



# School of Informatics, GCCIS

# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## Table of Contents

General Information.....	4
The RIT Quarter System.....	4
Your Program Code & Year .....	4
SIS.....	4
myRIT.....	4
Local Address .....	5
Computer Accounts .....	5
Parking Sticker.....	5
Student Identification Card.....	6
Good Academic Standing.....	6
Academic Honesty.....	6
Who to See When You Need Help .....	7
RIT’s Dean of Graduate Studies.....	7
Academic Support Services .....	7
Child care: Margaret’s House.....	7
Cooperative Education & Career Services .....	7
Counseling Center.....	7
Financial Aid & Scholarships.....	8
Graduate Enrollment Services .....	8
Part-Time Enrollment Services.....	8
Registrar.....	8
Saunders College of Business.....	8
School of Informatics Resource Coordinator .....	8
Student Employment Office .....	8
Student Financial Services .....	8
International Student Services .....	8
Student Status.....	9
Matriculation.....	9
Active Versus Inactive Status .....	9
Time to Complete MS Program.....	10
Registration Information.....	11
Quarterly Registration.....	11
Online Registration .....	11
Registering for an Undergraduate Course.....	12
Cooperative Work Experience (Co-op) .....	12
Course Information .....	13
Closed Courses.....	13
Add/Drop Week .....	13
Withdrawing from a Course.....	14

The “Incomplete” Grade .....	14
Repeating a Course .....	14
Grade-Point Average (GPA) for Graduation .....	14
Restrictions on Coursework in your Graduate Program .....	16
Concentrations .....	16
Online Learning Courses for International Students .....	16
Courses from Outside Your Department .....	16
Cross-Program Course Restrictions .....	16
Special Topics Concentrations.....	17
“Duplicate” Courses from Other RIT Departments.....	17
Undergraduate Courses .....	17
The MS Capstone Experience.....	18
What is a MS Capstone? .....	18
Difference between a MS Project Capstone versus a MS Thesis Capstone .....	19
Registration for Capstone Credits .....	19
Applying for Graduation.....	20
Cost and Credits Hours .....	21
Graduate Assistantships .....	21
RIT Institute Merit Scholarships.....	21
Scholarship Renewal .....	22
Financial Statement.....	22
Request for Additional Scholarship .....	22
Other Sources of Financial Aid.....	23
On Campus Jobs .....	23
Department Hiring .....	23
Other RIT Departments.....	24
Academic Dishonesty Policy .....	25

## General Information

### *The RIT Quarter System*

The academic calendar at RIT is based upon four (4) 10-week academic terms: fall (September), winter (December), spring (March), and summer (June) – with the typical starting months shown. Each quarter is ten weeks of study, with the eleventh week for examinations, and followed by a short break. Each quarter also has a unique, numeric identifier: *yyyyn*, where *yyyy* is the year in which the fall term starts and *n* identifies the specific term: fall (1), winter (2), spring (3) and summer (4). For example, for academic year 2011-12, the term identifiers are fall 20111, winter 20112, spring 20113, and summer 20114. Note that the year identifier does NOT change with the calendar year within a given academic year.

### *Your Program Code & Year*

Each student studying at RIT has a 4-character academic program code that identifies the student's program of study. Our graduate-level program codes are:

#### **Information Sciences & Technologies department:**

- VKSF<sup>1</sup> – Master of Science in Information Technology (MS/IT)
- VKSI – Master of Science in Human-Computer Interaction (MS/HCI)
- VKSU<sup>2</sup> – Master of Science in Medical Informatics (MS/MI)
- VKSV<sup>3</sup> – Advanced Certificate in Interactive Multimedia Development (IMD)

#### **Networking, Security & Systems Administration department:**

- VNNSM – Master of Science in Networking & System Administration (MS/NSA)
- VNNS – Master of Science in Computing Security & Information Assurance (MS/CSIA)
- VNNSI – Advanced Certificate in Information Assurance (CIA)
- VNNSP – Advanced Certificate in Network Planning & Design (NPD)

All RIT students also have a year in program. Graduate students are year 6.

### *SIS*

RIT's Web-based Student Information System (SIS) is used for online course registration. It is available from the **Students** section at the top left of RIT's **Student Information System Information Access Center** page at <https://sis.rit.edu/info/welcome.do>.

### *myRIT*

*myRIT* is the Web portal for all RIT students. It is accessed from the RIT home page (<http://www.rit.edu>; at the bottom right) or at <https://my.rit.edu/> using your RIT email (DCE) account (see later in this section). From this site you have access to various RIT

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<sup>1</sup> Previously ICSF/6.

<sup>2</sup> See **MS/MI Program Handbook** for university-specific details for the University of Rochester and RIT.

<sup>3</sup> Previously ICSV.

resources such as *myCourses* (RIT's course conferencing system), news and events, the RIT Library, etc.

### ***Local Address***

When you know your local address on campus, please update SIS and inform us so that we can update your records. This local address is used for mailings to you. If you do not update this address, materials will be sent to your permanent – i.e. home – address, which may be in another country. Obviously, this will delay the receipt of materials that may be important to you. In the future whenever your address changes, please inform us at the Student Services office (GOL-2120) – in addition to updating it in the RIT Student Record System (SIS) – so that we can update our records.

### ***Computer Accounts***

You will likely need multiple computer accounts to support your studies. At RIT, your DCE account is your RIT email and portal-access account. This allows you to use the library, host a Web page, and access your student records and register for courses using the RIT Student Information System (SIS). You can get your RIT DCE account at the Information and Technical Services (ITS) Help Desk in the Gannett Building (07) Room 1113, phone (585) 475-HELP.

As a graduate student, you may also need an account to access your or other department's computing resources. The NSSA labs do not require an account. IST courses require that students get an account, either from the department's website (<http://www.ist.rit.edu/?q=node/102>) or in the Open Lab (GOL-2670). You may want to ask a lab assistant in the School's Open Lab for assistance in forwarding your email to one central location.

If you take an online (or distance learning) course at RIT, you will need to use your DCE account to access the Online Learning servers for *myCourses* access. This is a different account from any departmental account. The Online Learning office will email access information to you when they process your registration. However, if you add a distance learning course shortly before or after classes start, contact Online Learning immediately to let them know that you've joined the course. Online Learning is located in the basement (Level A) of the Wallace Library; phone them at (585) 475-5089 or full contact information is at <http://online.rit.edu/contact/>.

Please check your email several times each day. If you plan to read your email on some system other than that here at RIT, you should forward your RIT mail. Ask a lab assistant in one of the computing labs to help you set a forwarding address. This is important because RIT faculty and staff will use your RIT account for communication with you outside of class and you are expected to respond in a timely fashion.

### ***Parking Sticker***

If you want to use your car on the RIT campus, you must obtain a parking sticker from Public Safety, Grace Watson Dining Hall in the dormitory complex (room 1317). Information is at <http://www.rit.edu/parking>. The telephone number is (585) 475-2074; fax (585) 475-7510; or email them at [parking@rit.edu](mailto:parking@rit.edu). If you take classes from another university, you will need to need to follow their parking regulations too.

### ***Student Identification Card***

You need a student identification card with your picture on it to do anything on the RIT campus. Go to the Registrar's Office to get your card as soon as possible. Non-picture cards are available for students studying entirely at a distance by calling (585) 475-2821. If you lose your card, you can also get a replacement card from them.

### ***Good Academic Standing***

To be in good academic standing, a graduate student at RIT must have a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0/4.0 or better after 12 quarter-credit hours of coursework completed at RIT. A 3.0, or better, cumulative GPA is required for graduation. Graduate students are expected to earn 'A's or 'B's in all courses taken. A grade of 'C' may be counted towards graduation if your cumulative worksheet GPA is 3.0 or better. However RIT institute policy states that "*'D' or 'F' grades do not count toward the fulfillment of program requirements for a graduate degree,*" regardless of GPA.

All courses taken while you are matriculated as a graduate student are included in your GPA. No course can be removed from your GPA, even if it is a prerequisite, from another department, or the course was repeated with a higher grade.

Your department will contact you if your academic standing is in jeopardy. However, if you are concerned about your GPA, please do not hesitate to contact the graduate coordinator or our graduate advisor so that we can help you.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Strict academic honesty is an expectation for all of our graduate students. RIT defines academic dishonesty as any act of improperly representing another person's work as your own. This includes the past or current work of *any* person – student, friend, colleague, relative, faculty member or absolute stranger, either with or without his/her knowledge – including yourself. Academic dishonesty can be cutting/pasting, plagiarism, collusion, or outright cheating. Nor may you facilitate someone else's act of academic dishonesty.

Academic actions contrary to our expectations will be addressed in accordance with RIT's code of conduct and your department's academic dishonesty/integrity policy. The normal department penalty is 'F' in the course for *all* students involved. Students with RIT Merit Scholarships, assistantships, or other RIT funding awards who violate this policy will have their scholarships revoked for a minimum of one academic term and, depending upon the severity of the offense, may face permanent award revocation or even academic suspension.

These are "single instance" policies – i.e. there are no second chances. So, if you are not sure that what you are doing is proper or if you find yourself in a situation that may violate RIT's code of academic conduct, immediately talk to someone with whom you feel comfortable: your instructor, your faculty advisor, the graduate coordinator, the graduate advisor, a faculty member, or a staff member. Do not risk jeopardizing your academic career here at RIT.

The responsibility expectations of RIT students are outlined on the RIT website at

<http://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/>; the RIT Academic Honesty policy is located at [http://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/rr\\_academicdishonesty.php](http://www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/rr_academicdishonesty.php). The Wallace Library offers workshops on avoiding plagiarism and on proper citation. A policy statement is included at the end of this handbook. Be sure to review this policy carefully. It is your responsibility to adhere to these rules; ignorance is not excused.

## Who to See When You Need Help

Your first source of help is always your graduate coordinator and your graduate advisor. They have weekly open hours available for short “walk-in” questions. Meeting times for longer issues are available by appointment on-campus or via the telephone at (585) 475-2700. They also share an email drop at [informaticsGrad@rit.edu](mailto:informaticsGrad@rit.edu).

You will also be given a faculty academic advisor in your area of interest when you matriculate; your advisor can help you with professional questions. Check the People section of your department website to find office locations and available office hours.

Below is a list of other departments and people at RIT who can provide help in the specific areas listed below. If you are ever unsure what to do or who to see, contact the Student Services office (GOL-2120; (585) 475-2700) and they will help you.

### *RIT's Dean of Graduate Studies*

**Dr. Hector E. Flores** (3100 University Services Center, ((585) 475-4476)

He oversees graduate study issues at RIT. The graduate studies website is located at <http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/gradstudies/>.

### *Academic Support Services*

**English Language Center** (2040 Monroe Hall)

Stanley Van Horn ([syvelc@rit.edu](mailto:syvelc@rit.edu); (585) 475-6939) manages English language course offerings, evaluations, and language preparation study.

**Writing Center** (2080 Monroe Hall)

Andrew Perry ([awpgsl@rit.edu](mailto:awpgsl@rit.edu); (585) 475-6945) manages the lab. They provide short-term reading and writing support.

**Disability Services** (1150, Student Alumni Union (SAU); (585) 475-2023)

Susan Ackerman ([smacst@rit.edu](mailto:smacst@rit.edu); (585) 475-6988; 475-2215 (fax)) coordinates. They handle educational access issues for RIT students.

**Child care: Margaret's House** ((585) 475-5176; 475-5948 fax)

RIT's on-campus daycare center for students, faculty and staff.

**Cooperative Education & Career Services** (1<sup>st</sup> floor Bausch & Lomb)

**James Bondi** ([jtboce@rit.edu](mailto:jtboce@rit.edu), (585) 475-5471; 1112 Bausch & Lomb)

**Annette Stewart** ([aksoce@rit.edu](mailto:aksoce@rit.edu), (585) 475-5466; 1200 Bausch & Lomb)

This department provides support in preparing your resume, interviewing skills, finding a co-op job and permanent employment.

**Counseling Center** (2100 August Center, (585) 475-2261)

The Counseling center can help with stress, depression, cultural adjustment, and other personal and academic advising issues.

***Financial Aid & Scholarships*** (2<sup>nd</sup> floor Bausch & Lomb, (585) 475-2186)

**Mindy Class** ([macsfa@rit.edu](mailto:macsfa@rit.edu), (585) 475-2989)

This office handles academic finance and scholarship issues for full and part-time students.

***Graduate Enrollment Services*** (1<sup>st</sup> floor Bausch & Lomb)

**Ann Cordy** ([amcrpt@rit.edu](mailto:amcrpt@rit.edu), (585) 475-6768)

She handles graduate applications for GCCIS. She can help with the application process, the TOEFL and GRE, and transcript and recommendation issues.

**Janet Miller** ([jem9334@rit.edu](mailto:jem9334@rit.edu), (585) 475-7357)

She manages the application material after RIT has received it. She can tell you the status of an application and what information is needed to complete it.

***Part-Time Enrollment Services*** (lower level (A) of Bausch & Lomb)

**Diane Ellison**, Asst. VP ([dmege@rit.edu](mailto:dmege@rit.edu), (585) 475-7284)

This office provides support for students studying part-time at RIT.

**Mandie Klingelhoffer**, Asst. Director ([mves@rit.edu](mailto:mves@rit.edu), (585) 475-6641; )

He advises students about veteran's support and the RIT PREP program.

***Registrar*** (1<sup>st</sup> floor Eastman; (585) 475-2821)

**Joe Loffredo**, RIT Registrar ([jjlrgr@rit.edu](mailto:jjlrgr@rit.edu), (585) 475-2829)

This office is responsible for student records and registration at RIT.

***Saunders College of Business*** (A312 Lowenthal)

**Peggy Tirrell** ([ptirrell@saunders.rit.edu](mailto:ptirrell@saunders.rit.edu), (585) 475-2795)

She can talk with you about the courses from the Saunders College of Business that may be used towards graduate study with your department.

***School of Informatics, Asst. Director of Operations*** (2124 Golisano)

**Elizabeth Zimmerman** ([elizabeth.zimmerman@rit.edu](mailto:elizabeth.zimmerman@rit.edu), (585) 475-6161)

She hires student workers, schedules Graduate Assistants, and handles pay issues for the School of Informatics.

***Student Employment Office*** (1358 University Services Center, Building 87)

**Joanne Stuewe** ([jmsseo@rit.edu](mailto:jmsseo@rit.edu), (585) 475-6164)

Student Employment has information about the jobs available on campus.

***Student Financial Services*** (1358 University Services Center, Building 87,  
(585) 475-6186; 475-5307 (fax))

**Kathy Cole** ([kvcbur@rit.edu](mailto:kvcbur@rit.edu), (585) 475-2756)

The university bursar handles issues related to billing, fees and payments.

***International Student Services*** (2330 Union, (585) 475-6943; 475-7419 (fax))

**Jeff Cox**, Director ([jwccst@rit.edu](mailto:jwccst@rit.edu), (585) 475-7433)

**Lilli Jensen**, Assistant Director ([lhjnscs@rit.edu](mailto:lhjnscs@rit.edu), (585) 475-5540)

This office provides support for international students for issues such as visas, I-20 paperwork, USCIS immigration policies, etc. Each student has an advisor.

## **Student Status**

### ***Matriculation***

When a student has been accepted for graduate study at RIT and takes a course, the student is said to be “matriculated” into the program. To earn a graduate degree, the student must complete all degree requirements, as shown on the program worksheet. This worksheet is prepared by the graduate coordinator in concert with your department and is given to you at admission. If you lose your copy, the office staff can give you a new copy (GOL-2120; (585) 475-2700).

Departments periodically review and update the requirements for their graduate programs. If program requirements are changed, the new degree requirements normally do not apply to currently matriculated students as long as they have maintained their active status by making steady progress towards the degree and they have not exceeded their 7-year deadline (see below). Alternately, the graduate student may elect to change to the new degree requirements, if preferred.

However, students who have “stopped out” prior to degree completion may have to restart their studies under the new program requirements (see discussion under “De-Matriculation” below) to obtain the degree. A new worksheet will be prepared that shows the current graduation requirements. If there are changes in the courses offered by your department that effect your program of study, the graduate coordinator can make reasonable substitutions. In this situation, you should contact the graduate coordinator as soon as possible to discuss options and arrange for a revised plan of study.

Please refer to the 7-year degree completion rule discussed below.

### ***Active Versus Inactive Status***

A matriculated student who is regularly taking courses and making progress towards a degree is “active.” If you have no registration activity in the quarter for which you were admitted, do not register for coursework for an extended period of time (four (4) consecutive quarters for full-time study; eight (8) quarters for part-time study); withdraw; or graduate, your academic status at RIT will become “inactive.” Students who did not withdraw or graduate may have been de-matriculated (see below). Inactive students will not receive departmental mailings such as registration materials, etc. or have access to other RIT resources.

Also, after two quarters of inactivity, your RIT computer account is usually deactivated. Registration activity is required to reactivate it.

### ***De-Matriculation***

RIT policy states that if a previously matriculated student has become inactive due to lack of registration activity, the student can be de-matriculated by the Registrar. If this occurs, the student is no longer in a graduate program at RIT and is not considered to be pursuing a degree. To complete the degree, the student will have to reapply and be readmitted to his or her previous degree program. If more than two (2) years have elapsed, the student’s previous program of study, as specified on his or her worksheet, will be reviewed and rewritten to meet the degree requirements currently in affect. Previous

waivers, coursework, and transfer credit may be lost; so there could be additional program requirements to complete along with other previously unfinished degree requirements. If this should occur, contact Graduate Enrollment Services and the graduate coordinator for assistance. Also refer to the 7-year degree completion rule discussed below.

### ***Time to Complete MS Program***

The **7-year rule** at RIT requires that all courses in a graduate program or certificate be completed within seven (7) years of the time that the first course is taken towards a program of study. The purpose of the rule is to ensure that graduate students have up-to-date knowledge in their field of study when officially certified for graduation by RIT. For example, if the first course taken towards a graduate program was taken in the fall term of 2011, then the student must complete all program requirements including the capstone work by the end of the fall term of 2018 (November 30, 2018). Prerequisites courses are not covered by this rule.

Course(s) more than seven (7) years old “expire” and can no longer be used to satisfy degree requirements. There are two options for the student to complete the program in this situation. The first is to complete additional course(s) to replace the credit that has been lost. The second option is to appeal, through the GCCIS Dean, to the RIT Graduate Dean for permission to complete the degree using the expired courses. Such an appeal is only possible in situations with unusual, extenuating circumstances as discussed below. An appeal must be made before the 7-year deadline is reached and before any additional coursework is completed towards the degree. Please note that an appeal may not be made simply on the basis of having had a “very busy” personal schedule.

The process is as follows:

- The graduate coordinator determines whether or not the student’s situation is “appealable” under RIT guidelines.
- If the student can appeal, s/he develops the appropriate documentation, as specified by the graduate coordinator.
- The graduate coordinator compiles the student’s documentation, develops a plan for degree completion, writes a recommendation, and files the appeal with the GCCIS Dean on behalf of the student.
- The GCCIS Dean reviews the appeal documentation and decides if an extension should be supported. If it is supported, s/he recommends a plan for degree-completion to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- If the appeal is supported by the GCCIS Dean, the graduate coordinator files the complete appeal paperwork with the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Dean makes the final decision as to whether or not, and how, the student may complete the degree. If completion beyond the original 7-year deadline is approved, the Graduate Dean decides which courses, if any, may be retained; and sets a new 7-year deadline.
- Should the plan approved by the Graduate Dean not be completed within the revised deadline there are no further appeal options and process terminates.

The graduate coordinator is not obligated to file an appeal. Per RIT guidelines, an appeal is only appropriate if the student can present a very strong case for completing the program and, separately, for retaining credit from any “expired” courses. Credit retention

is determined on a course-by-course basis; and each course lost must still be taught at RIT. Otherwise, lost credit will have to be replaced by successfully completing additional course(s).

For an appeal, the student must be able to satisfy the following two (2) requirements. There must be unusual reason(s), beyond the student's control, that prevented him or her from completing the program in a timely fashion. Some reasons might be injury or prolonged illness, serious family problems of long-standing duration, unusual employment situations, etc. Finally, the student must be able to demonstrate up-to-date knowledge of the topics in each course that have expired as it is currently taught – not as it was taught when taken by the student. This requirement can be satisfied by demonstrating ongoing professional work or training in the area of the course(s) appealed, passing a test, doing a project, writing a paper, etc. as specified by department faculty. The faculty evaluates the student's knowledge and decides whether or not the student has course "currency." This process is required for each course that is more than 7 years old and that has been approved for possible retention.

Please plan to complete your degree within the seven-year time frame. Appealing is a long and arduous process, and the RIT administration is not sympathetic to frivolous appeals. If you are coming close to the seven-year deadline, contact us as soon as possible so that we can help you complete your degree.

## **Registration Information**

### ***Quarterly Registration***

RIT uses a pre-registration system to register for courses each quarter. Registration for the winter quarter starts in the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the fall quarter; spring quarter registration starts in the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the winter quarter, and summer quarter registration starts in the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the spring quarter. Registration for the fall quarter is different; it starts in the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the spring quarter. Students are assigned starting registration dates by year in program. Graduate students are year 6 and register first. Registration dates are shown in the quarterly RIT Course Schedule.

### ***Online Registration***

We encourage you to plan your courses before registration starts each quarter and to register early. The estimated RIT yearly course schedule is available from the Academic Planning link in the Public section of <https://infocenter.rit.edu/>. Some courses have separate lecture and lab meeting times; so be sure that you register for a lab section if the course has a required lab component.

Popular courses close quickly. Plus each department judges the need for courses based upon registration activity. Should registration be low for a particular course, it may be cancelled so that resources can be switched to other high-demand courses. If you wait to register and the course that you want is cancelled because of apparent lack of student interest, your degree completion will likely be delayed.

You can register for courses via the Web with your DCE account and your Student Information System (SIS) pin number.<sup>4</sup> Go to the main RIT website at <http://www.rit.edu/SIS> and select the Student Information System option at the top left or to the **Schedule of Courses** link in the **Public** section of <https://infocenter.rit.edu/>. The staff in the Student Services office (GOL-2120) is also happy to help you register; you can stop in or call them at (585) 475-2700.

Each course in SIS has associated program codes and year levels that indicate which students can directly register for that course and when registration is open to them.

<b>Programs</b>	<b>Graduate Course Codes</b>	<b>Undergraduate Course Codes</b>
VKSF, VKSI, VKSV	4002, 4004	4002, 4006
VKSU	4006	4006
VNSM, VNSS, VNSI, VNSP	4055	4050

Students in most programs can register themselves for their own department’s graduate courses. However, you may be prevented from directly registering for undergraduate course (see below) or courses in other academic departments. If this is the case for a course that you need, you should file an “unmet need” request with the appropriate department to ask for a seat (<https://register.rit.edu/unmetCourseNeeds/>). Unmet needs are typically addressed on a first-come, first-served basis.

### ***Registering for an Undergraduate Course***

Graduate students require prior approval to use undergraduate courses (a course number from 400 to 599) towards graduate degree requirements. Speak with the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor about this. Registration is usually delayed so that the undergraduate students have first opportunity to register for their courses. After this, graduate students can register for any available seats, but you must file an “unmet need;” you cannot use SIS to directly register for an undergraduate course. (See the “Restrictions on Coursework” section of this document for more information and contact the graduate coordinator for prior approval to determine if a course can be used towards your program of study.)

### ***Cooperative Work Experience (Co-op)***

Co-op (also called curricular practical training by the US Customs and Immigration Service (USCIS)) is a zero-credit, registered course and counts as full-time academic status. Companies come to the RIT campus to recruit students for jobs or students can find their own coop positions. Typically, there have been more co-op jobs available than students seeking co-op positions. However job availability is naturally subject to the conditions of the economy and co-op positions cannot be guaranteed.

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<sup>4</sup> If you have prerequisite(s) to complete for your graduate studies or you are doing ELC study, you may have a registration hold for academic advising purposes; in this case, you will need to contact the Student Services office for registration. Be sure to inform us when you complete your prerequisites so that we can remove the hold.

Graduate students may do a *maximum of two (2) cooperative work experiences* (six months total). You must have: attended a coop orientation session offered by the Co-op office; completed all prerequisite study; completed at least two-thirds of your academic program (typically at least 32 credits); and have at least a 3.0/4.0 grade-point average, or better, to qualify for coop. We *strongly* recommend that you complete your MS coursework and capstone prior to going on coop because this ensures that you will achieve the degree and it puts you in a better position to accept an offer of full-time employment.

The RIT Office of Cooperative Education & Career Services is available to help you prepare for and find a co-op job. Jobs must be recorded with them on the RIT Job Zone website. You cannot register yourself for co-op; the Student Services office ((585) 475-2700) will register you when the Office of Cooperative Education or the graduate coordinator has approved the job. If you have not previously been approved for co-op, you will also need to see the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor for approval.

In addition to the criteria above, International students must study full-time at RIT for at least nine (9) months prior to going on coop. After the job is approved, students must go to the RIT International Student Office (ISS) to update their I-20s. International students should also plan their time at RIT carefully so that they are able to complete their degrees within the time specified on their I-20 paperwork. Coop is not required for graduate study and cannot be used as a reason for extension of an I-20 unless all capstone work is completed.

### ***Course Information***

Course descriptions are available on your department website in the **Courses** section. Information about the placement exams for degree prerequisite requirements is also available at this location. You can find course scheduling information as follows:

- Yearly schedule information is available at <http://register.rit.edu/courseSchedule/>.
- General academic planning information for RIT is available at <https://registration.rit.edu/>.

### ***Closed Courses***

Each course at RIT has a maximum enrollment. When a course has reached its maximum enrollment, it is marked as “closed” on SIS. In many instances, departments will not add extra students to a closed section since space can be limited and too many students can reduce the quality of the learning experience.

To request a seat in a closed course, file a request through unmet needs (<https://register.rit.edu/unmetCourseNeeds/>). However, your best option is to monitor the status of the course via SIS to try to get a seat. Students frequently add and drop courses throughout the open registration period. So, being persistent in monitoring a course’s registration may get you into it.

### ***Add/Drop Week***

During the first week of each quarter, students can add an open course or drop an existing course without cost penalty. Students can drop courses via SIS or the Student Services office staff can do it at the request of a student. If a student drops a course, there is no

indication on the student's transcript that student was ever enrolled in the course. There are also no cost implications for a dropping a course during this week.

### ***Withdrawing from a Course***

After the first week of an academic term, a student can only “withdraw” from a registered course. A grade of ‘W’ will appear on the student's transcript. The last day to withdraw from a course is specified in SIS; typically it is the last day of the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the quarter. After this time, it is *extremely* difficult to withdraw from a course. Exceptions are only made for very extra-ordinary personal situations, require written documentation, and must be approved by the RIT Registrar.

When a student withdraws from a course prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> week, a percentage of the tuition cost will be credited to the student's account. There is a sliding scale for reimbursement based on the length of time the student has been in the class. Consult <https://finweb.rit.edu/sfs/billing/refundpolicies.html> for the percentages returned and the relevant quarter deadlines.

### ***The “Incomplete” Grade***

RIT has an “incomplete,” or ‘I’, grade for situations in which a student, through no fault of his or her own, is unable to complete a course during a given academic quarter. This grade is only available for an extra-ordinary personal situation (such as accident or illness) that is sufficiently serious to prevent continued study during a quarter. The student is responsible to inform his or her course instructor as soon as possible after such a situation occurs and to request the “incomplete.” The faculty member decides whether or not to grant the request based upon the amount of work that they student has successfully completed. If granted, the faculty member will specify the work to be completed or repeated, due dates, and assign an ‘I’ grade. The standard RIT deadline is two (2) academic terms; however, a faculty member can specify a different deadline. After the deadline, an unfinished ‘I’ grade will automatically become a grade of ‘F’.

### ***Repeating a Course***

Graduate students are allowed to repeat courses, but cannot do so without receiving prior approval from the graduate coordinator. The usual reason for repeating a course is to solidify knowledge and demonstrate acceptable performance in a course that is used to satisfy degree requirements or to improve your grade-point average. Graduate students cannot remove the previous course grade from their RIT academic record (as undergraduate students are allowed to do at RIT). And, per RIT policy, all courses taken while matriculated as a graduate student – including prerequisites – will be included in your graduate grade-point average (GPA).

### ***Grade-Point Average (GPA) for Graduation***

As discussed in the “General Information” section of this document, student performance at RIT is evaluated through the student's GPA, which is calculated based upon the grades and credit earned for courses taken during graduate matriculation. The maximum GPA possible is 4.0/4.0 and indicates an ‘A’ grade for all coursework.

Your grade-point average can be calculated as follows:

- Grade-based quality points: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0
- Formula:  
$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{SUM}_{\text{for all courses}} (\text{course-credit} \times \text{grade-quality-points})}{\text{SUM}_{\text{for all courses}} (\text{course\_credit})}$$

Graduate students must have a 3.0/4.0 ('B' average) or better on their program worksheet to graduate from RIT. If you have had difficulty in your studies and have repeated or replaced courses, it will still be possible to graduate if the GPA for the courses that are included on your program worksheet is 3.0 or better – even if your total cumulative GPA is below 3.0/4.0.

Contact the graduate coordinator immediately if you are concerned about your academic progress or GPA.

## **Restrictions on Coursework in your Graduate Program**

### ***Concentrations***

The concentration and elective options for each graduate program are discussed in the program's handbook and shown on the program worksheet. Worksheets are sent to you when you enroll. Handbooks can be downloaded from your department's graduate website. The graduate coordinator, in concert with program faculty, approves your study plan, including concentration options and electives at admission.

Courses should be selected based on your background, goals, and interests. You should plan to meet with the graduate coordinator to discuss your interests and the study options available to you when you are admitted and periodically during your studies. Please be aware that some concentrations require prior background experience or may not be available in distance format, and thus may not be available to all individuals. If you should decide to change a concentration or elective, meet with the graduate coordinator as soon as possible to discuss your options and any impact on your progress towards graduation.

### ***Online Learning Courses for International Students***

As of 1/1/2003, international students who have an F visa for educational study in the United States may take one (1) online course for each on-campus course in a given academic quarter: four (4) credits online if taking 12 credits total; eight (8) credits online if taking 16 credits total. Contact the RIT International Student Services Office if you have any questions about this restriction.

### ***Courses from Outside Your Department***

Whether or not graduate courses from other RIT departments or other universities can be used towards your graduate studies depends upon the plan-of-study for your graduate degree; and you must receive permission from the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor, in advance. Only non-bridge/non-prerequisite, graduate-level courses from other departments or universities can be considered.

Generally, under New York State guidelines, for a 48-quarter-credit or higher graduate program, you can transfer in the equivalent of twelve (12) credits of coursework – or up to three (3) courses. This allows graduate students to complete a concentration from another RIT department or university. Coursework outside of RIT can only be counted towards your MS degree if you receive a grade of 'B' or better as shown on an official university transcript. Due to the 7-year degree-completion rule, credit is not typically transferred for courses more than two (2) years old.

For some graduate programs, courses or concentrations from other departments at RIT have already been approved; these are listed in the appropriate program handbook.

### ***Cross-Program Course Restrictions***

The following rules generally apply for coursework used as part of an MS program:

- Undergraduate courses with a course number below 400 cannot be used as part of a graduate program of study.

- Undergraduate coursework from other departments or universities cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
- Prerequisite coursework for a degree may never be used to satisfy the requirements of that degree.
- Generally, capstone courses from other degree programs cannot be used to satisfy a graduate program's designated capstone requirement.<sup>5</sup>
- Program-specific core courses (4002-718 for MS/IT; 4055-726 for MS/NSA and MS/CSIA; etc.) may not be used towards other degree programs. The graduate coordinator or graduate advisor can tell you which courses are restricted because they are "degree-specific."

### ***Special Topics Concentrations***

Some graduate programs support "special topics" concentrations: non-standard concentrations that are designed based upon a student's interests. Students in these programs can request a maximum of one (1) non-standard concentration composed of courses from their departments, of graduate-level courses from another department at RIT, or from another university. All other concentrations must be composed of the standard, pre-approved courses as listed in the program handbooks. Any non-standard concentration must be approved by the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor in advance; otherwise additional coursework may be required to graduate.

### ***"Duplicate" Courses from Other RIT Departments***

Occasionally courses from other RIT departments may significantly overlap in content with a prerequisite for or course in your program of study, and thus would not be acceptable as part of your graduate degree. (For example, the Information Sciences & Technologies course 4002-714, a MS/IT prerequisite, and the Computer Science course 4003-707 cover similar topics.) When one of these courses is used as part of your degree, the other may not also be used. To avoid difficulties, contact the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor for prior approval when you have or want to take courses from outside of your department.

### ***Undergraduate Courses***

The maximum of twelve (12) upper-level (numbered at the 400-level or above) undergraduate credits from your department may be used towards a graduate program – if the content significantly contributes to the depth of a student's plan of study and there are no graduate courses that cover the same content. This restriction is RIT policy and cannot be waived. Any undergraduate course used must be approved, in advance. So talk with your graduate coordinator or graduate advisor; do not risk losing time and money.

This limit does not include any undergraduate courses taken to complete prerequisite requirements.

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<sup>5</sup> In certain situations, a "higher-expectation" capstone experience *may* be available. This depends upon the student's plan of study and faculty support. See the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor if you are interested in doing a more extensive capstone experience than the one required for your program.

## The MS Capstone Experience

### *What is a MS Capstone?*

All graduate degrees have some type of “capstone” experience. This is the culminating educational experience that allows the student to pull together what s/he has learned and to demonstrate professional capabilities in the subject matter studied. The capstone experience for a graduate degree can be a prescribed experience, such as a specific course or set of courses; or it can be a more open-ended experience, such as graduate project or thesis. In a capstone course, the student works with the faculty member(s) leading the course to complete this requirement. For a capstone project or thesis, the student recruits faculty with whom to work and then completes the capstone work to their satisfaction. Typically, all capstone work includes the production of a significant written document. Capstone work is evaluated by the faculty; this evaluation includes a formal, public defense of the work completed. The student is certified for graduation after the entire capstone experience has been successfully completed and accepted by the faculty.

The capstone experience allows graduate students to demonstrate mastery of the computing topics they studied. Capstone work should be based upon the student’s previous studies, not upon learning an entirely new topic area specifically for the capstone. Therefore, the student’s plan of study determines the appropriate area(s) for capstone work. Unless specifically defined otherwise for a given graduate program, a capstone experience is solely an individual effort.

Details for the capstone experiences defined for our graduate programs are shown below.

<b>Degree Program</b>	<b>Capstone Course(s)</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>Type &amp; Time<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Proposal Required</b>	<b>Alternative Experience</b>
MS/CSIA	4055-896 Proposal Development <sup>§</sup> 4055-897 MS NSSA Thesis	1 4	open-ended	Yes	None
MS/IT	4002-893 Seminar in Thesis & Project Preparation <sup>§</sup> 4002-897 MS Thesis or 4002-898 MS Project	2 4 to 8 4 to 8	one term open-ended open-ended	 Yes Yes	 None
MS/HCI	4004-897 MS/HCI Thesis or 4004-898 MS/HCI Project	8	open-ended	Yes	None
MS/MI	4006-887 MI Capstone I 4006-888 MI Capstone II	2 2	one term one term	No	None
MS/NSA	4055-896 Proposal Development <sup>§</sup> 4055-897 MS NSSA Thesis or 4055-898 MS NSSA Project	1 4 4	one term open-ended open-ended	Yes	None

<sup>§</sup> This is an optional preparatory experience; if satisfactorily completed, credit will be deducted from the total for the MS capstone.

<sup>6</sup> A typical 4-credit, open-ended capstone experience requires six (6) months to complete, but it can take longer depending upon the topic under investigation and the depth of effort involved.

Proposal development courses are optional. The capstone experience and the number of credits required for it are defined when a graduate degree is developed by the faculty, and it is registered with New York State when the degree program is officially approved. A student can only be certified for graduation by RIT when the specific capstone experience for his or her degree program has been successfully completed and attested to – i.e. formally approved – by the faculty.

Advanced graduate certificates do not require a capstone experience.

### ***Difference between a MS Project Capstone versus a MS Thesis Capstone***

A capstone project involves some type of creative professional-level development, such as infrastructure creation, software development using traditional programming languages such as Java, C++, JavaScript, Perl, etc or modern software development tools, equipment, or a process refinement or improvement. A MS thesis is a more traditional, research-based effort, that typically also involves a development component, but that leads to external dissemination through a presentation and/or publication.

If the degree program offers a choice between a project or thesis, students who intend to begin their careers immediately after degree completion frequently choose to do a project; while students who are going on for additional graduate study or research often do a thesis. The final documentation for a project is typically 50 to 60 pages, whereas a thesis document and related publication(s) can easily be double that length.

### ***Registration for Capstone Credits***

Students will generally complete all of the coursework in a graduate program before beginning the capstone experience. Students in programs that have an open-ended capstone experience, which require a written proposal, cannot register themselves directly for capstone credit; registration is handled through the Student Services office.

Students with open-ended capstone experiences will develop a proposal document and have it approved by their faculty before beginning capstone development. After the proposal is approved, the student will be registered for capstone credit; this can occur at any time during the quarter. In some situations, the capstone credits can all be registered for in one quarter or they can be spread across several quarters to maintain the student's academic status during the time that it will take to complete the work.

Students in programs with a one-quarter capstone course experience are expected to finish all work within the quarter of registration. For students doing open-ended capstone work, the expectation is that the student will finish in approximately in 6-9 months. An approved capstone proposal is viable for up to one (1) year from the date of faculty signature. If the work is not completed within the year, the student will need the approval of his or her faculty to continue with the topic. Extensive completion delay can result in a topic “aging out,” and mean that the student needs to propose a new topic and recruit a new set of faculty. In either case, if capstone work is not completed within the registration quarter, an incomplete grade may be assigned and the normal RIT incomplete process will apply.

If capstone work is not completed within the normal timeframe the student may need to register for capstone-continuation credit to maintain active student status. Continuation-of-project and continuation-of-thesis course sections are available for degree programs

with open-ended capstone timelines to prevent students from being dematriculated due to inactivity. There is a one-credit registration charge for each quarter that this registration is necessary.

## Applying for Graduation

Graduate students should formally apply for graduation at least two (2) quarters before they expect to complete the program. Completion of the program occurs when all prerequisite work required as part of the admissions agreement has been completed, the student has at least a 3.0/4.0 GPA in his/her program of study *and*:

- An advanced certificate student has successfully completed all certificate courses.
- A MS/CSIA student has successfully completed all eleven (11) courses in the program, the MS capstone (a thesis, 4055-897) work, the required document submissions, the capstone defense, and been “passed” by all members of his or her faculty committee.
- A MS/IT student has successfully completed all eleven (11) courses in the program, the MS capstone (a project, 4002-898; or thesis, 4002-897) work, the required document submissions, the capstone defense, and has been “passed” by all members of his or her faculty committee.
- A MS/HCI student has successfully completed all eleven (11) courses in the program, the 8-credit MS capstone (a project, 4004-898; or thesis, 4004-897), the required document submissions, the capstone defense, and has been “passed” by all members of his or her faculty committee.
- A MS/MI student has successfully completed all twelve (12) courses in the program and the two (2) MS capstone courses (4006-887 and 4006-888).
- A MS/NSA student has successfully completed all eleven (11) courses in the program, the MS capstone (a thesis, 4055-897) work, the required document submissions, the capstone defense, and been “passed” by all members of his or her faculty committee.

Degree certification is not automatic. We will not know when you anticipate completing your program unless you file an application for graduation. The “Application for Graduation” is available from the Student Services office in Golisano building, Room 2120. Or you can contact the office ((585) 475-2700) and request that the packet be sent to you.

If you do not complete your degree by the quarter for which you applied to graduate, your department will automatically extend your graduation application for the next four (4) quarters. In each of those quarters, you will be re-reviewed for certification. If you do not complete your degree within that timeframe, you will be dropped from the review list and will have to reapply when you are actually ready to graduate.

## **Financial Information**

### ***Cost and Credits Hours***

Most courses that can be taken to satisfy the requirements for the graduate programs at RIT are worth four (4) credits each. “Full-time” registration status is 12 to 18 credit hours per quarter – or typically 3 to 4 courses. Graduate students taking more than 18 credits hours are charged the full-time tuition rate plus the applicable per-credit rate for each additional credit. Students must obtain prior permission from the graduate coordinator or graduate advisor to register for more than 18 credits. See <http://finweb.rit.edu/sfs/billing/tuitionandfees/1112/> for this year’s tuition costs.

There are also some minor fees. Matriculated graduate students pay the graduate student rate regardless of whether they are taking graduate or undergraduate courses. Courses may be audited for one-half the normal cost with departmental approval, but do not satisfy program or prerequisite requirements.

The graduate faculty recommends that full-time graduate students take a maximum of twelve (12) credit hours during their first quarter in a master’s program. After that the student can decide whether to take 3 or 4 courses per quarter.

### ***Graduate Assistantships***

RIT is not a traditional research university that supports large numbers of graduate students with fully-paid research or teaching assistantships. The academic departments can offer assistantships annually to a small number of individuals, who provide specific types of support for their students and computing facilities. Information about assistantship opportunities is available on your department’s website. Awards can be granted for from one up to three academic terms, depending upon the type. Award decisions are made by the program faculty before the start of each new academic year.

Academic honesty is explicitly expected of graduate assistants; refer to the section on “***Academic Honesty***” in this document for relevant information.

### ***RIT Institute Merit Scholarships***

An Institute Merit Scholarship may be available to graduate students who are receiving little or no financial support from an employer or other outside funding source. Scholarships are initially awarded at admission based on performance in prior academic study or employment, as well as on financial need. Awards can be granted for either full-time or part-time study. As discussed below, awards are typically granted for up to three academic quarters and are not automatically renewed. See the next section for information about award renewal.

The graduate coordinator, in concert with the academic departments, makes all decisions as to scholarship eligibility and award levels. To be eligible for an award in a given academic term, you must be in good academic standing (have a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0/4.0 or better), have completed all prerequisite courses before the start of a term, and have adhered to RIT’s academic honesty expectations. Should a student’s academic performance not meet RIT’s expectations, the graduate coordinator will decide whether or not a merit award will be granted for subsequent academic terms.

Students requesting an award, but who have not completed all of the program prerequisite courses, may or may not be awarded a merit scholarship at the discretion of the graduate coordinator. However the maximum amount that will be awarded in this situation is typically reduced.

Please refer to the section on “Academic Honesty” in this document for relevant information.

### ***Scholarship Renewal***<sup>7</sup>

An Institute Merit Scholarship is generally awarded for the first three (3) quarters that the student attends RIT and must be renewed if the student’s studies continue after that period. If you plan to study in a summer quarter or take courses in the next academic year and want your award continued, you will need to submit a scholarship renewal request to the graduate coordinator. Awards for full-time study will generally be continued for a maximum of two (2) academic years. Awards for part-time study can generally be continued as long as the student continues to make steady and satisfactory progress towards the degree.

The renewal forms can be found in the wall bins outside the School office, GOL-2100, from the Student Services office in GOL-2120, on your department website, or they can be requested by calling (585) 475-2700.

Please refer to the section on “Academic Honesty” in this document for information relevant to continuance of awards.

### ***Financial Statement***

Generally, the scholarship appears on your quarterly financial statements after you register for courses. However, the exact amount of the scholarship is not credited to your account until Add/Drop week (week #1) is over. At that time, since your total number of credits is set for the term, the exact amount of the scholarship is awarded can be shown.

### ***Request for Additional Scholarship***

The graduate coordinator receives many requests for scholarship awards. Please be aware that due to departmental budget constraints, requests to increase award amounts must typically be denied. We realize that a student’s financial situation may change due to unforeseen circumstances. However, the graduate coordinator has little to no capability to increase the amount of a scholarship award.

In addition, please be aware that most academic departments do not increase the amount of a scholarship solely based on academic performance at RIT. They assume that their students are striving to do their best at all times, and thus do not automatically reward or punish students for term-by-term variations in performance.

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<sup>7</sup> Note: Students are in their department’s Institute Merit Scholarship pool for the typical time required to complete the degree – either full- or part-time. If you “stop out” during your graduate study – such as leaving RIT for a job before completing your capstone requirement – you will be dropped from the merit pool. If this occurs, you will no longer be eligible for a merit award should you return to your studies at some later point in time.

### ***Other Sources of Financial Aid***

To be honest, there are not many additional department sources of assistance. The departments periodically offer Graduate Research Assistantships and Graduate Teaching Assistantships – based upon need and available monies. Information and applications are available on department websites.

U.S. citizens can also apply for federally guaranteed loans. The amount of the loan is based on the difference between your available funds and the cost of the program. If you are an international student, you need a co-signer who is an American citizen or permanent resident. Contact the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships at (585) 475-7998 for assistance or check out <http://www.rit.edu/emcs/financialaid/index.php> for information.

For international students, the International Student Office has a very limited amount of money for students who are in a desperate situation. In addition, the International Student Office awards its own scholarships. The application is available in November and is due in early December. The awards are based on the documented financial need and the academic performance of the student.

### **On Campus Jobs**

Various job opportunities are available on campus. These will not be sufficient to pay your tuition bill. However, the money can be used to supplement your living expenses. To work on campus, a student must be studying full-time. The maximum number of hours per week that can be worked on campus is twenty (20) in non-summer quarters and twenty-five (25) in summer term or for vacation quarters.

### ***Department Hiring***

Your department typically hires undergraduate and graduate students to work in their various computer labs and to support classes and faculty research on an “as needed” basis.

### **Quarterly Grader**

Individual faculty members periodically need students to grade for their courses. They will typically post notices of their grading needs and the skill requirements on the bulletin boards. Naturally, grading needs vary quarter to quarter.

### **Quarterly Teaching Assistant**

Your department hires graduate students as needed on a quarter-by-quarter basis to assist the faculty in teaching various courses. The School of Informatics’ Assistant Director of Operations generally knows which courses need teaching assistants. You can apply if a course requires skills that match your background and abilities. However, please be aware that job availability varies each quarter depending upon student enrollment and faculty need.

### **Lab Monitors (“Labbies”)**

The computing labs are staffed by students with computing skills who assist other students with general lab usage and maintain lab security. Obviously, working in a

specialized lab requires relevant knowledge in the topic(s) studied in that lab. Contact one of the lab managers below if you feel that you have the background necessary to work in a given lab.

<b>Computer Lab</b>	<b>Manager Email</b>
IST Lab Manager	<a href="mailto:gary.scarborough@rit.edu">gary.scarborough@rit.edu</a>
NSSA Lab Manager	<a href="mailto:ann.warren@rit.edu">ann.warren@rit.edu</a>

***Other RIT Departments***

Other departments on campus also hire students. RIT Student Employment (University Services Center, 87-1350) can provide information about these opportunities. Some good options are shown below.

**Information and Technology Services (ITS)**

ITS, RIT’s division for computing support, hires students to work in various capacities. You can find out about job opportunities through Student Employment or by visiting the ITS Help Desk in Building 7B, Room 1113.

**ITS Distributed Support Services (DSS)**

The DSS division of ITS (1238 Gannett) provides the colleges and divisions within RIT with computing support for their faculty, staff, and labs. DSS hires a large number of undergraduate and graduate students to work in their labs located in many different buildings on campus and to work on projects for departments and faculty members. To find employment opportunities, visit the DSS web site at [http://www.rit.edu/its/about/student\\_employment/index.html](http://www.rit.edu/its/about/student_employment/index.html).

**Note-Taking for NTID Students**

RIT has a large population of deaf and hard-of-hearing students. For many of these students, RIT supplies professional communication support (interpreter, C-Print, etc.). In addition, RIT frequently hires a student, usually a member of the class, to take notes for NTID-supported students. Highly legible handwriting, relevant background knowledge, and strong note-taking skills are important for these positions. Contact Lissa Schaefer by telephone at 475-4962 or by email at [ljsnge@rit.edu](mailto:ljsnge@rit.edu) to find out about this opportunity.

**RIT Food Service**

Jobs are available in the various food service venues on campus. You can apply for these jobs by meeting with the manager of a cafeteria. The major cafeterias on campus are the Grace Watson Residence Hall (Building 25), the NTID Dining Commons (Building 55), the Student Alumni Union (SAU) cafeterias (first floor, Building 4) and the Ritz (basement, Building 4), and at Crossroads (Building 89).

## Academic Dishonesty Policy

The School of Informatics in the B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing does not condone any form of academic dishonesty. Any act of improperly representing another person's work as one's own (or allowing someone else to represent your work as their own) is construed as an act of academic dishonesty. These acts include, but are not limited to, plagiarism in any form or use of information and materials not authorized by the instructor during an examination or for any assignment.

If a faculty member judges a student to be guilty of any form of academic dishonesty, the student will receive a failing grade for the course. Academic dishonesty involving the abuse of RIT computing facilities may result in a more severe action. If the student believes the action by the instructor to be incorrect or the penalty too severe, the student can arrange to meet jointly with the faculty member and his or her immediate supervisor. If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, an appeal may be made to the GCCIS Academic Conduct Committee. If the faculty member or the faculty member's immediate supervisor feels that the alleged misconduct warrants more severe action than failure in the course, the case may be referred to the GCCIS Academic Conduct Committee. The Academic Conduct Committee can recommend further action to the dean of the student's college – including academic suspension or dismissal from the Institute.

The following definitions will be used to clarify and explain unacceptable conduct. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of specific actions but a reasonable description to guide one's actions.

**CHEATING** includes knowingly using, buying, stealing, transporting or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an administered/un-administered test, test key, homework solution, paper, project, software project or computer program, or any other assignment. It also includes using, accessing, altering, or gaining entry to information held in a computer account or disk owned by another.

**COLLUSION** means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work or computer work (including electronic media) offered for credit. Final work submitted by a student must be substantially the work of that student. Collaboration on an assignment is expressly forbidden unless it is explicitly designated as a group project. When there is any doubt, a student should consult the instructor (NOT ANOTHER STUDENT) as to whether some action is considered collusion.

**Whenever there is any question as to whether a particular action is considered academic dishonesty, the course instructor should be consulted.**

**The penalty for academic dishonesty in a course is an automatic 'F' grade in the course; additional consequences may also result as warranted by the situation and/or as requested by the faculty involved.**

**Academic dishonesty may be grounds for immediate dismissal from departmental positions such as office employment, lab assistant, teaching assistant, graduate assistant, research assistant, etc., and may also result in the cancellation of scholarships and merit awards.**