Your Guide to Getting Started in the MSLOC Program
Welcome to our MSLOC Program and Community!

A Note from the MSLOC Program Director, Dr. Kimberly S. Scott

We’re excited that you’ve decided to join us in advancing the practice of learning and organizational change. We are proud of our unique community of scholars who are eager to develop in a way that builds a strong network of practitioners across disciplines and industries. We hope that the relationships you build while you are in the MSLOC Program will become long-term sources of expertise and support for your career.

To help you get started and make the most of your graduate experiences, we have created this welcome letter and Getting Started guide that will answer many of the questions you may have about getting started with MSLOC. Whether you are full-time or part-time, seeking a degree or a certificate, we recognize that you are embarking on an exciting life-changing journey that, at times, will surely seem overwhelming. We have created materials and events to help you prepare for this journey, and we hope you take advantage of all the resources available to you, including our MSLOC staff, faculty, your student colleagues, alumni, and other NU resources.

Included in the Guide are some of those resources and suggestions to help you make a strong start. To begin:

• Carefully read the remainder of this guide and review the content in the Student Resource Center that you will find on our website.

• Reflect on your development objectives and start planning what your academic career will look like by drafting your MSLOC program plan.

• Connect with your student colleagues and MSLOC alumni via the social media tools of Facebook and LinkedIn.

These are just a few of the things you can do as you await the start of classes and our MSLOC orientation events. Information about each of these items can be found in this Getting Started guide, including a Checklist for New Students that lists important steps that you must complete prior to your first week of classes.

The admissions process unfolds gradually and requires some patience as the various NU departments are alerted of your decision to join MSLOC. Be sure to check your NU email regularly for additional announcements about next steps as your access to NU’s technology is granted and spring activities begin.

One of the very first concerns new students have is getting registered for the classes they want. You can rest assured that space has been held for you in all of our spring classes, so there’s no chance the class you want will be closed. You’ll find more details about choosing classes, creating your program plan, registering, paying tuition, and buying books and other course materials in the content that follows.
Finally, if you have time to rest and relax, take advantage of it now! The MSLOC Program has an intense and demanding curriculum because of the breadth of material that is covered, the rigorous course requirements and assignments we have designed to accelerate your learning, and the short duration of the program. We have a lot of information to cover in so little time—you will be amazed at how quickly ten weeks go by, and before you know it you will be finishing your certificate or starting your Capstone project.

Many of our students find their first year in the program to be a big adjustment period, with team meetings filling up the weekend time and reading journal articles and writing papers filling up the evenings. But, after all, you are now in a NU Master’s program, so have your “TiVo” ready until you catch a short break between quarters!

While you can expect to work hard, know that you will be working hard with fellow students and faculty who are here to learn and enjoy learning together. We hope to see you at the many MSLOC and social events that we will offer to support your learning and networking throughout your time in the program. These informal learning opportunities can be as important to your development as your coursework. And, if you want to initiate a MSLOC event, brownbag lunch, community of practice, or other learning opportunity you haven’t seen offered yet, get your colleagues together and make it happen!

You need to play a major role in shaping what your learning journey will be—so, don’t wait for someone else to shape it for you. This is your chance to create the graduate program experience you’ve been looking for.

Welcome to MSLOC!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Scott,
Assistant Professor, Learning & Organizational Change
Director, MSLOC Program and Center for Learning & Organizational Change (CLOC)
School of Education and Social Policy
Northwestern University
Introduction

This guide provides answers to most of the questions new students have as they anticipate the start of their MSLOC academic life. Please set aside some time to review this information and take the steps necessary to set yourself up for success.

Resources for Getting Started. We begin with an overview of our main information systems along with key processes you need to know about to get started at NU. This section will tell you about the many resources available to you as a student and includes some tips that students find helpful.

Checklist for New Students. The second section of this guide is a detailed onboarding checklist for you to follow, including steps to give you access to online resources. Within our Student Resource Center (located on our website), you will find guides, which will walk you through the steps to access the variety of instructional systems we use at NU. The MSLOC New Student Orientation we host early at the start of the term will complete your onboarding process.

Tips for Success. The final section of this guide provides insights into how to make the most of your academic career. You’ll find information on crafting your learning plan, preparing for your practicum, preparing for your capstone, writing and thinking critically, contributing to community, as well as advice from our recent graduates.

Resources for Getting Started

MSLOC strives to make full use of technologies that support our students’ learning experiences. Because we seek to introduce a diverse array of innovative instructional approaches, the number and variety of applications and systems used by our faculty can seem overwhelming. To add to the complexity, NU and the MSLOC Department must use several different systems to manage administrative information.

Below is an introduction to the systems and processes that you will encounter early and frequently in your academic life at NU, organized by student activity.

Receiving MSLOC Announcements, Information, and Staying In Touch

In the weeks ahead, you will become the recipient of a lot of information about MSLOC events and deadlines, course offerings, professional development opportunities, and administrative requirements, not to mention information from your classmates. The following systems are used to facilitate communication with and between students, faculty and staff.

Access to NU Systems via Your NetID and Private Password

The key to gaining access to most of NU and MSLOC systems and communication flows is having a netID and password. Once you are entered into the NU system as an active student (no later than 3 weeks before the start of the term), NU Information Technology (IT) assigns you a netID. Your netID, three letters followed by three numbers (e.g. abc123), along with a private password, are what you will be prompted to supply any time you access a NU system, such as the library, CAESAR (i.e., NU’s registration and billing
system), or Blackboard (i.e., Course Management System).

You will receive your netID in an e-mail from Leslie Zimmerman, the MSLOC Program Assistant. Also included in this e-mail will be an activation code and a link that allows you to set up your private password to accompany your netID. (You should receive this e-mail no later than three weeks before classes start—if you have not received it by then, you should contact Leslie at 847.491.7376; l-zimmerman@northwestern.edu. It can take time to get new students set up in our systems, so please be patient!

At the site where you establish your private password, you will also be assigned a Northwestern email account. It is very important that you are able to receive e-mails from your Northwestern e-mail account even if you prefer to use your home or work e-mail account for correspondence. All NU and MSLOC communications will be sent to your @u.northwestern.edu address. (See the checklist at the end of this packet for instructions for forwarding your NU e-mail to a preferred account.)

As a result of a partnership between Google and NU, your @u. account also will give you access to Northwestern password-protected Google applications (e.g., NU Google sites, docs, shared calendaring), which are only available to NU students and faculty. These applications, for example Google Docs, are commonly used by teams to collaborate on student work.

**MSLOC Website Resources**

You probably are familiar with our MSLOC website (http://www.northwestern.edu/msloc) from when you browsed its contents as you were considering applying to our program. As a current student, you should now become familiar with a section of our website that has been designed to help you more easily find links and resources that pertain to graduate studies at NU. If you click on the “Resources” link in the navigation menu of our website and then click on “Current Student Resources,” you will see the Student Resource Center, which contains helpful information for the systems and procedures you will need to use. You are expected to review all the information in the Student Resource Center before attending the New Student Orientation (held the week prior to the start of the quarter).

**Staying Connected with MSLOC**

We make use of the social media tools Facebook and LinkedIn to keep our faculty, students and alumni connected and informed about upcoming MSLOC and MSLOC-related events, job openings, and other information relevant to your professional development. One of the first tasks we will ask you to do is create your profile in LinkedIn and join the MSLOC site so you can learn about your colleagues and they can get to know about you. We will also encourage you to join the Facebook MSLOC fan page, where you and your colleagues will be notified of social and other events of interest.

We have created a subgroup for new students within LinkedIn that you can use to get answers from your fellow students to the questions that new students typically have about joining NU and the MSLOC Program.

**Planning and Registering for Courses**

You have many options to think about as you map out your graduate school plan. (One common concern you can put aside, however, is whether you can get into all the classes you want—we have reserved space for you in the MSLOC courses you need to take during your first quarter.) The best way for you to move forward is to review the MSLOC Student Handbook and to complete the planning documents that you must submit to ensure ongoing course availability and timely registration. Program planning and registration processes are described below.

**MSLOC Student Handbook**

A good way to orient yourself to MSLOC will be to read the MSLOC Student Handbook (posted as a link in the Student Resource Center on the MSLOC website). Read the Handbook in advance of the New
Student Orientation and come prepared with your questions.

Policies and practices have been established to facilitate the progression of students through their graduate studies. Some of these practices are important to know about as you construct your program plan; others are necessary to consider if you plan to change your enrollment status from certificate to degree-seeking, for example, or if you need to take a Leave of Absence at any time. Other important policies to be aware of include requirements for completing your Practicum or Capstone within a given time period and guidelines for assigning grades.

It is your responsibility to comply with NU’s and MSLOC’s policies, so please take the time to fully understand the contents of our student handbook.

**MSLOC Program Plans**

Your MSLOC program plan is your academic planning form used to guide your enrollment decision-making and to establish your intended course of study with the MSLOC Department. You are required to keep an updated program plan filed with the MSLOC office throughout your time in our program. You can begin working on your plan right away, described in more detail below and in the Student Resource Center section about program plans.

Because MSLOC is a flexible program that will be different for each person, you will need to create a program plan that specifies the core and elective courses you want to take for each quarter and maps your intended progression—from the start of your program projected through your anticipated degree or certificate completion date.

We expect program plans to remain relatively stable once you have submitted your final draft to MSLOC. However, you can make changes to your program plan at any time. The MSLOC office will check that the courses you registered for each term match what is stated in your program plan by the posted deadlines. (Deadlines will be communicated to all students each term via e-mail.) Late fees and, in some cases, registration holds go into effect when program plans are not kept up to date, so it is important that you submit and maintain an accurate copy of your plan, and get approval of any changes by submitting a revised program plan by the communicated deadline for a given term.

**Getting Started**

We have created a number of resources to help you get started drafting your program plan; they can be found on the MSLOC website in the Student Resource Center. There, you can find guidelines, sample plans, important MSLOC policies to keep in mind when selecting your courses, and the template you should use to create your program plan. Course descriptions and schedules can be found on the MSLOC and Northwestern University websites.

In our Student Resource Center, there is a section that reviews the program plan process and things to consider when drafting your plan, such as when to take the Practicum and Capstone classes. Once you have thought through your draft plan, we are happy to help you finalize it, both during the New Student Orientation when we will answer your questions and in one-on-one meetings with your MSLOC Program Advisor Terri Cramer.

**Which Courses to Put On Your Plan First**

The number of classes you will take will depend on your status as a part-time (1 or 2 classes) or full-time (3 classes) student. Advice on which classes to take first depend on which term you are starting and can be found in the Program Planning Guidelines located in the Student Resource Center section on program plans. The Build Your Own Program tool, also found in this section, is an additional helpful resource.

**Timing and Due Dates**

Your initial program plan should be submitted to the MSLOC Program Advisor Terri Cramer at or shortly after the New Student Orientation and before classes start. Terri will provide you with feedback on whether your plan meets all the requirements for graduating or achieving the certificate, and will provide advice and
answer questions you may have about your plan. Once your plan has been submitted, it is your responsibility to keep it up to date. Keeping your plan updated guarantees space will be reserved for you in the classes you want. In the case of a class at capacity, enrollment priority will be given to those whose plans specify the given class. Several weeks before every quarter you will receive a pre-term registration news email from Leslie that will highlight when updated program plans are due.

**CAESAR: Course Registration and Tuition Payment**

You will register for the courses you wish to take each quarter by using CAESAR, NU’s on-line registration and reporting system. A tutorial for how to use CAESAR, how to find class listings and register is available in the Student Resource Center registration section. Space has already been reserved for you in your first quarter’s classes. If you encounter problems with registration, please contact Leslie for help.

Billing and tuition payments also are handled through CAESAR. If you register before the 10th of the month, tuition is due at the end of that same month; if registration happens after the 10th of the month, then tuition is not due until the end of the following month.

**Preparing for Coursework**

Once you know which course(s) you will take your first quarter, you should become familiar with the course expectations, required materials, and important deadlines. To access course information, you will need to have your netID and password so you can login to NU’s Course Management System, also called Blackboard.

**Blackboard**

With your Northwestern netID and password, you will have access to “Blackboard,” the course management system used for most of your NU courses and by the MSLOC Department. You will find information on how to use Blackboard in our Student Resource Center Blackboard section. However, it is a user-friendly resource that you can learn with some proactive investigation. You can access Blackboard through the MSLOC web page (under Current Student Resources) or you can go directly via the following URL: courses.northwestern.edu/webapps/login/.

As an MSLOC student, you will automatically have access to the “MS in Learning & Organizational Change” Blackboard site listed under your courses. (If you do not see this site listed after you login to Blackboard, please contact Leslie.) There you can find many of the documents and resources we have gathered for students to access during their time in our program, including course syllabi and information about Practicums and Capstones.

After you have registered for your courses through CAESAR, and once the instructor has made the course site available, you also will have access to the course Blackboard sites specific for those courses. Your course Blackboard site will typically contain the course syllabus, assignments and announcements about course requirements. Blackboard sites have features that enable you to post discussions, upload finished work, and check grades for individual assignments. Note that instructors can choose to keep the course designated “unavailable” until they are ready to release its contents to students. The course sites are usually available one week prior to the course start date.

**Course Materials**

Several weeks before the start of every quarter, you will receive a pre-quarter email announcement from Leslie, stating which courses are offered during the upcoming term and the textbooks and other materials that will be required for each course. Course materials also are listed in each course’s syllabus, or announced by the instructor through Blackboard, and can include textbooks, coursepacks (a customized collection of articles or book chapters) and additional materials, such as assessments.

You are responsible for the purchase of materials required for each class. We use a system called
University Readers to distribute MSLOC coursepacks. University Readers is an online service that allows you to order the hardcopy coursepack and to have it sent directly to you. (Coursepacks contain the hardcopies of all the readings from book chapters and journals that MSLOC instructors have selected for a given course.) See the “Checklist for New Students” for instructions on how to set up an account in University Readers.

Textbooks can be purchased from on-line booksellers such as Amazon or from the NU Bookstore, located in the basement of Norris Center on the Evanston Campus. Other materials may be required for purchase through the MSLOC office, such as assessments, cases, and simulation materials. All such materials purchased through the MSLOC Office can be paid by a check made out to “Northwestern University” and given to Leslie during office hours. You will be notified of other alternatives for payment as they become available.

We encourage students to purchase their coursepacks and books as soon as they are available. Our courses usually have assignments due the first week of the quarter, in addition to a heavy reading load. Your first class meeting is not a simple review of the syllabus—we jump right in to the course content. We expect students to have read the syllabus completely and to be prepared to ask questions about assignments if they have them, since we do not take class time to walk through the syllabus in depth. Our instructors take great care to write syllabi that are detailed and thorough, so please take the time to read them and understand the course requirements.

The most recent versions of MSLOC syllabi are posted on the general “MS in Learning & Organizational Change” Blackboard course prior to the actual course sites becoming available.

In addition to preparing for the content of your courses, you will need to ensure you are set up to access the online resources and information needed to successfully complete your course work. Many of your technical questions will be addressed in the Student Resource Center, but as soon as you receive your netID and activation code from Leslie, you should get your NU email account established quickly (see the “Checklist for New Students” below) and begin using it or forward it to your preferred personal email account so that you can ensure you receive all departmental and university communications. We will use your personal email address provided on your application form for only a limited time before we begin to routinely communicate with you via your @u.northwestern.edu account.

**Getting Wired**

A wireless-enabled laptop is required for your studies; see the “Checklist for New Students” below and the Student Resource Center for suggested technical requirements.

Once your laptop is configured for NU’s intranet, you will be able to access the library, CAESAR, Blackboard and the rest of NU and MSLOC services and systems on and off campus. Our classrooms all have multiple network ports, but you can also take advantage of NU’s wireless system. Because every laptop has different standards and security filters, we recommend you follow the instructions listed in the “Checklist for New Students,” and consider bringing your laptop to NUIT Support located at 1800 Sherman Avenue (www.it.northwestern.edu/supportcenter), so the system administrators there can be sure that you are set to go.

**Your Journey Begins**

Although this is a lot of information to absorb, know that you’ll have plenty of opportunities to ask questions and get answers before you start your classes. The MSLOC staff, experienced students, and faculty are now part of your professional and social network, ready to help you embark on this new journey. Welcome aboard!
## Contact Us

The MSLOC staff is here to make your transition to graduate school a good experience. Be sure to contact us with your questions and needs.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Member</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Contact For…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leslie Zimmerman</strong>, Program Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:l-zimmerman@northwestern.edu">l-zimmerman@northwestern.edu</a>, 847.491.7376</td>
<td>Student and faculty services including class scheduling and registration, billing issues, events planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terri Cramer</strong>, Assistant Director</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tcramer@northwestern.edu">tcramer@northwestern.edu</a>, 847.467.1481</td>
<td>Prospective student recruitment, general advising on MSLOC policies and program plans, career counseling, alumni relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keeley Sorokti</strong>, Instructional Technology Coordinator, MSLOC Student</td>
<td><a href="mailto:msloc.techsupport@u.northwestern.edu">msloc.techsupport@u.northwestern.edu</a>, 847.467.1872</td>
<td>Instructional technology help (Blackboard, MSLOC Wiki, Adobe Connect, Google Applications, creating presentations, MSLOC Knowledge Centers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jeff Merrell</strong>, Associate Director, Instructor MSLOC 430 “Creating and Sharing Knowledge”</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j-merrell2@northwestern.edu">j-merrell2@northwestern.edu</a>, 847.467.5292</td>
<td>Practicum coaching, organizational partnerships, marketing, teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kimberly Scott</strong>, Director, instructor MSLOC 420 “Accelerating Learning &amp; Performance”</td>
<td><a href="mailto:k-scott@northwestern.edu">k-scott@northwestern.edu</a>, 847.467.3102</td>
<td>Organizational strategy, curriculum planning and development, faculty staffing and relations, research, teaching and capstone advising</td>
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MSLOC Getting Started Guide updated Jan 2010
Checklist for New Students

What follows is a Checklist for New Students you can reference for getting connected to MSLOC and Northwestern University and to be prepared for your first quarter of studies. Please contact the MSLOC office at 847-491-7376 or lzimmerman@northwestern.edu if you have questions about any of these checklist items.

☐ Hold your calendar for the New Student Orientation. The New Student Orientation is designed to supplement the Student Resource Center that is available on the MSLOC website. During the session, we’ll answer any remaining questions you have about how to use NU and MSLOC systems and applications, how to create your program plan, and how to take advantage of the many NU resources available to you. Refer to your admission letter to note the date of the New Student Orientation. While not mandatory, we strongly suggest you plan to attend.

☐ Activate your netID and establish your private password and NU e-mail address. Your netID, three letters followed by three numbers (e.g., abc123), and password are what you will be prompted to supply any time you access a NU system, such as the library, CAESAR, or Blackboard. Leslie will send you an email with your netID, an activation code, a link and the instructions for establishing your password and NU e-mail address. You should receive this e-mail within two weeks after your receipt of this “Getting Started” guide.

☐ Forward your @u.northwestern.edu e-mail account to a preferred email address. All NU and MSLOC communications will be sent to your @u.northwestern.edu address. For this reason, you must be able to receive e-mails from your Northwestern e-mail account even if you prefer to use your home or work email account for correspondence. Your [name]@u.northwestern.edu email address can be forwarded to your work or home email address by following the instructions found at this link: mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=10957. Remember that even if you forward your @u.northwestern.edu e-mail to another e-mail of your choice, you will need to regularly check Google applications such as Sites and Docs for team documents and course Knowledge Centers. Note: Some students find it useful to use the @u.northwestern.edu e-mail account for all of their MSLOC related correspondence. You may want to consider waiting a few weeks prior to deciding whether or not to forward e-mail.

☐ Review the Student Resource Center content to become familiar with NU and MSLOC systems. We have created online training materials to introduce students to NU’s instructional technologies (e.g., Blackboard, @u accounts) and systems used in the MSLOC Department (e.g., MSLOC Wiki, digital portfolio). We will answer your questions and go into more depth during the MSLOC New Student Orientation, but we expect you to have introduced yourself to the key systems prior to attending this session.

☐ Read the MSLOC Student Handbook. Review the policies, practices and helpful tips contained in the MSLOC Student Handbook. You are responsible for understanding and complying with the information it contains. The MSLOC Student Handbook is posted in your Student Resource Center materials on our MSLOC website. You should read the handbook in advance of the New Student Orientation and come prepared with your questions.

☐ Draft your program plan. An up-to-date program plan is a requirement before enrolling in classes each quarter. The information and materials necessary for you to draft your program plan are available in the Student Resource Center. Use this information to get acquainted with when courses are offered and to start mapping out which classes
you want to take and when. We’ll collect your program plan and answer any questions you have during the New Student Orientation.

☐ **Purchase your books and coursepacks.** Several weeks before the start of each quarter, Leslie sends out a pre-quarter announcement to inform students about upcoming classes and required materials. Your course syllabi, available on the MSLOC Blackboard site, also will tell you what materials, including textbooks, are required for your course. You can order your books through an on-line service such as Amazon or buy them from the campus bookstore located in the basement of Norris. Coursepacks, which are collections of articles and other reading materials compiled by your instructor, are available through the on-line service called University Readers.

To set up an account and receive an e-mail from *University Readers* that will notify you when coursepacks are available for purchase:

- Go to universityreaders.com.
- Look for the ‘Student’ section on the right navigation menu.
- Follow the instructions to be notified by email when the coursepack is available for purchase (you will be prompted to create an account and provide necessary information).
- Once you receive the e-mail notification, enter the website per the instructions above, and you will see the MSLOC coursepacks available for purchase. The service will send electronic copies of the first 20 percent of the coursepack readings so you can begin your studies right away.

☐ **Complete and return the Admission Health Record form and the Insurance Coverage Selection form to Health Services.** To learn more about health care coverage requirements and the forms that you must submit prior to starting classes, please visit NU’s health services entrance requirements web page: [http://www.nuhs.northwestern.edu/evanston/entrance.aspx](http://www.nuhs.northwestern.edu/evanston/entrance.aspx).

For more information about NU Health Services for the Evanston campus and links to required forms, visit their website at [http://www.nuhs.northwestern.edu/evanston/default.aspx](http://www.nuhs.northwestern.edu/evanston/default.aspx).

☐ **Create your profile on LinkedIn and join the MSLOC LinkedIn site for new students.** We have created a LinkedIn site that MSLOC current students, faculty and alumni can use to post job and internship opportunities and job-hunting resources. If you are not already a LinkedIn user, please create an account at [http://www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com). If you already have a profile on LinkedIn, find our site by entering “MSLOC” into the search field and choosing “groups” from the pick list to the left of the search field. Request to join the group.

To take advantage of the networking capabilities of LinkedIn, we have created a subgroup on the site just for new students. Once you are a member of the MSLOC LinkedIn site, click on the “Subgroups” tab and join the “MSLOC: Spring 2010 New Students” subgroup. Use this site to post questions and ideas. MSLOC Buddies and staff members will check the site regularly to respond to discussion posts.

☐ **Take time to connect with your MSLOC Buddy.** Shortly before the beginning of the quarter, you can expect to be contacted by an MSLOC student currently in the program. This person has agreed to be a resource for you, providing an experienced student’s perspective about our program. MSLOC Buddies will also be monitoring the new student subgroup on LinkedIn. Have your questions ready!
Keep current with MSLOC and related events with Facebook. We have created a fan page so that students, alumni, faculty and MSLOC special guests can stay tuned to social and other events of interest to the MSLOC community. We post questions and requests for ideas and encourage our “fans” to join in on the discussions. If you have a Facebook account, join the MSLOC fan page by typing in “MSLOC” in the search field and clicking on “Become a Fan” when you open up the page. Be sure to set up your Facebook so that all postings from MSLOC will show up in your newsfeed or, alternately, plan to check the fanpage regularly.

Get a WildCARD. The WildCARD is your student identification card, which will show your picture and student identification number. You will need a WildCARD to use the library after 5 PM, enter the sports and recreation facilities, use Health Services, and take advantage of graduate student discounts to museums or professional association gatherings. (Show your WildCARD at the Century 12 and CineArts Theatres in Evanston and get the student rate!) The WildCARD office is located in the basement of Norris University Center. For location and hours of operation, please call 847.467.6843 or visit www.univsvcs.northwestern.edu/WildCard/index.html

Have a laptop ready for use in class. A laptop is required for your studies; there are several core classes that require a laptop for the final case analysis and/or for every class meeting. Your laptop should have the following requirements:

• Has a microphone
• Can connect via wireless
• The laptop itself should have a camera (or you can connect an external webcam)
• Has Microsoft Office version 2007 or higher (students and professors often share files that cannot be read by previous versions of Office). You can purchase Microsoft Office and other software at a discount through Northwestern: http://www.it.northwestern.edu/software/office/index.html.
• Has Mozilla Firefox installed—this is the preferred browser for Blackboard: http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/.
• We suggest that the laptop follow the Northwestern University Information Technology hardware specifications: http://www.it.northwestern.edu/hardware/.

Connect your computer to the NU network. Set up your computer to connect to the NU network on and off campus by installing the Virtual Private Network (VPN) client. Once installed, you will have access to resources, such as full-text articles through the Northwestern Library. See www.it.northwestern.edu/connected for instructions.

Because each laptop has different security constraints, we suggest you make a visit to the NUIT walk-in office in person, call or go on-line for personalized help: www.it.northwestern.edu/supportcenter. You can also ask them to set up your laptop’s wireless connectivity so you can access the internet in our classrooms or elsewhere on campus.

Once classes start, regularly scheduled walk-in clinics, called “Laptop ER,” are held in Norris Center. For the schedule, see: www.it.northwestern.edu/laptoper/.

NOTE: Firefox is the preferred browser for NU web-based applications.

Register for courses and pay tuition. You will register for courses by using CAESAR, NU’s on-line registration and reporting system. Instructions for how to use CAESAR, how to find class listings and register are covered in Student Resource Center sections. Open registration is available several weeks before each quarter begins. (Space has already been reserved for you in MSLOC classes, so don’t worry about getting closed out of your courses.) Look for the pre-quarter e-mail from Leslie to alert you to registration deadlines.
You may also pay your tuition through CAESAR. You can have tuition electronically deducted from a checking account or you can use a credit card. Approved credit cards are American Express, Discover and MasterCard; VISA is not accepted due to VISA regulations. Please note: the third party service provider will charge a 2.75% processing fee for all credit card payments. More details are in the Student Resource Center for billing and payment instructions, and can also be found here: www.northwestern.edu/sfs/payments/faq.html#Payments1. Note that if you enroll after the 10th of a given month, your tuition bill will not be due until the end of the following month.

☐ **Spend some time exploring the NU e-world.** Explore the NU homepage at [www.northwestern.edu](http://www.northwestern.edu). You can find the NU virtual library, Blackboard (Course Management System), and CAESAR (NU-wide course offerings) by clicking on the “Students” link on the NU homepage and using the “On-Line Tools” located on the left-hand navigation menu. The NU student homepage “NU Link” nulink.northwestern.edu is a great resource you can use to tailor the types of notifications you want to receive about sporting and cultural events across NU. Enter your netID and password in the upper right of the page and follow the prompts to build a customized alert and personal planning service. In addition, PlanIt Purple is your source for all events happening on campus: planitpurple.northwestern.edu.

☐ **Learn more about your @u.northwestern.edu e-mail account and the Google suite of applications.** NU has partnered with Google to deliver enhanced collaboration services. Google's robust educational tools, designed specifically for universities, improve the quality of Northwestern student collaboration services, e.g. increased e-mail storage, improved service quality with calendaring, instant messaging, and documents, spreadsheet, and presentation applications. Note that if you decide to forward your Northwestern e-mail account to another address, note that you will still need to become familiar with the functionality of the Google applications. For more information, including tutorials, go to u.northwestern.edu. (You will prompted for your netID and password.) An excellent resource guide created by NUIT for learning more about Google tools capabilities can be found at: [http://www.it.northwestern.edu/stucollab/faq.html](http://www.it.northwestern.edu/stucollab/faq.html). In addition, there are great videos on YouTube describing how Google Docs and Sites work. ([http://www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), keywords “How to use Google Docs” or “How to use Google Sites”)

☐ **Explore the MSLOC Wiki.** We have designed a MSLOC Wiki to capture written contributions from students and faculty and to be a resource to the larger community. Feel free to roam the pages to see what your colleagues in MSLOC are interested in, including Capstone topics that our students have pursued. You can start your exploration by reviewing the MSLOC Wiki Community Portal: [http://wiki.sesp.northwestern.edu/msloc/index.php/MSLOC:Community_Portal](http://wiki.sesp.northwestern.edu/msloc/index.php/MSLOC:Community_Portal). You will receive a prompt to log in. Create a user name for yourself that follows the following standard: First-Last.

☐ **Familiarize yourself with how to properly cite references in APA style.** You will be required to write many papers during your tenure as a student in MSLOC. Here are several actions you can take to ensure you are prepared:

- Attend an EndNote or Zotero training session offered through the NU Library. EndNote and its counterpart, Zotero, are software programs designed to integrate with MSWord and help you store and manipulate bibliographic information. More information can be found on the NU Library Research Guide: [http://libguides.northwestern.edu/content.php?pid=26823&sid=194165](http://libguides.northwestern.edu/content.php?pid=26823&sid=194165).

• Review the excellent tutorials and FAQ section on the official APA web site: www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx

☐ Learn about Kellogg courses and other elective options. If you are interested in taking a Kellogg course for one of your electives at some point in your academic career, you can begin to get a feel for what is offered each term by using this search engine: http://www20.kellogg.northwestern.edu/dpco/catalog.asp. Kellogg has a part-time (downtown Chicago campus) and a full-time (Evanston campus) program. All classes with section numbers in the 70’s are downtown offerings, all others are Evanston. Non-Kellogg students are allowed to take only one Kellogg class per term. Prior to each term, the MSLOC Program Advisor sends the list of available electives across all the NU schools, including a list of open Kellogg classes for a given term, along with instructions on how to register (since each school/department has a unique system).

☐ Obtain a (C-commuter) parking permit from the Parking Office. If you plan to regularly park on campus before 4:00 PM on a weekday, plan to stop for a student parking pass or plan to get fined $50 dollars (seriously!). No permit is needed after 4:00 PM and weekends for parking located near Annenberg Hall. Parking maps that show student parking locations can be found in the Parking Office or on their website at www.northwestern.edu/up/parking/. The office is located at 1819 Hinman Avenue (on the south end of campus). Daily, monthly and quarterly passes are available.

☐ Check for upcoming MSLOC events on our MSLOC Calendar. We sponsor a number of MSLOC social and professional events that will occur throughout the year. For example, we have a Project Showcase in December and again in May where our students present their best practicum and capstone work and the entire community gathers to network and celebrate their colleagues’ achievements. You’ll find the MSLOC calendar on the Student Resource Center. It lists event dates, NU holidays, and beginning and end dates for quarters. Be sure to take a break from your course assignments to enjoy these events and connect with your colleagues inside and beyond the MSLOC Community.

☐ Become aware of the many resources available to you as a graduate student at NU. The University websites www.northwestern.edu, www.hereandnow.northwestern.edu, and www.gradconnections.northwestern.edu contain a wealth of information that will help you become familiar with the NU campus and community. Links to these service offerings and more can be found on the Student Resource Center:

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Tips for Success

Craft Your Individual Learning Plan

During your first fall term, you will become acquainted with the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) as a required assignment in MSLOC 410-1 “Foundations.” Not to be confused with your MSLOC program plan, your ILP is your personal plan of action for acquiring the skills, knowledge, abilities and experiences that you have determined are important in order to achieve your desired professional and personal goals. It becomes your own roadmap for decision-making to direct your choices during your academic career: the individual and group projects you will choose in your classes, the extra-classroom activities you will engage in, the practicum work to provide you with the experience you seek, the electives that best address your knowledge gaps, and—very importantly—your Capstone question and the area of deep expertise you will develop.

A carefully crafted ILP enables you to think holistically about how to best leverage the investment of time and resources you are making as you pursue your MSLOC degree or certificate. Important elements that inform your ILP might include:

- your personal goals and aspirations for career and life, both near- and longer-term
- insights regarding your own motivation for entering a graduate program
- areas of strength or needs for development as they relate to the competencies important to your career
- feedback you’ve received from other sources, e.g. performance feedback from your workplace or coaching you may have received from a mentor
- results from assessments you’ve taken, e.g. the leadership and MBTI assessments you will take as part of your MSLOC Program
- resources and opportunities available to you inside and outside the classroom and in your professional and personal life

Reference and revise your ILP periodically throughout your academic career to ensure you are making progress toward the goals you have set for yourself. Use it as a launching pad for discussions with your MSLOC advisor, MSLOC faculty, and others in your life you rely on to provide you with advice and guidance.

Prepare for Your Practicum

Although you won’t likely begin your practicum until most of your core MSLOC coursework is complete, it is a valuable exercise to begin thinking about the type of practicum experience you want to have. The practicum is a 10-week applied research project (scoped to be approximately 100 hours) that students complete to demonstrate their skills in applying MSLOC concepts to “real world” organizational challenges.

You can choose to work as an individual or in a small consulting team to contribute LOC-based knowledge and expertise for a “client” you identify or with an MSLOC organizational partner. MSLOC faculty and staff will serve as coaches who advise you throughout the engagement process to ensure your success. In addition to the outcomes you produce for your client, you will also create a case-study presentation. Exemplary work will be shared with MSLOC students and members of the larger Center for Learning & Organizational Change community.

You can choose to engage in your practicum at any point after you have completed or are concurrently enrolled in your last MSLOC core courses. One or two terms in advance of when your practicum is scheduled, prepare for a session with the MSLOC Practicum Advisor to talk about your practicum interests by thinking about the type of experience you would like to have as well as any ideas for the client organization you would like to work with.

For more information about the practicum, including requirements and deadlines for enrollment, refer to the support materials in Blackboard: “MS in Learning and Organizational Change> For Your Classes> For Your Practicum.”
Prepare for Your Capstone

The MSLOC Capstone Project is designed as a series of three courses near the end of each degree student’s program and is open only to MSLOC degree candidates. A pre-requisite for beginning your capstone is the completion of or concurrent enrollment in all 7 MSLOC core courses.

Although the Capstone is more application-oriented than a traditional Master’s thesis, you should regard this as your culminating take-away from the MSLOC Program. The Capstone provides an opportunity for you to independently design and evaluate a study or intervention that incorporates the use of research methods and empirical analysis, sharpening your critical thinking skills throughout the process. The project you choose should concentrate on one of the three MSLOC focus areas: Learning & Performance, Knowledge Management or Strategic Change.

It is never too early to begin thinking about your Capstone topic. One way to direct your planning is to consider a question that you would like to think deeply about and that would result in some significant insights. The best of all scenarios is to center on a question that 1) will sustain your interest through the three-term series and beyond, 2) is relevant to the industry you are working in or aspire to work in, and 3) by achieving expertise in your chosen topic area, you will be able to parlay your expertise into a career opportunity, whether in a new field or with larger scope responsibilities within your current one.

To start exploring choices for a capstone topic, you may want to consider:

- Reviewing professional journals and other publications within fields of interest to you to determine current trends and needs
- Talking to industry leaders to determine threats and opportunities that are influencing an industry or area of enterprise of interest to you
- Finding out what content knowledge and areas of expertise are valued by employers who you are interested in working for or by those who are in positions you are interested in having
- Paying attention to what excites you in your classes and keeping notes on ideas as they occur; have conversations with MSLOC faculty and your fellow students to test your ideas
- Reviewing the abstracts and executive summaries of capstone work from students who have preceded you. (You’ll find this information on the MSLOC wiki.)

Capstone projects only start in the spring term with all capstone entrants enrolling in MSLOC 461 Capstone Project. The purpose of MSLOC 461 is to teach you to effectively design and conduct a research study and, in the process, learn how to read, understand, and evaluate research.

One key aspect of the Capstone is the advice, support and coaching you receive from your Capstone Advisor. Students are matched with an advisor early in Capstone 1 based on the students’ interest area and advisor availability. MSLOC Capstone Advisors are MSLOC faculty who possess doctoral degrees and, with their expertise in conducting a research-based inquiry, can guide their advisees through the design, planning and execution of their capstone.

For more information about the capstone, refer to the support materials in Blackboard: “MS in Learning and Organizational Change> For Your Classes> For Your Capstone.”

Write and Think Critically

Good writing is the highest form of critical thinking. It is through writing about a topic that you can come to think differently about a concept or ideas because it forces you to organize your thoughts, logically evaluate the information you have gathered (and your assumptions), and present your conclusions in a persuasive manner. Consider the following:

Even the simplest writing task, such as a summary of an article, requires that students make important critical choices: What information is most important to this argument? What might be left out? More complex writing assignments ask students to make more difficult choices about a topic - choices that eventually bring them to the questions: "What is it that I think about this subject? How did I arrive at what I think? What are my assumptions, and are they valid? How can I work with facts,"
observations, inferences, and so on, in order to convince others of what I think?"

(Source: www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/faculty/pedagogies/thinking.shtml)

Therefore, you should expect the organization, clarity and precision of your writing (including grammar and spelling) to be graded along with the quality of the content and information presented in your course work. Students also are expected to appropriately cite the resources they use to create their work so as to avoid the serious implications of violating our standards for academic integrity. (See the MSLOC Student Handbook for information about our policy on academic integrity.)

MSLOC coursework requires many written assignments to give students the opportunity to demonstrate their critical thinking skills and communication skills. For example, your capstone project requires several papers that will be used to present your research to both academic and practitioner audiences. Because knowledge sharing is at the core of the MSLOC program, we have high expectations for our students to share their writing with others, and we encourage our students to publish their work.

If you or our instructors observe that you need help with your writing skills, we will meet with you to discuss options for improving your writing. Make use of NU’s writing services, and other online resources, as needed. We may ask you to work with a coach to help you with your writing, or recommend a course or seminar you should take to improve your writing. These additional studies will not be counted as graduate credit toward completing your degree, but they may be necessary for you to successfully complete your other program requirements.

Contribute to Our Community

Participation in the MSLOC community is an activity that will generate dividends far beyond the time and effort you contribute. Building your professional and social network via the relationships you form in MSLOC will enhance your professional life now and after graduation in greater ways than any classroom experience can deliver.

Reach out to MSLOC students, faculty and staff to learn about their interests and expertise and to share yours. Make time to participate in the frequent events hosted by MSLOC, the Center for Learning & Organizational Change and your fellow students. If you perceive a need or have an interest area that you think others will share, be inventive in how to translate that interest into an event or opportunity. Put into practice what you will be learning in the classroom regarding building communities of practice, engaging others, and demonstrating informal and formal leadership.

Heed Some Advice from Recent Grads

Each term, our new graduates complete a survey that provides us with feedback we can use to assess our students’ growth and development during their academic tenure and to continuously improve the experience that the MSLOC program provides. One of the questions we ask is, “What advice would you like to give future students in the MSLOC program?” Not surprisingly, your colleagues had some valuable things to say. Here are some of their responses:

“Make use of all the opportunities for personal and professional development that the program provides.”

“Don’t sweat it. Just enjoy the experience—do the work—and reflect. You’ll definitely evolve through the program and be a better person for it.”

“Trust in the process, listen to all the advice, stay focused on your game plan, and have fun (enjoy the community and all it has to offer - there’s no other quite like it)”

“I am glad that I tried a bit of everything. Don’t focus too much on one aspect of the program.”

“I would recommend building relationships with the students you will meet. There are many great opportunities to engage in informal networking. These peers could be your future bosses!”

Congratulations once again on your admission to MSLOC. On behalf of all the MSLOC staff and faculty, we are glad you are with us, and we wish you success and fulfillment in your learning journey ahead!