



DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS

New Jersey Institute of Technology
College of Computing Sciences
University Heights
Newark, NJ 07102
973.596.2681
bieber@njit.edu
<http://web.njit.edu/~bieber>

Michael Bieber, Director, Ph.D. Program
GITC Building, Suite 5500

Dear Prospective Ph.D. Applicant,

We are glad to hear of your interest in the Ph.D. in Information Systems, as we always look forward to welcoming new Ph.D. students to our IS Community.

Our Ph.D. Program, which is a STEM degree, offers excellent research training in human-centered computing, information science, and to a lesser extent, management information systems. With diverse research interests, our faculty conduct research in areas such as pervasive computing, computer mediated communications, digital libraries, information retrieval, text and web mining, and learning systems – just to name a few. Students work closely with their advisor to participate in large research projects and design their own for a dissertation. After graduation, students have found careers in both academe and industry.

Being part of College of Computing Sciences, we have a very strong tradition in building computer applications. Therefore, we are especially interested in students with strong application development talents. Before you apply, please browse our faculty and students' web sites to get to know us and our research projects. Please also browse our Ph.D. Program page to learn our admissions and degree requirements.

In addition to our traditional doctorate, we offer a “collaborative doctorate” option, which allows a student to continue employment while pursuing the Ph.D. on a part-time basis in cooperation with their employer. In all other aspects, e.g. the process for admission and the various milestones toward completion are the same as those for a full-time student. However, we do *not* have a distance learning Ph.D. program for completing the entire degree online.

Here are some things you must do or prepare as part of the application process. Note that our IS Ph.D. application requires information *in addition to* the standard NJIT application. This additional evidence is important for us to judge your fit with our program, and therefore our ability to guide you effectively in your studies. Acceptance into our program is competitive, so the better your fit and your potential for research, the stronger your application will present you as we compare the different applicants. In some aspects below we list minimal threshold conditions, but of course, performing higher will reflect better as we evaluate your potential.

1. Work through the department home page (is.njit.edu), find the Ph.D. program and then study the program description. This will show you what is involved in the program. Generally speaking, the MS in IS from NJIT will fulfill the Foundation Coursework requirements, while other degrees need to be examined on a course by course basis to determine equivalents with the NJIT courses.

2. Graduate entry exams:
 - a) Make sure you have taken the GRE exam. The GRE General Test is a mandatory NJIT requirement, even for students with a masters degree. (The GMAT is also accepted but GRE is preferred.) The *minimum* score for considering admission is 1850/2400 combined on the GRE on the old 3-exam scheme, 1250/1600 on the old 2-exam scheme, or 315/340 on the current exam—about the 85th percentile. We also require at least 4.5 for the analytical writing portion of the GRE.
 - b) We strongly recommend studying for the GRE, either with guidebooks available in bookstores, or a preparatory course. The GRE exam is structured differently from many other exams, and this sometimes hinders people from taking the exam most efficiently and best reflecting their abilities. (In the past applicants sometimes have taken the GRE twice so it properly reflects their abilities.)
 - c) Good TOEFL or IETLS scores, if applicable, also are necessary.
3. We prefer that applicants will have already earned a master's degree, though outstanding students with a bachelor's degree will be considered. (Note that those enrolled in the Ph.D. will NOT receive a master's degree “on the way” without additional coursework not required for the Ph.D.) For admission, the GPA on the graduate level should be at least 3.5, and preferably 3.7 or better on a 4.0 scale.
4. Applications can be submitted online through Graduate Admissions on the NJIT web page (www.njit.edu). That is also the place to find out about tuition, etc. If you want a paper application, contact Graduate Admissions.
5. Applicants seeking financial support must submit all application materials by January 15 for the Fall admission, and by September 01 for the Spring admission. Applicants not seeking financial support are strongly encouraged to follow the above deadlines as well to allow sufficient time for application review.
6. To ensure that every admitted applicant will likely be able to find a dissertation advisor and committee in our program, we require you to find one faculty who is willing to advocate your application. You should therefore contact the following faculty to identify at least one who has matching research interests: core faculty members: Dr. Bieber, Dr. Duan, Dr. Jones, Dr. Wohn, Dr. Wu, and Dr. Xu; or Distinguished Professors Emeriti: Dr. Hiltz and Dr. Turoff. You can find their e-mail address and web site on <http://is.njit.edu>, and search online for their publications. Feel free to contact me for suggestions, as well as other possible faculty advocates. Note that you are under no obligation to do your dissertation with this faculty advocate, but you are encouraged to seek mentorship with your advocate once you enter the program. The purpose of advocacy is to ensure a good fit with our department.

Of course you can hold discussions with several faculty simultaneously as you learn about their research and look for an advocate. When you contact faculty you should describe your (potential) research interests and how they fit with that faculty member's specific research areas. Be as explicit and detailed as possible in order to provide the faculty member the information he or she needs to determine whether it would be fruitful to explore a collaboration with you. This also shows that you have taken the time to explore the faculty member's web site and research interests, and read some of the articles he or she has written.

7. Applications must include the following. Some of this information is *in addition to* the standard NJIT application.
- a) A curriculum vitae which details your prior degrees, your publications and your work experience. (Please also list your computer skills and relevant certificates.)
 - b) NJIT requires three letters of reference. You will include their email addresses in your online application and Admissions will ask them to fill out an online form evaluating you.

Note that we would like 3 full letters of reference, preferably from professors who can evaluate your research potential (as well as your academic performance). These can be the same people listed in your online application, or others. You can ask additional people to write letters for you at any time without completing an online form. Please ask them to send letters directly to me at bieber@njit.edu

Let your recommenders know that letters should describe your research potential with enough detail to justify their assessment.

- c) Research Statement (for admissions purposes you must call this “Statement of Purpose”): Your statement of purpose is primarily a research statement. Research statements should show your understanding of the current research in your areas of interest (using citations where appropriate), including discussing potential problems that you might address in your research. Your research statement should describe *both* your envisioned career goals once you receive your Ph.D. degree, and a detailed description of your research focus within the field.

Regarding this focus, some excellent applicants have a well-developed concept of a specific research topic they wish to pursue. They may know (and should describe) the current state of the research field and its literature, what problems need to be addressed, the specific research they hope to contribute and how this fits into the current research of our faculty. Other excellent applicants have not decided on a specific topic, but have a general area they wish to study and strong motivation for this. In your statement, please provide the detail that best reflects your research focus and understanding of that area at this time. Feel free to discuss your statement with your advocate and other faculty.

- d) Supplemental materials — please send these to Graduate Admissions as part of your supporting materials, and also please send a copy directly to me at bieber@njit.edu
 - Copies of any award letters or certificates listed in your CV
 - Copies of all articles published or submitted in any language. For each, clearly describe how you contributed to the paper's writing and the paper's concepts, as well as who the primary author was (even if that person's name is not the main one in the list of authors).
 - Copies of other writing samples in English where you are the primary author
 - Descriptions and screen shots of systems you developed
 - Any other appropriate materials to help us evaluate your research potential and English communication skills

We have an excellent program that is kept that way by making sure that the number of students admitted is limited to the number who can be given personal attention by our faculty. So, please understand that program admission is very competitive; we only admit the applicants with the best research potential and fit. Your work experience, recommendations from professors, and personal research statement weigh in that decision.

For support as a teaching assistant, competition is even stronger. For example, we expect a combined minimum GRE of 85% or better to consider you for support. We usually expect that you will already have a master's degree.

The only way you can be given an individual evaluation in detail is by applying. You can apply online. Go to www.njit.edu and to admissions, and follow the links.

Policies on part time and distance students

Full time students normally take 9 or more credits (3 or more courses) a semester. Part time students normally take 6 credits per semester. The general rule is that part time students have twice the amount of time as full time students to fulfill a requirement, within the 7-year statute of limitation. However, it may be necessary at some point in their work for a student to devote full time to work related to the dissertation, in order to complete work within the maximum time allowed.

Distance: We DO NOT have a distance learning Ph.D. program. We do have a distance learning master's degree in Information Systems, so many of our 600 level courses and some of our 700 level courses are available online. Students in the Ph.D. program should be careful to select distance sections taught by full time faculty members, and otherwise in consultation with their advisors and mentors. All students will need to spend at least a semester in residence, and often a full year, to be determined by the dissertation advisor who is chosen after qualifying examinations are passed. Please discuss this explicitly with me.

Credit for life experience: We do not give academic credit for life experience. However, if you already know the material in a required course, you may by permission take a different course.

We look forward to discussions with you, and if you and we believe there is a good fit, then to receiving your application. Please e-mail me at bieber@njit.edu with further questions.

Thanks for your interest in our Ph.D. program!

Sincerely,

Michael Bieber, Ph.D.

Professor and Director, Ph.D. Program
Information Systems Department