



**FORT HAYS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Forward thinking. World ready.

College of Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences

Master of Liberal Studies

**STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

A Message from the MLS Coordinator

Dear MLS students:

Welcome to FHSU! We hope that your experience will be enjoyable, educational, and useful in your future endeavors. The purpose of this handbook is to assist you and to help us improve the quality of the MLS program. Please share with me your suggestions and recommendations regarding the MLS program and the MLS Handbook. You may e-mail recommendations and comments to mls@fhsu.edu.

One of the most important persons here at FHSU is your faculty advisor. You are strongly encouraged to keep in regular contact with him or her. Login to your TigerTracks account to find the name of your faculty advisor. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your faculty advisor, please do not hesitate to bring them to the attention of the MLS Coordinator at mls@fhsu.edu.

As a general rule, the more interaction that you have with faculty and your fellow students, the more you will benefit, and the more you will enjoy your MLS program. Enjoy your MLS experience!

Sincerely,

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MLS Overview

Earning a Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) degree from Fort Hays State University can help you see the world differently. Graduates develop the critical thinking skills needed to become wiser consumers of knowledge, becoming better able to understand and evaluate the intellectual work of any discipline. Most importantly, as you begin to see the world differently, you may discover new ways to have a positive effect on the world around you. Designed with the working professional in mind, the 31-credit hour Master of Liberal Studies degree program makes it easier for you to balance work and personal commitments to achieve your educational goals. Earning a degree in liberal studies provides you the opportunity to explore a wide realm of knowledge and wisdom to help you better understand yourself, others and the world around you. Liberal studies focuses on intellectual, social, and moral growth, and helps foster your love of learning. Concentrations within the MLS provide collections of advanced study in areas of professional interest to you. Choose from concentrations in arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, business, education, and health studies areas taught by FHSU disciplinary graduate faculty. Choose innovative concentrations in emerging multi-disciplinary interest areas such as, global studies, corporate communications, literary arts, political leadership, public administration, and health sciences. Concentrations to meet emerging workforce development needs are being developed each year.

Flexible

Work closely with your faculty advisor throughout your degree program, from developing your program of study to completing your culminating experience.

Practical

With concentrations available on campus and online, find a program that meets your personal and professional goals.

Affordable

While earning a graduate degree does take a lot of time and effort, it does not have to cost a lot of money. Discover a [great education at a great price](#).

Accredited

Fort Hays State University is regionally accredited by the [Higher Learning Commission](#) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Program Purpose

What is our ideal? Rather than educate you within the parameters of a particular discipline, you are given an opportunity to acquire skills that will enable you to be liberally educated at a deeper level than when you were an undergraduate student, and to be interdisciplinary in your approach to the acquisition and use of knowledge. Upon the base of the liberal studies core, you build your program of study, which includes the courses in your concentration. Our purpose is to help you become a better person, and, through you, help the world to be a better place. Thus our motto: “A better world through a better self.”

You should expect to work much harder than you did as an undergraduate student. You should expect to encounter higher standards of excellence. A program of study with harder work, more work, and higher expectations should be understood as providing opportunities to improve your skills, acquire other skills, and increase your knowledge. Significant improvement does not come without significant challenge and sacrifice. Your education is an investment, and if you skimp on your investment now, you will, for the rest of your life, have much less “capital” upon which to draw interest. Therefore, while you are in school,

you should be more inclined to sacrifice other things for the sake of your education, rather than the other way around.

We hope to assist you in having a meaningful educational experience. If, in the course of doing so, we make mistakes or “irk” you, please let us know. We would like to be better, too.

Program Concentrations

The MLS program offers the following concentrations:

On Campus Concentrations

- Corporate Communications
- Digital Cinema Production
- Global Management
- Mathematics
- Music
- Science Education (*Currently not accepting applications.*)
- Political Leadership and Public Service

Online Concentrations

- Art History
- Corporate Communications
- Global Studies
- Gerontology
- Global Management
- Literary Arts
- Health Sciences
- Information Analysis and Communication
- Management Information Systems
- Political Leadership and Public Service
- Political Science
- Public Administration

NOTE: A successful background check is required for admission to the instructional sciences concentrations (e.g. Science Education). Visit the [Advanced Education Programs webpage](#) for the details.

Admission Process

All applicants must:

- Submit a formal application for admission, which can be found at www.fhsu.edu/gradschl
- Send official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate course work
- Submit 2 letters of recommendation
- Submit a personal statement
- Submit additional materials requested by your chosen concentration (if applicable)

Once you have submitted all materials, the Graduate School will forward the materials to the department that hosts your chosen concentration. Your application will be reviewed by the MLS advisor and/or departmental admissions committee for consideration and recommendation. Once the Graduate School receives the departmental recommendation, you will be assigned a faculty advisor. Finally, the Graduate School will complete its evaluation and notify you of the action taken and your admission status. You should watch your email address for updates that may be requested by Graduate School admissions staff.

After Being Admitted

Once you have been notified that you have been admitted to the MLS program and have been assigned an advisor, you'll want to contact your advisor to coordinate a class schedule. Make sure and do this early enough before classes start, so that the courses for your program do not close. Also, after you have been admitted to this concentration, please review the MLS Checklist and carefully read the MLS Student Handbook.

Please see the FHSU Graduate School policies regarding your ability to enroll in classes before you are considered for admission.

If you have questions or would like more information about the Master of Liberal Studies degree program, please contact the MLS Coordinator.

Program Checklist

Following Admission to a Degree Program

- IMPORTANT!** Check your FHSU Student Gmail account regularly for important information regarding deadlines, Program of Study updates, and other announcements.

- Consult with your faculty advisor about your Program of Study. Your Program of Study consists of the courses that you will take to meet the 31-hour requirement, the requirement to complete a culminating experience, and the research component requirement. IDS 804, one of the four core courses, automatically meets the research component requirement. Your Program of Study may also list your MLS committee, the topic of the next item on this list.

- Depending on your concentration, you may work with your faculty advisor to put together an MLS committee. Your MLS committee should consist of at least three faculty members. The chair of that committee must be a member of FHSU's Graduate Faculty. Your MLS committee will evaluate your culminating experience and may read part or all of your comprehensive exams. Your MLS committee is listed on your Program of Study. A copy of your Program of Study, signed by your advisor and the MLS Coordinator, must be submitted to the Graduate School.

- After consulting with your faculty advisor, pre-enroll in classes on your Program of Study according to dates listed in the class schedules. You can pre-enroll through your faculty advisor earlier in the year than you can request courses online. Ideally, you should complete the ten-hour core (IDS 801, IDS 802, IDS 803, and IDS 804) before taking courses in your concentration, and certainly before completing 21 hours in your Program of Study. Deviations from this recommendation should be discussed with your advisor.

Admission to Degree Candidacy

- After completion of at least nine hours of graduate work, your advisor will complete an application for Admission to Candidacy. This form will be sent to the Graduate School.
- For Admission to Candidacy, you must have achieved at least a 3.00 grade point average in all coursework on the graduate degree program. For example, if you have a C in one class, you must have an A in another class.
- Complete all departmental conditions of admission, including any deficiency work.
- Complete the 10-hour core.
- Complete your 21-hour concentration.
 - If you are completing a culminating experience, this project must be identified and approved by your faculty advisor. Work closely with your faculty advisor while completing your culminating experience. If completing a thesis, you will be evaluated by and defend before your MLS committee. An in-person defense is not necessary, and may be done virtually.
 - If your culminating experience is a thesis, ask the Graduate School for a copy of the most current Thesis Guidelines, and follow the instructions provided therein. You must defend your thesis after it has been accepted by your MLS committee.

Getting Ready for Graduation

- Sign up for comprehensive exams in the Graduate School. Specific times are set each semester in the [Graduate School Deadlines](#). You should begin preparing for your comprehensive examinations long before you take them, so it would be a good idea to consult with your faculty advisor well in advance of the date you will take your comprehensive exams. If you are completing a thesis for a culminating experience, then you only need to complete the **core** comprehensive exam. If you are completing a project or internship as a culminating experience, then you will need to take both the core and concentration comprehensive exams.
- A ballot reporting the result of your comprehensive exams will be prepared by your faculty advisor. Your advisor and/or MLS committee will indicate on the ballot whether you have passed the comprehensive exams. This ballot will be sent to the MLS Coordinator for their approval, then forwarded to the Graduate School.
- File an Intent to Graduate form in the Graduate School by the deadline date for that semester. You can find this form in your TigerTracks > Online Services tab.
- Pay the required graduation fee.
- Check with the Graduate School to update file for graduation (if applicable).

Program of Study

Your Program of Study lists the courses you will take, the members of your MLS faculty committee (if applicable), and other pertinent information. Your faculty advisor will complete a Program of Study form

that will be submitted to the MLS Coordinator for approval, then to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval. A Program of Study should be developed prior to completion of nine hours in the program.

The MLS degree is a 31-hour program consisting of a 10-hour core, a 21-hour concentration, and comprehensive exams. Each of these is briefly explained below.

The 10-hour Core

The ten-hour core consists of the following courses:

- IDS 801 Introduction to Graduate Liberal Studies (1 hr)
- IDS 802 Ways of Knowing in Comparative Perspective (3 hrs)
- IDS 803 Origins and Implications of the Knowledge Society (3 hrs)
- IDS 804 Information Literacy (3 hrs)

Check the availability of courses in TigerTracks, in the Course Schedule tab.

The ten-hour core is one of the distinctive features of the MLS program and is meant to serve as the intellectual and skill foundation for the MLS degree. IDS 804 meets the research requirement for a graduate degree. As a general rule, the MLS Coordinator will not approve substitutes for courses in the core. Ideally, each concentration would, in its courses, continually refer back to the foundation. You are therefore strongly encouraged to take the core before taking any classes in the 21-hour concentration. One important rule is that you will not be allowed to take more than 18 hours of credit if you have not yet completed the ten-hour core.

Make sure to keep notes from your four core courses. They should be used to help you prepare for your comprehensive examinations. You should also keep the books that you used in IDS 804; use them as reference books as you work on other course assignments and/or your culminating experience.

If you are completing a second MLS degree, you would not need to repeat the MLS core. Instead, you would work with your faculty advisor and the MLS Coordinator to select other courses deemed appropriate. If you are pursuing a second MLS degree, you must complete all other parts of the program—31 hours of approved courses, secure an MLS faculty committee (if applicable), and comprehensive exams.

The 21-hour Concentration

The key is to make sure that your curriculum is a coherent whole. Please work with your advisor early in your program to select courses for the concentration and to put together your Program of Study. Your advisor will complete a Program of Study form that will be submitted to the MLS Coordinator for approval, then to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval.

You may request that credits taken at other universities be transferred in to the MLS program. According to the Graduate School Policies and Procedures, candidates must earn a minimum of 50% program hours from FHSU; therefore, only a maximum of 15 credit hours can be transferred. Most concentrations, however, will accept only six or nine credit hours. There are two reasons for this: first, writing comprehensive exams may otherwise be difficult; and second, an MLS degree with 15 hours of transfer credit means that the degree is not much of a FHSU degree. Only a course meeting all of the following criteria can be transferred:

- must be offered for graduate credit
- must be offered by an accredited school
- must be for a grade (no "pass/no pass" or "satisfactory/unsatisfactory" courses)
- must have a grade of "C" or better

- if included in your Program of Study, no more than eight years can lapse between the time that course was completed and the time you graduate with an MLS degree
- if the course is not part of another degree program. For example, you cannot use a course taken as part of another Master's program.

Even if a course meets all of these criteria, your advisor determines whether to accept courses into your Program of Study. For example, your advisor may not accept a course with a grade lower than a "B."

Some concentrations may also require a culminating experience.

Culminating Experiences

Depending on the concentration, you may be required to complete a culminating experience. The requirement to complete a culminating experience can be met by an internship, a project, or a thesis. Your MLS faculty advisor and/or committee should evaluate the culminating experience and voice its approval before a grade for the experience is reported. You should expect to take more than one semester to finish the culminating experience. A brief discussion of each option follows.

Internship. You and your advisor select an appropriate organization in which you can serve as an intern. Your faculty advisor would serve as your mentor while you serve as an intern. Your advisor, perhaps along with your MLS faculty committee, would determine the requirements that you should meet to earn a grade for the internship. More information about internships can be found in the MLS Internship section.

Project. A project has an intuitive sensibility to students in the arts. For example, an exhibition for an art student, or performance of a composition for a student in music would be appropriate. A project may be appropriate for you as well. You may agree to write a research paper and then develop a series of presentations, or a series of web pages, for example. A project should not be a 'thesis-lite,' that is, any easier to do than a thesis. More information about projects can be found in the MLS Project section.

Thesis. You would conduct both secondary and primary (original) research and write up the results. The Graduate School has requirements that a thesis must meet; please check out those requirements before you get started on the thesis. It is especially important to work closely with your faculty advisor and MLS faculty committee if you write a thesis. You should also familiarize yourself with the Graduate School's Thesis Guidelines. If your proposed research will involve human and/or animal subjects, please see the Research Involving Human and/or Animal Subjects section. If possible, you should orally defend your thesis (this can be done through a conference call). For more information about the thesis, see the MLS Thesis section and the "Writing and Style Guide" by Dr. Chris Crawford on the MLS website.

Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive exams for the MLS occur in two parts: 1) the core exam, which covers skills acquired in the core courses (IDS 801-804), and 2) the concentration exam, which covers knowledge and skills acquired in your concentration courses. The core exam is administered by the MLS Coordinator, and the concentration exam is administered by your faculty advisor.

If your culminating experience is a thesis, then you must pass one comprehensive exam (core). If your culminating experience is either a project or an internship, then you must pass two comprehensive exams (core and concentration). The comprehensive exams are, collectively, an opportunity for you to demonstrate mastery of your subject. The comprehensive exams should be more than a test on the courses

taken. These exams afford you an opportunity to demonstrate familiarity with the relevant literature covered both in and outside of your coursework, and an opportunity to provide a nuanced, complex, and critical and analytical response to the questions at hand.

Make sure that you and your faculty advisor know no later than the semester before which semester that you will take your comprehensive exams. Sign up early for your comprehensive exams. You can sign-up for your comprehensive exams on the Graduate School website. Failure to sign-up for comprehensive exams may result in a delay of your graduation date.

Once you have passed the comprehensive exams, your faculty advisor will prepare a ballot to report the results. Each member of the MLS faculty committee (if applicable) will approve the form and each will mark whether you have satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily passed the exam. In the MLS program, the MLS Coordinator is considered the "Chair," so the ballot will be submitted to the MLS Coordinator for approval prior to being sent to the Graduate School.

The Graduate School requires that graduate students pass all required comprehensive examinations. The MLS program is not excluded from this, as is clearly stated in the FHSU catalog:

"Each applicant for a graduate degree must satisfactorily pass a comprehensive examination over the subject fields of the program. The comprehensive examination is not merely a reexamination of materials covered in coursework but is a test of the graduate degree candidate's ability to integrate materials from the graduate major and any related or supporting field. If a student writes a thesis, the student will sit for a total of four hours of comprehensive examinations; if a student does not write a thesis, the student will sit for a total of eight hours of comprehensive examinations. Each department will determine the content of the comprehensive examinations; the examination may be written and/or oral." (FHSU Catalog, p. 82).

Individual departments make decisions as to the form and content of the concentration exams. The concentration exams provide an opportunity for your committee to evaluate your learning. The defense period (of the Internship or Thesis) may also allow you to demonstrate your learning over the course of your graduate career, but the primary place for that to occur is when you complete the concentration exams. Please contact your faculty advisor for more information on the concentration comprehensive exam process.

GPA Requirement

You must meet the following GPA requirements in order to graduate with an MLS degree:

- Your Program of Study must have a GPA of at least a 3.0
- Each semester you take at least one course, your GPA that semester should be at least 3.0.

Graduate Degree Program & Admission to Candidacy Guidelines, *Modified For MLS Students*

Planning, Preparation, and Submission

The primary goals of the Graduate School are to encourage independent scholarship and develop competence in research or other creative activity. The objective of graduate study is not merely to take courses. The purpose is to plan a well-rounded, coherent program of courses and research that will contribute to the student's general academic goals and aspirations. Students are expected to follow general program planning procedures by undertaking these initial steps:

After admission to Graduate School, if not previously assigned an advisor, the student will be assigned an advisor in the area of proposed specialization;

The advisor or another faculty member designated by the advisor, and the MLS faculty committee (if applicable), are responsible for directing the student in the graduate program. A student's MLS faculty committee should consist of the advisor as chair, one other faculty member from the area of concentration, and one who has no connection with the graduate student's degree program. The MLS faculty committee, which is responsible for developing the program of study, typically also serves as the thesis committee; therefore, it is imperative that a graduate faculty member serve as the major advisor and that as many graduate faculty members as possible serve on the committee. Some departments have limited graduate faculty, but all efforts should be made for the committee members to hold graduate status.

The student will take exams as prescribed by the advisor and the departmental graduate committee;

The advisor will counsel with the student, and together with the departmental graduate committee or its delegate, will arrange a program. The degree program should include only the courses required for completion of the degree. The student should become acquainted with the members of the graduate committee as quickly as possible and should consult with them, as well as with the advisor, about the graduate program;

The completed program, approved and signed by the major professor, all MLS faculty committee members, the MLS Coordinator, who in this situation serves as the department chair, and the Graduate Dean, should be filed in the Graduate School on or before the completion of nine hours of graduate credit. Any coursework beyond nine hours taken prior to the arrangement of a degree program may not necessarily be counted.

The Graduate School will send copies of the approved program to the graduate advisor and to the graduate student. The student, the advisor, the departmental graduate committee, and the department chair must agree upon any changes in the approved graduate degree program. The department chair must send an amended program with the new date or appropriate documentation outlining any additions or deletions to the Graduate School for approval and for inclusion in the student's file.

The Program of Study serves an important function. It is the guide utilized by most graduate students throughout their graduate study at Fort Hays State University, and it becomes part of their permanent record in the Graduate School. It should be completed as soon as possible upon admission, and no later than the completion of the first nine graduate hours. Your faculty advisor will prepare a Program of Study form that will be submitted for approval to the MLS Program Coordinator, then to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Reminders:

- There is an **eight-year time limit** for any course on a program of study. A course that has been completed may remain on the program for only eight years. Failure to complete the degree in the specified time frame can mean loss of credit. A validation process may allow a student to retain a course for an additional two years with special approval from the Graduate Dean. Contact the Graduate School, or consult the University Catalog for more information on this process.
- There shall be no more than nine hours of *Seminar* on a student's Program of Study.
- There shall be no more than six credit hours of *Workshop* on a student's Program of Study.
- No more than 15 credit hours may be transferred to FHSU for use on a 30-credit hour graduate program. Concentrations in the MLS program may have varying rules regarding the number of

hours that will transfer. A master's degree candidate must earn a minimum of 15 resident hours at FHSU. (The number of hours accepted for transfer varies from department to department. Some departments will only allow six or nine credit hours of transfer coursework, others none.)

- At least 50% of the courses must be “content-based” courses.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to candidacy is an important step in the completion of a degree program. A graduate student may apply for admission to candidacy upon the successful completion of at least nine hours of graduate study, and upon filing an approved program of study in consultation with the major advisor and departmental graduate committee or its delegate committee. Application for candidacy should be made before completing more than 15 hours in order to avoid the possibility of extending the program. The student must be recommended for candidacy by the student's advisor, the departmental graduate committee, and the department chair. The student is admitted to candidacy by the Graduate Dean.

To be admitted to candidacy, the student must have:

- satisfactorily passed the preliminary or other qualifying examination, if either is required by the major department;
- removed all deficiencies for admission to graduate study;
- earned a B average in all graduate courses that are a part of the degree program to that point;
- filed a program of study in the Graduate School that has been approved by the Graduate Dean;
- completed a total of at least nine graduate program hours.

The student must be admitted to candidacy before being eligible to sign for or take comprehensive examinations or to file an Intent to Graduate form.

Intent to Graduate

The student who plans to graduate at the end of a given semester or summer term must file the Intent to Graduate form at the time of enrollment or before the filing deadline given in the class schedule. The student must be admitted to candidacy before being eligible to file an Intent to Graduate.

In the event the student does not graduate after filing an Intent to Graduate, a new Intent to Graduate form must be completed before the deadline for the semester or summer term in which the student plans to complete requirements. The student must be enrolled in a graduate course in the department of the major the semester or summer session of filing or refileing an Intent to Graduate.

Culminating Experiences

Depending on your concentration, you may be required to complete a culminating experience. Please consult with your faculty advisor regarding course requirements for your degree program. Below is a listing of three potential culminating experiences you may decide to pursue.

IDS 820: Projects in Liberal Studies

Selecting a project as a culminating experience makes sense if your area of concentration is art or music. For example, a student in the MLS concentration for Art might have an exhibition for his or her artwork. Another example: a student in the MLS concentration for Music might perform a series of his or her own compositions.

Even if you are not a student in either of those concentrations, selecting a project as a culminating experience may still be what is best for you. The challenge is to figure out what to do for a project and

how to make sure it is sufficiently ambitious to qualify as a culminating experience. You should expect to take more than a semester to finish the culminating experience. Listed below are some ideas for projects. The list is meant only to help you work with your advisor to develop a project that is appropriate for you. Be creative!

- A research project that results in a research paper and a series of web pages
- A research project that results in a research paper and a portfolio for a class, including a course syllabus, a detailed course outline or lesson modules, and a series of PowerPoint presentations
- Creation or re-organization of a business or non-profit organization, including a handbook (personnel policies, organizational procedures, etc.) and a research paper.

IDS 890: Internship in Liberal Studies

Taken in the final semester or two, the purpose of the internship is two-fold:

1. To integrate the knowledge learned in the core courses as well as the concentration, and
2. To give the student practical experience in a real world environment.

The successful MLS intern should have a broader understanding of the quickly evolving world and a greater understanding of the discipline he or she studied as a concentration. In fact, this requirement, above most others, is critical. The successful MLS intern will act as a graduate candidate, not just a graduate student. Those students who choose to do an internship for their culminating experience should expect to take longer than a semester to complete their culminating experiences.

Internship Proposal Guidelines

(Obtain your specific guidelines from your advisor/instructor.)

The first step of completing the internship is the submission of an Internship Proposal. The proposal is an approximately 8 – 12 page document that outlines the internship's basic processes and outcomes. Your advisor, your MLS faculty committee, and you should mutually agree upon the general topic of the proposal.

The proposal might contain many, if not all or more, of the following topics:

- Introduction
- Problem/Issue Background
- Theoretical Considerations
- Statement of Purpose and Objectives
- Detailed Outline of Proposed Accomplishments
- Timeline
- Expected Outcomes
- Criteria for Evaluation
- Summary

The draft internship proposal should be submitted to your advisor. After your advisor and MLS faculty committee have had a chance to review the proposal, you will receive suggestions regarding additions or revisions. Your graduate advisor and MLS faculty committee will need a minimum of one week to review the proposal, so please be patient. Your advisor may need a phone conference/proposal meeting in order to clarify what you seek to accomplish. During the proposal meeting you should be prepared to detail your proposal and answer any questions relevant to your project. At this stage, your advisor, and possibly your MLS faculty committee, may make changes to the proposal, asking you to adapt your project in one way or another, to make it more academically enriching. Once the proposal has been approved, you may start on the internship.

Guidelines for the Student While Serving an Internship

During the internship you must be doing two things. First, and perhaps most important, you should be compiling notes and other relevant records over the course of the project. Notes should be taken to help you recall the important events of the experience. Documents should also be collected since many advisors find them informational and reflective of your performance as an intern. In many cases, a journal is a very helpful tool in order to keep track of project milestones and your learning experiences. Second, you should be in regular communication with your advisor. Keeping your advisor apprised of the progress of the project is often easily done by sending frequent emails (your advisor may stipulate how frequently) about important milestones that have been accomplished.

Guidelines for Writing the Final Report

As your internship comes to a conclusion, several events are triggered. It is important that you contact the Graduate School to make sure you have declared your intent to graduate. This triggers an Examination Report to be sent to the graduate advisor. As always, you are responsible for meeting deadlines and monitoring your academic progress. The internship report will likely have a similar structure as the proposal, but the information will focus more on what was accomplished, rather than providing background and expectations. Notes and journals taken during the internship could, in an appropriate way, be included in the report. Work out specific expectations with your advisor. Upon completion of a draft of this report, you should forward a copy to your advisor and MLS faculty committee for review and approval. Your advisor and MLS committee may suggest changes to the document. Once the report has been revised a final draft copy should be forwarded to your advisor and MLS faculty committee, and a final defense meeting may be scheduled. The defense may be done virtually, so that you do not have to come to FHSU's campus. Please give your graduate advisor and MLS faculty committee at least one week to read and prepare for the final internship defense meeting.

The final internship defense should be an opportunity for you to demonstrate what you did in your internship, as well as what you learned from the internship. Some level of questioning, and perhaps some confrontation of ideas and conclusions, will characterize many of these defenses. In some cases, you may be asked to rework elements of your internship or internship report. If this is the case, you must contact the Graduate School and change your graduation date, if need be. If you need to re-defend your internship report, then you would repeat the process outlined above.

The final defense has dual purposes. First, it has to be a final reflection on the internship. Second, the final internship defense is the final examination of the student (unless the student takes the comprehensive exams after the completion of the internship). Therefore, elements related to coursework and how that information pertains to the internship are fair game. A final internship defense can take an hour or more to adequately cover the many intricacies of the internship and how it relates to your program of study. Ultimately, your advisor is looking at the widest range of attributes of the soon-to-be graduates, including:

- Ability to articulate and defend theories in your concentration
- Understanding of applicable research methods
- Objectivity in conducting your inquiry
- Amount of learning through coursework
- Amount of learning through the internship process
- Ability to act in a professional and "Master"ful manner

IDS 899 Thesis in Liberal Studies

If you write a thesis, you first identify an issue or topic and make sure that you have the approval of your faculty advisor and your MLS faculty committee to begin research on that topic. The next step is to work with your faculty advisor to develop a research strategy that will help you locate material related to your topic. Two books that you may find useful are:

James E. Mauch and Namgi Park. 2003. *Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: A Handbook for Students and Faculty*, Fifth Edition. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, Taylor & Francis Group. ISBN: 0-82474-288-5.

Kate L. Turabian, revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph Williams, & University of Chicago Press Staff. 2008. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0-226-82337-7.

You should also familiarize yourself with the Graduate School's thesis guidelines. Contact the Graduate School for the most recent copy. If your proposed research will involve human and/or animal subjects, please see Research Involving Human and/or Animal Subjects, below. You should expect to take more than one semester to complete a thesis.

Here is one idea for a research strategy:

Create three folders.

- One folder would be your 'subjects' folder. In this folder you create a list of subjects (related to your topic) that you will research. As you do research, you can and should add to this list.
- The second folder would be your 'resources' list. In this folder you create a list of where you would look for articles, books, etc. related to each item listed in your 'subjects' folder. Resources would include (continue to add to this list as well)
 - *The Social Science Citation Index*
 - *The Social Science Index*
 - *Reader's Guide to Periodicals*
 - *Lexus-Nexus*
 - Dissertation Abstracts
 - Index of Congressional Hearings
 - Index of government publications
 - *New York Times* index and the index of other major newspapers
 - Trade, professional, and academic journals
 - Online sources available through FHSU library's website
 - Internet search engines
 - Dialog (additional cost associated)
- The third folder would be your 'results' list. Here you could keep the notes from articles, books, etc. that you found in your research process. Make sure that your notes fully document their sources so that you won't have to go back and dig them up again when you get ready to write your Reference or Works Cited page.

Your research will help you understand how well your topic has already been studied, and you and your faculty advisor should talk about whether you will need to modify the topic that you had originally chosen. You and your faculty advisor should also discuss methodological issues: what primary sources do you want to gather, how do you want to gather them, and what analytical tools will you use to interpret them. Your thesis could have five major parts: an introduction, a review of the literature, stating and testing your hypothesis, an analysis of your results, and a conclusion. Make sure that the format of your thesis is in accordance with the Graduate School requirements!

See also the *Writing and Style Guide* on the MLS website.

Research Involving Human and/or Animal Subjects

If your research will involve human and/or animal subjects, you need to understand the relevant policies. An example of research involving human subjects is research that collects information from individuals through surveys or other means. An example of research involving animal subjects is research that collects information from observing animals in a controlled environment. You should engage in no research that involves human or animal research without first obtaining approval from the [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) and/or [FHSU Institutional Use and Care of Animals Committee \(IACUC\)](#). Please contact the [Office of Scholarship and Sponsored Projects \(OSSP\)](#) for more information.

Process for Validating MLS Core (IDS) Courses

The FHSU Graduate School sets an eight-year time limit on the use of courses for completing the requirements for a graduate degree:

All graduate courses for a Master's Degree, Specialist in Education, or Doctor of Nursing Practice degree program must be completed within eight years. The time begins with the beginning of the semester or summer term that the first course is taken on the degree program. Outdated credit will not be applied towards a degree program. Validating examinations for outdated credit may be given upon approval of the instructor of the course to be validated and the Graduate Dean. Action for the validating examination must be initiated by the department through a petition to the Graduate Dean. No course may be transferred for which validation will be required because of the eight year time limit. (*Graduate School Policies and Procedures*, <http://www.fhsu.edu/academic/gradschl/current-students/>, accessed 31 October 2017)

The IDS core courses are currently IDS 801, 802, 803, and 804. If one or more of these has exceeded the time limit and thus must be validated to meet requirements of the MLS degree, the validation can occur through either of the following two methods. The student may choose which method to follow for each course. If the student's effort fails to produce validation, the student can, of course, retake the class in question.

Validation Method 1. The student will complete the most cumulative assignment for the current or previous semester's version of the course in question. By "most cumulative" is meant the assignment that the instructor of the class intends to be the most complete assessment of the student's success in achieving the desired learning outcomes of the class in question. The coordinator of the MLS program will select the particular instructor of a current section or a section in the previous semester with whom the student will work. The selected instructor will grade the student's performance using the same standards he or she uses or used in the relevant class, and a grade of "C," "B," or "A" will be sufficient to validate the course.

Validation Method 2. The student will write a paper that does these three things:

1. Explains the goals of his or her culminating experience.
2. Explains the desired learning outcomes of the IDS class for which the student is seeking validation.
3. Reflects on the relevance of the desired learning outcomes of the IDS class to the achievement of the goals of her or his culminating experience.

This paper will be graded by three people, the director of the culminating experience, the coordinator of the MLS program or his or her designee, and a graduate faculty member selected by the coordinator of the

MLS program. If the instructor of that student's culminating experience is not available, then the coordinator of the MLS program will seek a suitable replacement. This paper will be graded on the accuracy and completeness of the explanations and on the quality of argument in the reflections. The course will be validated only if all three faculty graders of the paper agree that the paper is of passing quality. If a student is seeking validation for two or more of the IDS core courses, the student can choose to write a single paper in which the student explains and reflects upon the desired learning outcomes of all of the classes in question. Note that method 2 can be used only if the student has already completed or is concurrently completing the culminating experience. At the discretion of the three faculty graders, the student may be asked to revise and resubmit this paper one time.

Regardless of the method of validation to be used, there are certain conditions under which this policy is operative. First, as noted above, a student wishing to have an outdated course validated will need to have the cooperation of the department of the course in question. For the IDS core courses, that department is the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. As noted above, the validation process will go forward only if it is then approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Second, the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences will consider a request for validation for an outdated course for five years. That is, the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences will send forward a request for validation only if it has been thirteen years or less since the successful completion of the IDS core course in question. Third, the Graduate School has a policy that a validation expires after two years if the program has not been successfully completed by that time.

Any changes to these policies and processes require the approval of both the Dean of College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Approved by Dr. Paul Faber
Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
31 October 2017

Approved by Dr. Jennifer Bonds-Raacke
Dean of the Graduate School
31 October 2017

MLS Comprehensive Exams

All students receiving the Master of Liberal Studies degree are required to take TWO comprehensive exams: 1) the MLS core exam, which covers content and skills from the core courses (IDS 801, 802, 803, & 804), and 2) the concentration exam, which covers content and skills obtained in concentration courses. Students completing a thesis in their concentration are required to take the MLS core exam only. Students should sign-up for comprehensive exams with the Graduate School prior to the sign-up deadline posted each semester. Failure to do so may result in a delay of your graduate date.

Concentration Exams

Concentration exams are administered by advisors, and should be completed and graded in advance of the comprehensive exam reporting deadline posted each semester by the Graduate School. Each concentration has full authority over the format, content, and grading methods for this exam.

MLS Core Exam

The MLS core exam is administered by the MLS Coordinator and Graduate School at least three-weeks prior to the comprehensive exam reporting deadline posted each semester by the Graduate School. The MLS core exam is available on Blackboard for a period of time specified by the MLS Coordinator, and

students will have that time in which to access and work on the exams. Access to the MLS core exam site will be closed, except during the examination period.

The MLS core exam includes research and a writing prompt. Students will carefully consult the research and write a position paper that will be uploaded on the Blackboard site before the end of the examination period. Exam graders are looking for the application of skills that students learned in their IDS 800-level courses, specifically the ability to work with scholarly research, analyze it, and synthesize it in writing. There are typically no study questions available, for graders are looking for the application of skills, not memorization. A copy of the MLS core exam grading rubric used to assess the exams will be available to students on the Blackboard site. The rubric is based on a 10-point scale. The lowest possible passing grade is 6.0/10 (60%), averaged among all readers of the exam. Final scores are available on the Blackboard site prior to final reporting to the Graduate School. Graded rubrics reflecting the final score of the exam will be sent to students upon request to the MLS Coordinator.

Acquiring Textbooks

You may purchase or rent textbooks through the online service provided by the University Bookstore in FHSU's Student Memorial Union (www.bkstr.com/forthaysstatestore).

It may also be possible to acquire some or all of your textbooks through other online providers, at least some of which are listed below. Students should refer to the appropriate ISBN number for the most accurate purchasing of textbooks.

Online Textbook Retailers:

- Amazon
- Barnes and Noble
- Textbooks.com
- Half.com (hosted by e-bay)
- Powell's Books (powells.com)

Consumer Affairs has also compiled a *Buyers Guide* for renting textbooks through online retailers, and can be viewed at: <https://www.consumeraffairs.com/education/textbook-rental/>.

Organizing Your Semester

You should contact your faculty advisor as soon after you have been admitted to the MLS program as possible. You should begin to plan for your next semester's courses well in advance of the beginning of that next semester. Your faculty advisor can pre-enroll you for the next semester long before that semester begins. For summer session and fall semester, pre-enrollment begins at the end of March or the beginning of April. For spring semester, pre-enrollment begins at the end of October or the beginning of November. You should contact your faculty advisor before submitting online requests to enroll in courses. If you pre-enroll through your advisor, you can get into classes sooner and pay later (the due date for tuition and fees will be specified).

As soon as you know the classes you will be taking in the next semester, go to FHSU's online bookstore to see if course books and materials can be ordered. If they are not available the first time you check, go back to the website at least once a week until the books and materials are posted. You are not required to purchase your books through FHSU's online bookstore.

Two or three weeks before the next semester begins, contact (email) the instructor for each course in which you are enrolled. FHSU's online listing of courses may also include the name of the faculty. If a name is not provided, you may contact the department that is offering the course to obtain the name of the course instructor. Ask if the syllabus is available and if the course will have a Blackboard site. Try to get a sense of the class and how it will be conducted.

One or two weeks before the next semester begins, set up a calendar for the semester. Also, set up a file for each course. Carefully read each course syllabus as soon as you can, but no later than the first day of class, and list all of the assignments for each course. Mark assignment due dates on the calendar and for each date specify what is due. Use course syllabi to determine due dates. You may even want to mark on your calendar when you will begin to work on a specific assignment, or a specific portion of an assignment. For example, if a course requires a research paper, you may want to determine a date when you will begin research, a date when you will begin to write, and a date when you will have the initial draft completed.

Once the semester begins, keep copies of each assignment you submit and when you submitted it. Put these copies in the appropriate course file. Use course syllabi to set up a grading template so that you can keep track of your grades on each of your assignments. If you have a question about a grade on a particular assignment, contact the instructor as quickly as possible.

Most of the responsibility for your education rests in your hands. Be willing to learn; be quick to seek help; be generous in helping others.

How to Study

Organize the material for each course you take. For each course, have a space on your bookshelf or on your computer in your study room dedicated to material from that course.

Create a room conducive to study (your study room). This space should be well-lit, quiet, and not subject to interruption. It should contain the appropriate furniture and equipment: table, chair, bookshelf, etc.

Organize your study room so that

- your course materials are close at hand
- your desk or study area is properly lit
- there is a good fit between you and the equipment you use (in other words, proper ergonomics)

Set aside the same block of time each day, six days a week, which you will devote to study.

When you are taking a course, keep good notes and review them often.

In each course you take, correspond often with other students in the class and with your instructor.

For each course you take, find ways to integrate it with

- other courses
- your profession
- your personal life
- what is happening in the world (this complies with Peter Drucker's admonition to "only connect;" page 192, *Post-Capitalist Society*, New York: Harper Business, 1994)

Seek for ways to improve the effectiveness of your study.

If you have not been in school for a while, it may take a bit of time to adjust. Initially, you may only be able to read for short lengths of time before you become fatigued. Rather than be discouraged by this, use your initial experience as a benchmark against which you can measure your subsequent performance. You may even want to create a form you can use to answer the following questions:

Effective reading time: how many minutes can I read before I become fatigued?

Process speed: how many pages did I read in that period of time?

Comprehension: how quickly did I understand what was written?

Next, work on incremental improvement in each of these three areas. For example, if your answer to the first question is “15 minutes,” then each day try to increase it by five minutes. After just one week (seven days of reading) you will increase your effective reading time from 15 minutes to 45 minutes. If you study on a consistent basis, you will, by the end of ten weeks, achieve a noticeable improvement in effective reading time, process speed, and comprehension.

Tips on reading and note-taking:

Experiment with different ways of marking a book until you find a method that best fits how you think and how you remember.

Experiment with different ways of taking notes until you find a method that best fits how you think and how you remember.

Writing

For a detailed discussion of writing a paper, see the MLS Writing and Style Guide by Dr. Chris Crawford on the MLS website.

Writing is a key skill. As a graduate student entering the MLS program, you should already have some facility for writing well. You should expect the standard of writing to be noticeably higher in graduate school than it was in undergraduate education. Technical proficiency (spelling, punctuation, etc.), sophistication of analysis, clarity of thought, and fluidity of writing should already be at a fairly high level. Graduate school will give you opportunities to sharpen and improve your writing skills.

There is not just one right way to write. You may, however, find the use of an outline to be helpful.

Some tips on writing:

- If you struggle to write the introduction, start writing the paper or essay in the middle - or the end.
- If you are unable to aptly express your thought,
- Ask: “what point do I want to make?” Then write it down. Once it is written, ask: “can I say it better?”
- Ask: “how would I explain this to my ____?”
- child, significant other, friend, parent, workmate
- Put something on paper, then improve it.
- Does your writing ‘flow’ or is it disjointed?
- Is your analysis sound?
- Do you have a good introduction and conclusion?
- What about the more technical matters such as spelling errors (get it?), punctuation, past and present tense, etc.?

- Print your first draft, let it sit on your desk for at least half an hour, then find a red pencil and pretend that you are an English teacher.
- Let someone else critique your work. Give him or her a dollar for each misspelled word or each incorrect punctuation that he or she finds.
- Revise. Look especially for areas where your analysis is not adequately developed your argument isn't clear you 'read in' to the essay something that is in your head but not on the page.
- Be neither harried nor hurried. You can be fast, though.
- When you read, take note of what makes one writer good and another writer not as good. The point is not to try to adopt another person's style, but to apply what you learn as you develop your own distinctive style of writing.

Resources that you may find useful:

Diana Hacker. (2000). *A Pocket Style Manual*, Third Edition. Boston, Massachusetts: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Arthur Plotnik. (1982). *The Elements of Editing a Modern Guide for Editors and Journalists*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Alfred Rosa and Paul Eschholz. (1996). *The Writer's Brief Handbook*. Boston and London: Allyn and Bacon.

Margaret Shertzer. (1986). *The Elements of Grammar*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White. (1979). *The Elements of Style*, Third Edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Taking Exams

There should be little doubt that exams play a critical role in the educational experience, whether graduate or undergraduate. Even though students generally believe that the same assessment function could be fulfilled through any number of less intrusive means, the fact remains that exams are still a uniform and convenient method of measuring the level of student preparedness and knowledge.

Every instructor is a little different when it comes to building and grading exams. It is perfectly appropriate for you to ask a course instructor about exams and expectations. For some students, the learning curve may be very steep at the expense of a poor grade on the first and subsequent exams. This is coupled with the fact that many students experience some degree of apprehensiveness when completing exams. This is understandable. Perhaps it will help if you put exams in a more positive light: as opportunities to demonstrate what you have learned.

Preparing for the Exam

As you begin to prepare yourself for an exam (and for some of you it may be the first exam in a long time), you should keep several things in mind. An exam is best when it adequately measures student preparedness and knowledge. Thus, it would seem apparent that some questions will be designed to assess all different levels of student skill. Some questions will seem easy, and some will be much more difficult. In addition, the goal of the exam, contrary to the perception of many students, is not to take points away. The goal is to give points as a measure of knowledge.

Scores on a reasonable exam generally display a correlation between the effort of study/preparedness and the final score. Don't cheat; it is a form of lying, and perhaps the worst part is that you hurt yourself. To take an extreme example: how would you like to face an operating table, knowing that you cheated your

way through medical school? The best way to maximize your exam score is to prepare more (and know more) than your peers. Suggestions for how to prepare for an exam:

- Read the assigned materials
- Take thorough notes
- Review your notes
- Be an active participant in the lectures (yes, even the videotaped ones)
- Take thorough notes
- Review your notes
- Engage in class discussion
- Complete all assignments in a timely manner

As a final step in preparing for the exam, you should consider the question format and context. Question formats that require more processing and less rote memorization would include essay, short answer, and other synthesis type questions. In synthesis type questions the goal is probably to assess the way that you organize your knowledge, so your study habits should reflect this abstract and high-level learning.

You should understand the major points, many of the minor details, and most important, the big picture. If you know that your exam is going to be composed primarily of objective multiple choice, true-false, matching, or fill in the blank, you should engage in study habits that allow you to memorize specific facts rather than building the broadest possible understanding of the materials.

The context in which you take the exam is also critically important. In this digital age, exams that are taken via computer technology are more commonplace. The contexts for an in-class exam and for an online exam are totally different, and require different strategies. For an in-class exam you would want to make sure you have the required tools necessary to complete the exam (pencil, paper, scan form (if applicable), possibly notes and resources, etc). For an online exam, however, the tools necessary in order to complete an exam are likely to be different. The computer, the internet connection, and notes and resources (when allowed) all become issues. For online exams, consider the following suggestions:

- Make sure that your computer and internet connection is adequate and reliable
- Take the exam at a time that is going to have the least disruption
- Do not begin the exam until you are ready
- Avoid waiting until the last day or hour to begin the exam
- Know in advance what question format you'll be dealing with to decrease your apprehensiveness
- Keep a copy of what you submit online or through email in case it gets lost. Copy and paste your answers into a word processing document with a time and date stamp that can be verified through the computer's file system.

Taking the Exam

Immediately prior to taking an objective exam (true/false, multiple choice, matching) you should consider the following specific tips:

- Try to remember lists and objective facts by thorough review and study of the materials.
- Study for familiarity with the concept, recognition of the facts, not necessarily depth of knowledge unless the multiple choice questions are written at a level of synthesis (which is uncommon).

Taking the multiple choice exam is basically a choice among alternatives. This is a factor in your favor unless you are penalized for incorrect answers instead of rewarded for correct answers. If you have four choices to each question, then you theoretically have a 25% chance of getting the question right by random guessing. If you add this to the fact that it is common to put a "ringer" in as one of the options, your odds go up more. As you take the multiple choice exam, consider the following:

- The most common answer choices are B and C for multiple choice questions.
- True is more common than false, and will commonly appear closer to the front of the exam.
- Be careful with answers of “none of the above;” they are not the same conceptually as “all of the above,” even though they are opposites.
- If “all of the above” exists in the answer list, and you can find one or two choices that do not seem to meet the criteria of the question then you can automatically rule it out.
- Typically, professors and test banks avoid patterns and they usually mix up similar answer choice questions.
- Rely on prior questions to help you answer later questions; if you know some of the choices were not correct in an earlier question then remember that for a later question. If you know that you answered a prior question correctly then use that knowledge to your advantage.
- For matching questions, if there is an inconsistency between the number of questions and the number of answers (more of these typically) don’t rule out the last one until you have looked at all the options unless it is an obvious “ringer.”

The essay and short answer exam requires study of a different nature. Essay questions are typically different from short answer questions in that much more is required in the former and they typically have multiple parts; however, both the short answer and essay style question are similar in that they require the test taker to recall specific knowledge and show an advanced understanding (through theoretical challenge, analytical insight, or practical application). Essay and short answer questions attempt to expose what the student knows on a topic, rather than the student’s agreement with a series of phrases or questions. They are considered “free-response” rather than “forced-choice” style questions. It is also important to keep in mind that when the instructor grades essay and short answer exams, several factors are at play:

- Most professors use a grading key to score the essay answer (and short answer also). The grading key often has specific points that need to be addressed in order to receive various amounts of credit on the question
- Most essay answers are not graded from an “absolute zero” perspective, meaning that if you at least try to answer the question it is likely that you’ll receive some credit. Never try to “snow” the instructor as an alternative to writing the correct answer.
- There is subjective latitude in the answers that are acceptable. Given the fact that the answers are not in a precisely coded format (true, false, B, etc.), there will always be some level of interpretation on scoring the answers.

Essay and short answer questions can be best answered if you keep the following tips in mind:

- If the essay/short answer question is **PRECISE** and you **KNOW THE ANSWER** (and I mean know it), spend a minute to organize your thoughts and structure your answer, then make all the important points necessary.
- If the essay/short answer question **ASKS FOR AN INTERPRETATION** and you **KNOW THE ANSWER** then spend a few minutes to ‘brainstorm’ as much rationale as possible to support your position.
- If the essay/short answer question is **PRECISE** and you **DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER** then you should attempt to think of as many different correct answers and write your essay demonstrating what you do know about the topic. Don’t just write “I don’t know” and move on, demonstrate what you do know on the topic even if it is not specifically what was asked for. The answer may come to you as you write. Write the answers that you know first.
- If the essay/short answer question **ASKS FOR AN INTERPRETATION** and you **DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER** then you try to reason through the answer and try the best stab at it you can.

- Always take a minute at the beginning of the question to read and REREAD the question to make sure you understand it.
- Always take a minute or two to jot down some thoughts on the correct answer as opposed to just answering “on the go.” You typically have better answers if you stop, think, plan, and organize your thoughts than if you do it through a “stream of consciousness.”
- Organize your answers by numbering them if need be. Analyze each portion of a question separately, then together.
- Don’t waste time on spelling and grammar if you are taking an exam online; you can go back later and correct those problems.
- Pace yourself, and spend more time on the questions that are more difficult and worth more points.
- If you have time left over, use it to clarify your answer by adding examples or by adding a personal anecdote. This will demonstrate that you have mastered the concept at the applied level rather than just the theoretical level. If the question is applied, then add some theoretical aspects to the answer to demonstrate your understanding.
- Set your answer apart from other test-takers with your superior analytical and application skills. Formatting also makes a difference. Make it sound good, and make it look good.
- From another perspective, keep in mind that your answer should “tell a story.” Every narrative (test answer) should have fidelity and integrity, meaning that it should be accurate and should make sense as well as answer the question fully. Tell the story as best you can to argue your point.
- Always support the positions you take with theoretical backing and/or sound reasoning.
- Always proofread your answers, leave yourself five minutes at the end to read what you wrote and correct grammar and spelling problems.

Feedback and Learning: Concluding the Exam Process

Exams are typically scored and some results are shared with the student, whether they are distributed in class, emailed to you, or shown in the learning management system. Double-check every answer you missed whether it was objective or subjective. Make sure that it was scored correctly. If you seriously believe that you answered the question correctly, then contact your professor to seek an explanation of why you missed the question. Debrief your exam results and keep notes on special circumstances that were obvious so you can use them to score better on the next exam you take in the class and under that professor.

It is also helpful to go back and reflect on what you learned from the test materials. Real learning happens when people take the opportunity to self-reflect on what they learned not just from the process of testing, but from the process of study and review for the exam. This meta-learning experience is essential to understand the purpose of an examination.

Finally, don’t be shy when it comes to preparing for the next exam from a particular professor. If the score you earned on the first exam is less than satisfactory, then take more time to study and review, and ask questions about the course materials and the testing procedure. If you don’t feel that you are getting a sense for what is expected do not be afraid to pick up the phone and call the professor. Often the personal contact can make a difference in how things are explained, and it will demonstrate your interest in doing a super job. Confirm that the exam format will be similar or if there are substantial differences requiring more study time. If the exam is online, make sure that the technological process will be the same as for the first exam. A change in question type from objective to subjective requires a major shift in how you should study for each exam type (as per the previous discussion). Taking a little more time in preparation can dramatically increase your score.

Taking an Incomplete

The FHSU policy regarding the assigning of an Incomplete:

“Assigned at discretion of instructor when work is of otherwise passing quality but incomplete, usually for reasons beyond the student’s control.”

Except in the case of independent study-type courses, you have a year to finish the Incomplete. For example, if you receive an Incomplete in Fall 2017, you have until the end of Fall 2018 to finish the course. In the case of independent study-type courses, the one-year limit does not apply; you can take more than a year to finish an Incomplete in these types of courses. Please consult FHSU's Academic Policies in the Student Handbook for removing an Incomplete.

If you encounter unexpected events that will prevent you from finishing a class - family, death, or personal illness - contact your instructor as soon as possible. If you feel that there is a good reason for requesting an Incomplete in a course, contact the instructor as soon as it appears likely that you will want to request an Incomplete in the course. You should not seek an Incomplete because you have been too busy. Rather, early in the semester you should determine whether the demands in your life allow you sufficient time to complete the work for all of the courses in which you are enrolled. By week three of a sixteen-week course, you should determine whether to drop one or more courses.

Remember that other students have busy lives too, yet they complete their assignments. Think of a request for an Incomplete as a matter of equity. Allowing students more time to complete a course brings other logistical responsibilities (like grading things out of sync with the other students) that are hard to quantify.

These tips may help you make a decision of whether to seek an Incomplete in a course:

- Is the incomplete requested for a verifiable medical reason?
- If not, is there any verifiable compelling reason to consider an incomplete?
- Did you have the opportunity to drop the course?
- Have you submitted previous work in a timely manner?
- Has the work that you have completed been of passing quality?
- What impact will the incomplete have you? For example, if you plan on finishing the Incomplete during a semester that you are taking other courses, you have effectively increased your workload for that semester.

When an incomplete is issued it is your responsibility to complete all the assigned work in timely manner. If the material is not completed within the appropriate amount of time, it is possible that the instructor may submit a grade that you do not desire, rather than simply let the “Incomplete” stay in the record.

Plagiarism & Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s material without proper attribution. If you plagiarize, it is grounds for dismissal from the MLS program. If you are in a situation where you are not sure whether you are plagiarizing, contact your instructor. Three examples should help you understand what constitutes plagiarism.

EXAMPLE ONE: You found some material while you were researching for a paper. You decide to paraphrase or summarize the material in your paper. When you do, you fail to provide a citation. This would constitute plagiarism, though a more mild form of plagiarism than found in the next example.

EXAMPLE TWO: You found some material while you were researching for a paper. You decide to include a quote from that material in your paper. When you do, you fail to provide quotation marks and a citation. This would constitute a more serious form of plagiarism. The longer the quote, the more serious the violation. Here is a conservative rule that you can use to determine whether you are plagiarizing a quote: if you use three or more words in the same order as the author(s) from whom you have acquired the material, then you must cite the source. If you cut and paste words from a source on the web, that is as serious an error as copying words from a book or article.

EXAMPLE THREE: Someone else writes a paper and you submit it as your own. This is the most serious form of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. It is a claim that the ideas or words you have written are yours, when in fact they are not. A second form of academic dishonesty is to intentionally provide an incorrect citation. Other examples of academic dishonesty include handing in a paper purchased from an individual or agency; submitting papers from living group, club or organization files; and using another's computer program or documents. FHSU's policy on Academic Honesty can be found in the Student Handbook.

More positively, proper attribution helps you locate your own analysis and thinking within the context of what has already been written on the topic. Proper attribution shows the reader that you are familiar with the literature relevant to your topic, thereby helping the reader to more accurately judge your own contribution to the topic. Proper attribution is a way to honor all three parties involved in the paper: the sources, the readers, and you. Standards of attribution and acknowledgment of literary indebtedness are set by each discipline.

See also the MLS Writing and Style Guide by Dr. Chris Crawford on the MLS website.

Student Support Services

Financial Aid

It is best to avoid borrowing money for school; however, if you do need financial aid, you should try to explore as many options as possible: grants, scholarships, stipends, loans, etc. Pell grants are not available to graduate students; however, Perkins loans and Stafford loans (both unsubsidized and subsidized) are available. Also, check out FHSU's Financial Assistance website at www.fhsu.edu/finaid.

Forsyth Library

Forsyth Library is a university partner in delivering accessible quality education and developing engaged global citizens and leaders. The faculty and staff in Forsyth Library are available to assist you throughout your time in the MLS program. The library offers several sources on-campus and online, which include: interlibrary loan, open educational resources, eLibraries, and scholarly article databases. It is highly recommended that you utilize these services throughout your time in the MLS program, particularly for information literacy and research processes. Learn more at www.fhsu.edu/library. To access library resources off-campus, visit [Off campus access to Forsyth Library Resources](#). A variety of search engines for academic research are found [here](#).

Additional Resources

Google's index of public-domain works: [Google Books](#).
Google's search engine for academic/scholarly work is [Google Scholar](#).

Writing Center

The Writing Center welcomes on-campus students to receive free, individual consultation about writing at any stage of the writing process. Visit their website at <https://www.fhsu.edu/WritingCenter/>.

Smarthinking.com

Smarthinking.com is a free tutoring service available to students currently enrolled in at least two (2) credit hours of **only** virtual college classes. With Smarthinking, virtual students can: 1) Connect with an e-structor and interact with a live tutor; 2) Schedule a personal session and pre-schedule a live session with an e-structor of your choice; 3) Submit your writing for any class to our Online Writing Lab; 4) Submit a question and receive a reply from a tutor. Learn more at <https://www.fhsu.edu/virtualcollege/smarthinking>.

Tiger Tech

If you are experiencing problems with your FHSU email, Blackboard, or other online or tech services with FHSU, contact Tiger Tech for assistance. Learn more at <https://www.fhsu.edu/tigertech/>.

Career Services

As a FHSU student, you may use the Career Services office to help you. Career Services can assist you with resume building, interviewing, and job searching, all free of charge. For more information, visit the website at www.fhsu.edu/career.

Important Links

[Writing & Style Guide](#) by Dr. Chris Crawford

[Thesis Guidelines](#)

[Admission to Candidacy](#)

[Graduate Assistantships](#)

[Comprehensive Examinations](#)

Intent to Graduate - Note: You must have Program and Candidacy on file BEFORE filing your Intent to Graduate form. This form is found in Online Services of your [TigerTracks](#) account.

[International Applicants](#)

See also the [Graduate School's website](#) for the online application and other deadlines.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I contact an instructor?

You can always send an email to your instructor. Not all who teach in the MLS program are on the FHSU campus, so you may not be able to reach an instructor by calling the main FHSU number (1-800-628-3478). If you know the name of your instructor, you can go to the FHSU Web site <http://www.fhsu.edu>

and click on the Directory link. If you do not know the name of your instructor, or have not been able to locate your instructor on the web, you are welcome to contact the MLS Program Coordinator either by email at krklaus@fhsu.edu or by phone (785) 628-5578.

How do I contact my advisor?

You can always send an email to your advisor. You are strongly encouraged to keep in regular contact with your advisor. If you do not know the name of your advisor, or do not know your advisor's email address or phone number, you can find it on TigerTracks. You are also welcome to contact the MLS Program Coordinator either by email at krklaus@fhsu.edu or by phone (785) 628-5578 to obtain the name your faculty advisor.

What is a program of study?

A Program of Study lists the courses included in the curriculum for your MLS degree. It also includes your name, address, social security number, email address, and the names of the faculty on your MLS faculty committee.

What are comprehensive exams?

Comprehensive exams provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate mastery of your program of study. More information about these exams is found in the section titled MLS Program of Study.

What is the culminating experience?

The culminating experience occurs at the end of your program. It can be thought of as a capstone experience. It is an opportunity to bring all of your skills and abilities to bear on a single piece of work (that may have more than one part). More information about the culminating experience is found in the section titled [MLS Program of Study](#). Also, check out the sections on the [MLS internship](#), the [MLS project](#) and the [MLS thesis](#).

What is Blackboard?

Blackboard is a Web-based learning technology, through which all virtual courses are conducted. A tutorial is available to you once you have accessed the Blackboard website. When an instructor uses Blackboard, you will be able to access that course by going to <http://blackboard.fhsu.edu>, then click the "login" button. Login using your TigerNetID. For assistance in setting up your TigerNetID, visit <https://www.fhsu.edu/tigertech/TigerNetID/>. Once you 'login' to Blackboard, the courses in which you are currently enrolled will be listed on the right side of the screen. Click on the link for whichever course you wish to access.

Can I transfer credits from another school?

Your faculty advisor determines whether courses will transfer. While FHSU policy allows for a maximum of 15 hours to be transferred, only six or nine hours are typically able to be transferred. Only courses that meet the following criteria can be transferred:

- Taken for graduate credit
- Taken from an accredited school
- Taken for a letter grade, which cannot be lower than a "B"
- Not more than six years old when you graduate with your MLS degree.
- Not part of another program. For example, a class taken as part of another Master's degree could not be transferred.

How do I add or drop a course?

Prior to the beginning of a semester you can work with your advisor to add or drop courses. Once the semester has already begun, you need to submit requests to add or drop courses by using the online form

found in the TigerEnroll section of [TigerTracks](#). If you want to completely withdraw from school for a semester, you will need to contact the Registrar's Office at (785) 628-4222. To find the dates for adding and dropping courses, and the refund schedule, please see the [FHSU Academic Calendar](#). It is important to realize that when you use the online request to add or drop a course, what you are doing is submitting a request that will be processed later. So it is very possible that you attempt to submit a request to add a course at the time a course is open, but then the course will close prior to your request being processed. You should also realize that the online listing of courses is not in 'real time' - that is, it is possible that the online list shows a class as being open when it is in fact closed.