



# IT:U Master's Program Admissions Rubric – Valid as of November 1, 2025

(adapted from Cornell Communication Department Graduate Admissions Rubric)

This document describes the process of evaluating applicants, including:

- Application materials
- Scoring System
- Rubric

*As a reminder, the rubric aims to facilitate our admission discussions by helping us connect the application materials to the qualities we are looking for in applicants. Please use the whole scale. If too many applicants have a top rating, we will need to assign a further round of reviews.*

Score according to your confidence whether the applicant meets our criteria rather than as judgments of applicant qualities, per se. So, an applicant with a lower score may be a less ideal fit for this particular cohort, but their application is not inherently “worse.”

Distinct members of the admissions committee may use different heuristics for assessing these. So, sub-questions and suggested indicators should be viewed as prompts to aid staff and faculty in their assessment, not requirements.

## Application Materials

Please annually review what we ask applicants to provide:

### **Motivational Letter (ML):**

Motivational letter (in English only, max. 1 page/approx. 500 words)

The motivational letter should introduce the applicant (background and future goals), describe why the applicant is motivated to study at IT:U, and which of the four specializations (Designing Interactions; Digital Earth, Society, and Networks; Digital Humanities, Health, and Life Sciences; Future Industries) the applicant is interested in pursuing. The applicant can also surprise us and share if there is anything else the applicant thinks we should know about the applicant's background, identity, interests, or talents.

### **Video Submission (DM):**

#### REQUIREMENTS

Must be 2-3 minutes in length. Submissions under 2 minutes or over 3 minutes will not be considered further. Submissions must be in a video format. Submissions must include a video of the applicant speaking and using his/her/their own voice. Note: If the applicant does not provide a viewable link, the application will be marked as incomplete and will not be considered further.

The applicant should respond to the following questions: Why you are a good fit for the program and why the program is a good fit for you; what you imagine to be the most interesting, challenging, and/or rewarding part of this program; what is an industrial, societal, and/or global challenge that you are passionate about, and how will this program help you address this challenge?



### **Curriculum Vitae (CV):**

The CV should be written in English, well-formatted, and follow a logical, coherent structure. There are no formal length, content, or format requirements.

### **English Proficiency:**

IT:U requires students to have minimum C1 level English as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Applicants will be asked to complete a self-assessment as part of the application.

The motivational letter, digital media, and CV will all be assessed for English proficiency. This will help provide the admissions committee with an initial understanding of an applicant's English level. If the applicant fails to submit any of the aforementioned materials in English, their application will be rejected.

The interview will be the ultimate assessment of an applicant's English level. During the interview, the interviewers should consider if the applicant can:

- understand and respond to a wide range of questions and recognize implicit meaning.
- express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.
- use language flexibly and effectively, particularly as it relates to professional and academic purposes.
- produce clear, well-structured, detailed speech on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

## **Scoring System**

The following components of the application will be scored:

- Fit With IT:U (numbered scale)
- Past Achievement/Future Potential (numbered scale)
- Motivational Letter (numbered scale)
- Digital Media (numbered scale)
- English Proficiency (yes/no)

Following the initial application review, the interview will also be scored on a numbered scale. The numbered scales function as follows:

- 1 = adequate or less. Evidence should then be briefly named/described
- 2 = strong. Evidence should then be briefly named/described
- 3 = exceptional. Evidence should then be briefly named/described

## **Rubric**

The rubric is structured as follows. There are 3 criteria (A, B, C). Each criterion is accompanied by a set of sub-questions whose answers contribute to the assessment of the applicant. For each sub-question, there are suggested indicators for phase 1 (application) and phase 2 (interview). These are suggestions—admissions should feel free to develop/discover their own indicators (and explain them to the rest of us!).



## Example:

### **Criterion A – Academic Preparedness, (Past) Achievements, and (Future) Potential**

*Why? We want applicants who have the ability and baseline training to succeed within our program. Suggested sub-questions and ways of answering them:*

Can this applicant handle the rigors of the IT:U master's program?

- Suggested Indicators: Phase 1 – Written
  - Do transcripts show high marks in rigorous classes?
  - Do transcripts indicate they have strong academic capability?
  - Do the CV and ML describe past accomplishments and enthusiasm for further growth?
- Suggested indicators: Phase 2 – Interview
  - Can the applicant handle challenging questions?

### **Criterion B – Teamwork, Leadership, Flexibility**

*Why? We want applicants to thrive under our educational model. Some students may prefer to work more independently, in which case, they may struggle to succeed as members of a project group. In addition, we want students to succeed while working in diverse groups. Project group members will come from a variety of academic, personal, professional, and cultural backgrounds. Suggested sub-questions and ways of answering them:*

Will the applicant be able to work well in a close-knit team?

- Suggested Indicators: Phase 1 – Written
  - Does the CV, ML, or DM show the applicant's capacity for teamwork and leadership?
  - Does the CV, ML, or DM show a range of diverse experiences?
  - Does the CV, ML, or DM demonstrate a self-motivated approach and/or the applicant's capacity for approaching problems from various perspectives?
- Suggested Indicators: Phase 2 – Interview
  - How does the applicant respond to questions regarding difficult/challenging teamwork scenarios?
  - How does the applicant respond to questions regarding working with peers from different backgrounds?

### **Criterion C – Fit with IT:U**

*Why? We want applicants to pick the right master's program for their goals/interests. In addition, applicants should demonstrate that they have an understanding of interdisciplinary study and research. Suggested sub-questions and ways of answering them:*

Do the applicant's interests fit with the IT:U master's program interests?

- Suggested Indicators: Phase 1 – Written
  - Does the CV, ML, or DM demonstrate an understanding of interdisciplinarity?



- Does the DM show the applicant's excitement for the potential chosen specialization?
- Does the ML show strong interest in interdisciplinary learning or solutions?
- Suggested Indicators: Phase 2 – Interview
  - How does the applicant respond to questions regarding interdisciplinarity?
  - Do the interviewers notice a strong interest in interdisciplinary learning and a commitment to how studying at IT:U will equip the applicant to solve societal/industrial/global challenges?
  - Does the applicant show interest in project-based, personal learning in an international environment?