

Call for Applications to the MLA Research Training Institute (RTI)

Application must be received by February 16, 2026

Submission Process

Why You Should Attend

The MLA Research Training Institute (RTI) provides librarians and LIS graduate students with the opportunity to work on research design and planning to conduct research that improves practice and adds to the professional knowledgebase. Institute training is geared for health sciences library professionals who have a strong interest in research but do not possess the skills and confidence to conduct research on their own. It also provides a unique opportunity to network with colleagues for future research learning, collaboration, and success. Building on the success of previous years, a cohort of LIS graduate students will join the 2026-27 RTI. The School of Library and Information Management (SLIM) at Emporia State University has the opportunity to have SLIM students join as full participants in the 2026-27 Institute. This is a great opportunity for SLIM students who are interested in strengthening their research expertise and conducting an independent research project with the supervision of RTI faculty instructors. **SLIM will cover the \$948 institute registration fee for up to three SLIM students who are awarded a spot in the Institute.**

Institute Activities

Participants will be expected to:

- May: Pre-institute learning activities.
- May–July: Core institute modules, Tuesdays, 1:00 p.m., Central Time. [See schedule.](#)
- August–June: Participants conduct research projects
- September–April: Monthly institute modules.
- June–June of next year: Periodic mentor group meetings.
- May 2027: Research Poster Presentation @ MLA '27.
- participate regularly in the online community of practice that supports them after the workshop.
- update institute instructors and peers on the status of their research project and offer support to the others conducting their research.
- share their research by submitting it for an MLA annual meeting presentation or a peer-reviewed publication.
- participate in program assessment activities, providing the project director with periodic updates on research activities that have been completed and on presentations or publications resulting from their research.
- If you're interested in learning more about the MLA RTI, please refer to the main website: <https://www.mlanet.org/professional-development/research/research-training-institute/>. Please do keep in mind the website is designed for practicing librarians, so not all of the information will be relevant to SLIM students. Please do not apply through the MLA RTI site. See details below for where to apply.

- ESU SLIM students who are selected as RTI participants will be eligible for a 3-credit hour independent study for Summer 2026, Fall 2026, and Spring 2027 in recognition of their time spent on the RTI curriculum and research project. Students who select to take advantage of the independent study will be responsible for the tuition.

Application Procedures

Please apply through the specific student link below. Do not apply through the general online MLA RTI application on MLA's website. The selection criteria will focus on commitment to learning research skills, the quality and promise of the research topic submitted, and potential professional contributions. All application materials and selection processes will be handled confidentially.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet all of the following requirements:

- interested in future employment as a health sciences library professional or as a library professional who provides health information, support, and services to health care professionals, researchers, educators, students, patients, consumers, or the public.
- a current SLIM graduate student with an anticipated graduation date of Summer 2026 or later. 2027 graduation dates are preferred so that the students will be simultaneously participating in the RTI as well as SLIM students.
- able to attend the Research Training Institute June 2026–June 2027.
- membership in the Medical Library Association is NOT required.

Application Instructions

Please thoroughly review the instructions below before beginning the application process.

Deadline:

- Applications for the Research Training Institute are accepted until **February 16, 2026**.
- Applicants accepted to the institute will be notified in March 2026.
- Incomplete or late submissions will not be reviewed.
- Accepted applicants must confirm invitation to attend the institute by April 1, 2026.

Checklist:

The application process consists of submitting the following documents and procedures:

- application form: [MLA Research Training Institute Application for Graduate Students](#) (due 2/16/2026)
- a one-on-one 30-minute Zoom interview. This will be scheduled after February 16, 2026, once applications have been received.

Application Preparation:

Applicants will need to provide extended answers to two questions on the RTI application.

- Applicants will be asked to describe their learning goals. They will be asked to explain why they are applying and what they hope to gain from participation in the institute; also, they will describe how they will manage their time and balance research tasks with workplace demands throughout the year-long process.
- Applicants will be asked to describe the research topic that they would like to develop while in the RTI program, including one potential research question they would like to explore in relation to the topic. Note that research topics and questions may evolve and change during the Institute.

PLEASE NOTE that the research topics of accepted applicants will be developed during the institute as they acquire knowledge and explore various approaches and methodologies. Participants will develop and refine their proposals in collaboration with institute instructors and peers, with the goal of having a well-constructed research project soon after they return to their home institutions.

Self-Assessment:

As you prepare and revise your answers, please perform a self-assessment or ask a colleague or mentor to consider the following:

- Does the applicant provide specific learning goals, reasons of interest, and outcomes from attending the program?
- Does the applicant provide specific time management strategies?
- Does the applicant provide a clear, focused, and achievable research topic?
- Does the research topic address an important issue in health sciences librarianship or fill a gap in the health sciences information sciences knowledgebase?
- Are the literature citations relevant and supportive of need for the proposed research topic?
- Are the applicant's answers clear, logical, and well-written?

If you have any questions about the Research Training Institute, SLIM's involvement, and/or the application process, please contact Dr. Emily Vardell at evardell@emporia.edu.