



MS Statistics: Statistics and Data Science (MSDS)

Program Handbook

2024-2025

Department of Statistics

Reference this handbook to learn about the unique policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for graduate students in the Statistics Department.

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Preface

The [Department of Statistics](#) is committed to the training and education of its graduate students. To facilitate this practice, we have created this document to help guide students through their education in the [MS Statistics: Statistics and Data Science](#) (MSDS) program. The MSDS program is a named option, professional program within the broader MS Statistics. Because this is a professional program, there are additional policies in areas such as funding and enrollment. The policies of the program are overseen by the VISP & MSDS Committee.

The [Graduate School at UW-Madison](#) oversees all graduate programs and provides [policies that apply to all graduate students](#). Additionally, departments must create and oversee the specific curriculum and provide additional policies for students in their program. This document is designed to provide information and links to relevant Graduate School policies and outline departmental and program specific rules and policies.

Degrees and course requirements may change over time. However, students must meet the degree and course requirements in effect when they enter the program. In addition, administrative procedures and processes can change over time. Students are required to follow the procedures and processes listed in the current handbook. The information in this handbook is supplemental to the [MS Statistics: Statistics and Data Science Graduate Guide](#), which serves as the official repository of program rules, requirements, and policies.

Students who have questions or concerns should contact the MSDS program chair, Jun Shao (shao@stat.wisc.edu) and the MSDS program coordinator Jinda Moore (visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu). Jun Shao also serves as the faculty advisor for all MSDS students.

Navigating Policy and Resources at UW-Madison

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



Who to Contact for Questions

Many of your questions about how to meet expectations and thrive as a graduate student will be answered by the various sources of policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms at the resources provided above as well as in this Handbook.

Several key positions in this department and on campus are ready to answer your remaining questions:

Graduate Program Coordinator

Each graduate program will have at least one department staff person typically called a graduate program coordinator who serves as a point person for program policy and procedures. Graduate program coordinators are well versed in most elements of graduate education that extend beyond academic instruction in your program and will likely be your first stop for questions related to anything in this handbook. The graduate program coordinator and academic advisor for MSDS is Jinda Moore (visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu).

Director of Graduate Studies

Each graduate program has one faculty member designated to direct its educational vision and structure.

Names and contact information of your graduate program coordinator and Director of Graduate Studies can be found on your program's page in the [Graduate Guide](#). Simply navigate to the "Major/Degree" tab, click on your program's name, and look for the contact information box on the right hand side.

Faculty Advisor

Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor in each graduate program in which they are enrolled. Your faculty advisor(s) will be a key source of guidance for your academic development. Further definition can be found in [the Policy Library](#) (#1232). Guidelines for finding, changing, and working with your advisor can be found in the Advising & Mentoring section below.

The name and contact information of your faculty advisor can be found on your Student Center on [MyUW](#) under "Academic Progress" and then "Advisors." Jun Shao serves as the faculty advisor for all MSDS students.

Graduate School Services

For general inquiries and graduate student services from the Graduate School, see the operations and front desk contact information on the [Graduate School's contact page](#).

Department and Program Overview

Please view the [Graduate Guide](#) for an overview of the MSDS department and program learning outcomes.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Department of Statistics strives to create a sense of belonging among all students, faculty, and staff. We foster an inclusive environment by treating other members of the department with esteem and respect. We honor diversity in our department and promote this sense of belonging by working together considerably towards our common goals of teaching, community engagement, and scientific innovation. We are dedicated to serving the [UW Madison statement on diversity](#) and are committed to creating an environment where all feel respected and included.

Students who need to report an incident, please view the [Graduate Guide Grievances and Appeals policies](#), and/or contact the program coordinator, Jinda Moore (visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu).

How to Get Involved

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

On Campus & In the Community

The Wisconsin Idea is the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom. For more than 100 years, this idea has guided the university's work.

You will find a list of ways to engage in campus and local community life at: [The Graduate School's Current Student Page](#).

If you are a student actively involved in leadership and service activities, consider nominating yourself for membership in the following honor society: [Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society](#).

Getting Started as a Graduate Student

This section outlines important steps to take as a graduate student at UW-Madison.

New Graduate Student Checklist

Be sure to review all steps listed on this webpage for new graduate students:
[The Graduate School's New Student Page](#).

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

International Student Specific Events

International Students will need to attend one of the mandatory [International Student Services \(ISS\) orientations](#). Click the link in the previous sentence for information on dates and times. Please note that there are specific sections for incoming graduate students.

In Our Program

The Statistics department will have orientation events for incoming MSDS students, both online and in person. Additional information can be found in the MSDS Orientation course in Canvas and your email inbox.

Advising and Mentoring

Advising relationships are a central part of academia, important to both the experience and development of students and faculty members alike.

Please see the [Graduate School's definition of an advisor](#). Your MSDS advisors have two main roles: 1) To assist you in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field, and 2) to track your progress in completing your degree (note: this may include use of the [Graduate Student Tracking System](#)), assisting with course selection, and planning your academic path.

Advisors are assigned to MSDS students and include the MSDS program coordinator and VISP & MSDS program chair for academic advising. Because MSDS is a professional program, students do **not** form a graduate advising committee.

Students will need to receive approval for their enrollment each semester via the course plan survey, sent to students' wisc.edu email early each semester. This form can also

be used to make edits or updates once enrolled in a term. Students who do not provide this form will have an enrollment hold put on their record for the following semester.

Information will be sent to students regarding courses for the upcoming semester before enrollment begins: by early to mid-November for spring enrollment, and by early April for fall enrollment. Specific and detailed information will be provided via email and online to students before they begin the program. Students with more specific questions are welcome to make an appointment with their program coordinator ([via Starfish](#)) or advisor at any time, and drop-in advising is also offered during peak enrollment times.

Both the student and advisor are responsible for making their expectations clear to each other. Be sure to discuss this with your advisor. Students in the program are expected to read their wisc.edu emails on a regular and timely basis, respond to emails from the chair and program coordinator, fill out their course plan survey form and other requested forms in a timely fashion, and contact the advisors when they have questions or concerns. These must all be done in a timely manner. See the [Statistics Department Advising Expectations webpage](#) for further information about advising expectations for both students and advisors.

Office Hours

Professors, teaching assistants, and other instructors schedule time outside of class to meet with students called “office hours.” Office hours are times when you can meet your instructor to discuss coursework or other related interests. This may include asking for extra help understanding class materials, following up on something you found interesting in class, or to discuss their academic and/or professional interests, such as continuing graduate school or future internship or job prospects.

Instructors typically share their office hours’ time and location in the course syllabus.

While office hours are not required, many students find that visiting their instructors can be very helpful. Instructors do not have any lessons planned during this time, and it is typically the student’s responsibility to lead the interaction. A good way to prepare for office hours is to review your course materials, noting areas where you may need more help along with any questions you may have. It’s also a good idea to start attending office hours early in the semester, rather than waiting until you’re overwhelmed near the end of the term – it’s always easier to keep up with coursework than to try to catch up at the last second.

Office hours are not a time when your instructor will complete your assignments for you. Study your materials and try to complete any assignments before going to office hours. This will help you form good questions to discuss with your instructor.

A Graduate Student Guide to Working with Faculty Advisors

Through [this interactive, self-paced micro-course](#), graduate students learn about the characteristics of functional and dysfunctional relationships with faculty advisors, strategies for communicating effectively and aligning expectations, as well as program grievance processes and Hostile and Intimidating Behavior resources. Completion of the micro-course takes about 20 minutes and is optional but encouraged for all graduate students.

Advising Expectations

Clearly defined expectations for both the student and advisor are a crucial starting point for a strong relationship. Programs/departments are encouraged to maintain a practice of producing “Advising Expectations” that clarify and document mutually agreed upon expectations for both the student and advisor. Advising and enrollment expectations for the Department of Statistics can be found [at this link](#).

An [Individual Development Plan](#) may also be a helpful tool to reflect upon and plan your academic and professional goals, and may be used in conjunction with advising.

Mentoring Networks

In addition to your formal advisor, you are encouraged to develop a broad network of individuals who can provide academic and professional mentorship during and beyond your time as a graduate student.

Students are encouraged to visit their instructors’ office hours (time instructors set aside to meet with their students) in order to develop a professional relationship with their instructors as well as better understand coursework. Students may also consider joining graduate student clubs, found at win.wisc.edu, such as the [Statistics Graduate Student Association \(SGSA\)](#) in the Statistics Department.

Funding, Employment, and Finances

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

The MSDS program, as a professional MS program, is allowed to set its own market-rate based tuition which is \$1,600 per credit (2024-25 academic year, this rate is subject to change from year to year) plus any relevant student fees. The tuition rate is the same for all students and is credit-based.

General information on the current tuition rate and fees can be found on the [Bursar's website](#), MSDS is the tier 1600 with segregated fees rate (to find our specific program go to the link above and select the correct term and academic year and then search for "Statistics: Statistics and Data Science").

MSDS students are expected to be self-supported and will need to pay the appropriate tuition during the time of their study.

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

- [Maximum Levels of Appointments](#)
- [Concurrent Appointments for Fellows/Trainees](#)
- [Enrollment Requirements for Graduate Assistants](#)
- [Eligibility for Summer RA, TA, PA, and LSA Appointments](#)

Assistantships

Per [UW-Madison campus policy](#), students enrolled in this program may be employed in a graduate assistantship (teaching assistant/TA, research assistant/RA, project assistant/PA), but **are not eligible** to receive tuition remission from graduate assistantship appointments at this institution. Corporate tuition support and waiver of tuition for veterans is not included in these categories. See the [Graduate School's policy document regarding assistantships](#), along with the [Graduate School's policy document regarding tuition remission](#) to learn more about what tuition remission is and the sorts of positions that would grant remission.

Department of Statistics Academic Scholarships

Admissions Scholarships

The Statistics department offers a limited number of selective scholarships to highly qualified applicants at the time of their recommendation of admission. These selected students may receive a scholarship of up to 25% of the MSDS program tuition charges over the duration of their time in the program in the form of fee deferrals. Potential scholarships for students entering the program with pre-approved credits would be prorated based on the number of credits needed to complete the program.

Academic Excellence Scholarship (AES) for Statistics-VISP to MSDS Students

The Statistics department offers a limited number of selective scholarships to highly qualified Statistics-VISP students who have been admitted to the MSDS program. Students may receive a one-time scholarship applied to their tuition account in their first semester in the MSDS program.

Notes on Academic Scholarships

- Students must maintain [satisfactory academic progress](#) to continue receiving admissions scholarships for the duration of their studies. Students who are found not maintaining satisfactory academic progress (including those who participate in academic misconduct) risk the removal or suspension of their scholarship.
- The Statistics Department is not responsible for updating scholarship payments if students fail to communicate enrollment changes (i.e. enrolling in additional courses) in a timely manner.

Finding Funding Without a Guaranteed Appointment

Campus-Wide and External Sources

To help students find resources to pay for costs related to graduate education, the Graduate School provides a comprehensive overview of the funding process on campus as well as descriptions of the types of funding available, sources of funding, minimum stipend rates and benefits, and links to applicable human resources policies (e.g., GAPP) at:

- [Graduate School: Funding and Financial Aid](#)
- [External Fellowship Database](#)
- [UW-Madison Libraries Grants Information Collection](#)
- [UW-Madison Student Jobs](#)

Additional Policies & Resources

- [Graduate School Policy: Residence for Tuition Purposes](#)
- [Employee Disability Resources](#)
- [Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures \(GAPP\)](#)

Degree Requirements

All students in the MSDS program are responsible for keeping aware of the following requirements to complete the degree.

Prerequisite Courses

Students admitted to the MSDS program are expected to have courses equivalent to the UW-Madison courses listed on the [MSDS Graduate Guide Admissions page](#).

MSDS Requirements

For all current catalog year requirements to complete your degree (e.g., credits, courses, grades/GPA, etc.) see the current [MSDS Requirements page in the Graduate Guide](#). Navigate to guide.wisc.edu/graduate, then select “Degrees/Majors,” your program’s name, the “Named Option” of your program (if applicable; found near the bottom of the Requirements tab), and then “Requirements” from the navigation bar on the right side. You will be taken to a subsection of your program’s *Guide* page that contains all official requirements for your degree. Similarly, see “Policies” from the navigation bar of your program’s page to learn about policies affecting these requirements (e.g., prior coursework, probation, credits per term allowed, time constraints, grievances and appeals, etc.).

Note that when you look at the *Guide* to learn about program requirements, you will be viewing the current year’s version. To find past versions of program requirements, see the [Guide Archive](#) and search for your program and the year you would like to reference.

Per campus policy, MSDS students:

- **may not take** courses outside the prescribed curriculum without faculty advisor and program director approval
- **cannot enroll** concurrently in other undergraduate, graduate or certificate programs.

Doing so may result in being removed from the MSDS program.

Course Plan Survey

Each semester, MSDS students are required to submit a course plan survey indicating the courses that they are enrolled in for the upcoming semester. This allows MSDS program coordinators to ensure that students in our program are continuing to make satisfactory academic progress in the program, and that you are enrolling according to [MSDS program requirements](#).

The link to the course plan survey will be emailed to all students’ wisc.edu email address at the beginning of each semester. If students do not submit their course survey plan by the deadline, a hold will be placed on their record preventing any future enrollment (add/drop/swap current courses, or future semester enrollment).

All changes to enrollment after students' course plans **must** be approved by an MSDS program coordinator. **Students who do not inform program coordinators of enrollment changes risk not making satisfactory academic progress and may jeopardize their graduation status.**

Statistics-VISP to MSDS Students

Students who come to MSDS from the Statistics-VISP program are allowed to transfer up to 14 credits from their enrollment during VISP to the MSDS program if they received a grade of B or higher. These credits will typically include STAT 601 (4 cr); 610 (4 cr); 615 (3 cr); and either STAT 605, STAT 606 (3 cr), or 3 credits of undergraduate Statistics electives. Visit the [Graduate School's Transfer credits for Prior Coursework policy webpage](#) for more details.

Students who join the MSDS program from the Statistics-VISP program must have completed at least one core MSDS course ([STAT 601](#), [STAT 610](#), or [STAT 615](#)), and may only have one core course with a passing grade below B (either BC or C). If a student receives more than one passing grade below B (BC or C) in core courses, they must receive an approved grade waiver to maintain eligibility for MSDS. Contact visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu for more information about requesting a grade waiver.

Time to Degree

If coming from the Statistics-VISP program, students are expected to complete the program in 2-3 semesters. Students who did not participate in the Statistics-VISP program are expected to complete the program in 3-4 semesters. Students who wish to pursue the program part time must receive permission from the program chair (email visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu).

Graduate and Undergraduate Courses with Similar Topics

Please view a list of graduate and undergraduate course pairs that cover the same or similar topics in the [MSDS Graduate Guide](#). Contact the MSDS program coordinators (visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu) with any questions about this policy.

For example, if a student wishes to enroll in both STAT 451 Introduction to Machine Learning and STAT 615 Statistical Pattern Classification, they must first take STAT 451 (the undergraduate-level course). If a student would enroll in STAT 615 first, they would be ineligible to take STAT 451 in a future term.

Additional Policies

- Students may take a maximum of 2 credits of STAT 699 research electives
- Students holding an F-1 or J-1 visa who need to enroll in a CPT course for federal internship requirements will be expected to enroll in [STAT 403](#) (1 credit). MSDS students may count up to 1 credit of STAT 403 toward degree requirements and may enroll in the course for a maximum of 3 times.
- Non-approved elective courses for MSDS students:
 - COMP SCI 760, 761, 762: course content replicates materials in STAT 615 Statistical Pattern Classification. If a student enrolls in either COMP SCI 760,761, or 762, they will be notified that they must drop the course

Additional policies for MSDS can be found in the [MSDS Graduate Guide Policies webpage](#).

Enrollment Requirements

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

- [Adding / Dropping Courses](#)
- [Auditing Courses](#)
- [Canceling Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment Accountability](#)
- [Enrollment Requirements](#)

Students with visas and/or assistantships have different enrollment minimum requirements. It is extremely important to understand how these policies apply to your specific situation.

International Students

Visa-holding international students are [required to be enrolled full-time](#) on the campus that issued their I-20 (F-1 students) or DS-2019 (J-1 students). Visit the International Student Services (ISS) [webpage for current students](#) for more information on enrollment requirements for visa-holding international students.

Students with Assistantships

Students employed in a graduate assistantship (teaching assistant, research assistant, project assistant) have special [enrollment requirements](#) to maintain full-time status.

In order to maintain full-time student status during the fall and spring semesters, students holding a teaching assistant or project assistant position of at least 33.33% must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credits, while those who hold an appointment of at least 50% must be enrolled in a minimum of 4 credits. Research Assistant students are

required to maintain a full enrollment load each semester during the academic year (8-15 credits).

Sample Course Schedules

Students are expected to complete the program in 2-3 semesters (if coming from the Statistics-VISP program) or 3-4 semesters. Students who wish to pursue the program part time must receive permission from the program chair.

Below are sample course schedules for the typical MSDS student. Contact your graduate program coordinator (visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu) with any specific questions, or to create an enrollment plan that reflects your goals.

Please use the linked [MSDS requirements worksheet](#) to help plan your enrollment.

Four-semester MSDS student

- First Fall term: STAT 601 (4), STAT 610 (4) =8 credits
- First Spring term: STAT 615 (3), STAT 605 and/or STAT electives (4) =7 credits*
- Second Fall term: STAT 628 (3), STAT 605 (if not yet completed) and/or STAT electives (6) =9 credits
- Second Spring term: Elective (3), Elective (3) =6 credits

*Note: F-1/J-1 visa-holding students must enroll in a minimum of 8 credits in all terms except the final semester, when a Reduced Course Load may be requested. Visit the [International Student Services \(ISS\) website](#) for more information about [full-time enrollment requirements](#) and [Reduced Course Load](#) for visa-holding students.

Three-semester MSDS student

- First Fall term: STAT 601 (4), STAT 610 (4), STAT 605 or STAT elective (3) = 11 credits
- First Spring term: STAT 615 (3), STAT 605 and/or STAT electives (7) = 10 credits
- Second Fall term: STAT 628 (3), remaining electives (6) = 9 credits

One-year MSDS student (option for UW alumni only)

- Transfer coursework from undergraduate record: 3-7 credits
- Fall term: STAT 601 (4), STAT 610 (4), STAT 605 (3), optional STAT elective (3) = 11-14 credits
- Spring term: STAT 615 (3), STAT 628 (3), STAT electives (3-7) = 9-13 credits
- Summer Term: electives as needed (3) = 3 credits*

*Statistics-VISP to MSDS student***

- Transfer credits from Statistics-VISP year: STAT 601 (4); 610 (4); 615 (3); STAT 605, 606, or undergrad elective (3) = up to 14 credits
- Fall term: STAT 605 or elective (3), STAT 628 (3), elective (3-4) = 9-10 credits
- Spring term: elective (3), elective (3-4) = 6-7 credits*

*Visa-holding international students requiring less than a full-time course load to meet degree requirements in their final semester must request a [Reduced Course Load](#).

**Per [Graduate School policy](#), all Master's degree students must complete a minimum of 16 credits in residence as a graduate student at UW-Madison.

Statistics-VISP to MSDS students: please [use this worksheet to plan your future enrollment](#).

Final Semester

Students in their final semester with only one credit of program coursework remaining may [request an exception](#) to the UW-Madison Graduate School's minimum enrollment requirement of 2 credits.

Students holding an F-1 or J-1 visa who need to complete less than 8 credits in their final semester must [request a Reduced Course Load](#) (RCL). This maintains active visa status without full-time enrollment. RCL requests need to be submitted prior to the semester in which a student plans to graduate.

Students who intend to graduate must apply for graduation by the end of the 4th week of classes so that graduate program coordinators can request their graduation warrant. Instructions for applying for graduation through the MyUW Student Center can be found on the Registrar's Office [Apply for Graduation website](#).

Summer Graduation: Visa-holding International Students

Visa-holding international students completing degree requirements during the summer term will have additional rules and policies that must be followed, and which may affect future visa-status and employment in the US. International students planning to graduate in the summer must [meet with an ISS advisor](#) to discuss their summer graduation plans and implications.

Master's Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains a [list of steps to complete a Master's degree](#), including information and deadlines. In addition to what is posted on this webpage from the Graduate School, you must complete all program requirements.

International Student Services: Program Completion Checklist

[International Student Services](#) (ISS) has compiled many resources for visa-holding students who are completing their program of study, including a program completion checklist, timeline, and Frequently Asked Questions section.

Academic Exception Petitions

Academic exceptions are considered on an individual case-by-case basis and are not considered a precedent. Deviations from normal progress are highly discouraged, but the program recognizes that there are, in some cases, extenuating academic and personal circumstances. Petitions for course substitutions or exceptions to the Satisfactory Progress Expectations (academic or conduct) must be directed to the VISP & MSDS committee chair (visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu). The following procedures apply to all petitions:

1. The specific requirement/rule/expectation pertinent to the petition must be identified.
2. All coursework substitutions and equivalents will be decided by VISP & MSDS program committee members.

More generally, the VISP & MSDS committee chair may grant extensions to normal progress requirements for students who face circumstances as noted in university regulations, including:

- childbirth
- adoption
- significant responsibilities with respect to elder or dependent care obligations
- disability or chronic illness
- circumstances beyond one's personal control.

Where warranted, the petition should provide good evidence of plans and ability to return to conformance with the standard and to acceptably complete the program. The normal extension will be one semester; anything beyond this will be granted only in the event of highly extraordinary circumstances. Formal extensions will be granted with a note of explanation maintained in the student's record.

Students who wish to request an exception to a requirement (including substitutions) or seek permission to apply non-Statistics VISP previous coursework, should first consult

with an MSDS program coordinator, either by emailing visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu, or [scheduling an appointment](#). Following this consultation, the student will be given information about writing a formal petition to the VISP & MSDS committee chair.

Academic exception petitions will only be considered in extraordinary circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. All petitions will be reviewed, and students will be notified via email whether their petition has been approved or denied. Note that academic exception petitions may take at least 10 business days for processing and review once submitted.

Exception petitions are not intended to serve as a way for students to bypass MSDS program requirements.

STAT 405 Data Computing Project

Students who have enrolled in STAT 405 Data Science Computing Project (3 cr) as an undergraduate at UW-Madison may request to count this course towards their MSDS requirement of STAT 605. The student will then not be required to complete STAT 605 and will instead take an additional 3-credit elective course (Statistics-taught 600+ level).

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Your continuation as a graduate student at UW-Madison is at the discretion of your program, the Graduate School, and your faculty advisor. Any student may be placed on probation or dismissed from the Graduate School for not maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and this can impact your academic standing (detailed below), [financial aid](#), or funding (consult your sources of funding, as applicable). Our program has its own definition of satisfactory academic progress and related procedures that supplement Graduate School policy, as described in this section.

Definition

In addition to the Graduate School's monitoring of [satisfactory academic progress](#), MSDS program coordinators regularly review the satisfactory academic progress of its students.

For MSDS, satisfactory academic progress includes:

- Maintaining [minimum 3.000 \(B average\) cumulative GPA](#) for all graduate courses
- Having only one core course ([STAT 601](#), [STAT 610](#), or [STAT 615](#)) with a passing grade below B (either BC or C)

- Students with more than one passing grade below B (BC or C) in core courses must receive an approved grade waiver to count this course toward degree requirements (contact visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu for more information)
- Taking only courses within the prescribed [MSDS curriculum](#)
 - Students in an extraordinary circumstance that requires outside coursework must receive approval prior to enrolling in outside coursework (email visp-msds@stat.wisc.edu)
- Graduating in the semester in which all degree requirements are completed
- Enrolling **only** in the MSDS program, [not concurrently enrolled](#) in any other academic programs
- Submitting [course plan surveys](#) each semester
- Upholding [personal conduct expectations](#)

For students on academic scholarship, continued receipt of admissions scholarships is contingent on maintaining satisfactory academic progress. Students who are found not maintaining satisfactory academic progress (including those who participate in academic misconduct) risk the removal of their scholarship.

Not Meeting Academic Expectations

Program coordinators will review student progress each term by monitoring grades, course enrollment, and GPA. If MSDS program coordinators find that a student has failed to achieve satisfactory progress in the academic expectations set by the program, the student will be contacted and required to meet with the program chair and/or graduate program coordinator to discuss their plan to return to good standing. Additionally, students in this status may have a hold placed on their record either by the program and/or the Graduate School, and may face disciplinary action or removal from the program.

Graduation

The program will request an MS Graduation Warrant in your final term, provided that all course work has been or is in the process of being completed. The MS Graduation Warrant will be submitted to the Graduate School once all the final semester grades have been submitted and the program confirms that all grades and the overall GPA meet the standards for satisfactory academic progress.

It can often take 4-6 weeks from the end of the semester until a degree is posted on a student's transcript. Students who need proof of graduation before this time are recommended to request [Certification of Graduation](#) from the Office of the Registrar.

Apply to Continue for a Statistics PhD

Students who wish to apply for the Statistics PhD program while currently enrolled in MSDS should follow the [steps outlined in the KnowledgeBase \(KB\)](#). Students with questions should contact the PhD coordinator (admissions@stat.wisc.edu) for clarification.

Personal Conduct Expectations

Professional Conduct

The [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) maintains detailed guidance on student rights and responsibilities related to learning in a community that is safe and fosters integrity and accountability. You are responsible for maintaining awareness of their policies and procedures.

Students should avoid even an appearance of improper behavior or lack of ethical standards while in Graduate School at UW-Madison, in all professional settings, and in their personal lives. Students should conduct themselves according to the standards expected of members of the profession to which the student aspires.

Concerns about infractions of Professional Conduct may be effectively handled informally between the instructor/advisor and the student. If a resolution is not achieved, a graduate program representative may be included in the discussion. Separate and apart from a violation of Professional Conduct, a student may face University disciplinary action regarding the same action. Students are responsible for reading the information here as well as the information published on all the relevant websites. **Lack of knowledge of this information does not excuse any infraction.**

1. **Professional Ethics:** Students shall show respect for a diversity of opinions, perspectives, and cultures; accurately represent their work and acknowledge the contributions of others; participate in and commit to related opportunities; aim to gain knowledge and contribute to the knowledge base of others; understand the [UW-Madison Student Code of Conduct](#); represent their profession and the program; and strive to incorporate and practice disciplinary ideals in their daily lives. Resumes/CVs must reflect accurate information.
2. **Honesty and Integrity:** Students shall demonstrate honesty and integrity as shown by their challenging of themselves in academic pursuits; honesty and ethics in research and IRB applications—including honesty in interpretation of data, commitment to an unbiased interpretation of academic and professional

endeavors; and the need to document research activities, protect subject/client confidentiality and HIPAA regulations. Students shall follow-through and pull their weight in group activities and understand where collaboration among students is or is not allowed; not plagiarize others or past work (self-plagiarism), cheat, or purposefully undermine the work of others; and avoid conflicts of interest for the duration of their time in the program. As a professional, honesty and integrity also extends to personal behavior in life outside of the academic setting by realizing that students are representatives of the program, UW-Madison, and the profession.

3. **Interpersonal and Workplace Relationships:** Students shall interact with peers, faculty, staff, and those they encounter in their professional capacity in a manner that is respectful, considerate, and professional. This includes and is not limited to attending all scheduled meetings, honoring agreed upon work schedules, being on-time and prepared for work/meetings, contributing collaboratively to the team, keeping the lines of communication open, offering prompt response to inquiries, and employing respectful use of available equipment/technology/resources. Chronic or unexplained absences are unprofessional in the workplace and could be grounds for termination or removal of funding. To facilitate the free and open exchange of ideas, any criticism shall be offered in a constructive manner, and the right of others to hold different opinions shall be respected.
4. **Commitment to Learning:** Students are expected to always meet their educational responsibilities. Be actively prepared for class and be ready for questions and answers. Be on time for every class and always show courtesy during class or if you must leave class early. If possible, students should notify the instructor at least one day in advance of a planned absence. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for finding out what occurred that day and should not expect instructors to give them individual instruction. Recognizing that the pursuit of knowledge is a continuous process, students shall show commitment to learning by persevering despite adversity and seeking guidance to adapt to change. Students shall strive for academic excellence and pursue and incorporate all critiques, both positive and negative, in the acquisition of knowledge to understand and respect the community in which they work.
5. **Professional Appearance:** Students shall convey a positive, professional appearance to represent the program in a dignified manner. Appearance includes a person's dress, hygiene, and appropriate etiquette/protocols for the environment (including safety protocols and protective clothing in environments that require them).

This graduate program, the Graduate School, and the Division of Student Life all uphold the UW-System policies and procedures in place for academic and non-academic misconduct. In addition, graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff. Furthermore, unprofessional behavior towards clients/subjects, faculty, staff, peers, and public are significant issues in the evaluation and promotion of students. In turn, we hold expectations for the highest level of academic integrity and expect professional, ethical, and respectful conduct in all interactions. Students may be disciplined or dismissed from the graduate program for misconduct or disregard for professional conduct expectations regardless of their academic standing in the program. Separate and apart from a violation of Professional Conduct, a student may face University disciplinary action about the same action. Students are responsible for reading the information here as well as the information published on all the relevant websites. **Lack of knowledge of this information does not excuse any infraction.**

Academic Misconduct

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

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies and Procedures: Misconduct, Academic](#)

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

[Academic Misconduct Website](#)

[Academic Misconduct Flowchart](#)

University of Wisconsin System (UWS)

[Chapter 14: Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures](#)

Non-Academic Misconduct

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

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies and Procedures: Misconduct, Non-Academic](#)

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

[Non-Academic Misconduct Website](#)

University of Wisconsin System (UWS)

[Chapter 17: Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures](#)

[Chapter 18: Conduct on University Lands](#)

Research Misconduct

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

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies & Procedures: Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

[Research Policies](#)

Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (Bullying)

Hostile and intimidating behavior (HIB), sometimes referred to as “bullying,” is prohibited by university policy applicable to faculty, academic staff, and university staff. Further definition, policy, and procedures related to HIB can be found at the dedicated [UW-Madison HIB webpage](#). Students who feel that they have been subject to HIB are encouraged to review the informal and formal options available on the ["Addressing HIB"](#) tab of this website.

Grievance Process

Each college or program on campus has a grievance process that students can use to address other concerns regarding their experience in the program. The MSDS program’s grievance process can be found detailed in the [MSDS Graduate Guide](#).

Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards

Failure to meet the program’s academic or conduct expectations can result in disciplinary action including immediate dismissal from the program. If a student is not making satisfactory progress regarding academic or conduct expectations, the advisor will consult with the program committee to determine if disciplinary action or dismissal is recommended.

Possible Departmental Disciplinary Actions

- Written reprimand
- Denial of specified privilege(s)
- Imposition of reasonable terms and conditions on continued student status
- Removal of funding
- Probation
- Restitution
- Removal of the student from the course(s) in progress
- Failure to promote
- Withdrawal of an offer of admission
- Placement on leave of absence for a determined amount of time
- Suspension from the program for up to one year with the stipulation that remedial activities may be prescribed as a condition of later readmission. Students who meet the readmission condition must apply for readmission and the student will be admitted only on a space available basis. See the Graduate School Academic Policies & Procedures: [Readmission to Graduate School](#)
- Suspension from the program. The suspensions may range from one semester to four years.
- Dismissal from the program
- Denial of a degree

In addition to the program's disciplinary actions, the [Office of Student Assistance and Support](#) may also have grounds to issue one or more of the following:

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

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

The [Office of Student Assistance and Support](#) maintains a portal to report incidents of hate, bias, sexual assault, hazing, dating/domestic violence, stalking, missing students, and students displaying other concerning behaviors at UW-Madison:

[Office of Student Assistance and Support Incident Reporting](#)

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

[Human Resources Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Website](#)

Professional Development

When students participate in professional development, they build skills needed to succeed academically and thrive in their career. The following are professional development activities that we recommend for your consideration. Additionally, students are strongly encouraged to seek out campus resources that focus on this area.

On Campus

The Graduate School develops and curates a wide variety of resources for professional development, including a tool to assess student skills, set goals, and create a plan with recommended activities on campus (i.e. the [Individual Development Plan](#) or “IDP”) as well as programming to help students explore careers, prepare for a job search, build their network, learn more from alumni, manage projects, communicate about research, and much more.

[DiscoverPD](#) helps master’s and doctoral students at UW-Madison advance their academic and professional goals with customized recommendations based on a skills self-assessment. The 400+ professional development recommendations available in the DiscoverPD database are available in a range of formats to best meet diverse needs, including in-person, virtual, asynchronous, and synchronous opportunities.

The Graduate School communicates professional development opportunities through an e-newsletter, [GradConnections](#), that all graduate students receive at their wisc.edu email. Graduate Students in [onsite degree programs](#) receive the newsletter weekly during the academic year and every other week in the summer.

Department of Statistics Professional Development

MSDS students are encouraged to join in Statistics Department professional development events and opportunities. Students are also encouraged to meet with the program coordinators for one-on-one help with professional development. The Department of Statistics also maintains a [Student Career Resources](#) website.

School of Computer, Data & Information Sciences (CDIS) Professional Development

The UW-Madison School of Computer, Data & Information Sciences (CDIS) holds a career fair each fall, which is open to all UW-Madison students with computer, data, or information skills. Check the [CDIS Career Fair website](#) for more details.

International Student Services

The [International Student Services](#) (ISS) office is a great resource for international students with professional development questions, especially regarding visa status and eligibility for CPT/OPT.

Intellectual Property

Graduate students should seek to understand their rights and obligations related to intellectual property, including how patents and copyrights protect their work and when invention disclosure policies apply. This is especially important if there are special considerations related to external funding sources.

Faculty and instructors should discuss these topics with graduate students, making intellectual property education part of their research culture. Graduate programs should keep abreast of educational opportunities on the topic of intellectual property and inform their graduate students and faculty about these.

The primary campus resource for intellectual property policy and information is the [Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education](#) website. Additionally, the [Graduate School Office of Professional Development](#) maintains a collection of online resources aimed at highlighting intellectual property topics, including [Introduction to Intellectual Property](#), [Introduction to Patents](#), and other topics of interest to graduate students.

Student Health and Wellness

University Health Services

Students who pay segregated fees are eligible to access [University Health Services](#), also known as UHS. There is no charge to students for many basic services including counseling sessions because services are paid through tuition and fees. Personal health and wellness services are also available in addition to medical services.

Securing Health Insurance Coverage

Graduate students who hold an assistantship appointment (teaching assistant, research assistant, or program assistant) of 33.33% or more, or who hold a fellowship, may be eligible for health insurance and other benefits beyond University Health Services. Contact the staff benefits and payroll coordinator in the unit where you have been hired to see whether you may select one of several healthcare plans within 30 days of your hire date. **Please note that MSDS students are not allowed to accept any tuition remission offered with a graduate assistantship appointment.**

Graduate students without an assistantship or fellowship who are currently enrolled can access [University Health Services](#) (UHS), the campus health clinic. Many services are provided at no extra cost, including outpatient medical care during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. UHS is located in the Student Services Tower at 333 East Campus Mall, 608-265-5600 or uhs@uhs.wisc.edu.

Prescription medications, emergency room visits, and hospitalizations are not included in UHS benefits. Therefore, supplemental insurance for these drugs and services is recommended for all students and is required for international students. The [UHS Student Health Insurance Plan](#) (SHIP) is an excellent option for many students. Contact the SHIP office at 608-265-5232 or shipmail@uhs.wisc.edu for more information.

Disability Information

Students with disabilities have access to disability resources through UW-Madison's McBurney Disability Resource Center. As an admitted student, you should first follow the steps to [apply for accommodations](#).

Additional non-academic disability campus resources (not found through the McBurney Center) can be found under the Other Resources drop down menu near the top of the page on the [McBurney website](#).

Visit [Accessibility @ UW-Madison](#) for a centralized location of campus accessibility and disability resources.

On- and Off-campus Mental Health Resources

University Health Services is the primary mental health provider for students on campus. [UHS Mental Health Services](#) offers a wide range of services to the diverse student community of UW-Madison, including immediate crisis counseling, same-day appointments, and ongoing treatment. UHS Mental Health Services can be reached at 608-265-5600 (option 2), and offers 24/7 crisis support at 608-262-5600 (option 9). UHS service costs are covered for students through tuition and fees.

While there are many mental health resources throughout the Madison community, UHS Mental Health Services is the best resource for referrals to off-campus providers. Call 608-265-5600 (option 2) for assistance in finding an off-campus provider.

Inclusion Resources

The [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement](#) maintains a [list of inclusion resources](#), which provides information about various activities that have served the campus community in support of equity and inclusivity.

Multicultural Student Center

The [Multicultural Student Center](#) (MSC) serves as home to a variety of identity centers, cultural programs, student organizations, and other community building events for students of color on campus. The MSC also provides drop-in hours that are free and open to all students, and which provide help and advice with writing, staying healthy, and more.

Gender and Sexuality Campus Center

The [Gender and Sexuality Campus Center](#) (GSCC) focuses on training, education, and campus climate intervention for LGBTQ+ students and allies, to help all students thrive on campus. GSCC provides drop-in space for students, support services, training and resources, and community involvement activities including discussion groups and a peer mentor program.