



# Frequently Asked Questions

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## General

### Who will my classmates be?

UC Berkeley seeks candidates with strong academic and professional backgrounds, and Master of Information and Data Science candidates must meet the same rigorous admissions standards as students in our on-campus programs. While your classmates may come from a variety of backgrounds and industries, many will be data science professionals. Please view our [Class Profile](#) to learn more about [datascience@berkeley](mailto:datascience@berkeley) students.

### When do classes begin?

Visit our [admissions overview](#) page to see our cohort start dates and application requirements.

### What are the program requirements?

The MIDS program consists of 27 units. You are also required to attend at least one, three-to-four day immersion at the UC Berkeley campus. *Students residing in Minnesota and/or Arkansas must complete 3 additional units for a total of 30 credits.*

### How long does the program take to complete?

The program is designed for you to complete it in 20 months, taking two courses per semester. You may choose a more accelerated path and complete the degree in as few as 12 months, taking three courses per semester. All students are required to take two courses in their first term.

### Will my course schedule be flexible?

The MIDS program is designed with working professionals in mind. Most classes are held in the evening on Pacific Standard Time, and you are required to attend all sessions. Faculty members assign coursework in preparation for weekly classes, which you may complete when your schedule allows.

### Will my diploma denote that I earned my degree online?

When you graduate, you will receive the same diploma as students in other on-campus UC Berkeley graduate programs, with no indication that you earned your degree through an online program. You may partake in the on-campus graduation ceremony as well.

**Is this degree delivered completely online?**

All classes and coursework are delivered entirely online. However, you are required to attend a [three-to-four day immersion program](#) on the UC Berkeley campus. Offered twice a year, each immersion is crafted to deliver additional learning, networking, and community-building opportunities. During immersions, you will meet faculty and classmates while attending lectures and workshops, as well as during social and professional networking events.

**Is this program accredited?**

The Master of Information and Data Science program is fully accredited by the [Western Association of Schools and Colleges \(WASC\)](#). WASC accreditation speaks to the quality of the program, faculty, and the Berkeley I School. It ensures that the program will prepare you for a career in data science.

## Admissions

**Is there an undergraduate GPA requirement?**

You should have a superior scholastic record, normally well above a 3.0 GPA.

**Does it matter where I previously attended university?**

Domestic applicants must hold or expect to hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. university prior to the beginning of classes.

Graduates of recognized academic institutions outside the United States should hold a degree equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree. International evaluators in the UC Berkeley Graduate Admissions Office will determine equivalency.

**Who should I ask to write my letters of recommendation?**

We prefer that letters come from your current direct supervisor or a former employer. Select individuals with whom you have had considerable professional interaction, such as your supervisor or a major client. The title or status of those you select is not important; what does matter is how closely your recommenders have worked with you and whether they can attest to your value as an employee, your professional accomplishments, and your personal qualities and interpersonal skills in an organizational context. Letters of recommendation from co-workers, someone you have supervised, or personal and family friends are inappropriate and can be detrimental to your application.

**Is work experience required?**

Although prior work experience is preferred, it is not required for admission.

**What educational or professional background is required for admission?**

Applicants from a range of academic and professional backgrounds will be considered. To see the variety of backgrounds our students come from, visit our [Class Profile](#).

**Can I request that my transcripts be sent electronically?**

Many schools issue transcripts electronically, either through their own web services or through vendors. If this option is available through the institutions you attended, please specify that your transcript(s) be sent to [applicationservices@datascience.berkeley.edu](mailto:applicationservices@datascience.berkeley.edu). This will expedite the delivery of your transcript(s) and the completion of your application.

**What materials do I need to submit if I have previously applied to the School of Information?**

We keep copies of previously submitted transcripts for two years from the date of your previous application; you will still need to submit any new or updated transcripts. We may have copies of previously submitted GRE, GMAT, or TOEFL scores submitted within the past five years; please email [admissions@datascience.berkeley.edu](mailto:admissions@datascience.berkeley.edu) to confirm. You will need to retake the exam if your exam date now falls outside the acceptable time frame (five years for the GRE and GMAT; 18 months for the TOEFL or IELTS).

**I'm interested in more than one UC Berkeley graduate degree. May I apply to both simultaneously?**

No, you may only apply to one UC Berkeley graduate program per admissions cycle as outlined by Graduate Division requirements.

**Is there an application fee?**

There is an application fee of \$105 for domestic applicants or \$125 for international applicants. This fee is nonrefundable and must be paid when you submit your application.

## Online Learning

**What is the online learning experience like?**

You will attend live, online classes each week, hosted using face-to-face video-conferencing technology. The platform encourages collaboration and connection with classmates and faculty, which allows students to forge real, lasting relationships.

In addition to the live class sessions, you'll complete self-paced coursework throughout each week and have access to social groups with classmates and one-on-one interaction with faculty. [You may read more about our online platform here.](#)

**How is the coursework delivered and what does it entail?**

UC Berkeley faculty has worked with world-class course developers to create an I School curriculum designed specifically for an online learning environment.

Before each weekly live class, you will complete coursework on your own time. Coursework is immersive and dynamic, and prepares you for classroom discussions with peers and instructors. Content includes compelling videos, interactive case studies, recorded lectures, and collaborative activities that foster teamwork.

**What are live class sessions like?**

Our state-of-the-art online platform facilitates live, seminar-style classes driven by problem solving, collaboration, and discussion. After each class, you'll have 24/7 access to class recordings.

**How will I feel connected as an online student?**

Our online platform facilitates collaboration and leads to real connections. You will create profiles similar to other social networking tools and can get to know your fellow students outside of class through social groups. In addition, you can meet classmates for study sessions, group project work, faculty office hours, or even virtual happy hours using our online classrooms.

**What is the student-to-faculty ratio?**

Our classes are capped at 18 students.

**Who teaches the courses?**

The I School is made up of tenured faculty, leading industry practitioners, and post-doctoral scholars. MIDS classes are taught by many of the same I School faculty and data science professionals who teach on campus.

**What student support and advising services are available to students?**

Support begins the moment you request information and continues beyond graduation. You will be assigned an advisor who is available to meet with you one-on-one throughout the program to help you meet your academic and career goals. Our student support team will work with you to provide technical assistance and help you acclimate to our online learning community. Once you graduate, you will join the I School and UC Berkeley global alumni network, which connects you for life to other graduates around the world.

**What career services are available to students?**

You will have access to the UC Berkeley [Career Services](#) Team who will assist you in your job search, including resume-building and interviewing advice.

# Programming Competency

## What is the Programming Competency Statement?

MIDS program applicants have the option to document their programming experience on a Programming Competency Statement specifically describing their level of programming proficiency. This statement is not a form; it is a document you create, similar to a resume. It should specify the programming language(s) in which you are proficient, describe your level of skill, and provide a brief description of relevant courses completed. The Programming Competency Statement can be uploaded as part of the online application.

## Which programming languages meet this requirement?

We require knowledge of a high-level object-oriented language such as Python, Java, or C++.

## Should any documents be submitted as evidence of completion of the competency requirement?

Applicants should submit some form of documentation showing successful completion of programming courses, inclusive of transcripts or certificates of completion. In addition, applicants may describe their level of programming competency and name and describe completed courses in their Programming Competency Statement.

# Math and Computer Science Knowledge

## Must I have completed specific courses in data structures, algorithms and analysis of algorithms, and linear algebra prior to applying to the MIDS program?

It is not necessary to have completed courses in all three of the areas above in order to be admitted. Your application should demonstrate:

- A solid understanding of these topics, either through coursework, on-the-job training, or self-study; OR
- A demonstrated aptitude to learn these subject areas — prior coursework in quantitative classes and/or work experience of a quantitative nature will be considered in the overall aptitude assessment. If you are admitted to the program but have not acquired this prerequisite knowledge in your past academic or work experiences, you will be asked to take a bridge course before enrolling in the Applied Machine Learning course. [Learn more about this bridge course here.](#)

# Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

## Are GRE or GMAT scores required for the application?

GRE/GMAT scores are not required for the application. GRE/GMAT scores may be submitted if you feel they would benefit your application. Candidates who might benefit from providing scores include those with a mediocre undergraduate performance, limited quantitative experience, and/or strong previous scores.

## If I choose to submit scores, may I take either the GRE or the GMAT?

Yes.

## Can the test scores be received after the application deadline?

The I School must receive all supporting application materials (test scores and letters of recommendation) no later than the announced deadlines.

## How long are test scores valid for admission purposes?

No more than five years may have passed between the GRE or GMAT test date and the application deadline.

## What are the GRE school and department codes?

The school code for UC Berkeley is 1634. The department code for the I School is 0404 (Information Sciences).

# Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

## Are foreign national applicants who graduated from a university in the U.S. required to take the TOEFL or IELTS?

If you have completed at least one year of full-time academic coursework with grades of B or better in residence at a U.S. university, you do not need to take the TOEFL. Instead, you must submit an official transcript from the U.S. university.

## How long are TOEFL or IELTS scores valid for admission purposes?

No more than 18 months may have passed between the TOEFL or IELTS test date and the application deadline.

## Should I include copies of my TOEFL or IELTS scores in my packet of supplemental materials?

No. Test scores should be sent directly from the testing authorities.

## What are the TOEFL or IELTS school and department codes?

The school code for UC Berkeley is 4833. The department code for the I School is 99.

## Test Codes

TEST	CODE/DEPT	VALID FOR
GRE	1634/0404	5 years
GMAT	N2V-Q0-28	5 years
TOEFL	4833/99	18 months
IELTS	TRF <sup>1</sup>	18 months

<sup>1</sup>Test Report Form must be sent directly from IELTS

## Tuition & Financial Aid

### How much does MIDS cost?

Tuition is charged per unit, and datascience@berkeley is a 27-unit program. Please note that tuition and fees are subject to change at the start of each academic year and you should expect them to moderately increase each fall term.

Current tuition rates can be found at the [I School online's Tuition and Financial Aid page](#).\*

### What types of aid are available?

U.S. citizens and permanent residents are eligible to apply for federal financial aid programs, which include student loans. We encourage you to apply for financial aid as early as possible.

To be eligible for federal financial aid, students must be registered in a minimum of six units per semester. Students who choose to take a less accelerated path toward completion of the degree should be aware that this will impact their federal financial aid eligibility.

### How do I apply for financial aid?

To apply for federal aid, complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) at [studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa](http://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa). The Federal School Code for UC Berkeley is 001312.

*\* The tuition, fees, and charges displayed here are estimates based on currently approved amounts. These figures may not be final. Actual tuition, fees, and charges are subject to change by the Regents of the University of California and could be affected by state funding reductions. Accordingly, final approved levels (and thus a student's final balance due) may differ from the amounts shown.*