conclusion and Implications Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project's significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of public policy and public administration.

References In collaboration with the readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study (for MPPA, this is typically APA). The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. For students who are not familiar with this academic writing style, the library has manuals and guide sheets. Request help at the Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

Appendices Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as annotated bibliographies, original source materials, charts, graphs, photocopied work samples or other data collection sources.

### ***MS in Regulatory Compliance and MS in Quality Assurance and Regulatory Science (MSRC and QARS)***

The thesis project is an opportunity to apply learning from the entire program and demonstrate mastery of the curriculum in a single project. The project is a distinctly individual effort where a student either creates a new system to conform with modern regulatory requirements or analyzes the effects of a particular event or events on quality or regulatory systems for an industry. In cases involving the creation of a new quality assurance system for a work-related project, the individual must first negotiate with his or her direct manager to approve sharing the work with two MSRC faculty members who will serve as readers and who may be able to sign nondisclosure agreements. One of these readers must be from outside of the student's company. In addition, the student must state his or her approved role in the project and how the project will affect the applicable industry.

Thesis projects that do not fall into these two categories may be appropriate but must be reviewed with the program director before the project is started.

Thesis project documentation must be written in a professional style and include approximately 50 to 75 double-spaced pages with appropriate supporting materials. This final project should be viewed as an opportunity to apply specific skills gained through sustained independent study on a topic that draws on and integrates a number of different perspectives introduced in various courses. The project must consist of original intellectual analysis (but need not consist of primary research from the student) that addresses a contemporary regulatory problem, food safety/quality concern or quality event and applies the conclusions to the industry as a whole. The project may begin from a question arising in the student's work setting that could be appropriately addressed by material learned in the program. The project is subject to revision until the final product represents the highest standards of the reviewers. The thesis should adhere to this format:

Abstract One page or less, giving the reader an overall description of what was done and what was found.

Table of Contents Use headings and provide page numbers.

Introduction Provide an introduction to the topic or event and questions the project sought to answer. Introduce the concepts, regulations and theories that apply to this project.

Statement of the Problem/Research Question Describe the issue or topic being explored. For projects involving the creation of a unique quality system, describe the problem to be solved.

Justification Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study in the field.

Review of the Literature Literature includes relevant regulations, past inspections, litigation and related scholarly articles and books. Through a review of the literature germane to the topic, answer questions and provide guidance on the importance and developments of previous or related research. In the literature review, students should read and synthesize no fewer than seven pieces of independent sources related to the topic. These sources are defined as refereed research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions, legal reviews and results of past FDA inspections. Avoid using documents that are not in the public domain. Research pieces published in journals or recent books that provide theory and practical application and that clearly explain the history of the relevant regulations along with the intent of the regulating agencies are recommended. A synthesis of the literature should take the form of a scholarly summation of the issues presented across the readings directly related to the topic or project and must be properly cited using an appropriate format for the field. The review should demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives on the topic, including the regulating agency, the industry and the end consumer of a

product. Students should strive to have a balance of articles addressing all affected parties and should address possible pitfalls or loopholes in the current regulated environment. For projects involving the creation of a new quality system, the review of available literature must define the state-of-the-art options and regulation requirements, appropriate laws and court cases for the new system or explain why the current regulations are insufficient and introduce a possible solution path.

Analysis, Interpretations and Findings This is the heart of the project or paper. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data researched or collected. This is best done in a narrative format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting tables/charts/graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Analyze and interpret the findings from the applied project. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to address whether the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. Discuss the revelations and defend or justify the findings in the analysis. For projects involving the creation of a new quality system, describe the key attributes of the system and demonstrate that the system is functional and meets regulatory requirements. Use flow charts to show sample/data flow and computer screen shots to show user interfaces if needed. An independent audit of the system should be performed to verify that the system meets FDA regulations.

Conclusion and Implications Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project's significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of quality assurance and regulatory science.

References In collaboration with the readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study. The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. Request help at the Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

Appendices Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as annotated bibliographies, original source materials, charts, graphs, photocopied work samples or other data collection sources.

### ***MA in Sports Administration (MSA)***

The thesis project is designed to provide an avenue for students to demonstrate to faculty their mastery of the interdisciplinary curriculum and the conceptual implementation of the theories and practices in the field of sports administration. The thesis is a research project of approximately 40 to 50 double-spaced pages with appropriate supporting materials written under the supervision of a faculty member. The final project should be viewed as an opportunity to engage in sustained

independent study on a topic that draws on and integrates a number of different perspectives that students have been introduced to in various courses and may be an extension of work done for a previous course. The project must consist of original intellectual analysis (but need not consist of primary research from student) that addresses a contemporary administrative problem defined and developed in concert with an extensive literature search. The project can begin from a question arising in a student's work setting that could be appropriately addressed by material learned in the program. The project is subject to revision until the final product represents the highest standards of the reviewers.

MSA thesis projects should adhere to this format:

Abstract One page or less, providing an overall description of what was researched/found.

Table of Contents Use headings and provide page numbers.

Introduction Provide an introduction to the topic and questions the project sought to answer and how this is an integrative work that applies the concepts, theories and interdisciplinary curriculum in the field.

Statement of the Problem/Research Question Clearly state the issue or topic being explored.

Justification Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study in the field.

Review of the Literature Through a review of the literature germane to the topic, answer questions and provide guidance on the importance and developments of previous or related research. In the literature review, students should read and synthesize no fewer than seven pieces of scholarly literature related to the topic. Scholarly literature is defined as refereed research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions. MSA recommends research pieces published in journals or recent books that provide theory as well as practical application. A synthesis of the literature should take the form of a scholarly summation of the issues presented across the readings directly related to the topic or project. The readings should be relatively recent, unless there is a seminal work or works in the area that are key to the topic. The review should demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives on the topic. The objective here is not to prove that a particular point of view is correct; rather the goal is to demonstrate that the student has read, understood and synthesized a variety of perspectives/research around the topic. Students should strive to have a balance of articles, some of which support their position and others that offer contrasting evidence and perspectives.

Analysis, Interpretations and Findings This is the heart of the project or paper. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data researched or collected. This is best done in a narrative

format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting tables/charts/graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Analyze and interpret the findings. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to address whether the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. Discuss the revelations and defend or justify the findings in the analysis.

Conclusion and Implications Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project's significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of public policy and public administration.

References In collaboration with the readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study (for MSA, this is typically APA). The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. For students who are not familiar with this academic writing style, the library has manuals and guide sheets. Request help at the Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

Appendices Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as annotated bibliographies, original source materials, charts, graphs, photocopied work samples or other data collection sources.

### ***MS in Information Systems (MSIS)***

The Northwestern University Master of Science in Information Systems (MSIS) thesis project is an opportunity for students to join the Northwestern community in conducting applied research under the supervision of business practitioners and University faculty. The MSIS thesis is an academic project where students demonstrate their ability to conduct an independent study that combines theoretical knowledge with empirical research. Thesis projects should be viewed as a chance to demonstrate specific skills and knowledge gained in the program to study or solve problems faced by professionals in the information technology community.

Students who choose to participate in the thesis program should be prepared to work with faculty members to identify existing problems, select a research methodology to study these problems and draw on existing literature to analyze and formulate conclusions from existing or new empirical data. Thesis project documentation should include 75 to 100 double-spaced pages; appropriate supporting materials would be in addition to the minimum of 75 pages. The project will be evaluated based on intellectual merit. The project is subject to revision until the final product represents the highest standards of the two readers.

The thesis should adhere to this format:

Abstract The abstract demonstrates a student's ability to understand and communicate an overview of the project. The abstract identifies the scope and depth of the study. The abstract should provide a summary of the context and scholarly contribution it makes. The abstract should be written in a concise manner so that it identifies the problem or research question, significant aspects of the research, the approach or research methodology to be used and the findings. In general the thesis abstract should be one page or less (150 to 250 words) and give the reader an overall description of what was done and what was found.

Table of Contents The table of contents is used to allow readers to easily navigate the thesis. The table of contents must be properly formatted with headings and page numbers.

Introduction The thesis introduction is the first part of the body of the thesis paper. The introduction should enable the readers to get the general idea of what the thesis is about. The thesis introduction introduces the readers to the thesis paper topic and the basis for selecting the research topic.

The thesis introduction should contain the following information:

The thesis paper topic;

The reasons or motivation for the selection of the topic;

The background information on the thesis topic;

The goals of the research;

The tasks to complete in order to attain the goals.

The thesis introduction should be written after composing the entire thesis paper. It will allow the student to analyze the whole work and to discover the best way to introduce the thesis to the readers. The rules below will help students achieve the goal of the introduction:

Do not use any highly technical terms in the thesis introduction, since it can baffle the readers.

Students should present the terms related to the topic of the thesis paper only in the main body of the thesis paper.

Try to use simple language within the thesis introduction.

Remember that one of the main tasks of the thesis introduction is to attract the readers' attention to the thesis paper.

Statement of the Problem/Research Question This section starts with a statement of the main purpose of the thesis. Then write answers to each of these questions:

What is the problem or question that the work addresses?

How was the study undertaken?

What was found and what does it mean?

Justification Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study in the field.

Review of the Literature Why do students need to review the literature for their thesis? A review of the literature fulfills the following functions:

- establishes the importance of the research question and topic
- defends the theoretical or conceptual framework of the study
- validates the research methodology
- provides background information needed to understand the study
- establishes the study as a link in the body of knowledge related to the study topic
- demonstrates the students' knowledge and/or up-to-date research relevant to the topic

The literature review provides a relatively brief historical overview of the theory and the research literature, with an emphasis on the literature specific to the thesis topic. It serves as well to support the argument/proposition behind the thesis, using evidence drawn from authorities or experts in the research field. The literature review should provide a bridge between the statement of purpose and research question or problem and the presentation of the students' original contribution.

The literature review should demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives on the topic. The students' objective here is not to prove that a particular point of view is correct; rather the goal is to demonstrate that the student has read, understood and synthesized a variety of perspectives/research around the topic. Students should strive to have a balance of articles, some of which support their position and others that offer contrasting evidence and perspectives. The methods section should contain a description of how the scholarly articles were identified for the literature review and describe the details for the applied project completed as part of the final project.

The review must be shaped by a focus on key areas of interest, including research that provides a background to the topic. It should also be selective. A common mistake in writing the review is to comment on everything read regardless of its relevance. In writing, it is useful to think of the review as a funnel — start wide with the overview and then narrow fairly quickly into discussing the research that relates to the specific topic. In the literature review, students should read and synthesize no fewer than seven pieces of scholarly literature related to the topic. Scholarly literature is defined as referenced research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions. The readings should be relatively recent, unless there is a seminal work or works in the area that are key to the topic.

Analysis, Interpretations and Findings This is the heart of the project or paper. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data researched or collected. This is best done in a narrative format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting

tables/charts/graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Analyze and interpret the findings from the applied project. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to address whether the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. Discuss the revelations and defend or justify the findings in the analysis.

Conclusion and Implications Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project's significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of information technology. Conclusions are not a wordy summary of the thesis; they are short, concise statements of the inferences that the student has made based on the results of his or her work. It helps to organize these as short numbered paragraphs, ordered from most to least important. All conclusions should be directly related to the research question.

### References

The reference section should

- cite all ideas, concepts, text and data that are not the student's own
- provide data or a reference to back up any statement made
- list all references cited in the text

In collaboration with the readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study (for MSIS, this is typically APA). The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. For students who are not familiar with this academic writing style, the library has manuals and guide sheets. Request help at the Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

Appendices Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as annotated bibliographies, original source materials, charts, graphs, photocopied work samples or other data collection sources.

### ***MS in Predictive Analytics (MSPA)***

The thesis research project in the MSPA program represents an opportunity to conduct original applied research under the supervision of a thesis project adviser or supervisor. Thesis projects are evaluated by a team of two readers, one of whom can be a professional with appropriate skills and expertise external to Northwestern University and one of whom must be a Northwestern faculty member. The first reader is the student's primary adviser, supporting the student through a quarter of regular thesis advising. After the first reader approves of the thesis, the second reader reviews it. Both readers must be approved in advance by the academic adviser.



The thesis project is a wholly individual effort and represents an opportunity to apply specific skills gained through sustained independent study. The project must consist of original intellectual analysis of a predictive analytics problem. The thesis project is likely to draw upon and integrate a number of different perspectives or analytical approaches reviewed in courses in MSPA program. Typical projects come in one of three forms: (1) business case study, (2) simulation experiment or (3) predictive analytics competition.

Business Case Study This type of project often arises within the student's work setting and is usually supervised by a predictive analytics practitioner. The student identifies a problem that a manager faces and data relevant to the problem. The student analyzes the data, develops a predictive model and uses that model to make recommendations to management. A detailed description of the case study problem and data set is prepared as part of the project documentation.

Simulation Experiment A project of this type is often an extension of work done in previous courses and is usually supervised by a predictive analytics faculty member. Alternative modeling methods, traditional and/or data-adaptive, are selected for evaluation. Experimental data consist of random draws from an actual data set or simulated data generated to conform to selected distributional assumptions. Relevant factors — including modeling method, distribution type and sample size — define the experimental design. Statistical criteria are defined for evaluating the predictive accuracy of methods. The student conducts a statistical simulation for each cell in the design, analyzes the results and draws conclusions about the alternative modeling methods.

Predictive Analytics Competition This type of project relates to an active data mining, text mining or predictive analytics competition and is usually supervised by a predictive analytics faculty member. The typical competition relates to a decision that needs to be made by a business or public sector manager. The student analyzes the data and provides relevant predictions. The student prepares a formal/official entry into the competition, identifying the entry by his/her name and affiliation with the Northwestern University MSPA program. Documentation for the competition, including the description of the problem and the available data, should be included in the appendix of the thesis.

Regardless of the type of project, the thesis provides documentation for the completed project. The thesis is subject to revision until it meets the highest standards, as defined by the team of readers.

The thesis should include 35 to 50 double-spaced pages with additional pages of appropriate supporting materials in appendices. The thesis answers four basis questions relating to the project: Why? How? What? And, so what? The thesis should adhere to the following format:

Abstract One page maximum, giving the reader an overall description of what was done and what was found.

Table of Contents Use headings and provide page numbers.

Introduction Provide an introduction to the topic and questions the project intends to answer. Show how this is an integrative work that applies the concepts, theories and interdisciplinary curriculum of predictive analytics.

Statement of the Problem What is the issue or topic being explored?

Justification Explain why this topic is important and worthy of study.

Review of the Literature Through a review of the literature germane to the topic, answer questions and provide guidance on the importance of previous or related research. For the literature review, which is expected to be between 5 to 15 pages of the thesis, students should read and synthesize no fewer than seven pieces of scholarly literature related to the topic. Scholarly literature is defined as refereed research journals, publications and websites maintained by scholarly institutions. MSPA recommends research pieces published in journals or recent books that provide theory as well as practical application. A synthesis of the literature should take the form of a scholarly review of the issues presented across the readings directly related to the topic or project. At least two references should be to works published within the last 10 years. The literature review should demonstrate an understanding of multiple perspectives on the research topic. Students should strive to have a balance of articles, some which support their analytical approach and others that offer contrasting evidence and perspectives. Taken together, the introduction, statement of problem, justification and literature review answer the question “Why?” They explain why the student did this research.

Methods This section should contain a description of the methods used in executing the project. These include underlying statistical theory and methods, measurement techniques, database and data management tools, algorithms and software systems. The methods section answers the question “How?” It tells how the research was conducted.

Results Here students describe the project analysis and findings. This is the heart of the project or thesis. The goal is to interpret, analyze and report on the data researched. This is best done in a narrative format that methodically addresses the research question or questions with supporting tables, charts and graphs, when appropriate. Present the findings and analyses in a manner that will permit the reader to understand what was found in the investigation. Discuss, analyze and interpret the findings. Relate this back to the literature review and be mindful to discuss how the findings or conclusions are consistent with or contradictory to previous published research or theories on the topic. The results section answers the question “What?” What were the findings of the research?

Conclusions Prepare a summary in the form of a critical analysis of the project's significance and the implications of the conclusions as they relate to the topic and to the broader field of predictive analytics. The conclusions section answers the question "So what?" It explains why this research is worthwhile.

References In collaboration with the team of readers, agree on a citation style appropriate to the field of study. Acceptable styles are APA journal style (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*) and Chicago style (*The Chicago Manual of Style*). The citation style should be applied consistently throughout the project. Students who are not familiar with academic writing style should consult with a reference librarian to obtain manuals and guide sheets. Request help at the Writing Place for further guidance on referencing. Northwestern provides free downloads of EndNote, a useful referencing application, through NUIT.

Appendices Attach, as needed, any appendices or supporting documentation such as annotated bibliographies, original source materials, charts, graphs, photocopied work samples or other data sources.