

*Student Handbook  
for  
Instructional Technology*

*Written by Faculty Members in the Program of  
Instructional Technology  
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville*

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## ***What's in this Handbook and Why Do You Need It?***

Congratulations on your admission to Instructional Technology (IT)! This student handbook contains useful information about policies and processes to help make your trip through the graduate program more rewarding. Also, this handbook contains suggestions for enhancing your learning. Please note that this handbook supplements the *SIUE Graduate Catalog*. Where conflicting information occurs, the graduate catalog is the “final word” on university policies. You can find the start of the catalog here: <http://www.siu.edu/academics/degrees-and-programs/graduate/instructional-technology/index.shtml>

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## ***CHAPTER 1: YOU’VE BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN IT; SO, NOW WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?***

When you received your acceptance letter into the Instructional Technology (IT) program, you also received a checklist called “Setting Yourself Up for Success in the IT Program.” This checklist can be found within Blackboard’s Instructional Technology Learning Community (ITLC), too. (The ITLC is discussed in detail later in this chapter.) You should diligently complete each item on that checklist. There have been cases of students delaying their own progress through the program—and even their graduation date—because they didn’t complete each of those items.

This chapter elaborates on the importance of some (but not all) of those items in the checklist and offers allied advice for your first steps. The advice comes from both faculty members in the IT program and graduates from the program.

### ***GET ORGANIZED***

Graduate students regularly point to the benefits of getting organized early in their degree program. Why? First, there is an administrative reason for getting organized. You often can avoid administrative headaches by being able to quickly put your hands on needed information. Second, there is an educational reason. Being organized can help you more easily prepare for your jury and for the world of work beyond the IT program.

What types of organizing should you do? For one thing, you should establish a system for keeping communications between you and the university. For instance, some students complete a “Graduate Student Request Form” to transfer courses from other universities to SIUE. Keep a copy of those request forms. Keep, too, copies of any forms that you completed that you might need again, if the originals were to be lost. For instance, keep copies of health records, your undergraduate transcript, your acceptance letter into the program, and other administrative documents.

You also might keep a list of courses that you’ve completed, the semester that you completed them, and the faculty member who taught each course. These records might be useful to you as you work with your advisor to move toward graduation. To help you select courses each semester, your advisor likely will ask you to share the courses that you’ve already taken in the program.

Throughout this program, you will receive course syllabi, content-based handouts, useful readings, and other resources in your classes. You also will receive written feedback on course assignments and projects. These materials might be useful to you as you strategize your next career move and as you go through the jury process. (See chapter 4 of this handbook for more information about the jury process.)

In short, getting organized so that you can put your hands on most any resource that you might need is useful. You never know when you'll need them.

### ***OPEN ALL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION***

Clear communication can make the difference between success and failure in any endeavor; graduate school is no different. You should follow the advice below to make sure that you have access to all of the useful information that you will need as a student in this program.

#### ***OBTAIN AN E-ID***

With your IT acceptance letter, you should have received a handout of step-by-step instructions for obtaining and preserving your e-ID account. You also can find this handout in the ITLC. Follow the instructions listed within that handout.

Why is this important? Your e-ID and accompanying password give you access to a variety of platforms and systems at SIUE. These systems include (a) SIUE email ([office365.siu.edu](mailto:office365@siue.edu)), which you must check regularly to be successful in this program; (b) CougarNet ([siue.edu/cougarnet](http://siue.edu/cougarnet)), which is used to register for courses and other administrative services; and (c) Blackboard ([bb.siu.edu](http://bb.siu.edu)), which is the learning management system that is used for most online courses. Not having access to these systems when you need them can cause you administrative and educational problems.

#### ***BE AWARE OF “INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY LEARNING COMMUNITY” (ITLC) IN BLACKBOARD***

Soon after you are admitted to the IT program, you will be added to the Instructional Technology Learning Community (ITLC) in Blackboard. When you log into Blackboard, then, you will see a course called “Instructional Technology Learning Community.”

This is not a “course” in the traditional sense; rather, the ITLC is a place where you can have access to information about IT, in general, and the IT program at SIUE, more particularly. For instance, within the ITLC, you can find resources that can help you with the jury process and symposium. (You will read more about the symposium and the jury process in chapter 4 of this handbook.)

Through the ITLC, faculty members disperse communications about career planning, job opportunities, IT administration, future course offerings, and other related things. There also are discussion boards where you can interact and network with other IT majors.

So, be aware of the ITLC within Blackboard and consider checking out the resources within that community's Blackboard space. If you do not see the ITLC in Blackboard by the time your first semester of courses begins, then contact your advisor and let him/her know that you don't seem to be a member of the ITLC.

### ***MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR ADVISOR***

When you received your letter of acceptance to the IT program, you were assigned an advisory committee of three faculty members. The faculty member listed first in the letter is your advisor. Your advisor can be a valuable resource in helping you understand the IT program. Your advisor also can be a valuable mentor who can help you determine your goals so that you will be able to make decisions to best advance your career. For instance, your advisor will ensure that you have selected the most appropriate credential (i.e., a certificate or degree) within the IT program. If you are working on the Master's of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) degree, your advisor will guide you through the jury process, too.

Because of the importance of your relationship with your advisor, you absolutely should make an appointment to meet (face-to-face, phone, video conferencing, or whatever) with your advisor. If you learn that your advisor will not be available for a significant length of time—due to sabbatical or illness, for example—then the faculty member listed as second advisor on your acceptance letter will be delighted to meet with you. Within this meeting, you will get a brief orientation to the IT program, and you will create a plan for your first semester of coursework. Likely, you will discuss each of the following:

- Have you completed all of the appropriate items on the “Setting Yourself Up for Success in the IT Program” checklist?
- Which credentials within the IT program are you interested in earning to best help you achieve your goals? In particular, if you and your advisor decide that the Distance Education emphasis of the M.S.Ed. is right for you, then discuss with your advisor the need to also apply for the Certificate in Web-Based Learning. (You will read about these credentials in chapter 2 of this handbook.)
- What pace through the program is most appropriate for you? One course a semester? Two? More? As you think about the answer to this question, consider your responsibilities beyond being a graduate student. For instance, if you are working full time and have family obligations, it is reasonable to decide to get a “feel” for workload by taking only one course during your first semester.
- Do you have any questions about the structure of the program, *The Student Handbook* or anything else related to the program?

## ***CHAPTER 2: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT COURSE ADVISING, SELECTION, AND REGISTRATION***

The chapter begins by providing you with an overview of the structure of the IT program and courses. Then, this chapter directly addresses the course-selection process, which includes both input from your advisor and using resources to determine the appropriate courses for you.

### ***IT PROGRAM CREDENTIALS AND COURSE OVERVIEW***

The purpose of this section is not to tell you everything that you might need to know about the IT Program and courses. You can find more full information about the program and courses within the university's graduate catalog. Rather, the point of this section is to provide you with a big-picture perspective of the credentials within the IT program and orient you toward understanding key categories of courses.

This big-picture perspective and orientation should help you understand why you are required to take some courses while bypassing others and when you should take some courses relative to others. That is, after reading this section of the chapter, you should see that the various credentials offered by IT are quite different from each other in terms of the career paths for which they are preparing you. Thus, your coursework within your chosen emphasis should be quite different from coursework in the other emphasis areas.

### ***CREDENTIALS WITHIN THE IT PROGRAM***

The IT program can best be understood as a series of stacked credentials, where the very small nine-credit hour credential of Professional Development Sequences (PDSs) leads to certificates. The Certificate in Web-Based Learning, for instance, leads to the M.S.Ed. with a major in Instructional Technology and an emphasis in Distance Education. The Certificate in Classroom Technologies does not lead to the M.S.Ed. with a major in Instructional Technology, but it could lead to various other master's degrees, such as the M.S.Ed. with a major in Curriculum & Instruction or a master's degree in integrative studies. This graphic shows you the stacked credentials: <http://www.siue.edu/academics/degrees-and-programs/graduate/instructional-technology/index.shtml>

Because you have declared Instructional Technology as your major with the intention of earning either a certificate or the M.S.Ed., you likely do not need to formally apply for a PDS. PDSs really are credentials that are best used on a resume when a certificate or master's degree in the same field has not been earned. A certificate or master's degree is a more valued credential. If, however, you really want to pad your resume with credentials, your advisor can tell you how to apply to the appropriate PDS(s) that are a part of your certificate or degree. You can learn more about each PDS by visiting this website:

<http://www.siue.edu/education/edld/it/it-tech-grad-pds.shtml>

Either you have selected, or you soon will need to select a specific certificate or emphasis within the M.S.Ed. Each credential is summarized below. The purpose of these summaries is to help you select, or affirm your selection of, an appropriate credential.

**CERTIFICATES.** The IT program offers two post-baccalaureate certificates of advanced graduate studies. Each certificate consists of six classes (i.e., 18 credit-hours) and can be easily completed in three semesters (one academic year).

- *Classroom Technologies:* This certificate offers both p-12 school personnel and adult educators an opportunity to learn cutting-edge educational software and lesson design approaches that can be integrated into classrooms. Through completing this certificate, you will gain knowledge and skill in successfully integrating computers, other digital tools, and software into their classroom. The Classroom Technologies Certificate is a combination of two PDSs—one in Emerging Technologies and the other in Teaching with Technology. See this website for more information: [www.siue.edu/education/edld/it/it-tech-grad-cct.shtml](http://www.siue.edu/education/edld/it/it-tech-grad-cct.shtml)
- *Web-Based Learning:* This certificate offers you an opportunity to gain expertise in the areas of designing and developing web-based learning environments within corporations, non-profit organizations, healthcare, higher education, and K-12 education. The coursework for this certificate is a combination of two PDSs—one in Instructional Design and the other in Online Pedagogy. Furthermore, the coursework comprises half of the coursework for the M.S.Ed. in IT with an emphasis in Distance Education. See this website for more information: [www.siue.edu/education/edld/it/it-tech-grad-cwbl.shtml](http://www.siue.edu/education/edld/it/it-tech-grad-cwbl.shtml)

**M.S.ED. AREAS OF EMPHASIS.** The M.S.Ed. degree with a major in IT is thirteen classes (i.e., 36 credit-hours). Most past students have completed the M.S.Ed. in about three years; faster paths through the program exist, though, as you will learn later in this chapter. Within the M.S.Ed., there are three areas of emphasis, each of which prepares you for a different career paths within the field of IT. The coursework within each emphasis varies considerably. Each emphasis area is summarized below.

- *Distance Education:* This emphasis focuses on the tools and techniques for designing, producing, and facilitating online courses. This emphasis area will be useful to teachers, adult educators, college faculty members, and corporate training personnel who are interested in the potential of online classrooms to expand learning opportunities for students and employees. While pursuing the Distance Education emphasis, you simultaneously can earn the certificate in Web-Based Learning. Note that you must apply separately for this certificate.
- *Educational Technologies:* This emphasis enables teachers and other school personnel to plan, implement, and evaluate technology-based instruction and learning activities in P-12 and adult education settings. This emphasis places a particular focus on the emerging technologies that can give classroom teachers a cutting-edge advantage in promoting learning.

- *Instructional Design & Performance Improvement*: This emphasis is designed for those who want to be instructional designers, performance improvement specialists, and learning consultants. Many graduates from this emphasis work in non-profit organizations, corporations, healthcare organizations, and within higher education.

### ***COURSES WITHIN THE IT PROGRAM***

During the fall and spring semester, most of your courses will be sixteen weeks long, though some might be eight weeks long; during the summer, three-week, five-week, and ten-week courses are common. All of your IT courses will be 100% online. Online courses are designated in each semester's "Schedule of Classes" as section 701, 702, and so forth.

Online courses at SIUE are almost completely asynchronous. This means that you can work on the course at any time of the day or night. As long as you are submitting work by the required due dates, you are meeting your obligations. Sometimes, IT professors will hold synchronous—real-time—meetings using Zoom, which is the university's official conferencing tool, much like Skype or Google Hangouts. You are encouraged to attend those real-time meetings, though your professors understand that other obligations might make it impossible for you to attend.

Most students complete their IT credential completely online and never take a face-to-face course. If you are working toward the M.S.Ed., then you might have the option to take a traditional, face-to-face course within your EPFR courses. (EPFR courses are defined and explained in the next section of this chapter.) Within the schedule of classes, you can identify face-to-face courses because they will have section numbers of 001, 002, and so forth. Typically, in the fall and spring semesters, these courses meet once a week in the evening. In the summer, the schedule for face-to-face courses might vary. So, if you decide to take a face-to-face course, carefully pay attention to when the course meets to ensure that you can be on campus.

***EPFR COURSES.*** Students within the Master's degree program must take multiple courses within the area of Educational Psychology, Foundations, and Research (EPFR). Depending on your emphasis within the M.S.Ed., you will take either two or three EPFR courses.

Consider that many of the key EPFR courses are offered multiple times per year. (There are a few exceptions.) This frequency of offerings is important when you consider that most IT courses are offered only once per year. Your advisor, then, will usually strongly urge you to take an IT course over an EPFR course, since IT courses are sometimes offered less frequently.

Conversely, though, if you are particularly interested in working with college students, then you might be interested in taking College Student Learning and Development (EPFR514) as your Educational Psychology course and Diversity in Higher Education (EPFR522) as your analysis of educational issues course. These courses are sometimes offered less than once a year, as are other EPFR courses that might serve you well. Sometimes these EPFR courses are offered in traditional formats; other times, they are offered online.

The point in this entire section on EPFR courses is to make it clear that letting your advisor know of your interests and goals within the program can help your advisor guide you in selecting meaningful courses. Furthermore, because your advisor knows longer-term plans for what courses are offered in any given semester, you should follow your advisor's counsel on when you should best take your EPFR courses.

**YEAR ONE DESIGN COURSES.** Because the IT program is a design program, you need to get oriented to both design thinking and design techniques as early in the program as possible. Three courses can help you do that. This section discusses those courses.

First, Major Concepts of Instructional Technology (IT500) essentially serves as an introduction to graduate studies within the M.S.Ed. program. One of the goals of that course, for instance, is to orient you toward a thinking process that will serve you well as a student within the IT program and as a designer beyond this program. If you have been admitted to the M.S.Ed. program, you will find that your advisor will be very insistent that you take IT500 at your first opportunity.

If you have been admitted to one of our certificate programs, then IT500 is not a required course for you. However, if you are enrolled in the Distance Education Certificate and are considering completing the degree after you complete your certificate, then you should consider taking IT500 during your first year in the program, even though it doesn't contribute toward the certificate.

Second, you should be aware of the primary design courses in the program. Computers in Education (IT481) is the required design course for those of you working on the certificate in Classroom Technologies or the M.S.Ed. in IT with an emphasis in Educational Technologies. IT481 focuses on designing lessons that integrate computers and other tools, whether in k-12 or adult education settings. Instructional Systems Design (IT510) is required for those of you working on the certificate in Web-Based Learning or the M.S.Ed. with emphasis in either Distance Education or Instructional Design and Performance Improvement. IT510 focuses on a systematic process for creating instruction or other training interventions.

The reason that it's important for you to be keenly aware of IT481 and IT510 is because the design approach that you learn in these courses will be essential to you in later courses. Past students have assured us that these courses need to be taken early in the program as a foundation for later courses. To provide one example, the approach to design that you learn in IT481 or IT510 might be key toward your ability to produce a strong design studio project in IT596, IT597, or IT598.

**DESIGN STUDIOS.** SIUE's Design Studio courses (IT596, IT597, and IT598) are requirements for those who are working toward the M.S.Ed. Certificate students do not take design studio courses.

The studio model is based on the view that people learn best when they are engaged in design activities. Studios are used successfully in many fields to promote design and production processes that are both creative and technically sound. For instance, Pixar Films is famous for its

use of studio approaches for developing their animations. Within universities, design studios have been used in fields like architecture, art, music, dance, and creative writing. Studios are highly collaborative and socially supportive in nature, requiring interaction with other studio participants, professors, and possibly external clients. Within studios, ideas and products are constantly shared, critiqued, and revised.

Within SIUE's IT Program, the studio exists virtually as a "place" to be creative about the design of instruction and learning environments. Design Studio activities might include multimedia project development, game design and development, or the creation of other products and environments. Regardless of the specific project, you will be expected to work on your juried portfolio, reflect on your own design processes, critique the work of others in professional ways, and demonstrate your skills and competencies in using media and digital tools.

### ***COURSE SELECTION PROCESS***

Consulting your advisor is essential in selecting appropriate courses each semester. Thus, this section of the chapter addresses advising meetings for each registration period. Also, though, there are some resources that can help you consider which courses you ought to take in any given semester. Thus, this section of the chapter also addresses those resources.

#### ***ADVISING MEETINGS FOR EACH REGISTRATION PERIOD***

Later in this chapter, you will learn about some resources that can help you select appropriate courses each semester. Those resources do not, however, replace collaboration with your advisor when selecting courses. Faculty in the IT Program view collaboration with your advisor to be essential. Why? Several reasons:

The first reason is that we have learned over the years that some courses overwhelm students and needlessly frustrate them, if that student doesn't have the necessary background for the course. Your advisor can help you make sure that you are "ready" for a specific course during a specific semester.

The second reason is that sometimes your advisor has particular information about unique circumstances for an upcoming semester. For instance, sometimes course substitutions are possible when, say, special topics courses are being offered.

There are two advising periods each academic year. Advising for each year's spring semester typically begins in October and continues until spring courses begin in January. Advising for each year's summer and fall semesters begins in March and continues until each of those semester's courses begins.

Typically, near the start of each advising period, you will receive an email from the IT Graduate Program Director, your advisor, or both. These emails will prompt you to contact your advisor to complete the advising process for the next registration period. Get in the habit of making an appointment with your advisor as early as possible during these advising periods. Courses

sometimes fill up quickly, and you should give yourself the best opportunity for taking the course that you most need. Conversely, sometimes a course might seem radically under-enrolled, and thus it is cancelled. We have experienced cases of courses being cancelled only to find out that students needed those courses. Make no mistake: Your procrastination at getting advised and registered can delay your graduation.

Likely, you will need to be prepared to share the following information with your advisor during each advising session:

- What credential are you working on? If the full Master's degree, then what area of emphasis are you in?
- If you are working on a full degree, what courses have you already successfully completed?
- What progress are you making on your jury portfolio?
- How many courses do you want to take this next semester (or semesters, if about both summer and fall)?

Your advisor might have a lot of this information on file. But, if you have it easily available, then communication will be clearer; and you can get registered for courses more efficiently. Please remember, you are only dealing with the advising of one student—yourself. Your advisor, however, is dealing with approximately twenty-five advisees. So, being prepared by having the information above can help move communication along.

Once you and your advisor have communicated and decided on the courses that are best for you in the upcoming semester(s), your advisor will remove the “hold” on your registration privileges so that you can register. Please don't procrastinate registering after your meeting with your advisor.

### ***RESOURCES TO HELP WITH COURSE SELECTION***

Working with your advisor is essential. The following resources that are discussed are not meant to help you bypass discussions with your advisor. Rather, they are meant to help you best prepare for course-selection discussions with your advisor.

The first resource is the Instructional Technology page within the *Graduate Catalog*. The *Graduate Catalog* serves as your official contract with SIUE for completion of your credential—whether a course sequence, certificate, or Master's degree. You can find that page here: <http://www.siue.edu/academics/degrees-and-programs/graduate/instructional-technology/>

Second, IT regularly publishes a “Tentative Course Schedule” of what's planned to be offered in specific semesters. That tentative course schedule is published inside the Instructional Technology Learning Community (ITLC) in Blackboard. (You read about the ITLC in the previous chapter.) This tentative course schedule can also be found as a link from the Department of Educational Leadership's “Student Resources” page: <http://www.siue.edu/education/edld/resource/index.shtml>

Third, at the end of this chapter, you can find a page of “Program Planning Tables” for the two certificates and then three separate pages of tables for each of the three emphases within the M.S.Ed. These tables are consistent with the *Graduate Catalog*. Unlike the *Graduate Catalog*, however, the planning sheets break down the courses into years and semesters based upon the current “Tentative Course Schedule.” (That schedule can change, however, so if you and your advisor simply agree that you are following one of the tables, you still should check with your advisor each registration period to make sure these tables are up to date.)

Notice that for each emphasis within the M.S.Ed., two tables are included—one showing a recommended path through the program and the other showing an accelerated path. Each table includes the number of maximum and minimum credit hours each semester that you would have to take to complete that particular path through the program.

Former students in the IT program have suggested that the recommended path is ideal and that you only should attempt the accelerated path if you have minimal responsibilities beyond being a student in this program. In fact, many students who are working full time and have families find even a slower path than what’s recommended in the tables to be useful.

Furthermore, some students might deviate from what’s shown in the table because they want to only complete a certificate or PDS as a first step in their graduate-school journey. That, at times, can be appropriate and might mean not taking, for instance, “Major Principles of Instructional Technology” (IT500) in your first year. However, once you are accepted into the M.S.Ed., then your advisor will be insistent that you take IT500 at your first opportunity.

As a final point about the tables, course numbers are used in the tables, where appropriate. But, in some cases, you can choose an exact course that fits a category. To give one example, those of you working on the M.S.Ed. in IT with an emphasis in Educational Technologies can select from more than one “Educational Research” course. In these cases where you have choices, exact course numbers are not used in the tables; rather, category names of courses are used in the tables.

The larger point about the tables is this: The tables might be useful, but pacing through the program is something that you should discuss with your advisor. Consider the tables in this handbook as possibilities for your pacing through the program, not requirements. You can use the tables as a starting point for discussion with your advisor.

## ***CERTIFICATE PROGRAM PLANNING TABLES***

This page contains a table for each of the two certificates offered by Instructional Technology. As you can see, each certificate can be completed in one academic year.

### **CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGIES CERTIFICATE**

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT481 IT550*	IT560	IT561 IT562 IT563

\*IT481 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for IT550.

### **WEB-BASED LEARNING CERTIFICATE**

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT505 IT510	IT486	IT567 IT568 IT569

***DISTANCE EDUCATION EMPHASIS OF M.S.ED.: PROGRAM PLANNING TABLES***

**RECOMMENDED PATH**

(Fall/spring Hours Maximum: 6, Minimum 3; Summer Hours: 9 then 3)

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT505 IT510	IT486 IT500	IT567 IT568 IT569
<i>Year 2:</i>	Analysis of Ed Issues IT596	IT430 IT597	Educational Psychology
<i>Year 3:</i>	IT598		

**ACCELERATED PATH**

(Fall/spring Hours Maximum: 8, Minimum 6; Summer Hours 9)

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT505 IT510	IT486 IT500 IT596	IT567 IT568 IT569
<i>Year 2:</i>	Educational Psychology Analysis of Ed Issues IT597	IT430 IT598	

***EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES EMPHASIS OF M.S.ED.: PROGRAM PLANNING  
TABLES***

**RECOMMENDED PATH**

(Fall/spring Hours Maximum: 6, Minimum 3; Summer Hours: 3)

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT481 IT550*	IT560 IT500	Educational Psychology
<i>Year 2:</i>	Educational Research IT596	IT430 IT486	Distance Ed Course
<i>Year 3:</i>	Analysis of Ed Issues IT597	IT598	

\*IT481 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for IT550.

**ACCELERATED PATH**

(Fall/spring Hours Maximum: 9, Minimum 6; Summer Hours 3)

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT481 IT550*	IT560 IT500 IT596	Educational Psychology
<i>Year 2:</i>	Educational Research Analysis of Ed Issues IT597	IT430 IT486 IT598	Distance Ed Course

\*IT481 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for IT550.

***INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT EMPHASIS OF  
M.S.ED.: PROGRAM PLANNING TABLES***

**RECOMMENDED PATH**

(Fall/spring Hours Maximum: 6, Minimum 3; Summer Hours: 3)

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT505 IT510	IT486 IT500	Educational Psychology
<i>Year 2:</i>	IT530 IT596	IT430 IT520	Distance Ed Course
<i>Year 3:</i>	Analysis of Ed Issues IT597	IT598	

**ACCELERATED PATH**

(Fall/spring Hours Maximum: 9, Minimum 6; Summer Hours 3)

	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Summer</i>
<i>Year 1:</i>	IT505 IT510	IT486 IT500 IT596	Educational Psychology
<i>Year 2:</i>	Analysis of Ed Issues IT530 IT597	IT430 IT520 IT598	Distance Ed Course

## ***CHAPTER 3: HOW SHOULD YOU APPROACH LEARNING WITHIN THE IT PROGRAM?***

A key aim of the IT program is to avoid a predictable and mundane experience where we all “play school”—an experience where you listen to some lectures, take some tests, get a good grade, and pretend that meaningful learning has occurred.

Instead of aiming you toward that type of humdrum dogma, faculty members in the IT program aim you toward a type of learning that will engage you in ways that lead to meaningful changes in your thinking, ways of doing business, and ways of living. We believe that your experiences within IT can change the way you think and experience the world around you.

For this degree to have such a large impact on you, though, you have to approach your coursework, the jury process, symposium, and other opportunities provided to you in this program with a degree of intention toward meaningful change. If you take an approach of simply trying to earn a grade and get out of this program with the least amount of effort possible, then please don’t be surprised if you aren’t particularly successful in terms of developing the types of knowledge and skills that you will need beyond this program. If, however, you take an approach of aggressively pursuing learning and your own development, then this program—past students have told us—can make a real difference in your life.

The rest of this chapter is divided into practical advice for approaching your own learning within the IT program.

### ***BRING ENTHUSIASM FOR LEARNING***

A comparison of students who have been successful in the IT program with those who haven’t been successful leads to some clear differences:

Students who were not particularly successful were those who seemed to be here for reasons other than “to learn.” Those students wanted to stay mired in their current ways of thinking and the practices that they had already developed. In fact, when asked to go beyond what they currently thought and could do, these unsuccessful students often responded with resentment and a sense of confusion. These unsuccessful students seemed to be here only for superficial reasons—to earn a piece of paper that would allow them to move up the pay scale. They seemed to ask very narrow questions about their experiences within the program—“What do I have to do to get an ‘A’?” And, they interacted with faculty members in ways that seemed to value only on an easily-achieved end result—“Just tell me what you want.” They saw learning as a matter of quantity—“Should we do three or four paragraphs in this writing?”

The successful students were always in a mode of learning. These students see learning as a matter of quality of thinking, not quantity of results. They constantly are self-examining their own work and engaging in processes to make things better—to maximize the learning situation such that they reap benefits beyond the predictable. Such students seem to revel in confusion,

additional questions, one more revision, putting themselves “out there,” and grappling with the uncomfortable. Those students understand that real learning is neither familiar nor comfortable, either cognitively or emotionally. Students who have been successful in this program have thrown themselves straight into ideas that made them squirm a little. And, they have done so with high levels of enthusiasm, almost embracing the need to be uncomfortable as a prerequisite for learning and growth.

### ***LEARN MEDIA THROUGH PLAY***

One common question that is asked by prospective students goes something like this: “I’m not sure that I have the background in computers and software that will be necessary in this program. What should I know coming into the program?”

Faculty members in the IT program do assume some basic computer and software knowledge as you enter this program. For instance, you should know how to use word processing software, such as Microsoft Word. We also assume that you have used presentation software, such as PowerPoint or Prezi. It certainly would be helpful if you know basics of spreadsheets, such as Excel. Certainly, we also assume that you can navigate the Internet and know your way around the web, using browsers, such as Explorer or Firefox.

Most importantly, though, when it comes to learning new media so that you can produce and develop software- or hardware-driven creations, you must embrace a willingness to play, try things out, explore, and teach yourself through trial and error. Within this program, you rarely will be exposed to lessons in media production or media development that are step-by-step—now click on this, then click on that, now put a check in the checkbox and click “ok.” Instead, you will learn to develop and produce by playing with media and learning to use it on your own. Inherent to media production and development are elements of trial and error thinking and problem solving. You must embrace the value of exploring and problem solving on your own in order to learn the media that you need to learn.

The learn-media-through-play approach used in this program is purposeful. You will find throughout your career that media is constantly changing. An Instructional Technologist needs to be able to adapt to the change by acquiring new media skills as needed. The process of learning by playing will teach you the media you need to know next; more importantly, though, learning by playing teaches you the valuable skill of “how to learn” a new medium in a just-in-time environment.

### ***NETWORK WITH OTHER GRADUATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS***

A large amount of your work during your graduate program will require you to collaborate with other students in the IT program. The better that you know them, the more productive and successful you are likely to be as a student in the IT program.

Networking with others is important for another reason: Your classmates today may be the director of training and development at a large corporation who will be hiring twenty instructional designers in the next five years. Another classmate might one day be a principal at a well-respected high school. Your potential in the job market after you finish your degree may depend on your willingness to network now.

### ***GET INVOLVED IN RESEARCH AND PROJECTS***

At times, some graduate students within the IT program have formed research and writing groups. Often, the professors in the IT program are looking for students to help with research or to help with the design and development of products for special projects. Getting involved in research and volunteering to help on projects has benefits. First, you will be enhancing your own resume, not to mention your own learning opportunities. Second, you will be developing relationships with professors and classmates that can further your networking opportunities. Consider, for example, that a strong relationship with a professor through research and projects will allow that professor to write specific letters of recommendation for you.

Getting involved in research and projects is particularly important for those of you who have aspirations to earn a doctorate after you finish your Master's degree. But, even for those who don't plan on earning a doctorate, showing participation in research and projects can enhance your resume and provide you with real-world projects to share with potential employers.

### ***KEEP AN IDEA JOURNAL***

IT is a broad field that encompasses many ideas and disciplines, like psychology, communication, education, computer science, anthropology, sociology, human resource, management, and others. Because IT is so broad, you must find a means for personalizing it. One way to personalize it is to keep an "idea journal" of thoughts, questions, and visions related to your beliefs and understanding of the field, your courses, and your experiences.

Your journal might include ideas that can help you develop your jury portfolio and prepare for the job market. To this end, perhaps it includes "key points" that you want to remember to include in your jury or express in job interviews. Perhaps it includes sketches, storyboards, rough drafts of ideas, and so forth.

By committing ideas and experiences to writing, you are allowing the ideas to ebb, flow, and evolve in your imagination. An idea journal can provide a forum for you to imagine things that don't exist and to evaluate whether or not they should exist. This type of active approach to learning is far more useful than a generic view of "I will have to remember that."

Of course, in many of your courses, you will be required to do the types of writing that might fit within your idea journal. But, even when you aren't required to do so, it can be useful to document your thinking and ideas in writing.

## ***AIM TOWARD THE PROGRAM GOALS***

In the spring of 2014, the IT program faculty created a list of program goals that substantively will benefit you: Students in the IT program . . .

- employ appropriate techniques and processes throughout design project lifecycles.
- demonstrate understanding and application of theories and/or concepts that inform design practices.
- envision the impact of an M.S. Ed. (or advanced graduate certificate) in Instructional Technology on your future.
- express a sense of self-awareness.

In what follows, each of these program goals is briefly discussed so that you will have some insights into how you must approach learning within this program. Certainly, within your coursework, you should get more detailed understanding of each goal.

### ***EMPLOY APPROPRIATE TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES THROUGHOUT DESIGN PROJECT LIFECYCLES***

Foremost, the IT program at SIUE is a “design program.” We use the term “design” fluidly, as different areas of emphasis within our program might define the term “design” in different ways. *Design has occurred any time that you have created processes or products that could be implemented with your learners and/or users.* Design could result in better *environments*, such as safer and more efficient workplaces and schools; *instruction*, such as a social studies lesson plan for a fifth grade classroom; or *media*, such as computer-based animations that teach museum patrons about a scientific process. Two points about design are particularly important.

First, design is used to describe a full lifecycle of a project—from the initiation of the project through its submission. Sometimes the lifecycle of a design project can be described using broad acronyms, such as ADDIE (analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate) or EDPER (envision, design, produce, evaluate, and reflect). Other times, the life-cycle might be organized using a specific design model. Particularly important within most design cycles or models is the idea of evaluation. At the appropriate point within a project’s life cycle, you must make judgments about your own designs and the designs of others.

Second, design requires a specific way of thinking; this way of thinking is sometimes described as “design thinking” in this program. Whatever the approach to design within a specific course, you must aim to understand that design is not a step-by-step recipe or linear algorithm. Instead, design is non-linear and iterative. You have to understand how every part of the life-cycle of a project relates to every other part of the life cycle. Among other things, design thinking requires the following:

- Accepting ambiguity as normal and important
- Empathizing with all those concerned in your designs—clients, learners, subject-matter experts
- Avoiding easy answers and obvious solutions so that you can aim for creativity and innovation

## ***UNDERSTAND AND APPLY THEORIES AND CONCEPTS THAT INFORM DESIGN PRACTICES***

It is not enough to understand “how” to design. The “how” merely makes you a technician. Being a technician alone is not indicative of graduate-level work. It is more important to understand “why” you are designing the way that you are designing—understanding the applications of theories and concepts.

This perspective has two implications: First, in each of your design projects, you ought to unceasingly ask, “Why am I designing the way that I’m designing?” If you cannot answer the question “why,” then you are not learning at a graduate-level.

Second, in every course that you take, you ought to realize that you are learning theories and concepts, even when those theories and concepts aren’t being taught directly. That is, sometimes, theories and concepts are in bold and italics within a textbook or article. Those theories or concepts are defined for you (often through pages and pages of reading). There is clear emphasis on the importance of that theory or concept and you and your classmates will learn why those theories should shape your design.

Other times, though, the theories and concepts that become most important and meaningful to you are not even “taught” in the course; rather, they are constructed and created by you, as a student designer. That which resonates with you may not be bolded words in a textbook but concepts and theories that come from your own unique personality, values, beliefs, philosophies, and experiences within a course. They come not from readings but from your own “take” on the design experience. Be open, then, to the possibility that the most important design concepts and theories that you should apply are created by you.

## ***ENVISION THE IMPACT OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY CREDENTIAL ON YOUR FUTURE***

To learn well, you must simultaneously have one foot in the present and one foot in the future. People who are consummate learners are always imagining and envisioning their future. They have vision for the path that they are taking and what they need to be doing now to prepare themselves to reach the end of the path.

One of the reasons that you should be here earning a credential in IT is to improve your future life. To learn well in the IT program, then, you constantly should ask a set of questions about the impact of the IT program and your courses on the future that you envision for yourself:

- How will this content/experience within the IT program serve me well in my future?
- To what extent will I ever use this content from the IT program again? If I envision myself using it a lot, then why? If I don’t envision myself ever using it again, then why now?
- How can I shape my current experiences within the IT program so that those experiences become important professional development in my future?

### *EXPRESS A SENSE OF SELF-AWARENESS*

Reflection, metacognition, introspection, self-examination, taking a personal inventory—these may sound like ideas that are more indicative of personal therapy than of formal education. But, good designers are aware of themselves. They constantly think about their own strengths, weaknesses, areas in which they can improve their thinking, and so forth. Good designers realize that an understanding of themselves and “who they are” is just as important—if not more important—than an understanding of the techniques of instructional design, lesson planning, and so forth. Good Instructional Technologists recognize that their work is more than intellectual; they connect with their work aesthetically, emotionally, and perhaps even spiritually. The most successful Instructional Technologists integrate the ideas of the field into their lives; they see it as a personal endeavor and way of living. Thus, to learn in this program, you must be able to express a sense of self-awareness.

### *HAVE A GROWTH MIND SET AND BE OPEN*

This chapter has thrown a lot of ideas at you. This final point serves somewhat as a way of encapsulating all of the previous points. How do we want you to approach learning in this program? We want you to aim toward growth and openness. Most research and books on creativity and innovation discuss the ideas of the growth mind set and openness in one way or another. Obviously, we couldn’t begin to summarize all of that research and writing here.

What we can tell you is that there are things that a person with a growth mindset and a sense of openness shies away from and things that they embrace. As you approach learning in this program, we hope you will consider those things:

<b>Shy Away From</b>	<b>Embrace</b>
Dogma	Innovation
Status quo	Stretching beyond
“the same ole, same ole”	New
Feeling entitled	Being engaged
Intellectual comfort	Intellectual curiosity
Safety	Risk taking
Self-protection	Vulnerability
Functionality	Creativity
Product focus	Process focus
Satisfied with first answers	Asking additional questions
Efficient problem solving	Playful problem finding
Practicality of results	Possibility of imagination
Technical achievement	Artisanship
“Getting through this”	Adding value

It is true that some things on the “shy away from” list must be accepted to some small extent. Certainly, your work in this program should have some sense of functionality to it, and you will

be asked to create “products.” But, having a growth mind set and being open requires you to push yourself beyond the “bottom line” result. If some of these things that we ask you to embrace sound too whimsical, know that being an Instructional Technologist requires some whimsy. If you can’t take the time to embrace open exploration and play within graduate school, then where can you?

## ***CHAPTER 4: WHAT ARE JURIES AND THE SYMPOSIUM? HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR THEM?***

For those who are pursuing the M.S.Ed. in IT, you will participate in a jury process and a symposium presentation. This chapter provides you with details about the jury process and the symposium.

### ***JURIES***

All students who are pursuing the M.S.Ed. in IT must complete the jury process. This section begins with an explanation of juries. Then, this section lays out the jury process within the IT Program. Finally, this section explains the content of your jury portfolio.

#### ***WHAT ARE JURIES?***

The idea of academic juries is one that has a long history and rich tradition in some academic disciplines. This tradition is particularly strong within disciplines that are associated with “the sciences of the artificial”—those disciplines where students are learning to design, build, construct, and create. For instance, juries are common within schools of architecture and departments of music and art. Within these disciplines—and many others—juries commonly are a requirement for program completion.

Within juries in other disciplines, a student works with a faculty mentor throughout a semester or across the span of the program of studies. Sometimes, this mentor works with the student in private lessons; other times, mentorship comes within courses, through studio experiences, field experiences, or even through informal relationships between the student and a faculty member. The mentorship serves to equip the student to submit work to a broader jury of faculty. Depending on the discipline and context, this submission of work might occur as a performance, showcase, exhibition, portfolio, and so forth. The jury provides expert feedback on the student’s work and judges the work, which in turn prepares the student for future submissions or performances.

The IT faculty members have adopted and adapted a conceptual structure of “juries” for the M.S.Ed. program by taking what we consider to be “the best” aspects of juries in other disciplines. Within IT, you will experience a jury process. The defining characteristics of the jury process include the following:

- Juries are a *process* that begin with your first course in the program and end with completion of a portfolio in the semester that you graduate.
- Students must expressively *communicate in writing* the extent to which they have met program goals throughout their coursework.
- A mentor/protégé relationship with faculty is an essential part of an IT student’s education. Your advisor will serve as a teacher, counselor, and critic toward your success.
- Feedback and revision necessary to help students broaden their understanding of their experiences within the IT program.
- Judgment is useful for helping students understand their own efforts in a meaningful way.

## ***YOUR JURY PORTFOLIO***

The jury process is not merely the submission of the portfolio; yet, everything within the process is leading to the portfolio. Therefore, the portfolio is discussed here prior to a more thorough explanation of the process.

Most typically, the jury portfolio is a website, often housed on each student's 10 megs of university-provided web space. If that's not enough space, though, Instructional Technology has a sandbox server that might be particularly useful if some of your electronic products are too large for your SIUE web space. (Your advisor can give you more information about how to access the Instructional Technology server.)

But, your portfolio doesn't have to be a website at all. For instance, it might be a blog. Or, it might be a self-contained multimedia package saved on a flash drive or CD. Perhaps, your portfolio is a combination of self-contained media, a website, and web 2.0 technologies, such as YouTube videos. Regardless of the media that you use, your portfolio must present content clearly and cogently to your audience.

The audience for your portfolio is the faculty members of the IT program, though a secondary audience for your portfolio might be other graduate students in the IT program. All of the content within your portfolio serves as an argument from you to the faculty members of the IT program that you have met IT program goals, which were discussed in detail earlier in this handbook but are listed again here for convenience. Students in the IT program . . .

- employ appropriate techniques and processes throughout design project lifecycles.
- demonstrate understanding and application of theories and/or concepts that inform design practices.
- envision the impact of an M.S. Ed. in Instructional Technology on the future.
- express a sense of self-awareness.

How do you build this argument that you have achieved these goals? One resource that will help you is the "jury guide." The jury guide is located within the Instructional Technology Learning Community (ITLC) under the link called "IT Program Resources." The jury guide lists jury prompts designed to help you achieve each program goal. The jury guide also has criteria for assessing various parts of your portfolio.

Your jury portfolio will contain the following:

***NARRATIVES.*** The heart of your portfolio will be your narratives. The narratives are defenses, discussions, explanations, and reflections that serve as an argument from you to the faculty members in the IT program. Namely, you are arguing that you have demonstrated proficiency in meeting the program goals. Your narratives should include links to your supporting artifacts, and your narratives should refer specifically and directly to those artifacts in ways that demonstrate how the artifact has helped you achieve (or demonstrate your achievement of ) a program goal. It is this specificity and directness that makes narratives the most effective.

**SUPPORTING ARTIFACTS.** To support the arguments that you make within your narrative, you will include a collection of carefully-selected artifacts from your various courses. The artifacts serve the purpose of providing evidence and support for the claims that you make within your narratives. Artifacts can come in many forms, including (but not limited to) work that you've produced within a course, email exchanges with classmates or professors, and discussion board conversations in which you participated. While artifacts are important, they serve only as support for your narratives. You should not assume that simply including an artifact is sufficient for helping your audience understand the degree to which you've met a goal. Artifacts cannot replace narratives; they supplement and support narratives. In fact, some faculty members never even open your artifacts; they just read your narratives.

### ***JURY PROCESS***

The term “jury” within the IT Program at SIUE really is short-hand for the entire jury process. Do not think of your jury in terms of only arriving at the final submission of your portfolio. For this experience to be a meaningful learning experience, you must immerse yourself in a meaningful process that begins with your first course and continues through the submission of your portfolio. Every IT course in this program should contribute to your knowledge that ultimately is demonstrated within your portfolio.

No explanation of the jury process could be fully complete, as each of you have responsibilities to craft the process. Still, what follows is a broad overview of how the jury process should unfold.

**DURING YEAR ONE COURSEWORK.** While you are completing your first few courses, you should begin planning your jury portfolio. One thing that will help you plan that portfolio is the Major Principles of Instructional Technology course (IT500) that you read about earlier in this handbook. Within that course, you will learn about juries and have plenty of opportunities to ask questions. For instance, in that course, you will read this handbook and discuss it. Furthermore, you will read the “jury guide” which can be found in the ITLC.

Beyond IT500, you will find that each of your IT courses has assignments that can be directly relevant to your jury portfolio. Think about the logical connection between your courses and juries: *If* the purpose of your jury portfolio is to help you express the extent to which you have met program goals and *if* all of your IT courses are aligned with the program goals, *then* your coursework should be instrumental toward helping you think about appropriate content for your jury portfolio?

Sometimes, faculty member will even be direct enough to call some course assignments “jury assignments.” Regardless of how the assignments are labeled, you should be coming out of each and every IT course with content that could become a part of a jury narrative. Within your year one courses, then, you should be thinking about juries.

But these course assignments, by themselves, are not enough. You have to show initiative and be proactive in compiling items for your portfolio throughout your coursework. Some students find it helpful to create a folder on their own computer called something like “Ideas for Jury

Portfolio.” (Back up that folder regularly and multiple times. Computers die.) Getting organized early in your coursework will allow you to be more efficient in creating your portfolio.

Throughout your first year, as you begin writing your narratives and producing your portfolio, you should consult with your advisor regularly. Ask questions of your advisor when you hit stumbling blocks, need clarification, or want advice. Initiate conversations with your advisor when you want to just pitch an idea for your jury and get feedback. Phone calls, office visits, Skype (or other synchronous tool) meetings are common, and you should feel free to request such a meeting from your advisor.

Sometimes, a meeting is not enough of an opportunity for you to get the type of feedback that you need. You can rightly expect that your advisor will be willing to review drafts of narratives and provide you with more thorough feedback, advice, guidance, and additional ideas. By policy, “turn-around time” for feedback from your advisor on narratives is two weeks during the fall and spring semester—not including week-long breaks, such as Spring Break and Thanksgiving—or three weeks of a summer semester, as some faculty members are not under contract with the university during parts of the summer. Getting your advisor’s input during your first year of coursework is particularly important. As you will see later in this chapter, your advisor has to approve your portfolio before it is forwarded to other faculty members. Thus, getting your advisor’s input early in the process is important.

***DURING YEAR TWO COURSEWORK.*** Each of your second year courses should also have direct connections to the program goals, and thus to juries. In fact, some of your courses will provide you with time for narrative writing. For instance, in Design Studio II (IT597) and in Design Studio III (i.e., Final Project, IT598) some of your time will be devoted to jury writing; within Computer-Based Publishing (IT430), you will find a heavy writing component, an abiding piece of which gives you time to work on your jury narratives.

As with your jury process in year one, though, you can’t only depend on time in courses for narrative writing and portfolio production. For instance, as you work with your advisor, you will receive feedback. You are expected to implement that feedback. Indeed, by the time you get to your fourth semester of coursework, you should be building your portfolio fairly aggressively and coordinating with your advisor timelines for feedback and revision.

Certainly, in year two of your coursework, you’ll get even more feedback from your advisor than you did in year one. You must view your advisor as a valuable mentor throughout the process. Regularly initiate conversations with your advisor. Send drafts to your advisor for feedback—being mindful of appropriate turn-around times. Let your advisor teach you, counsel you, and—yes—criticize your efforts. Trust your advisor to guide you toward a high-quality jury portfolio.

During this year two process, your advisor has the right—and, indeed, the responsibility—to ask you to revise as many times as necessary *before* your portfolio is forwarded to the jury of your advisory committee. If your advisor does not believe that you have demonstrated proficiency in each goal, then she/he would be remiss to allow you to send your portfolio forward to your committee. Because of this process, you should pace yourself such that before mid-term of the semester that you intend to graduate, your advisor has already seen at least one draft of each

narrative. This will help you gauge the extent to which it's realistic for you to graduate in the semester that you hoped to graduate.

Once your advisor has judged your achievement on each program goal as "proficient" or better, she/he will forward your portfolio to the second and third members of your advisory committee; these committee members will serve as additional jurors for your portfolio. While the committee's role at this point is to provide summary judgment of your portfolio, your committee will try to offer useful feedback to you, if they do not believe that your portfolio is currently up to standards. That is, if a faculty juror does not rate you as at least "proficient" on a goal, that faculty juror will provide you with feedback that will guide you in revising.

The jury process is complete when, on average, your advisory committee agrees that you have met a standard of proficient for each program goal. If the advisory committee feels that you have not met that standard, then you will be asked to revise. Successful submission of your portfolio is a prerequisite to having discussions with your advisor about your symposium presentation.

### ***SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION***

Once each semester—fall, spring and summer—the IT program has a virtual symposium. Presenters at the symposium are those students who have finished all coursework and successfully completed the jury process. That is, the presenters are those who are about to graduate from the IT program. The symposium is conducted using Zoom—SIUE's official synchronous communication tool, kind of like Google Hangouts.

The symposium is held during final exam week of the spring and fall semesters. During the summer, symposium typically occurs during the last week of classes. The exact date each semester is announced through the ITLC and your SIUE email. All IT majors are expected to attend the symposium; it is an important learning experience not only for the presenters but also for all IT students who serve as participants during symposium.

The exact format of the symposium is determined each semester by IT faculty members. The format varies and could consist of the soon-to-be graduates participating in a round-table discussion about their experiences in the program. In other cases, the graduates might make a formal presentation of a project (i.e., your Design Studio III project) or offer an informal talk in the tradition of a TEDTalk or a Pecha Kucha Presentation.

In all cases, the symposium is meant to be an interactive event that is facilitated by program faculty. Often protocols are used during the symposium to help guide the presentations, discussions, and other activity toward a productive learning experience.

#### ***WHAT PARTICIPANTS NEED TO KNOW?***

If you are a participant who comes to the symposium, then know that passively listening to the presenters is not enough; you must participate and engage during the symposium. For instance, as a participant, you might be called upon to offer the presenters feedback on their ideas. You

also might be invited to make connections between the presentations and your own experiences in the IT program.

In short, you should bring the same types of positive energy and enthusiasm to the symposium that you bring to your coursework. The symposium is designed to be useful to you as a participant just as much as it is to be useful to the graduating students who are presenting.

### ***WHAT DO PRESENTERS NEED TO KNOW?***

Presenting at the symposium is a prerequisite for degree completion. Because symposium is only held once a semester, you need to either arrange your schedule such that you can attend or prepare to wait an additional semester to graduate. Because the date of symposium for each semester is announced very early in that semester, you will have plenty of time to arrange your schedule.

You should not worry about the symposium until you get your jury portfolio submitted. After you submit, be on the lookout for instructions and criteria to guide your symposium presentation. Often, the graduate program director will be the one to inform you of the format of symposium. Sometimes, it might be your advisor who informs you. Certainly, if you've received no information about the symposium two weeks prior to the scheduled date, then you ought to ask your advisor for information.

Usually, the format of the symposium requires you to prepare in advance. For instance, often, you will prepare a presentation. For most formats, you will receive criteria upon which the faculty members will judge your work during the symposium. Pay close attention to the criteria as you prepare. One criterion for presentations might be a time limit; while it may seem minor, you not abiding by the time limit often is interpreted as a lack of preparation on your part.

As you prepare, use your advisor as a resource. Run your ideas for your presentation by your advisor; talk with your advisor about how you think that you are meeting the criteria. You will find that your advisor is interested in helping you make a great presentation.

One question that commonly comes up is whether or not presenters should use visual support (e.g., PowerPoint or Prezi) during their presentation. The answer varies depending on the format of symposium. For instance, if you are asked to make a fifteen minute presentation about a design project, then perhaps PowerPoint can help you stay on task and communication. If, however, you are asked to offer a five-minute informal talk, then PowerPoint might seem too formal. Discuss this option for using PowerPoint or some other visual support with your advisor.

On the evening of your presentation, consider logging into Zoom five to ten minutes before the symposium is scheduled to start. This will give you time to ensure that all of your equipment is working.

The day following the symposium, presenters will receive an email from their advisors. This email will communicate the results of the symposium. If, as a result of the presentation, you have not met the criteria, a follow-up meeting will be held later that week to allow you to further

elaborate. You are obligated either to attend that meeting—face-to-face or virtually—or to know that your graduation might be delayed. The purpose of that meeting would be to either give you a chance to better meet the established symposium criteria.

## ***CHAPTER 5: WHAT FACTORS SHOULD YOU CONSIDER AS YOU MOVE TOWARD THE END OF YOUR MASTER’S DEGREE?***

The purpose of this chapter is to give you a suggested timeline as you think about moving toward graduation. The timeline in this chapter is not perfect and will not fit every situation. Still, pay attention to the spirit of this chapter. That spirit is based on the idea of thinking ahead and communicating often, clearly, and proactively with your advisor. Procrastination and a lack of proactivity can delay your graduation.

### ***NEXT TO LAST SEMESTER***

If you are working only on one of IT’s certificates and not the M.S.Ed., then really your only task in your next-to-last semester is to ensure that you know what courses you have left to take. If, however, you are working on the M.S.Ed., then this section will help you think about a timeline for your jury narratives and portfolio in the semester before your last semester.

#### ***FIRST QUARTER OF THE SEMESTER***

Communicate to your advisor your “hopeful” graduation date and initiate a conversation about how realistic that date may be. As a part of this communication, you should discuss the status of your portfolio with your advisor. Even better, within this time frame, your advisor should read some of your jury work and give you feedback.

#### ***MID-TERM***

Aim to have a draft of each portfolio narrative to your advisor. This won’t be your first draft, as surely you have already done some revising and rethinking. While you are waiting on feedback from your advisor, you can be organizing the artifacts you will use to support your narratives. Furthermore, you can be thinking about your format for your jury portfolio.

Also around mid-term go through all the courses that you’ve already taken and compare them to the program planning tables presented in chapter 2 of this handbook. Make sure you have taken all that you need to take for your degree.

#### ***LAST QUARTER OF THE SEMESTER***

By this time, you likely will have already shown your advisor at least couple of drafts of each of your narratives. This might seem really early to you—after all, you have an entire semester left to go. The reason that we urge you to meet this deadline of having received multiple rounds of feedback by the end of your next-to-last semester is to avoid last-minute problems. Based on your work on your jury portfolio, you likely should be able to estimate how many drafts away from a final draft you might be. Based on your progress, talk with your advisor again about how reasonable it is for you to finish your juries and all coursework by the end of next semester.

## ***PRIOR TO FIRST DAY OF YOUR LAST SEMESTER***

If you and your advisor agree that the end-of-the-semester is a realistic time frame for you to complete all of your coursework and, if you are working on the M.S.Ed., to finish the jury process, then apply for graduation with the Graduate School. For example, if you hope to graduate at the end of the spring semester (May Graduation), you should apply for graduation prior to the first day of spring classes (in January). It is very important that you observe this deadline for graduation applications. This deadline is set by the graduate school, not by Instructional Technology. Graduation applications can be downloaded from this website: <http://www.siu.edu/registrar/forms/graduation.shtml>.

Importantly, if you are working on more than one credential, then you must complete more than one graduation application. Likely, this will affect those of you who are working on the M.S.Ed. in IT with an emphasis in Distance Education. You likely have also applied for the Certificate in Web-Based Learning, since that certificate is built into the M.S.Ed. In this case, you have to apply for graduation for both the M.S.Ed. and the Certificate.

## ***SEMESTER IN WHICH YOU INTEND TO GRADUATE***

### ***FIRST HALF OF THE SEMESTER***

During the first week of classes, communicate with your advisor about the status of your jury portfolio. Establish some “due dates” with your advisor so that you and your advisor will be on the same page with your intended timeline.

Consider that by the end of the first quarter of your semester, you probably want to have what you consider to be absolute final drafts of your narratives to your advisor. By the mid-term of the semester, your jury portfolio should be done. Your advisor might establish an exact due date for your portfolio. Or, your advisor might not. Regardless of your advisor’s approach, you need to be “on top of things” in terms of ensuring that you are on target to submit your portfolio in a timely way.

### ***SECOND HALF OF THE SEMESTER***

Remember, your jury of faculty might take as long as two weeks to read your portfolio—slightly more, if there are any university closures or holidays. Your advisor will tell you when your portfolio has been forwarded to the committee. If your advisor has not sent you the results in two weeks, then follow up.

## ***SYMPOSIUM NIGHT***

You will present. Enjoy this moment; it should be a celebration. See chapter 4 for more information about the symposium presentation.

After your presentation, you should complete the School of Education’s “Graduate Student Evaluation Form.” Your comments and opinions expressed on this form will in no way impact whether or not you graduate. The form can be found at this address.

[https://siue.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9X47IaUH1SSoDWd](https://siue.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9X47IaUH1SSoDWd)

## ***CHAPTER 6: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

Below are numerous questions that faculty members often are asked by students in the IT program. We hope that the answers are useful to you as you move toward the completion of this degree program.

### ***WHAT IS BLACKBOARD?***

Blackboard (bb.siue.edu) is SIUE's learning management system. It is where you go to log into your online courses or your more traditional courses that have online components. Shortly before a semester starts, when you log into Blackboard, you will see the list of courses that you are registered for during that upcoming semester. You also will find in Blackboard the Instructional Technology Learning Community that serves as an online learning community for the entire IT program.

### ***WHAT IS THE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY LEARNING COMMUNITY (ITLC)?***

The Instructional Technology Learning Community (ITLC) is a Blackboard "course" that you will be enrolled in as an Instructional Technology major. The ITLC is not a "course," per se. Rather, it's a place in Blackboard where we can house information that will be useful to you as an IT student. We also use the ITLC as a "meeting place" when necessary. For instance, the IT symposium is held within the ITLC. The ITLC has discussion boards where we hope that IT students can share ideas and opportunities with each other, too.

### ***WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T FINISH ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ON TIME?***

Sometimes it does take longer than expected to finish all of the exit requirements for the program, which include passing the jury process; completing; and being approved to present, during the symposium. If you do not finish all requirements during the semester in which you are enrolled in your final design studio (IT598), then you will receive a grade of "DE," which stands for "deferred." Receiving a "DE" simply means that you are deferring completion until a future semester.

After the semester in which you received the "DE," you do not need to continue signing up for IT courses. Instead, you should sign up for UNIV500 in subsequent semesters. For a nominal fee, UNIV500 keeps you enrolled as a student in the program, which will keep your Internet benefits active and allow your advisor to work with you, even though you are not enrolled in program courses.

You can enroll yourself in UNIV500 each semester or you can complete a Graduate Student Request form and ask that you be automatically enrolled each semester until you graduate. Please note that if you fail to enroll, the university will charge you all fees for UNIV500 between the semester of your last course and the semester in which you graduate.

Once you finish all requirements for your degree, your grade will be changed from a "DE" to a "Satisfactory."

## ***WHAT'S A GRADUATE STUDENT REQUEST FORM? WHERE DO I FIND IT? HOW DO I USE IT?***

The Graduate Student Request Form is a general form that allows you to make official requests. For example, if you exceed the length of time normally allowed for completion of a Master's degree—six years—you can use the Graduate Student Request Form to ask for an extension. As discussed earlier in this student handbook, a Graduate Student Request Form can be used regarding requests to transfer courses into the IT program. Here is a link to the Graduate Student Request Form:

[http://www.siu.edu/registrar/gradstudentrecords/pdf/GR\\_Request\\_Form%20-%202016-04-05.pdf](http://www.siu.edu/registrar/gradstudentrecords/pdf/GR_Request_Form%20-%202016-04-05.pdf)

## ***HOW SHOULD I THINK ABOUT GRADES IN THE IT PROGRAM?***

As implied in chapter 2 of this handbook, grades and learning are two different things; and you, in many ways, are better off aiming for learning and not worrying about grades. However, grades are important in some ways, and you ought to understand what a grade from a faculty member means. The connotations of grades in graduate school is a little bit different than in undergraduate. In undergraduate programs, a “C” sometimes was acceptable. After all, the word we associate with a “C” is “fair.” In graduate school, though, a “C” really is a professor's way of sending you a message that your work is not acceptable within a graduate-level class. A grade of “C” suggests that, in the professor's judgment, you have not achieved at a “good” level within the course. And, for someone who is trying to earn a master's degree or an advanced certificate, work that is “not good” is akin to work that is failing. If you get a “C” in any IT course, then you should consider having an honest conversation with that professor and your advisor about the extent to which this program is an appropriate program for you to earn your advanced credential.

## ***WHAT'S INACTIVE STATUS? WHY AM I INACTIVE? HOW DO I BECOME ACTIVE AGAIN?***

A student who is “inactive” is simply a student who has not enrolled in a course within the past three consecutive semesters—one calendar year. If you have not enrolled in a course for one year, then you must submit a new admission application and the accompanying application fee. Essentially, you are applying to the graduate school again. Once the graduate school considers you “active,” the IT program considers you to be active. You should note that once you become inactive, any documents—like your portfolio—that are saved on the university server are deleted. To avoid this problem, you can remain active by registering for UNIV500, even if you aren't actively taking program courses.

## ***WHAT CREDITS CAN I TRANSFER INTO THE PROGRAM?***

You can transfer into the IT program up to twelve hours of credit. The official guidelines for transferring courses into the program are discussed in the *SIUE Graduate Catalog*. For the sake of convenience, we offer a non-official explanation below. A variety of possible scenarios describe the transfer in of these hours. Consider the following:

- Perhaps you have taken courses from another university that are the equivalent of SIUE IT courses. If those courses were completed within six years prior to your graduation date, you can request that those courses be transferred into our program and substituted for SIUE's version of the course. You can transfer in a maximum of twelve hours of equivalent courses from another university. If these courses, however, counted toward you earning a Master's degree at your previous institution, then you cannot count them

toward our Master's degree, as well. The principle here is you cannot count a single course toward two different Master's degrees.

- Perhaps you took a course at SIUE that is required for your IT degree, but you took it prior to being admitted into the IT program. You will need to get those courses transferred into the program. You can transfer a maximum of twelve hours into the program once you have declared IT as your major.

Regardless of which scenario above describes your situation, you can only transfer into the program a total of twelve hours. Your advisor and the IT graduate program director must approve the courses that are transferred in, so work closely with your advisor on issues related to transfer. Once your advisor and the IT graduate program director approve, your request will be sent to the Graduate School. The Graduate School has the final say in all acceptances of credits.

***IF I AM HAVING A PROBLEM WITH A FACULTY MEMBER OR COURSE, THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO?***

You first should try to address the problem with the faculty member who teaches the course. You should find that all faculty members who teach within the IT program are committed to your success. So, be direct with that faculty member about your concerns and problems. If, however, you cannot speak with that faculty member for one reason or another, then please approach your advisor for a discussion. As we have tried to note throughout this handbook, your advisor is committed to serving as a mentor for you who can help you think through and troubleshoot problems that you are having within this program. In some rare situations, it could be that a discussion with the professor of the course and your advisor is not feasible. The graduate program director for IT also would be happy to discuss. If you've exhausted all options mentioned here, then the Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership is the best person to contact for help.

***CLERY NOTICE***

The SIUE Annual Security and Fire Safety Report is available online at [www.siu.edu/securityreport](http://www.siu.edu/securityreport). The report contains campus safety and security information and crime statistics for the past three calendar years and fire safety policies and fire statistics for the previous three calendar years. This report is published in compliance with Federal law, titled the “Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act” and the Higher Education Opportunity Act also known as the “Campus Fire Safety Right to Know.” For those without computer access, a paper copy of the report may be obtained from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration, Rendleman Hall, Room 2228, 618-650-2536.