Program Details: Master of Science in Information Systems (MSIS)

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Detailed Admission Requirements

Students wishing to apply to the MSIS program must meet the admissions criteria for both the University of Nevada, Reno Graduate School and the Information Systems Department MSIS program. All applications are reviewed by the MSIS admissions committee, and only complete applications are considered. Applications approved by the committee are forwarded to the Graduate School for final disposition.

Graduate School Requirements:

1. Grade Point Average of 2.75 on a scale of 4.0, or an average of 3.0 or higher for the courses taken during the last half of the undergraduate program.
2. A baccalaureate (or an advanced) degree from an accredited four-year institution; any major is acceptable.

Information Systems Department MSIS Requirements:

1. Completion of the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) with a minimum score of 500. Students must also place in the 20th percentile or higher in each portion (verbal, written, and quantitative) of the exam. Students can substitute GRE scores for the GMAT only if they have already taken the GRE test. [These minimum scores are subject to change.] The GMAT exam is not required for MSIS admissions if:
1. A student has an undergraduate business degree with a major in information systems from a business school accredited by the AACSB at the time the degree was granted, and
2. An overall undergraduate GPA of 3.5 or higher.

2. All students are expected to be proficient using a computer for word processing. Students in the IS Management Emphasis should be able to analyze and solve business problems with software such as spreadsheets, statistical packages, and databases. Students enrolled in the Data Analytics emphasis will develop those skills as part of the degree program.

3. International student applicants must submit satisfactory scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) indicating an ability to speak, write, and understand the English language. The minimum TOEFL score is 550. International students may be required to complete additional Intensive English courses during their first semester in the program.

4. One of the following:
   1. A bachelor degree completed with a minimum 2.75 GPA on a scale of 4.0, or a GPA of at least 3.0 on a scale of 4.0 for courses taken during the last half of the undergraduate program. An international student who is not a University of Nevada, Reno graduate must have an undergraduate GPA of at least a 3.0 on a scale of 4.0.
   2. If the applicant does not meet the preceding requirement, admission to graduate standing on a prescribed program may be considered. A prescribed program consists of the completion of one semester or summer session of full-time study in 9 credits, or 12 credits over two consecutive semesters for those working full-time, with a grade of "B" or above in each course taken. The courses prescribed may be undergraduate or graduate courses. These courses may or may not apply to the graduate program of study.

5. A bachelor’s degree in information systems and/or business is not required for admission to the MSIS program. Students without an undergraduate degree in information systems can earn the MSIS degree by completing the designated courses outlined in the track descriptions.

6. Prerequisites for the MSIS differ depending on the selected track. Review the required prerequisites in the IS Management Track and the Data Analytics Track.

Refer to tuition and fees for graduate student tuition information. The tuition costs do not include student fees, insurance fees, parking fees, and other incidental fees. The estimated costs for textbooks and other fees is $2,733 per student (for the total program).

In addition to graduate student tuition, the Nevada Board of Regents approved a differential fee tuition program to go into effect fall 2011 for Master of Accountancy (MAcc), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Science in Finance (MSF), and Master of Science in Information Systems (MSIS). The course fee is $100 per credit for graduate level courses in accounting (ACC), business administration (BADM), business (BUS), entrepreneurship (ENT), gaming management (GAM), finance (FIN), information systems (IS), management (MGT), and
marketing (MKT). These additional fees will support financial aid of students in the programs, as well as enhance the curriculum and services to the program's students.

For information about grants, financial aid and scholarship opportunities, refer to The Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships

To apply, the following documents must be submitted to the Graduate School at the University of Nevada, Reno:

- A completed and signed Application for Admission form.
- A $60.00 non-refundable application fee.
- An official transcripts from each college or university where work has been completed or is in progress.
- The official report of the GMAT.

Students should also submit the following documents directly to Mark Simkin, the Director of the MSIS program at the College of Business, University of Nevada, Reno:

- A current, detailed resume, including all undergraduate education and work experience.
- Personal statement expressing your career interest and indicating why you wish to obtain an MSIS.

Application Deadlines

Students may apply for admission into the MSIS program for either the fall or spring semesters. Applications are approved on a continuing basis, but students should file complete applications (including GMAT scores) at least 2 months prior to the semester in which they wish to matriculate.

Track Prerequisites

IS Management Track

A bachelor's degree in business or information systems is not required for admission to the IS Management track. Students without such degrees can become eligible for the IS Management track by completing prerequisite courses. The following items outline specific program prerequisites:
1. **Background in Information Systems and Computing Applications.** An applicant to the MSIS program should understand the basic components of hardware, software, telecommunications, networking, and transaction processing. He or she should also understand the systems development life cycle and how organizations use computers to solve business problems. Finally, applicants should have advanced competencies using computer application software. Undergraduate courses that could satisfy this prerequisite include IS101, IS201, IS301 and IS495. An example of a graduate-level course that would satisfy part of this prerequisite is BADM750.

2. **Programming ability.** An applicant should have experience using a procedural programming language. Undergraduate courses that could satisfy this prerequisite include IS350 and CS135.

3. **Database design prerequisite.** An applicant should understand the concepts of database design and implementation. Undergraduate courses that could satisfy this prerequisite include IS475 and CS457. An example of a graduate-level course that could satisfy this prerequisite is IS701.

4. **Project management prerequisite.** An applicant should understand the basic concepts of project initiation, planning, and management. An undergraduate course that could satisfy this prerequisite is IS445.

These prerequisites may be satisfied with professional knowledge gained outside the classroom. Students without the prerequisite knowledge should enroll in the recommended courses to gain the knowledge necessary for the MSIS program.

**Data Analytics Track**

The MSIS data analytics track is open to those who hold a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university. Students may join this program after completing a variety of different undergraduate degree programs. Before starting this program, students must have:

1. **A basic background of the vocabulary of technology-based information systems.** This background could be satisfied through classes such as IS101, CS100, or IS201.

2. **Basic knowledge of computer programming.** An applicant should have experience using a procedural programming language. Undergraduate courses that could satisfy this prerequisite include IS350 or CS135.

**Suggested Courses of Study by Track**

**IS Management track**

This track prepares technology professionals to advance into the management of information technology related processes in organizations. This track can be completed with a total of 30 credits, or 10 semester courses.
The IS Management track consists of four major components: (1) the information systems core (5 courses), (2) the business core (2 courses), (3) the required IS789 policy and strategy course (1 course), and (4) additional courses in the non-thesis option, or completion of a thesis in the thesis option. Below is an overview of the IS Management track.

Data Analytics track

This track helps prepare students to become a "data scientist" or data analyst. A data scientist is a professional who uses large data sets in order to gain insights into complex problems. A data scientist incorporates knowledge of statistics, computer technology, information visualization, the scientific method and an application domain to identify appropriate data sets, develop effective analytic models, and create visualizations that help understand and solve problems.

The Data Analytics track consists of five major components: (1) data analytics common body of knowledge (5 courses), (2) information systems core (5 courses), (3) analytics core (2 courses), (4) application domain core (2 courses), and (5) the master’s project (1 course). Below is an overview of the Data Analytics track.
Course Waiver Policy

A course waiver means that a student is excused from taking a specific class due to prior work experience or prior education. Course waivers do not reduce the number of credits that a student must take to complete the MSIS degree, which remains at a minimum of 30 or 32 credits (depending upon the thesis or non-thesis option). Individual MSIS courses may be waived with the permission of the Director of the MSIS program or his/her designees.

The Department of Information Systems may also grant credit for those students who have completed an equivalent course within the last five years with a minimum grade of B at an AACSB-accredited or equivalent institution. Students cannot receive credit by examination for any of the required courses in the curriculum, nor can they replace any of the required
business core courses with an undergraduate course. Applications for core course waiver or course credit must be completed during a student’s first-year in the program. The department cannot grant graduate credit for work experience. Internship credit cannot be used for course degree credit in the MSIS degree program.

Contact the MSIS Director for more information about whether a specific course will fulfill a requirement in the MSIS program.

A bachelor degree in business or information systems is not required for admission.

Students without an undergraduate degree in information systems can earn the MSIS degree by completing the designated courses outlined above. However, all students must complete a minimum of 30 or 32 graduate credit hours (depending upon the thesis/non-thesis option in the IS Management Track) to earn the MSIS degree. As an accredited college of business, the department cannot grant graduate credit for work experience.

For international student information, please consult the Office of International Students and Scholars.

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