Frequently Asked Questions about the School of Information and Library Science

Q: How would you define Information Science?

Information Science is typically defined as: “A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention,” a wise man once said—and the world has never been wealthier. Information professionals help people overwhelmed with information make sense of it all, so that they can use their limited attention more effectively.”

Q: How is Information Science different from Computer Science?

Computer programmers focus on technical systems: designing efficient algorithms and techniques for automated data processing. Information professionals, on the other hand, focus on sociotechnical systems—including how systems for automated data processing are integrated into organizations. For information professionals, understanding how people communicate and collaborate is just as important as understanding the technical systems that they use to do these things. Despite this difference, the two fields are closely related, since designing efficient technical systems often requires insight into human behavior, and a deeper understanding of technical systems can lead to the design of better organizational practices.

Q: What kinds of jobs do graduates get?

School of Information and Library (SILS) graduates go to work for top companies, including Google, Credit Suisse, LinkedIn, Twitter, SAS, Atlantic BT, Nielsen-Norman, Red Hat, and Capital One, as well as government organizations and non-profits. Graduates assume a variety of job titles, including:

- Business Analyst
- UX (User Experience) Architect
- Database Designer
- Information Security Specialist
- Software Engineer
- Systems Manager
- Web Developer
- Technology Consultant

Q: How many credit hours is the minor?

The minor is 15 credit hours.
Q: What courses are required for the minor?

INLS 201 – Foundations of Information Science
INLS 161 – Tools for Information Literacy
INLS 382 – Information Systems Analysis and Design
INLS 523 – Database Concepts and Applications
One Elective (3 hours): Elective can be any INLS course above 200, or a class from the approved electives list. It may not be a course that counts towards your major.

Q: When can I submit my application to the minor?

To apply to the minor: you need to have completed 1 semester at UNC and currently be enrolled in or have completed 1 INLS course.

Q: What are the prerequisites to apply to the major?

COMP 110 – Intro to Programming or COMP 116 – Intro to Scientific Programming
PSYC 101 – General Psychology
INLS 201 – Foundations of Information Science
INLS 161 – Tools for Information Literacy

Q: How many credit hours is the major?

The major is 30 credit hours.

Q: What courses are required for the major?

INLS 382 – Information Systems Analysis and Design
INLS 385 – Information Use for Organizational Effectiveness
INLS 523 – Database Concepts and Applications
INLS 697 – Information Science Capstone
Six Electives (18 hours), chosen in consultation with the student’s faculty advisor. Electives can be any INLS course above 200, or a class from the approved electives list.

Q: When can I submit my application to the major?

To apply to the major: 3 of the 4 prerequisites must be complete (COMP 110 should be 1 of the 3 completed courses) and you should be enrolled in the last remaining requisite.
Q: When does the application open?
Spring Admission: September 1 – 30
Fall Admission: February 1 – March 1

Q: What is required in the application for the major and minor?
Application via Slate
Resume
A brief essay in response to the essay question
Letters of reference are optional (not required)

Q: Where can I find more information?
More information on this department can be found at https://sils.unc.edu. If you have direct questions you can contact Ryan Shaw, the Undergraduate Program Coordinator at ryanshaw@unc.edu.