

## **Summary of the UAlberta MLIS Graduate Student Exit Survey 2019-2020**

*School of Library and Information Studies  
University of Alberta*

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A total of 77 MLIS students graduated from the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta in the two academic convocations Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. All but two were enrolled in the course-based MLIS program; the other two were thesis-based joint-degree students in the MLIS/MA in Digital Humanities program (they are combined with on-campus MLIS graduating students for survey purposes). The combined Fall and Spring convocations in the previous two academic years registered 82 and 61 graduating students, respectively.

UAlberta MLIS students initially register in one of two teaching and learning delivery streams, on-campus or online. The online program stream has been offered by the School since 2013, and 2019-2020 saw the fifth cohort to complete the MLIS program (the online cohort enrolls in two courses per term while on-campus students can enroll in up to four).

Comparison of total enrolments in the two learning streams over the past five years shows a gradual shift in School policy towards online delivery, a trend that is likely to continue. Of the 220 MLIS students enrolled as of September 2020 in either stream in any stage of their MLIS program, 77% were in the online stream. The previous year it was 66%.

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 preceding 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.

Accordingly, the Graduate Exit Survey captures the perceptions of graduating students' educational experiences by means of two types of questions: fact-gathering demographic questions, with findings reported in percentage distributions; and perceptual questions, with findings reported through the qualitative mechanism of weighted averages of students' collective satisfaction or ascribed importance of a factor on 5-point Likert rating scales. The digital platform is Survey Monkey.

The biannual survey supports two key priorities of the UAlberta School of Library and Information Studies: continuing international accreditation of the MLIS degree program by the

American Library Association, and institutional transparency and community engagement. In addition to international accreditation, survey results also help to guide the School's future planning and educational directions, inform the School's recruitment and marketing strategies, and provide feedback to the larger local and international practitioner communities about the School's successes and effectiveness.

For logistical reasons and because Fall graduating classes have typically been small, the precedent set from previous reports in this survey series has been to focus detailed analyses primarily on students graduating in the Spring convocations. The current report follows this pattern.

A total of 55 students in both learning streams graduated in the Spring 2020 convocation, with 24 or 44% participating in the Graduate Exit Survey. This was lower than the 61% response rate in the Spring 2019 survey, largely attributable to disproportionately lower engagement by the online cohort.

The Graduate Exit Survey asks graduating students to respond to 23 metrics of interest to the UAlberta MLIS program that qualitatively and quantitatively attempt to capture their experiences and perceptions of the quality of the program, support services, facilities and resources, and program help in meeting personal goals.

Overall student satisfaction ratings on the Spring 2020 survey were relatively similar to the Spring 2019 for 15 of the 23 quality indicators. However, the Spring 2020 survey showed markedly lower ratings than the year before on two key metrics in the Graduate Exit Survey that are regarded as "bottom line" indicators of the quality of students' educational experience: 'would recommend the MLIS program' and 'overall MLIS program experience'.

Arguably, a new (and hopefully temporary) metric on the Spring 2020 survey might also be regarded as an important factor in student satisfaction ratings. This is a question about major program impacts of COVID-19. More than half of the Spring 2020 survey respondents, regardless of learning stream, said they experienced major program impacts, with on-campus students revealing they were twice as likely as their online peers to say so.

At the same time, a confluence of other factors during the previous two academic years or more may also have contributed, by the time of the Spring 2020 survey, to lower MLIS program satisfaction ratings on the two key metrics 'would recommend program' and 'overall program experience'. Among such factors were the reduction in MLIS program requirements from 16 to 13 courses with attendant fewer elective offerings; the workload impact of the international accreditation review; the disruptive physical relocation of the School in mid-2018 from the Rutherford South complex to the Faculty of Education building; and, the merging and streamlining of the School's administrative staffing needs.

A briefer public version of this report is posted to the Assessment folder on the School's website that provides a top-level overview of the Spring 2020 survey findings that focuses on key satisfaction indicators.

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

**Graduate Exit Survey, UAlberta MLIS Program  
Key Student Satisfaction Metrics  
Spring 2016-2020**

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 2020. The analysis includes those enrolled in both online and on-campus teaching and learning streams. Marked<sup>1</sup> declines in satisfaction between the latest two survey years, Spring 2020 and Spring 2019, are indicated with a downward arrow ↓; there were no marked improvements between these two years.

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

***Would recommend UAlberta MLIS program to prospective students***

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring
Yes	85%	82%	86%	88%	45% ↓
No	15%	18%	14%	12%	55%

***COVID-19 major program impacts (new metric)***

	2020 Spring
Yes	60%
No	40%

***Overall program experience***

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.0	3.7	4.2	4.1	3.0 ↓

<sup>1</sup> Such differences are defined as a threshold minimum of: a) 20 or more percentage-points for questions generating descriptive statistics, and b) 1.0 or greater on questions yielding weighted average 5-point Likert scale ratings (in previous years, data analysis set the threshold difference at the more demanding level of 0.5 on the Likert scale). These magnitudes of difference are somewhat arbitrary thresholds and may be considered noteworthy but not an implied claim of (tested) statistical difference. The report avoids the use of terms denoting statistical significance because formal statistical analysis has not been applied to the data.

## Key Indicators of Program Quality and Student Satisfaction with Educational Experience

### *Course-based program advisor support*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)		3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	

### *Availability and scheduling of required courses*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.2	3.2	3.8	3.0	3.6	

### *Quality of elective courses*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.7	3.9	4.2	4.2	3.6	

### *Quality of instruction*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	Spring 2020	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.5	3.5↓	

### *Quality of required courses*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.4	3.5	3.9	4.2	3.4	

### *Opportunities to learn and grow*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.4	

*Appropriateness of course requirements*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.8	3.2	

*Career relevance of courses*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.0	

*Quality of scholarly experience*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.1	2.9↓	

*Variety of course offerings*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.0	3.0	3.3	2.6	2.0	

*Availability and scheduling of elective courses*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.0	2.9	3.2	2.2	1.9	

## Key Indicators of Student Satisfaction with Program Resources and Services

### *Library resources, access, and tutorials*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.5

### *eClass, other online learning support*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring
Average satisfaction rating					
- On-campus learning stream	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0
- Online learning stream	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.1
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)					

### *Technology support*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring
Average satisfaction rating					
- On-campus learning stream	4.1	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.6
- Online learning stream	3.5	3.7	4.5	4.2	3.9
(scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)					

### *Course registration*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.4	3.9	4.0	4.1	3.5

### *Graduate program administration*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.6	2.7↓

## Indicators of Student Satisfaction with Program Help in Meeting Personal Goals

### *Program help with personal and intellectual enrichment goals*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.2	3.7	

### *Program help with career change goals*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.4	

### *Program help with further career and professional development goals*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.1	3.3	

### *Program help with specific job or career preparation goals*

	2016 Spring	2017 Spring	2018 Spring	2019 Spring	2020 Spring	
Average satisfaction rating (scale 1=very dissatisfied; 5=very satisfied)	4.1	3.6	4.1	4.0	3.0↓	