

Evaluation of the UT Instructional Technology Online Master's Program

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The University of Tennessee

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Introduction

I am a current graduate student proposing to design and conduct this outcome evaluation on the Instructional Technology online program at the University of Tennessee. The purpose is to determine whether the program prepares its students for the workforce and to identify possible areas of improvement. The study is necessary because the program objective is to train graduate students for jobs in the Instructional Technology field. The marketability of these graduates and their ability to retain employment will impact program recruitment and sustainability and reflect on the university. This two-fold evaluation will collect data from recent graduates and from a panel of experts conducting a portfolio review. This proposal addresses the evaluation questions, participants, design and methodology, proposed analysis, budget, and dissemination plan. In addition, the proposal highlights my qualifications as an evaluator.

Description of Program

The Instructional Technology (IT) online program at the University of Tennessee (UT) prepares master's degree students for work involving designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating online learning environments in a variety of settings. These settings include: education (both K12 and higher education), government, corporate, and nonprofit organizations. The program is entirely online, with synchronous and asynchronous classes. The synchronous courses are offered after 5 p.m. The IT concentration requires 33 credit hours and results in a master's in education. The IT program is part of the Educational Psychology Department. Students have the flexibility to earn the degree in two, three, or four years. The program is offered by two full-time professors and up to four adjunct professors teaching per semester. Approximately four to six courses are offered per semester.

The program does not place an emphasis on learning specific technology skills. Rather the program strives to provide a framework for students to make informed decisions about

incorporating appropriate technology for the situation in designing learning environments. The UT IT Online program emphasizes theory and pedagogy. A professional portfolio takes the place of a thesis and is required for successful completion of the program. The first course, ProSeminar I is offered in the fall and includes an introduction to the portfolio requirement as well as an assignment to wireframe a portfolio and provide two artifacts. Wireframing, the skeletal framing of the website, consists of setting up all sections of the portfolio so that artifacts can be easily added later. Artifacts are items created during the program (although not exclusively from coursework) and used to evidence competencies in instructional design. Proseminar II is offered in the spring and is taken in one of the last semesters of coursework. The portfolio is a requirement for this course, and students cannot graduate from the program without passing the portfolio requirement. A committee of three professors assesses the portfolio as a comprehensive presentation as a professional in Instructional Technology. The portfolio is then used to pursue employment in the field.

The portfolio requires a professional statement, resume, program of study, and artifact categories (University of Tennessee IT online program, 2017). Ten artifacts are required, two each in five of the six listed categories. Artifacts are typically from coursework throughout the program but can also be related to employment or outside activities. The required artifact categories are: evidence of theoretical knowledge in IT, the design of learning environments, and the design of assessments and evaluations. The student must select two of the following artifact categories as well: evidence of collaboration in the field, authorship of multimedia for learning, or evidence of leadership towards ethical practice in Instructional Design. Each artifact must include: 1) a description, 2) a rationale explaining how each artifact reflects the student's understanding of instructional/educational technology as a field, and 3) an explanation that

addresses how the skills demonstrated with the artifact align with the student's career goals and professional standards. The student may refer to either standards from the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) or the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) depending on their target employer. The latter organization is more K12 focused.

From January 2017 through May 2018, 14 students graduated from the program. A percentage of students enter the program to make a job transition or career change. However, historically, some of the students have been working in the IT field or related fields. Not all graduates of the program seek new employment.

Major Stakeholders of the Program

The first group of major stakeholders are the UT Board of Trustees, the head of the Educational Psychology and Counseling department, and the dean of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. These stakeholders want to see if the program results in the desired outcomes. Their interest is primarily in the cost-effective use of UT and department resources, the ability of the department to recruit and retain students, and the enhancement of the reputation of the university, college, and department. They are concerned with the quality and sustainability of the program and what the program can contribute to the university. They are expecting to find out whether graduates of the program are competitive in the job market and career ready.

The IT program coordinator, associate professor in the IT department, and adjunct professors are also major stakeholders. They have the most to gain from evaluation input as program improvement is a primary concern. Like the Board of Trustees, they are interested in the sustainability and quality of the program. They expect a determination of whether graduates are competitive in the job market and career ready.

Current IT students and graduates of the program are also stakeholders. The marketability of their degree is a concern, and the reputation of the program is important to them as well. Current students also have an interest in knowing if they need to be pursuing additional knowledge and experience on their own to compete in the job market.

Additional stakeholders include future employers of graduates in industry, higher education, government, non-profit organizations, and K12 settings. In addition, those served by the graduates in their jobs in the IT fields can be considered stakeholders. These would include students of all ages, employees in corporations, faculty and staff at universities, K12 teachers, government employees, and the clients of non-profit organizations. In a larger sense, the communities of those being served by UT IT graduates will also be impacted. These additional stakeholders are not aware of the evaluation and likely would not rely on the findings even if they were.

Program Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes

The goal of the IT Online program is to educate future instructional technology professionals. The objectives are to educate them in the competent practice of IT and to give them the tools necessary to incorporate appropriate technology in learning environments based on the desired learning outcomes. The objectives also include preparing them for the job market by teaching skills and theory sought by employers in the field. Objectives include having one-hundred percent of students graduate and having one-hundred percent of graduates obtain employment in the field if the graduates are interested in pursuing work in the field.

The short-term outcomes are knowledge and skills in instructional technology, including pedagogy and the appropriate inclusion of technology in learning design. In addition, demonstration of competencies in instructional technology through the portfolio is a short-term

outcome. The medium-term outcomes include graduates securing employment in an instructional design or instructional technology position or applying skills to current employment. An additional medium-term outcome is the competent practice of IT and/or Instructional Design (ID) by graduates within the AECT or ISTE standards.

Long-term outcomes are threefold. First, graduates continue to perform according to employer expectations in the workplace. Second, graduates have a positive impression of the program which leads to increased alumni activity, including increased giving, internships, and hiring future UT IT graduates. Third, competent graduates lead to enhanced reputation of the program and the university with increased enrollment and program success.

Logic Model

Instructional Technology Online Program Logic Model

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes -- Impact		
	Activities	Participation	Short	Medium	Long
<p>Money: In the form of faculty and support staff salaries, online materials access, office space, and equipment.</p> <p>Time: Approximately four courses offered per semester for three quarter hours each. Teaching time, grading time, and office hours.</p> <p>Staff: Two full time professors, including the program head. Two to four adjunct professors. One clerical staff person.</p> <p>Materials: Access to Zoom and Canvas platforms for conducting online courses.</p> <p>Equipment: Computers and accessories for full time professors and staff person.</p> <p>Office space.</p>	<p>Multiple courses per semester for students to pursue 33 credit hours over a two, three, or four-year period.</p> <p>Course assignments consistent with creation of a portfolio with a minimum of 10 artifacts.</p>	<p>Graduate students pursuing a master's in education with an IT concentration.</p>	<p>Learning theory and skills in instructional technology, including pedagogy and appropriate inclusion of technology in learning design, including skills and theory sought by employers.</p> <p>Demonstration of competencies in instructional technology through the portfolio.</p> <p>Student satisfaction.</p>	<p>Graduates secure employment in an instructional design or instructional technology position or apply skills learned to current employment.</p> <p>Competent practice of IT and/or ID by graduates within ISTE or AECT standards.</p>	<p>Graduates continue meet employer expectations in the workplace.</p> <p>Graduates have a positive impression of the program which leads to increased alumni activity, including increased giving, internships, and hiring future UT IT graduates.</p> <p>Competent graduates lead to enhanced reputation and increased enrollment and program success.</p>
<p>Assumptions: Students who complete the program will produce a portfolio reflecting the knowledge and skills gained. Students who</p>			<p>External Factors: Students will continue to gain outside experience through self-study, work experience, etc. during the program. All gains will not be attributable to the program.</p>		

Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether the program prepares its students for the workforce. The purpose is to identify possible areas for improvement. The hypothetical program evaluation will be developed as if commissioned by my client, the UT Board of Trustees, and the purpose has hypothetically been decided by the client. The study is necessary because the program objective is to train graduate students for jobs in the IT field. The marketability of these graduates and their ability to retain employment will impact program recruitment and success as well as reflect on the university.

The Board of Trustees will benefit from the evaluation by making choices regarding allocation of resources and determining if the program enhances the university's reputation. The program will benefit by gaining information about any needed changes that would result in a stronger program with greater enrollment over a greater number of years. Students of the program will also benefit by improvement in the program or by awareness of the amount of self-study or outside work needed to succeed in the job market.

I will be conducting a formative, outcome evaluation. This is an external evaluation conducted under the auspices of the governing board. The evaluation will be two-fold. First, recent graduates will complete surveys and be interviewed to determine their impression of their ability to compete and perform in the workplace. Second, a panel of experts will evaluate the portfolios of recent graduates of the program. The evaluation is designed to assess the short and medium-term outcomes experienced by participants of the program. Have the graduates learned theory and skills in instructional technology, including pedagogy and appropriate inclusion of technology in learning design? Have they demonstrated competencies in instructional technology through the portfolio? Have graduates secured employment in an instructional design or instructional technology position or applied skills to current employment? Have they

demonstrated competent practice of IT or ID in the workplace to the satisfaction of their employers?

Evaluation Questions

- a. Do graduates learn theory and skills which are required by and sought by employers?
- b. Are the competencies in instructional technology demonstrated through UT graduates' portfolios? Would 70% or more of graduates be competitive in the job market based on their portfolios?
- c. Are at least 80% of graduates satisfied with the UT IT program?
- d. Do graduates secure employment in an Instructional Design or Instructional Technology position or apply skills learned to current employment?

Variables/Constructs of Interest

Graduate perceptions of job readiness and job preparedness

Current employment of recent graduates

Graduates' demonstration of skills through the portfolio

Employer hiring practices

Employer perceptions of the portfolio

Self-study of graduates

Related job experience of graduates

Graduate satisfaction with the UT IT program

Graduate perceptions of their performance in the workplace

Proposed Methodology

COMPONENT I (Data Collected from Volunteer Graduate Respondents)

Participants

Component I of the study will involve recent UT IT Online graduates, defined as those graduating from Spring 2017 through Spring 2018. All these graduates have master's degrees and bachelor's degrees. However, there is a wide variety in their undergraduate education. Student backgrounds include: science, education, information technology, and liberal arts. In addition, the students range in age from the twenties to the fifties. Some have graduate degrees in other fields. They have varied work experience, including a variety of employers: higher education, K12, and corporate. They include administrative staff, teachers, university instructors, corporate trainers, managers, and much more. They have varied volunteer experience. However, they are likely largely from middle class backgrounds. There is diversity among genders and race, as well.

The UT IT Online department will email letters soliciting volunteers for the evaluation. Participation will be voluntary. The participants will complete a survey and also be interviewed. Since direct quotes from the interview sessions may be used, the evaluator will take care to protect the identity of specific participants so that the person who made the comment will not be identified. All responses from these graduates will remain confidential. However, because these will be in-person interviews, complete anonymity is not practical. Numbers will be assigned to participants, and those numbers will not be revealed to anyone by the evaluator. The evaluator will keep the number assignments under lock and key.

Fourteen students have graduated from Spring of 2017 through Spring of 2018. The UT IT department will mail letters to these fourteen students requesting that they participate in the evaluation. Because the number of graduates is very small, it is essential to have a high

participation rate. As an incentive, graduates who participate will have their names entered in two lotteries. The first will be for a stipend of \$400 for a one-year membership in AECT or ISTE. The other lottery incentive will be for a \$700 stipend for the fee of the AECT or ISTE conference in 2019 or 2020.

In addition to voluntary, confidential participation, all ethical guidelines of the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board will be followed. Interviews will take place at a location away from the department or via Zoom or Skype. Care will be taken to schedule interviews so that interviewees do not encounter one another when coming and going to further ensure confidentiality.

Design and Methodology

Data will be collected using a survey of the volunteers from the fourteen graduates from Spring of 2017 through Spring of 2018 as well as one-on-one interviews with the volunteer graduates. The surveys will be completed immediately prior to the interviews. The surveys should take no longer than 30 minutes to complete. The interviews should take no longer than two hours to complete, and the average interview will be significantly shorter. The data will be recorded on a laptop during the sessions. Information will be collected on demographics as well as perceptions of job readiness, self-study, job experience, and experience in the UT IT online program. Some interviews will be conducted in person. However, the majority will enlist Skype or Zoom. The surveys will be emailed to and from the interviewee in these situations, along with the electronically signed release form. If there is a response rate of less than 80 percent for the interviews, surveys will be emailed to the remaining graduates for completion. While the questionnaire process will yield more quantitative data, a higher response rate on the surveys may be more realistic with this approach.

The survey consists of 16 items using a five-point Likert response set (see Appendix B). Sample items are: “When I graduated from the UT IT Online program, I was prepared to enter the workplace,” “I gained the requisite skills through my own self-study,” and “I was interviewed for more than twenty-percent of the positions for which I applied after graduating.” The validity and reliability of the survey is unknown as it was developed for this evaluation. The survey instrument has been developed with attention given to utility, suitability and acceptability, sensitivity, directness, nonreactivity, appropriateness, and expense.

There will be one instrument used with 19 items for the graduate interviews (Appendix C). Six items relate to background and demographics. The majority of the questions are open ended. Sample items include: “Do you feel that there were gaps in your education in the UT IT Online program? If so, please elaborate,” “Is there anything else you would change about the program,” “What advice would you give current or prospective students? Particularly with regard to self-directed study.” Validity and reliability are unknown. However, attention has been given to the same factors described in the paragraph above.

COMPONENT 2 (Expert Panel Review of Portfolios)

Participants

Component 2 of the study will involve a panel of experts evaluating the portfolios of the fourteen UT IT Online graduates from Spring 2017 through Spring 2018. Experts will be selected by the evaluator. The panel will consist of a total of seven to eight hiring officials from various employment sectors. Two will be selected from industry, two from higher education, and two from K12. In addition, one to two experts will be retained from the nonprofit sector. An emphasis will be placed on recent hiring experience in their sector. Their input on the strengths and deficiencies of the portfolios and the portfolio format and substance will be essential in identifying strengths and weakness to help make adjustments to the UT IT Online program.

The fourteen UT IT Online graduates will be asked to volunteer to have their portfolios reviewed. Analysis of the portfolio will not be shared with the graduates. Findings related to specific portfolios will be kept confidential. Identifying information in the expert responses will be redacted. Numbers will be assigned to portfolios, and those numbers will not be revealed to anyone by the evaluator. The evaluator will keep the number assignments under lock and key.

The UT IT department will email these fourteen students requesting that they participate in the evaluation in the email that they request participation in Component 1. Because the number of graduates is very small, it is essential to have a high participation rate. For participating in Component 2, the same incentives will be offered as for Component 1. A graduate who participates in the interview and in the portfolio portion will have four chances to win, two for the membership and two for the conference fee. All ethical guidelines of the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board will be followed for Component 2 as well.

Design and Methodology

Data will be collected using questionnaires to be completed individually by each expert. A focus group is not appropriate because multiple viewpoints are sought. In addition, the expertise from their particular job sector is important in answering the questions posed by the evaluation. Each expert will complete one questionnaire for each portfolio and one for the portfolios overall. The experts will have two months to evaluate the portfolios and complete the instruments. The review of each portfolio is estimated to take 3.5 hours. Experts will be sent a reminder three weeks prior to the deadline and again one week prior to the deadline. Full expert participation is necessary. However, the reviews of five to seven experts would be informative. Compensation is contingent on completion of the review instruments.

There will be one instrument used with 7 items for each portfolio (Appendix D). They will be asked to base their comparisons on the portfolios they have reviewed during this study and on the portfolios they have reviewed in the course of their employment over the last three years. Experts will be selected, in part, based on their current hiring experience and familiarity with recent graduates in the job market. They will be primarily approaching the portfolio review as if the graduate were an applicant for a current position in their workplace. Sample items include: “What artifacts were lacking, above average, or of particular interest to you? What about the artifact caught your attention? For example, theoretical knowledge, innovation, visual presentation,” “Were there areas with deficiencies? Please elaborate,” “Were there areas that were above average? Please elaborate.” Additional questions include, “Please score this portfolio on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent, comparing it not only to the other portfolios from this project, but also to those you have seen in the last three years from recent graduates applying for positions with your employer” and “If you were hiring someone with similar experience to this graduate, would you offer this graduate an opportunity to interview for a position with your employer based on this portfolio? Please note that this question is to assess the marketability of the graduate based on their portfolio and no interview is expected.”

The overall portfolio rating questionnaire will contain 8 items (Appendix E). Sample items include: “Would you recommend the addition of a category or categories? If so, what would they be and why,” “Would you recommend other changes to the portfolio requirement at UT? If so, what changes,” “What are your observations regarding the portfolios overall, both positive and negative.”

The majority of the questions are open ended to encourage feedback from the experts. The reliability and validity of the instruments is unknown as they were developed for this evaluation.

Procedure

In September 2018, meetings will be held with the UT Board of Trustees or their designees and the head of the UT IT online program to discuss implementation of the evaluation. The proposal will then be submitted to the UT Institutional Review Board in September of 2018. Once the IRB grants approval, the solicitations will be emailed to graduates to recruit volunteers. In addition, the evaluator will solicit for experts to comprise the panel. The experts will be selected and hired in November of 2018. Interviews of graduates will take place in November and December. On December 31, 2018, the names will be drawn for the incentives, and winners will be notified. The experts will review the portfolios in December of 2018 and January of 2019. Data entry will be performed in February of 2019 with questionnaire and expert-generated data entered into NVivo 8.0 and survey data entered into SPSS. Data will be coded and analyzed in March of 2019. The report will be written in April 2019. The report will be disseminated to the Board of Trustees and the UT IT online program head for any comments and clarifications by May 1, 2019. A final report will be provided to stakeholders by May 31, 2019.

	Sept 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Apr 2019	May 2019
Additional Stakeholder Meetings	x								
IRB Submission	x								
Solicitation of Experts		x							

Solicitation for Graduate Volunteers		x							
Selection of Experts			x						
Interviews of Graduates			x	x					
Expert Review of Portfolios				x	x				
Data entry						x			
Data analysis							x		
Report write-up								x	
Dissemination to major stakeholders									X

Proposed Analyses

I will prepare the data for analysis by cleaning the data. I will sanitize all qualitative data to add an extra layer of anonymity to the participant responses. Because the sample size is so small, I will not disaggregate and will not identify participant responses by demographics.

I will change outliers so they are not as deviant by assigning a score that is one unit larger or smaller than the next most extreme score to reduce the score's impact. I will run frequencies of every variable to check for coding errors. I will use pairwise deletion for any missing data. I will check the distribution of all qualitative data for skewness and kurtosis to ensure normal distribution. I will transform the data if needed. I will then use content analysis.

For the quantitative data, I will use frequency distribution. I will use range as the measure of variability. Data Analysis will be straightforward as there is only one administration of the survey measure to the graduates. There is no second group for comparison.

Evaluation Questions	Sources	Analysis
Do graduates learn theory and skills which are required by and sought by employers?	Survey	Descriptive Analysis
	Interviews: open-ended questions	Content Analysis
	Individual Portfolio Reviews and Portfolios as a Group: open-ended questions	Content Analysis
Are the competencies in instructional technology demonstrated through UT graduates' portfolios? Would 70% or more of graduates secure interview based on their portfolios?	Individual Portfolio Reviews and Portfolios as a Group: open-ended questions	Content Analysis
Are at least 80% of graduates satisfied with the UT IT program?	Survey	Descriptive Analysis
Do graduates secure employment in an Instructional Design or Instructional Technology position or apply skills learned to current employment?	Interviews: open-ended questions	Content Analysis

Evaluation Budget

Expense Category	Amount	Description
Evaluation fee	\$7875	175 hours at \$45/hour (JD with minimal experience)
Expert fees	\$21,600*	54 hours per expert at \$50/hour (3.5 hours per portfolio times 14 portfolios plus 5 hours for group portfolio feedback form) times 8 experts
Incentives	\$2200	2 \$700 conference fees plus 2 \$400 professional organization memberships
Color printing and paper	\$100	For executive summary and copies of final report.

Total = \$31,775

*Expert fees may be smaller depending on number of experts hired (7 versus 8) and number of graduate volunteers for portfolio review.

Description of Evaluator's Qualifications

I will be conducting the evaluation, interviewing the graduates, collecting and analyzing data, and hiring and coordinating the expert panel. I will then compile and present the reports of findings. I will communicate with the primary stakeholders throughout the evaluation. Since I am hypothetically conducting this evaluation for a graduate course, I will be able to seek the guidance of my professor when needed throughout the evaluation.

My experience with higher education gives me a unique outlook on the UT IT Online program. I graduated summa cum laude from UT with a bachelor's degree in 1992. I graduated cum laude from the University of Georgia School of Law in 1996. I am currently a student in the UT IT Online program. My experiences with higher education, and professional programs in particular, enable me to fully comprehend the needs of the governing board, the IT program, and the program's graduates.

I currently work as an administrative law judge for the federal government and coordinate and decide 500 disability claims per year. My workload management skills will translate well to the evaluation setting. I also have managed an office of fourteen administrative law judges and approximately sixty employees. My management experience will enable me to communicate with and interpret the findings of the expert panel. In addition, I have designed and conducted training for my employer throughout the years on a national level. My experience with training in the workplace setting allows great insight into the desired outcomes of the UT IT program, particularly as addressed in this evaluation.

My work background involves communicating with people of diverse backgrounds, orally and in writing, about sensitive and complex issues. This experience will be key in stakeholder communications and data collection. My legal training and extensive experience in

law enable me to draft clear, concise, meaningful instruments for this evaluation. My training and experience in the law also means that I am particularly qualified to conform to the IRB requirements. I maintain the highest ethical and professional standards as an attorney and judge and am dedicated to conducting the highest quality evaluation and delivering accurate, timely results.

In my coursework for my undergraduate degree, I completed a course in statistics. In my current degree program, I have completed an in-depth course in program evaluation. As I hold myself to the highest standards of ethics and professionalism, I would not undertake this outcome evaluation of the UT IT program without the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for an informative, high quality evaluation.

Dissemination Plan

Throughout the evaluation, I will provide stakeholder updates through emails and orally when convenient. I will consult with the governing board and the UT IT program head prior to dissemination of the results to clarify any questions or concerns. I will then present the findings to both stakeholders by May 31, 2019. During that week, I will arrange a time to present my findings via a presentation with extensive visuals to summarize my findings, largely in terms of percentages. At that presentation, I will provide these stakeholders with an executive summary with bulleted highlights of key findings and conclusions. I will also provide a detailed, comprehensive evaluation report.

I will not disseminate the findings to anyone else unless the governing board makes the findings and/or report public. If the findings and/or report are disseminated by the governing board or IT program head to those who are not UT employees or trustees, I will disseminate

portions of the evaluation to professional audiences, primarily in conference presentations, but also in journals, as will be clearly addressed in the final contract for the evaluation.

References

University of Tennessee IT program (2017). IT Online Portfolio. <https://epc.utk.edu/it-online/it-online-portfolio/>

Appendix A
Letter to Participants/Consent Form

Dear UT IT Online Program Graduate,

You have been selected to participate in a program evaluation by the UT Board of Trustees regarding the IT Online Program here at UT. We are interested in your opinions regarding the skills and knowledge you gained through the program. Your responses will help us evaluate the effectiveness of the UT IT Online Program as it relates to marketability of graduates and career readiness.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. The study involves two components. First, we will be sending surveys for graduates to complete. We will also be scheduling short interviews, either in person or using Zoom or Skype for your convenience. Your participation in this part of the study will be entirely confidential.

The second component of the study involves an expert panel evaluating the portfolios of recent program graduates. You will not have access to their feedback. However, their input on the strengths and deficiencies of the portfolio format and substance will be helpful in making improvements to the program here at UT. Any expert comments used in the final report will be redacted to avoid linking the comment to any particular portfolio.

We are pleased to offer some incentives for your participation. For participating in the survey and interview, your name will be entered in two drawings. The first will be for a \$400 stipend for a one-year membership in AECT or ISTE. The second drawing will be for a \$700 stipend for the fee of the AECT or ISTE conference in 2019 or 2020. If you consent to participation in the portfolio review, your name will be entered in two more drawings—one for a membership and the other for a conference fee stipend. Thus, two participants will receive

memberships, and two will receive conference fee stipends. The drawing will be held on December 31, 2018. Winners will be notified by January 7, 2019.

Please electronically sign as instructed below in order to participate in either or both components of this study. You may direct any questions to me at:

Juli Heaton
Jheaton5@vols.utk.edu
(865)805-4643

Information about Involvement

You will be asked to complete a 16-question survey that asks about your job readiness after graduating from the program. The survey should take 30 minutes or less to complete. You will also be asked to schedule an interview with me. Interviews are estimated to take 45 minutes, but I will block off two hours in case you have more to share and discuss.

Risks

You may feel uncomfortable sharing your opinions about the program and your experiences after graduating. However, all responses to the survey and interview will be kept confidential. Only the researchers will have access to this information, and data will be stored in a secure location. No references will be made in any reports that could link you as a participant to the study or data.

You may feel uncomfortable having a small group of experts review your portfolio. However, particular items related to your portfolio will not be shared in the final report. All portfolio findings will be generalized. We are looking at the portfolios of graduates as a whole and the portfolio structure as assigned. The experts will have access, if granted by you, to your entire portfolio, including your name. However, they will sign an agreement that they will not share the information from your portfolio with anyone other than the researchers.

Benefits

The program will benefit from your participation by further making refinements and better serving students and alumni.

Rights

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, contact the Donna Ford at the UT Office of Research Integrity at (865) 974-2474.

Participation

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and

without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Consent

I have read and understood the above information. Please print or save a copy of this information for your records. If you agree to participate in this study, please click the link below.

Link will lead to browser page which reads...

Please click the appropriate button at the bottom of the page. If you do not wish to participate in this evaluation, then simply close the web browser window.

“I have read the Informed Consent and agree to participate in the survey, interview, and portfolio review.”

“I have read the Informed Consent and agree to participate in the survey and interview.”

“I have read the Informed Consent and agree to participate in the portfolio review.”

Appendix B
IT Online Program Graduate Survey

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. When I graduated from the UT IT Online program, I was prepared to enter the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I started my job after graduating, I had the skills to perform my assigned tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When I started my job after graduating, I had the theoretical knowledge to perform my assigned tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I gained the requisite skills through my coursework in the program.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I gained the requisite knowledge through my coursework in the program.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I gained the requisite skills through my own self-study.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I gained the requisite theoretical knowledge through my own self-study.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I gained the requisite skills through outside experience such as work or internships.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I gained the requisite theoretical knowledge through outside experience such as work or internships.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I was interviewed for more than half of the positions for which I applied after graduating.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I was interviewed for more than twenty-percent of the positions for which I applied after graduating.	1	2	3	4	5

12.I received compliments or praise on my portfolio from prospective employers.	1	2	3	4	5
13.My first employer after graduating gave me positive evaluations or positive feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
14.My current employer, if different, gives me positive evaluations or positive feedback.	1	2	3	4	5
15.The UT IT Online program prepared me for work in my chosen job sector.	1	2	3	4	5
16.I would recommend the UT IT Online program to a friend.	1	2	3	4	5

Graduate ID#__

Appendix C
GRADUATES INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

My name is Juli Heaton, and I am a current graduate student in the Instructional Technology program at UT. For my program evaluation class, I am conducting an evaluation regarding the marketability of the UT IT Online graduates and their job readiness. I am interested in your opinions regarding the program, both positive and negative. There are twenty questions. I will take notes on my laptop during the interview.

Participation in the interview is completely voluntary. You may choose not to answer certain questions or stop the interview completely at any time. The interview should take forty-five minutes on average. However, I am interested in all the feedback you can provide, and I have blocked off two hours. Do you have any questions before I begin?

Thank you for taking your valuable time to answer my questions. I appreciate your help with this evaluation. You have my contact information, and feel free to contact me at any time about the interview. I plan to analyze all data from the interviews in March of 2019 and will disseminate my report to the University in May of 2019.

1. When did you enter the UT IT Online program?
2. When did you graduate from the UT IT Online program?
3. What is your gender?

☐ male
☐ female
☐ other

4. What is your age?

☐ under 30
☐ 31-39
☐ 40-45
☐ 46-50
☐ over 50

5. What is your ethnicity origin? (Optional)

☐ White
☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Black or African American
☐ Native American or American Indian
☐ Asian / Pacific Islander

☐ Other

6. What degrees have you earned other than through the UT IT Online program?
7. Are you working in the IT field?
8. Were you working in the IT field prior to graduation?
9. When you entered the program, did you intend to change jobs? Were you pursuing a master's in IT in order to apply the material learned, or were you seeking a master's degree in general?
10. Have you changed jobs or been promoted since graduation? If not, did you desire to change jobs or receive promotions?

11. Which best describes your workplace? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ corporate
- ☐ higher ed
- ☐ nonprofit
- ☐ K12
- ☐ government/military
- ☐ consultant/contractor
- ☐ other—please explain:

12. Which best describes the average amount of self-study you engaged in weekly to acquire technical skills outside of your coursework?

- ☐ none
- ☐ one or two
- ☐ three to five
- ☐ six to nine
- ☐ ten or more

13. Have you received negative or positive feedback from an employer regarding your theoretical knowledge? Please describe to the degree you feel comfortable.

14. Have you received negative or positive feedback from an employer regarding your technical skills? Please describe to the degree you feel comfortable.

15. Do you feel that there were gaps in your education in the UT IT Online program? If so, please elaborate.
16. Do you feel that the UT IT Online program could be improved? If so, how?
17. Is there anything else you would change about the program?
18. What advice would you give current or prospective students? Particularly with regard to self-directed study.
19. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences or perceptions?

Graduate ID#__

Appendix D
Individual Portfolio Review Form

Portfolio #__

1. How long did it take you to review the portfolio?
2. What three things stood out about this portfolio, whether positive or negative?
3. What artifacts were lacking, above average, or of particular interest to you? What about the artifact caught your attention? For example, theoretical knowledge, innovation, visual presentation?
4. Were there areas with deficiencies? Please elaborate.
5. Were there areas that were above average? Please elaborate.
6. Please score this portfolio on a scale of 1 to 10, comparing it not only to the other portfolios from this project, but also to those you have seen in the last three years from recent graduates applying for positions with your employer.

Score: (poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (excellent)

7. If you were hiring someone with similar experience to this graduate, would you offer this graduate an opportunity to interview for a position with your employer based on this portfolio? Please note that this question is to assess the marketability of the graduate based on their portfolio and no interview is expected.

__yes __no

Additional comments:

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Appendix E
Expert Assessment of Portfolios as a Group

1. Approximately how many portfolios have you reviewed in the last three years?
2. How many candidates have you interviewed in the last three years?
3. The UT IT Online portfolios require two artifacts in 5 of 6 categories. Which categories were of particular interest to you? Why?
4. Which categories were not of interest to you? Why?
5. Would you recommend the addition of a category or categories? If so, what would they be and why?
6. Would you recommend other changes to the portfolio requirement at UT? If so, what changes?
7. What are your observations regarding the portfolios overall, both positive and negative?
8. Were there any weaknesses in the UT IT portfolios overall with regard to theory or technical skill? If so, please elaborate.