

MLIS Graduate Student Exit Survey Summary—2018-2019

*School of Library and Information Studies
University of Alberta*

- by Alvin M. Schrader, Professor Emeritus
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A record number of 82 MLIS students graduated in the two academic convocations fall 2018 and spring 2019; in the previous three academic years, total graduates numbered 61, 70 and 54. Students graduating in 2018-2019 were enrolled in either of the two teaching and learning program streams offered by the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta, on-campus and online. This is the fourth graduating cohort in the online learning stream, which has been available since September 2013.

Graduates in the 2018-2019 convocations were evenly split 1:1 between the two learning streams, a reversal of the 2:1 ratio two years earlier for on-campus enrollment. Taking the two learning streams together, a total of 283 students were registered in 2018-2019 in the various stages of their graduate professional MLIS program (it was 273 the previous year). Two-thirds of these students were in the online stream (188 out of 283), indicating that in future years the ratio of on-campus to online enrollment can be expected to shift towards the latter delivery stream.

Overall, 53 of the 82 students convocating in 2018-2019 participated in the Graduate Exit Survey, for a response rate of 65%, similar to previous years. All but two of the 53 survey participants were in the course-based MLIS program; the other two were in the on-campus, thesis-based MLIS/MA joint degree program in Digital Humanities (for statistical purposes, joint-degree survey participants are included in the on-campus MLIS cohort).

By way of background, the School has been participating since the fall 2015 convocation in the biannual Faculty of Education Graduate Exit Survey, a faculty-wide perceptions survey of all convocating graduate students that is typically conducted over a one-month period around each fall and spring convocation. The broad goals of the survey are to capture the program experiences and satisfaction levels of Faculty of Education graduate students with both their educational programs and student services.

The biannual surveys serve two key educational priorities in the School of Library and Information Studies: continuing international accreditation; and institutional transparency and community engagement. In addition to assisting with the continuing international accreditation of the MLIS degree program under the auspices of the American Library Association's Committee on Accreditation, the survey results also help to guide the School's future planning and directions, inform the School's recruitment and marketing plans, and provide feedback to the larger practitioner community about the School's success and effectiveness.

This report is devoted primarily to the 39 students graduating in the spring 2019 convocation who participated in the survey, accounting for 61% of all 64 convocants; the rate the year before was 67%.

In a nutshell, 88% of the survey participants in the spring 2019 said they would recommend the MLIS program at the University of Alberta to prospective students, a pattern of student endorsement that has remained robust over the past several years (see below). Willingness to recommend is regarded as the key “bottom line” indicator of the School’s program quality and the students’ satisfaction with their overall academic experience.

Other key indicators of students’ educational experiences – overall program satisfaction; quality of instruction; quality of required courses; quality of elective courses; and quality of scholarly experience – showed that graduating students’ ratings were similar or had improved in the spring 2019 survey compared to previous years.

Sincere appreciation to all survey participants for taking the time and thought to inform the School’s work in serve of the public good.

Selected Student Satisfaction Metrics

Graduate Exit Survey of MLIS Program Teaching and Learning Streams Survey Respondents – Spring Convocations 2016-2019

The following summary of survey results compares key indicators of MLIS program quality and student satisfaction as reported by graduates in the spring convocations 2016 to 2019. The analysis includes those enrolled in both online and on-campus teaching and learning streams.

A marked or noteworthy change in survey responses between any two years is defined as a threshold minimum of 20 percentage-points for questions that generate descriptive statistics, or a threshold minimum of 0.5 on questions yielding weighted average 5-point Likert scale ratings. These magnitudes of change are somewhat arbitrary thresholds and may be considered noteworthy but not an implied claim of (tested) statistical difference. There were no threshold differences in student satisfaction indicators between the spring 2019 survey and the year before.

“The Bottom Line” – Key Indicator of Satisfaction with Academic Program Experience

Willingness to recommend UofA MLIS program to prospective students

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Yes	85%	82%	86%	88%
No	15%	18%	14%	12%

Key Indicators of Program Quality and Student Satisfaction with Educational Experience

Overall program experience

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.0	3.7	4.2	4.1

Quality of instruction

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.5

Quality of required courses

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.4	3.5	3.9	4.2

Quality of elective courses

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.7	3.9	4.2	4.2

Quality of scholarly experience

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.1

Opportunities to learn and grow

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1

Appropriateness of course requirements

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.8

Career relevance of courses

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.8

Key Indicators of Student Satisfaction with Program Resources and Services

Graduate program administration

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.6

Library resources, access, and tutorials

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.6

eClass, other online learning support

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating				
- On-campus learning stream	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1
- Online learning stream	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)				

Course registration

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.4	3.9	4.0	4.1

Technology support

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating				
- On-campus learning stream	4.1	3.4	3.7	3.7
- Online learning stream	3.5	3.7	4.5	4.2
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)				

Indicators of Student Satisfaction with Personal Goals Help

Help with personal and intellectual enrichment goals

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.2
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)				

Help with further career and professional development goals

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.1
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)				

Help with career change goals

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.9
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)				

Help with specific job or career preparation goals

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring
Average satisfaction rating	4.1	3.6	4.1	4.0
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)				