School of Information - MIMS Admissions Chat – August 12, 2016, 9-10AM

Shelley Kim, Admissions and Financial Assistance Coordinator
Inessa Gelfenboym, Admissions and Student Affairs Assistant

Shelley@ISchool: Welcome! Let us know if you have any questions about MIMS!

Inessa@ISchool: So, I'll start off by giving you all a little background about the program. The MIMS (Masters of Information in Management and Systems) is a two-year, interdisciplinary program. The first year of the program is dedicated to completing the core courses. These courses consist of INFO 202, an abstract course teaching the fundamentals of information organization and retrieval. INFO 206, a more technical course taught using python, which helps students build on the Python fundamentals and learn to use Python for the kinds of projects they will pursue in the program. In the second semester, students take INFO 203 Social Issues of Information and INFO 205 Information Law and Policy. In addition to the four core courses, our students are required to fulfill a technical and a management requirement. The summer between the first and second years is meant to be used for an internship to help our students get professional experience and build professional relationships.

Ishan M: Hi Inessa, Can you explain a little more about that technical & management requirement?

Inessa@ISchool: Of course! Students typically fulfill these requirements within the first three semesters of the program. The tech requirement can be fulfilled by courses like Web Architecture and Databases. The Management requirement can be fulfilled by courses like "Managing in Information Intensive Companies" and "Lean/Agile Product Management"

Ishan M: What if I already have a work experience of working in a MNC. Will that be helpful?

Inessa@ISchool: The I School values work experience very highly and it is definitely an important factor in our admissions process. It also means you'll have a good sense of what kind of work you'd like to pursue during and after your time with MIMS.

Pranshu: Hi, Could you please explain what things to keep in mind while writing essays for I School?

Shelley@ISchool: Hi Pranshu, thanks for your question! We want to see why MIMS is a great fit for you and how your experience has shaped this.

yulingz26: Hi Inessa, I saw many programming classes are offered in summer terms, are there any in spring or fall terms?

Inessa@ISchool: Yulingz, are you referring to our INFO W18 Python course? We don't offer that particular course during the spring or fall.

yulingz26: I'm referring to programming courses, not only Python?

Inessa@ISchool: Yulingz, the I School conducts all of its programming in Python. Aside from our Summer Online course, the I School does not teach students how to program. There are many courses that require programming skills and during which students are taught how to use their skills to do work with design or databases.

Berkeley SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

Ishan M: Inessa, I would like to know more about the application requirements of I School. Can you please explain the basic requirements for the admission?

Shelley@ISchool: Hi Ishan, happy to answer your application requirements question. You can find all the application requirements here: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/admissions/mims. In short, we want to see your 1) Bachelor's degree and transcripts 2) Resume and Work experience 3) Statement of Purpose 4) Personal History 5) Short Answer Essay 6) 3 Letters of Rec (we prefer professional letters of rec) 7) GRE/GMAT score 8) TOEFL or IELTS Scores if you are an international candidate and 9) Programming Competency Statement. Let us know if you have specific questions about each!

Inessa@ISchool: Hi Emily! If the grades/transcripts are not yet available at the time of your application, you can list the classes you are taking in the application, however, even an unofficial transcript with the grades would be helpful in assessing your programming skill!

Pranshu: Thanks for the answer Shelley. When is the application starting?

Shelley@ISchool: The application will be open starting early September, but I encourage you to check back mid-September so they can work out the kinks in the system!

yulingz26: If I don't have any tech background and have already graduated, what should I do now to fulfill the application requirement?

Inessa@ISchool: Yulingz, our students fulfill the Programming requirement in a variety of ways. Some of our successful applicants are self-taught, some have taken extension or online coursework. What is important is that you feel you have at least a basic understanding and a good grasp of the programming language.

Ishan M: Question 1: What does short answer essay mean and what should be its content?

Inessa@ISchool: Ishan, the short answer essay should answer the question "What is the most interesting information problem you have solved?" We are interested in learning how you approach problems and what kinds of skills and techniques you are able to apply.

Ishan M: Question 2: Should all my letter of rec be from my work place or can I get a few from my college profs too?

Shelley@ISchool: Ishan, we prefer letters of recommendation to be professional, but will also take into account academic letters.

Ishan M: Question 3: Programming competency statement?

Inessa@ISchool: The Programming Competency statement is like a resume of your programming languages. You list the programming languages that you know, your level of skill, and any coursework or projects completed with that language.

Ishan M: Question 4: How many LOR's do you want in number?

Shelley@ISchool: 3 LOR's

Ishan M: Question 5: Can you specify the average GRE and TOEFL scores ?

Shelley@ISchool: Ishan, average scores can be found here: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/admissions/mims.

yulingz26: Thank you, Would this chat history be reviewed or uploaded later on the website?

Shelley@ISchool: Sure, please send an email to admissions@ischool.berkeley.edu and we will get that to you!

Ishan M: Thanks.

Shelley@ISchool: No problem! Great questions!

Ishan M: What is the percentage of acceptance? I meant the application acceptance

Inessa@ISchool: Ishan, we receive approximately 325-350 applications and aim for a class of about 50.

Ishan M: ok. Great. Thanks for the info. Will my undergraduate CGPA have any impact on my application?

Shelley@ISchool: Hi Ishan, yes, we will review your undergraduate GPA with the application, as we require you to have a bachelor's degree.

Ronghui: Hi Inessa, can you please talk about financial aid?

Shelley@ISchool: Hi Rongui - happy to take the question on financial aid! All students who are admitted in MIMS are automatically considered for an I School Fellowship that will help fund your degree for the 2 years in various ways. With that said, many of our students get teaching positions that also help finance their degree. If you are a US Citizen or permanent resident, we encourage you to fill out the FAFSA. In addition, we also encourage you to apply for scholarships concurrently with your MIMS application as many of the deadlines coincide! Here's a great resource for scholarships: http://scholarships.berkeley.edu. Please also see the Financial Aid website for UC Berkeley: http://financialaid.berkeley.edu.

Pranshu: Is there any way MIMS students can collaborate in research with Ph.D students?

Inessa@ISchool: Pranshu, I'm not sure about collaboration with PhDs, but some of our MIMS do pursue research with faculty guidance. We've had a number of MIMS travel to conferences to present their research.

Ishan M: Do I need to get my GPA converted into US format from WES?

Inessa@ISchool: Hi Ishan, nope, we are able to review international GPAs as they are.

Ishan M: Shelley & Inessa, Can I have your email id's in order to contact for future reference?

Shelley@ISchool: Sure! You can reach us at admissions@ischool.berkeley.edu, and either Inessa and I will respond!

Ishan M: thanks

Shelley@ISchool: No problem - thanks for joining us today! If you have any more questions, feel free to keep asking!

Ishan M: Thanks for arranging this session. It has been so helpful so far.

Shelley@ISchool: Great! We are happy to help.

Inessa@ISchool: Happy to help!

Ishan M: one more: Where can I find the details of profs involved with the subjects of MIMS ?

Inessa@ISchool: A full list of I School faculty can be found here: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/people/faculty. You can also learn more by looking at the courses that are offered: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/courses/info/2016/fall. The instructor is typically listed with the course.

Emily: Are there any prerequisite classes that we could take in advance, in the event that we get admitted to the program?

Shelley@ISchool: Emily, there are no prerequisite classes to take in advance. However, if you think you need more experience in object-oriented programming, I would recommend that.

Ishan M: I checked out the website of UC, Berkeley but couldn't find separate column for profs dealing with MIMS curriculum. It was a mixture for MIMS & MIDS I believe.

Inessa@ISchool: The INFO courses are offered only to MIMS students. The only courses our MIMS do not take are those under level 200 and the doctoral colloquia.

Ishan M: Basically, all the profs details were mentioned over there. I thought there would be a separate column for MIMS. Anyways, It's fine.

Inessa@ISchool: All of the faculty listed in "Ladder and adjunct faculty" teach MIMS classes.

Ishan M: ok. Thanks a lot Inessa :)

Inessa@ISchool: No problem!

Ishan M: This is exactly what I wanted

Pranshu: Could we have little more info regarding the information problem, you mentioned earlier?

Berkeley SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

Shelley@ISchool: Hi Pranshu - are you referring to the Short Answer Essay? If so, it's a short response limited to 300 words. We ask that you detail why it was interesting and how you solved it.

Pranshu: Yes.

Shelley@ISchool: Got it - great question! The Short Answer is one of 3 essays, and should be uploaded as a PDF on the online application. Let me know if you have any more questions!

Ishan M: What is the deadline for applying to I School?

Shelley@ISchool: Ishan, the deadline is January 4, 2017.

Ishan M: Do you accept rolling applications?

Inessa@ISchool: Ishan, no, all applications are evaluated as one pool and all admissions decisions are sent by early March.

AdrianS: When one graduates from the MIMS program, what types of careers can he or she pursue?

Shelley@ISchool: Adrian, great question! We typically see a wide array of career outcomes for the MIMS degree since it is so interdisciplinary. These include business analysts, product manager, software engineers, data scientists, data engineers, UX researchers, etc. You can find career reports here: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/careers/paths that can give you a better sense of median salary and job titles. We also offer career services at the I School and our Director of Career Services, Rebecca Andersen, will be available for 1-1 sessions if you are admitted into the program. She also has a number of career events such as resume workshops, networking events, panels and more. The I School website has a lot of career resources and what you can expect as a MIMS student. You can find them here: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/careers/mims/guides.

Ishan M: In the application procedure, do we need to upload the SOP / ask concerned person to send it to you over the email OR do we need to courier it to you?

Inessa@ISchool: Ishan, the SOP (statement of purpose) should be written by the applicant and must be uploaded. All LORs (Letters of Recommendation) should be uploaded by recommenders. The application allows the applicant to invite their recommenders to submit recommendations and complete a form.

Ishan M: Don't I need to send the LOR's in a sealed envelope to you by courier services?

Inessa@ISchool: Nope!

Ishan M: Or is it just that Soft copy from my recommenders will do?

Inessa@ISchool: Your recommenders should upload their recommendations directly to the application.

Pranshu: Is there any kind of face-to-face interview part of admission process?

Berkeley SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

Inessa@ISchool: Some, but not all applicants may be invited to interview.

Emily: Could you talk about the final project? Also, are there any specializations within the program?

Inessa@ISchool: Emily, I would love to tell you about the final project! The final project is the culmination of the MIMS curriculum. Students, often in groups or pairs (but sometimes on their own), set out to solve a problem, build a product, or study an issue. There is a lot of variation in final projects, because they emerge from student's interests. Here is a link to the final projects from this past year: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/programs/mims/projects/2016. Students apply different skill sets to these projects and work together to create something truly impressive. Some students continue to pursue these projects even after they graduate. MIMS students are not required to specialize in any one sub-field, but certainly many students take different courses based on a desired career outcome (or take courses that they are interested in and find that their career choice goes from there)! Certainly some students find that there are particular courses that are more relevant to some career outcomes than others and we counsel those students accordingly.

Emily: Thanks, Inessa! Much appreciated.

Ishan M: What about the transcripts? Do I need to upload them or do I need to send it via courier ?

Shelley@ISchool: Ishan, we ask that you upload them to the online application and if we require hard copies, we will notify you.

AdrianS: Thank you for the link. Shelley, you mentioned data scientist as a potential career. If one were to pursue this field is there an advantage to taking the MIDS program versus the MIMS program?

Shelley@ISchool: Adrian, great question! The MIDS program is geared more towards working professionals, as it is an online program. We also do see that the MIDS program is more programming-based, whereas the MIMS degree allows you to get a more interdisciplinary approach. We see that MIDS is more focused to data science whereas MIMS has a broader scope that gives you perspective from the business, tech, user and policy side of a product. Let me know if you have any more questions about the difference between MIDS and MIMS and what might be right fit for you!

Pranshu: In the information course, what are lower-division and upper-division courses?

Inessa@ISchool: Lower division courses are courses, which would not count toward the MIMS degree and are offered primarily for undergraduates. Upper division courses are also primarily for undergrads, but could count toward the degree. Most of our MIMS take only 200 level courses.

Emily: For the programming competency statement, could you list the languages you would like students to have knowledge of?

Inessa@ISchool: Sure! We require students to have a basic knowledge of an Object Oriented Programming Language. While the I School does its coursework in Python, this also includes Java and C++. Either of those will fulfill the requirement.

Emily: What about C and Visual Basic?

Inessa@ISchool: I don't believe those fulfill the requirement, but we'd love to know about any programming skills and knowledge that you have

Ishan M: In the programming competency statement, can we attach the certifications we must've done for languages such as JAVA / C?

Inessa@ISchool: You are certainly welcome to include your certifications!

AdrianS: Thank you Shelley you were very helpful.

Shelley@ISchool: No problem! Let me know if you want to have a deeper conversation about the difference between MIDS and MIMS. Happy to speak to you more about your career goals and which program is a better fit for you.

Shelley@ISchool: As we are nearing the top of the hour, does anyone have any remaining questions?

Pranshu: Is it ok to drop by to campus and meet few MIMS students?

Shelley@ISchool: Absolutely! Feel free to e-mail us at admissions@ischool.berkeley.edu and we can help arrange a class visit and meeting with MIMS students.

Pranshu: Perfect! Thanks

Shelley@ISchool: No problem! We look forward to meeting you soon!

Ishan M: I am still a little confused about the programs you mentioned. Can you provide some link where i can go through the courses for MIMS? I meant the courses in MIMS.

Inessa@ISchool: Here are our degree requirements: http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/programs/mims/degreerequirements. MIMS students may also take any 200+ level INFO course. http://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/courses/info with the exception of doctoral colloquia.

Ishan M: Ok. Thanks Shelley & Inessa for answering the queries.

Shelley@ISchool: No problem!

Inessa@ISchool: Thank you all for coming! It's been wonderful chatting with you. :)

Shelley@ISchool: As we are reaching the end of the chat, we encourage you to keep in contact with us by attending future admissions events, or emailing us at admissions@ischool.berkeley.edu. Thanks for joining us!

Ronghui: Thanks so much!

Inessa@ISchool: Yes! Please feel free to e-mail us any additional questions. We will look forward to hearing from you!

Berkeley SCHOOL OF INFORMATION