Students pursuing the Master of Science Instructional Technology should familiarize themselves with the relevant portions of the Graduate School Bulletin (i.e., the general information section and the section on the Instructional Technology program). The material on these pages is meant to supplement the Bulletin and provide you with information relative to your degree program.

- **Time limits.** All students must complete their degrees within 5 years from date of admission.

- **Program formats:** There are two formats of degree plans: 100% online and hybrid. If you want to complete the entire program online, please select all online classes when developing the study plan. If you like to meet your professors face-to-face or you are an international student, you can take some of these classes in traditional/hybrid format. Every course, either online or face-to-face, has exactly the same requirements and same instructor. International students have to take no less than two traditional face-to-face classes in fall and spring terms. There is no limitation in summer unless the international student started in summer. If so, he/she needs to take two traditional classes in summer to meet the immigration regulations.

- **Conditional Admission.** If you were admitted "conditionally," you should review your conditions of admittance with your advisor during your program planning meeting. Also, it is your responsibility to inform your advisor when all conditions have been met. Your advisor through the Department Chair will send a form to the Graduate School requesting your admission status be changed to "regular admit." This can be done provided that you have obtained a "B" or better in the first 9 semester hours of program coursework.

- **Advisors.** Upon admission, you are arbitrarily assigned an advisor. The advisor will help you with establishing your program plan, preparing for the comprehensive examinations, and answering other programmatic questions.

- **Program planning meeting.** Entering master degree students must schedule a program planning meeting with their advisor prior to registering for courses in the Instructional Technology program. Students should come to the meeting with a plan of which courses they are planning to take and, ideally, when they plan to take them. A Plan of Study form must be completed and turned into the Graduate School after the first semester of coursework. Click the following link to obtain the Plan of Study form online.

- **Research and Scholarly Integrity Education.** All graduate students must complete the RSIE training modules required by the Graduate School and their departments the first semester there are enrolled in graduate school. The RSIE policy and training information are found on the Graduate School web page: [http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/research-and-scholarly-integrity-education](http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/research-and-scholarly-integrity-education). Contact the Dean of the Graduate School if you have any questions regarding the policy of training information. The RSIE completion certificate is good for 5 years.

- **Fall and Spring loads.** A normal full-time load is 12 hours. In fall and spring terms, the student
may request the advisor and the Department Chair to approve a maximum load of 15 hours. This maximum load of 15 hours is a Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning Board requirement. Students must clear their course selections with their advisor before they will be given their pin numbers allowing them to register.

- **Summer loads.** During the summer term, the maximum load is 12 hours. This is an Institutions of Higher Learning Board policy, and there are no exceptions. The registrar’s computer is programmed to throw out any schedules exceeding 12 hours. Students must clear their course selections with their advisor before they will be given their pin numbers allowing them to register.

- **Courses taken as a non-degree student.** For master’s degrees, a total of no more than twelve (12) semester hours of work earned as a non-degree student may be applied toward a master's degree. When planning to transfer credit, a total sum of no more than twelve (12) semester hours of transfer work and non-degree work may be applied toward a master's degree.

- **Transfer credit from other universities.** Students may transfer up to 6 hours from another university. These courses must be approved by the advisor and the Department Chair. In no case may a single course count for two different completed degrees.

- **Special Problems courses.** Special problems or arranged courses (IT 692) may be taken by Master's students who wish to investigate in-depth some topic not covered in regular course work. In such courses the student must: (1) gain permission from the instructor before enrolling; (2) propose to the instructor a detailed plan of work in the form of a learning contract; and (3) document at least 45 hours of work devoted exclusively to that course in a time log to be submitted with the other completed course materials (portfolio). In no case may the Capstone projects or thesis be considered for the major part of the Special Problems.

- **Use of APA.** The Instructional Technology program adheres to the policies and format of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), with regard to all course-related papers and the thesis, unless otherwise indicated. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual.

- **Incompletes.** The Instructional Technology program and the University at large strongly discourage incompletes. They are appropriate for illness and family emergencies, but not because of a lack of time. If an incomplete grade is requested by the student and allowed by the professor, the student must sign a contract with the professor specifying the work outstanding, the due date (toward the end of the following semester), and the student's understanding that the grade will revert to an F if the deadline is missed. The University requires that any incomplete be completed by the end of the following semester. Failure to do so will result in being automatically converted to an F.

- **Deadlines and documents.** Graduate School deadlines are available from the Graduate School for each semester. Documents to be submitted, such as the application for graduation, have deadlines for which the student is responsible.
• **Application for degree.** An application for graduation must be filed by the student for any graduate degree. The deadline for filing the application is about midterm of the semester prior to the semester in which the student plans to graduate (for example, if a Spring graduation is planned, the deadline for applying for the degree is usually about the first week of November). It is the student's responsibility to secure a copy of the Graduate School’s deadlines and to file the application at the appropriate time. If the deadline is missed, the Graduate School is not obligated to make exceptions because the student "didn't know about the deadline." Furthermore, your advisor is unlikely to be willing to "plead your case" to the Graduate School because the deadline was simply forgotten. If you are not sure of the commencement in which you will participate, it is better to file for the earliest reasonable graduation and then if you do not make that graduation (for example, either you did not finish the courses as you planned, or did not defend the Dissertation as you had planned) you will automatically be moved to the next graduation (no action will be required by you or your advisor). You must complete a Graduation Deferment form to move the intended graduation semester. On the other hand, if you do not file the application degree and then finish all other requirements, you will not graduate until the semester for which an application was filed. Applications for Degree can be obtained online at [http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/application-degree](http://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/application-degree).

• **Deference of Graduation.** If you cannot graduate in the term you specified for the Application for Degree form, then you will need to complete a Deferred Graduation Request form (located under the Graduate School’s Web site). A $50.00 fee is assessed and must be paid in the Business Office before taking the form to the Graduate Auditor in the McCain Library, Room 205.

• **Continuous Enrollment Policy.** Students must adhere to the following criteria to ensure that graduate status is maintained: (1) continuously enroll each term to ensure that residency requirements are met and that students benefit from being actively engaged in intensive and consistent study, (2) enroll in at least 1 hour if they are using university resources, including requiring faculty to read/supervise projects and theses, (3) register for at least three hours of IT 698 or IT 699 during the semester they defend the thesis or capstone project, and (4) must register for 1 hour of IT 697 in the semester in which they defend the thesis or capstone project, if they had not defended the thesis/capstone the semester prior.

• **Instructional Technology Minors.** Graduate students who are minoring in Instructional Technology for the Master, Specialist, or Doctoral level must meet with the IT Minor Advisor, Dr. Taralynn Hartsell, for advising of courses. Upon meeting with the Minor Advisor, students will need to complete a Minor Plan of Study form. In addition, it is important that IT minors subscribe to the Instructional Technology listserv. You can subscribe by e-mailing Dr. Taralynn Hartsell with your name and current e-mail address.

• **Graduate Catalog.** Students will use the current Graduate Catalog in the year in which they are admitted to the IT Program. If a student does not take classes for two consecutive semesters (including the summer term), then that student will have to follow the current Graduate Catalog in which they are readmitted to school.

Last Update: August 24, 2014
Master’s of Science in Instructional Technology
Department of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education
The University of Southern Mississippi
Hattiesburg, MS, United States