



University of Maryland, College of Information

Welcome to the Doctoral Program Open House

October 1 & November 10, 2025



Hello!



Jessica Vitak (jvitak@umd.edu), she/her
Director of the PhD Program, Professor

Joel Chan (joelchan@umd.edu), he/him
Assistant Director of the PhD Program, Associate Professor

Emily Dacquisto (emilyd@umd.edu), she/her
PhD Program Coordinator, Faculty Specialist

Ph.D. in Information Studies (est. 1969)



Photo from the UMD Archives.

SLIS doctoral seminar lead by Dr. Edward Olson, 1972.

NOVEMBER 1968

THE UNIVERSITY SENATE APPROVES THE PROPOSAL FOR A PH.D. PROGRAM WITHIN SLIS

The first doctoral students start in 1969.



Ph.D. in Information Studies (est. 1969)

87 students currently enrolled as of Fall 2025

- 67% female; 30% male; 3% non-binary
- 84% full-time; 16% part-time
- 61% domestic; 39% international

137 students have graduated as of Summer 2025

- Time to degree completion: 5.5 years for full-time & 8 years for part-time
- Placement
 - Tenure-track academic positions (e.g., Clemson, Penn State, George Mason)
 - Teaching- and Research-focused academic positions
 - Industry (e.g., Meta, Google, Capital One, IBM)
 - Postdoc, consulting, government, etc.

Our Ph.D. Alumni have acquired opportunities across the world and developing a global community at the iSchool.

Listed below are all alumni of the UMD iSchool's Ph.D. Program, by decade, including their year of graduation, first job placement post-graduation, dissertation title (and link to the dissertation where applicable), and their faculty advisor(s).

Ph.D. Alumni 2020 - Present	 
Ph.D. Alumni 2010 - 2019	
Ph.D. Alumni 2000 - 2009	
Ph.D. Alumni 1990 - 1999	
Ph.D. Alumni 1980 - 1989	
Ph.D. Alumni 1970 - 1979	

————— 2024 —————

Marianna J. Martindale

- Year of Graduation: 2024
- First Placement: Computational Linguist with the Federal Government
- Dissertation: Understanding and Mitigating Misleading Machine Translations
- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Marine Carpuat

Sigfried Gold

- Year of Graduation: 2024
- First Placement: Senior Research Informatics Applications Architect in Biomedical Informatics and Data Science at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
- Dissertation: VALUE SETS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF REAL-WORLD PATIENT DATA: PROBLEMS, THEORY, AND SOLUTIONS
- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Wayne Lutters

Salma Elsayed-Ali

- Year of Graduation: 2024
- Dissertation: **Personal Objects as Design Materials**
- Faculty Advisors: Dr. Joel Chan and Dr. Beth Bonsignore

Kristine Rogers

- Year of Graduation: 2024
- First Placement: Technology Research, US Government
- Dissertation: **Change Detection: Theoretical and applied approaches for providing updates related to a topic of interest**
- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Doug Oard

Amy Wickner

- Year of Graduation: 2024
- First Placement: Electronic Records Archivist (Librarian III), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland
- Dissertation: **Archival Workers as Climate Advocates**
- Faculty Advisor: Dr. Katie Shilton

<https://ischool.umd.edu/academics/phd-information-studies/>



PhD Admissions

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Student Organizations

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UMD Scholarship Management Tool

Admissions – Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies (PhD)

<https://ischool.umd.edu/academics/phd-information-studies/admissions/>

[HOME](#) / [PHD INFORMATION STUDIES](#)

Admission to the UMD College of Information (INFO) graduate programs is through the UMD Graduate School, with supplemental program-specific application criteria and materials as described below. The UMD's Graduate School accepts applications through its **TerpEngage** application system. If you still have questions, please contact us at infophd@umd.edu.

Completed applications are reviewed by an admissions committee in each graduate degree program. The recommendations of the admissions committee are submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School, who will make the final admission decision. Students seeking to complete graduate work at the University of Maryland for degree purposes must be formally admitted to the Graduate School by the Dean.

+ Admission Requirements & Steps

+ Tips and Recommendations for INFO PhD Applicants

[CONTACT US](#)

[PHD HOME](#)



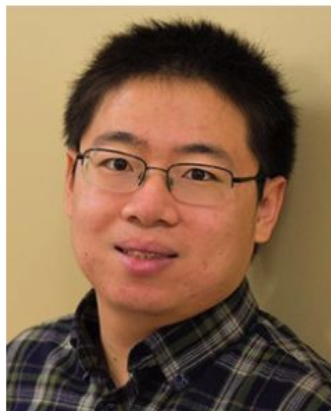
Tips and Recommendations for INFO PhD Applicants

(also listed on INFO Doctoral Admissions page)

1. **Identifying key faculty** – An awareness of the research being done in the INFO College and a readiness to talk about how you could add to it is incredibly beneficial. Additionally, drawing connections between your own research interests and the work of specific faculty demonstrates that you are familiar with the INFO College and can offer a detailed proposal for why you would be a good addition to the program. Search through [our directory](#) to find faculty that are accepting PhD students.
2. **Contacting faculty** – It can be helpful to get in touch with potential advisors before you apply. They can tell you directly whether or not they're looking to take on new PhD students and whether your research interests are a good match with theirs. However, as individual faculty members do not make admissions decisions on their own, they cannot answer whether an applicant will be accepted or not before they apply.
3. **Recommendation letters and TOEFL scores** – Make sure you give your recommenders plenty of time to write and submit their letters and, if you're an international student, make sure you give yourself plenty of time to take the TOEFL and send in your scores. We cannot review incomplete applications, so it is essential that these are submitted on time.
4. **Holistic application review** – There is no one single factor that determines a successful application. The INFO College takes a holistic approach to reviewing applications, meaning that we take into account several factors when making admissions decisions.
5. **General timeline for application review** – During January, some faculty might ask applicant for an interview as part of their deliberation. From late January–early February, the INFO College makes its first round of admissions recommendations to the Graduate School. The Graduate School then makes final admissions decisions and applicants are notified via email, usually around the end of February through early March. The INFO College usually makes a second round of admissions recommendations around early to mid April and all application decisions are made by the end of April.

Directory

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Wei Ai

Assistant Professor

✉ aiwei@umd.edu

🌐 <https://aiwei.me/>

Dr. Wei Ai joined the UMD iSchool and **UMD Institute for Advanced Computer Studies** (joint) in January 2020 as an assistant professor in data science. New developments in data science are opening the doors to world-changing social applications. Dr. Ai's research focuses on harnessing this potential of data science, particularly around machine learning and data mining algorithms. With a background in computer science, economics, and information science, Dr. Ai is creating end-to-end data science pipelines that have real-world applications. He utilizes industrial partnerships, stakeholder collaborations, and hands-on field experiments to develop tangible applications that promote social good. In recent work, Dr. Ai designed and deployed an innovative recommender system on the world's leading ride-sharing platform, DiDi. Benefiting millions of users, Dr. Ai's recommender system is helping DiDi to achieve its mission of solving global transportation, environment, and employment challenges. Dr. Ai's research has been published in top journals and conferences, including PNAS, ACM TOIS, WWW, and ICWSM.

ACCEPTING PHD STUDENTS

☑ This faculty member is currently accepting Ph.D. students

CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Machine learning
- Data mining algorithms
- End-to-end data science pipelines that have real-world applications



Funding

We provide 5 years of guaranteed funding for full-time students through TA- or RA-ship, provided that you maintain a good academic standing. Current stipend rates are shown in the table on the right.

A 20 hours/week TA- or RA-ship comes with up to 10 credits of tuition remission. A 10 hours/week TA- or RA-ship comes with up to 5 credits of tuition remission.

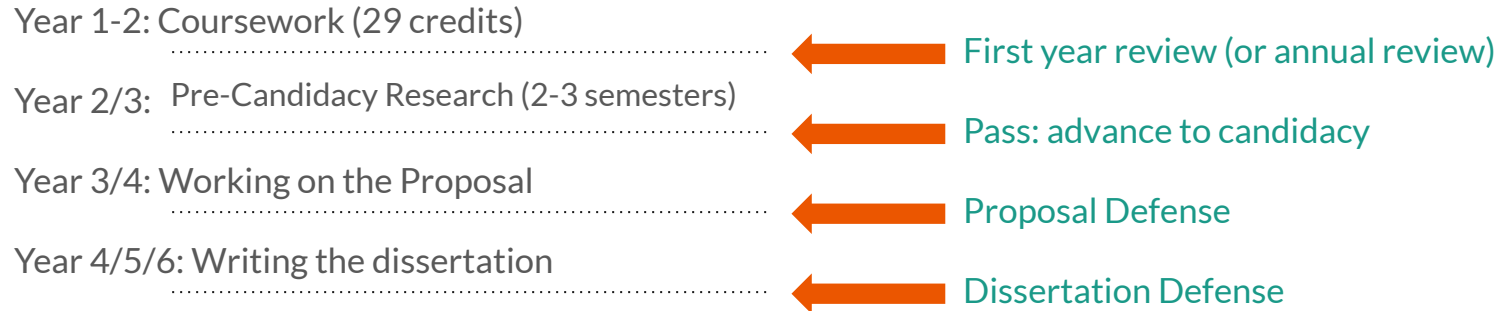
Students with a TA- or RA-ship are also eligible to enroll in the University Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) or the Maryland State Employee Health Insurance Plan.

20 hours/week	9.5 Month	12 Month
PhD Pre-candidacy	\$31,145	\$39,341
PhD Post-candidacy	\$33,453	\$42,256
10 hours/week		
PhD Pre-candidacy	\$15,572	\$19,670
PhD Post-candidacy	\$16,726	\$21,128



Timeline

Average time to degree for full-time students is 5.5 years; most students finish within 4 to 6 years



<https://ischool.umd.edu> → academics → doctoral program → handbooks and policies



Handbook

Read the latest version carefully and thoroughly.

- 
- 2025-2026 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2024-2025 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2023-2024 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2022-2023 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2021-2022 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2020-2021 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2019-2020 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2018-2019 Doctoral Student Handbook
 - 2016-2017 Doctoral Student Handbook



Doctoral Students Research Awards (DSRA)

- Funding to assist current INFO PhD students' research
- Up to \$1500 to cover costs associated with students' research
- May receive the award more than once (max: \$3000 awarded while enrolled)

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Common FAQs

Q: When is the application deadline?

A: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 11:59 pm ET.

Q: Can I complete the program online?

A: No! This is an in-person doctoral program.

Q: Can I be a part-time student?

A: Yes! The program supports both full- and part-time students.

Q: Can I have an application fee waiver?

A: Check the Graduate School's website at this link to see if you are eligible:

<https://gradschool.umd.edu/feewaiverinformation>

Q: Can my TOEFL/IELTS score be waived?

A: Check the Graduate School's website at this link to see if you are eligible:

<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements>



Q&A

Please reach out to infophd@umd.edu with any questions you may have.