**Industrial-Organizational Psychology MS Degree**

**Common Questions**

**GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT I-O PSYCHOLOGY**

***Can you tell me more about the profession?***

The [Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (](https://www.siop.org/)SIOP) is a great resource. They have the following definition.

I-O psychology is a dynamic and growing field that addresses workplace issues at the individual and organizational level. I-O psychologists apply research that improves the well-being and performance of people and the organizations that employ them. This involves everything from workforce planning, employee selection, and leader development to studying job attitudes and job motivation, implementing work teams, improving diversity and inclusion, and facilitating organizational change.

***How can I learn more about the certificate and degree programs at S&T?***

We have a video overview at this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Px5a1hgJn4I>

***What is the difference between a certificate and an MS degree? Which should I take?***

The certificate is fewer hours and is an introduction to the field (Applied Workplace Psychology Certificate) or human factors (Human Factors Psychology Certificate). You receive grades and graduate credit for these classes just like the MS degree. The costs are the same. Some people start with a certificate to learn more about graduate school and the field. If you take the Applied Workplace Psychology Certificate and make a “B” or better in each class you can apply to move into the MS degree and those classes will count towards the MS degree. One advantage many students appreciate is that the certificate application process does not require you to take the GRE exam.

***How many hours does it take to complete the MS?*** 37 credit hours total

***How many hours does it take to complete a certificate?*** 12 credit hours total

***What courses are offered in the MS?***

Information about all courses, including which courses are required and which courses are electives, as well as a basic timeline of course completion (assuming full-time student status) can be found here: <https://psych.mst.edu/academic-programs/graduate/>

***What courses are offered in the Applied Workplace Psychology Certificate? What courses are offered in the Human Factors Psychology Certificate?***

Information about all courses in either certificate, including a basic timeline of course completion can be found here: <https://psych.mst.edu/academic-programs/graduate/>

***I want to learn more about S&T?***

Take a virtual tour at [https://futurestudents.mst.edu/visit/virtual/#](https://futurestudents.mst.edu/visit/virtual/) Or check out our main webpage at <https://www.mst.edu/>

**APPLICATION PROCESS, DEADLINES, AND FORMS**

***What are the application requirements?***

Visit the website at <https://psych.mst.edu/academic-programs/graduate/admission-requirements/>

***How do I apply?***

The application process is online. On the application site, you can select a certificate or degree. You can also specify which semester (fall or spring) you wish to start. The link is at <https://futurestudents.mst.edu/admissions/>. There are different sections for on-campus students, international students, and distance students.

***When can I start?***

Our classes follow the normal university schedule with classes starting in the middle of August and the middle of January. It is preferred for a student to start in the Fall Semester, but some students do start in the Spring Semester.

***When I finish my graduate certificate, am I automatically in the MS program?***

No. You need to apply for the MS degree, you need to apply to complete the certificate and you need to complete your plan of study (form 1). See the link below for more information.

***I am an existing student, where can I find forms and deadlines?***

Monitor these closely as many cannot be waived <https://grad.mst.edu/currentstudents/forms/>

***Additional information can be found in the graduate catalog:*** <http://catalog.mst.edu/graduate/>

**THESIS VS. NON-THESIS**

***What is a thesis?***

A thesis is a lengthy document that demonstrates what a student has learned in a particular research area. A student works one-on-one with an advisor to develop a research question, conduct an extensive literature review, design a research experiment, collect and analyze data, and prepare scholarly documents often including conference and journal papers. Students have oral exams over their thesis called a defense.

***What is the difference between thesis and non-thesis?***

The I-O MS degree is 37 credit hours whether you do a thesis or non-thesis. Both have the same 31 credit hour foundation. Thesis students must register for two sections of Psych 6099 Research to reach a minimum of 37 credit hours. Non-thesis students take two three-credit hour elective courses to reach a minimum of 37 credit hours. The cost is the same unless a thesis student takes extra time to finish the thesis.

***Should I do a thesis?***

Writing a thesis provides more experience in conducting research and can be helpful if one is planning on pursuing a Ph.D. after completing the M.S. degree. Industry employers tend to not emphasize a thesis. A non-thesis student gains more breadth by taking additional elective classes. The majority of our students are non-thesis. Distance students can do a thesis but working closely with a professor may require trips to the campus while working on your research.

***If I want to do a thesis, where do I start?***

The first step is to find a professor in the Psychological Science Department. Our web page provides information about our faculty members’ research. You can contact a particular faculty about taking on a thesis student. This does not have to be done in the first semester, but planning ahead can be beneficial.

**TIME**

***When are classes?***

Our classes are typically one night a week. They are offered Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. The three-hour classes are 4:00 pm CST - 6:30 pm CST or 7:00 pm CST - 9:30 pm CST. We try to schedule classes to avoid students taking two classes on the same night. The one-hour Psych 5012 Ethics and Professional Responsibilities is an exception.

***Full-time vs. Part-time?***

Someone taking nine credit hours during a regular semester is considered a full-time student. You can finish the MS degree in two years at this pace (with one extra one-hour class). Many of our students are part-time and take three or six credit hours in a semester. You should expect to spend 2-4 hours outside of class for every hour in class. If you are working full-time or have other significant responsibilities, we highly recommend you start as a part-time student. You will still be able to graduate at a part-time rate, it will just take longer.

***As a distance student, can I work at my own pace in the classes?***

Not exactly, you do NOT have to participate in the class “live”. You can watch it recorded but many faculty members have weekly assignments and you need to keep up with those.

***Can I take a semester or two off?***

Once admitted to either a certificate or the Master’s program, a student can apply for a leave of absence for up to one year. This leave of absence will not count towards the time limits for degree completion.

**TAKING CLASSES AS A DISTANCE STUDENT**

We offer all MS and certificate courses as distance courses (in addition to on-campus courses). Any questions about the typical structure of distance education and global learning on campus can be answered at this link (<https://distance.mst.edu/>) or contacting [stgrad@mst.edu](mailto:stgrad@mst.edu)

**FINANCIAL AID**

***Can you tell me about financial aid?***

Financial aid is different for graduate students than undergraduate students. Some employers will help with the cost. Loans are available but students tend to find those themselves. General information is available at <https://grad.mst.edu/future-students/funding/>

***Can I get paid to work as a GRA or GTA?***

Some students do get hired as a graduate research assistant (GRA) or graduate teaching assistant (GTA). GRAs are hired directly by a professor and the availability of these positions depends on faculty funding and needs. The department typically hires one GTA who is a second-year student.

**CONTACT US**

***How can I learn more about graduate school at S&T?***

**Office of Graduate Education** at Missouri University of Science and Technology can be contacted at [grad@mst.edu](mailto:grad@mst.edu) or 573-341-4141

***How can I talk to someone in the department?***

The department’s general email is [psych@mst.edu](mailto:psych@mst.edu) and the phone number is 573-341-4956. If you are in Rolla stop by the department and visit us.

***Are you an international student?***

Find more information from the **International Affairs Office** at <https://futurestudents.mst.edu/admissions/international/>