

REQUEST FOR SUSPENSION OF ADMISSIONS TO OR DISCONTINUATION OF A GRADUATE PROGRAM

Please check one:

Suspension of Admissions

A university may suspend admissions into a graduate degree program if:

- (1) The institution plans to reactivate admissions into the program within five years of the suspension, or
- (2) The program has existing students that need to complete their degrees prior to discontinuation of the program.

If, after suspension of admissions into a graduate degree program, the program is not reactivated within the specified period, the program will be declared permanently discontinued. Reinstatement of a discontinued program will require formal approval as a new graduate degree program.

Immediate Discontinuation

An institution may immediately discontinue a program if there are no students currently enrolled in the program, and there is no intent to reactivate the program in the future. Reinstatement of a discontinued program will require formal approval as a new graduate degree program.

Date of request: March 25, 2020

Implementation date: Spring 2021

Name of institution: KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

Degree designation: Master of Digital Sciences (M.D.S.) degree

Primary institutional contact for this request:

Name: Cindy Stillings
Title: Dean of Graduate Studies (Interim)
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1. Provide a rationale for the suspension of admission or immediate discontinuation of the program.

The Master of Digital Sciences (MDS) program has been offered since the inception of the School of Digital Sciences (DSCI) eight years ago. Three years ago, DSCI, which had operated as an interdisciplinary school previously, was incorporated into the College of Communication and Information (CCI). CCI leadership and faculty decided that it would be necessary to assess DSCI's place in CCI from a curricular standpoint. That is, we set out to understand whether and how its curriculum at the time fit with the other schools in CCI. Since that time, the entire DSCI curriculum has undergone a thorough review. On the basis of that review, the Bachelor of Science curriculum underwent significant changes, and the Bachelor of Arts program suspended admissions pending any curricular changes that are forthcoming. The BS program eliminated its five concentrations, narrowed its curricular focus to web development, and created a minor in web development. In addition, DSCI changed its name to the School of Emerging Media and Technology (EMAT). All of these approved changes represent a significant and fundamental change in the school's curricular focus. The only remaining program in EMAT (formerly DSCI) to have any action taken is the MDS. Like the undergraduate programs, now is an appropriate time to review the MDS curriculum and make decisions on its focus and direction. To that end, we propose to suspend admission to the MDS in order to give faculty time to do a curricular review and revision and to give EMAT time to move current MDS students through to graduation. Our plan is to propose a new graduate program for implementation in fall 2022.

2. Indicate number of students currently enrolled in the program.

Currently, there are 26 students enrolled in the MDS program. Of those, 4 students will be graduating Spring 2020. Of the remaining 22 students, 16 students have less than 15 credit hours left to graduate, and 6 students have more than 15 credit hours left. We will offer all courses required of students in the program in the most efficient way possible. In order to efficiently accomplish this, we will communicate to students when required and elective courses in the program will be offered over the next two years, and work with each student in order to ensure they register for these courses as soon as possible. In terms of Fall 2020 admits, we have 7 students admitted unconditionally and 3 students admitted conditionally. Many of these students are international, so we are uncertain at this time if they will join the program in the fall. We anticipate we might have less than 5 students in the Fall 2020 cohort. For the students in this smaller cohort, EMAT faculty will work with them individually to customize a program that is specific to their interests and professional goals.

3. Describe how the suspension of admissions and any plan for discontinuation of program will affect the program and the students currently in the program. Explain plans for notifying current students and assisting them in the completion of their degrees, when applicable.

For any courses required or elective used by other units, we will communicate with their graduate coordinators to determine which courses will be absolutely necessary for their

students. As it stands now, we will need to coordinate with the following units for the courses listed:

College of Business Administration

MBA in Information Systems

Elective - DSCI 64210 Data Sciences

Electives of DSCI 61010 Enterprise Architecture, DSCI 62010 Business Arch,
DSCI 64010 Data Arch, and DSCI 65010 Application & Technology Arch

MS in Business Analytics

Elective – DSCI 61010 Enterprise Arch

College of Arts & Sciences

Geography – GIS (Geographic Information Science)

GIS Grad Certificate

Electives – DSCI 64010 Data Arch and DSCI 64210 Data Science

MGIS

Electives – DSCI 64010 Data Arch and DSCI 64210 Data Science

School of Information (CCI)

MLIS – Applied Data Science concentration

Required – DSCI 64210 Data Science

College of Public Health

MPH

Elective - DSCI 64210 Data Sciences

College of Aeronautics & Engineering

Technology- MTech – being sunset, not sure if students are still finishing.

Students used to take 3-4 DSCI electives because TECH did not have enough electives otherwise.

4. Will there be a loss of faculty or staff positions? If so, indicate when the faculty or staff members were or will be informed.

There will be no loss of faculty as a result of this suspension. In fact, we now have more faculty dedicated to teaching and curricular revisions than at any other time in the program's history. While the program, one that has been interdisciplinary throughout its history, has not had dedicated full-time faculty, it now has a number of faculty with joint appointments in EMAT. The following table shows the list of those faculty. Faculty Member Appointment Michael Beam, PhD 25% DSCI, 25% CCI, 50% Communication Studies Mina Choi, PhD 25% DSCI, 75% Communication Studies Abraham Avnisan, PhD 75% DSCI, 25% JMC David Silva, PhD 75% DSCI, 25% Communication Studies Tang Tang, PhD 25% DSCI, 75% JMC These are the faculty members who have contributed significantly to the BS curricular revisions, and who will do the same with the BA and MDS programs.

5. Describe the plan for communicating the suspension of admissions or discontinuation.

Applicants to the program for fall 2020 will be informed by e-mail of the suspension. Students are being given the option of either being reviewed for admission to another program. For students currently in the MDS program, the school will review their individual situations and determine what courses these students need. After this review, we will develop a plan for offering those courses or providing appropriate substitutions until students have all of the courses they need to graduate. We will communicate this plan to students through email and advising.

The signature below verifies that this request has received the necessary institutional approval and that this information is truthful and accurate.

Respectfully,

Cynthia R. Stillings
Dean of Graduate Studies (Interim)
Kent State University

CIM Approval Path

1. 03/25/20 11:45 am
David Robins (drobins): Approved for DSCI Director
2. 04/26/20 2:29 pm
Catherine Zingrone (czingron): Approved for CI CCC Agenda Role
3. 04/26/20 8:56 pm
Amy Reynolds (areyno24): Approved for CI Dean
4. 04/28/20 2:32 pm
Cynthia Stillings (cstillin): Approved for Graduate Dean
5. 05/01/20 11:54 am
Therese Tillett (tillet1): Approved for Provost