



PhD Program in Communication, Information & Media

22 October 2024

PhD Director: Dr. Melissa Aronczyk
Email: PhDDirector@comminfo.rutgers.edu

RUTGERS

School of Communication
and Information

Welcome

Dr. Matt Weber, Area Coordinator, Communication

Dr. Caitlin Petre, Area Coordinator, Media Studies

Dr. Charles Senteio, Area Coordinator, Library & Info Science

Dr. Kevin Ewell, Assistant Dean of Student Services

Ms. Katie Scrivani, PhD Candidate

As of 2024:

- **80 full-time faculty**
- **55 PhD students with full-time appointments (internally/externally funded research fellows, teaching assistants, graduate assistants)**

Three areas of concentration:

- **Communication**
- **Media Studies**
- **Library and Information Science**

Communication

- Communication and Technology
- Health Communication
- Interpersonal Communication
- Language and Social Interaction
- Organizational Communication

Library and Information Science

- Health Information and Technology
- Human Information Behavior
- Human-Computer Interaction
- Information Institutions, Artifacts and Documents
- Information, Learning, and Technology
- Information Retrieval and Language Analysis
- Social Computing and Data Science

Media Studies

- Critical Data Studies
- Political Economy of Media
- Media and Inequality
- Journalism Studies
- Digital Media and Platform Studies
- Media and Politics
- Promotional Culture
- Science Communication
- Media History

Q. How many people applied for 2024-25?

Total	244
Comm	101
LIS	74
MS	69

International	Domestic
64%	36%

Q. How many applicants were admitted for 2024-25?

Area	Admitted without funding	Admitted with funding	2024-25 Cohort
Comm	19	4	5
LIS	21	4	5
MS	0	4	4

Q. How are application materials reviewed? What are you looking for in the application package?

All faculty members in each area (Media Studies, Communication Studies, Library and Information Science) review applicants to its area and make recommendations.

- (a) articulation of a strong and feasible research project;
- (b) connection to faculty research and interests;
- (c) prior scholarship and qualifications;
- (d) quality of writing and expression;
- (e) recommendation letters;
- (f) required TOEFL/IELTS scores.

Q. What if my proposed research interests cut across more than one program area? Can I choose faculty from two program areas with one application?

We welcome interdisciplinary applications. However, students are accepted into only one of the three areas. So it's best to be clear about which area you would like as your "home" area.

Once accepted to the program, **students can take courses in all three areas and work with faculty across all three areas.**

Q. How important is it to secure a potential advisor before applying?

We do not require applicants to secure an advisor before applying to the PhD program. We will assign an advisor to you once you are accepted. However, we recommend that you (a) reach out to individual faculty members to discuss the possibility of working with them and (b) explain in your application why your research interests will be well served by our faculty and our program.

Q. Can I apply directly to the PhD program from a Bachelor's degree?

Yes.

Q. If you are applying with a BA and no MA, what are things you can do or highlight to improve your odds of admission?

We are looking for PhD students who can articulate a feasible research project that connects to the expertise of our faculty.

Q. What are the profiles of some successful applicants to the program?

Q. Could you share something about SC&I that isn't available on the website?

Q. What qualities or characteristics do you prioritize when selecting a PhD student?

Q. How often do graduate students go to conferences?

Q. Will SC&I replace a PhD offer with an MA offer during admission?

Q. Can an MA student apply to transfer to a PhD after graduation?

Q. Is it advisable to first apply for an MA and then transfer to a PhD?

Q. If I apply for an MA, will I be eligible for a full scholarship?

Our PhD program is NOT connected to our MA program.

Students apply separately to the MA program. There are limited scholarships (but no full scholarships).

There are no automatic transfers from MA to PhD.

Our MA programs:

<https://comminfo.rutgers.edu/graduate-programs>

Q. Is financial aid available for Ph.D students?

All applicants (international and domestic) applying for full-time study are automatically considered for funding.

Media Studies Area: 4 funded positions

Communication Are: 4 funded positions

Library and Information Science: 4 funded positions

Media Studies only accepts funded students.

Comm and LIS accept unfunded students.

Q. What is the funding package for funded students?

Five years of funding is provided. Each of those five years of support will include salary/stipend, tuition and fee remission, and health insurance.

Students may be appointed as a teaching assistant, graduate (research) assistant, or fellow during their years of funding.

Q. Can I work while being a PhD student?

It is not very common for PhD students to work full time unless the candidate is a part-time student (in which case they are not eligible for funding). *Note: The Media Studies program does not accept part-time students.* Some part-time work for students may be available but is not guaranteed. International student visas restrict students to 20 hours/week of work.

Q. Is there a part-time option to study? Is there an online option? When are classes held?

We occasionally accept part-time students, but they are not eligible for funding. We do not offer any online options. All coursework must be completed in person. Classes are offered once a week for three hours, day and evening.

Q. Can I apply to begin in Spring or Summer?

Our PhD program accepts students beginning in Fall only.

Q. Does Rutgers provide PhD student housing? Will the housing be covered by funding?

Yes, there is some graduate student housing. The housing is not covered by funding.

Q. Will a media studies concentration help with a sports media career (TV/radio/camera operator)?

A. Our PhD program is mainly designed to prepare students for an academic career as a professor or lecturer in a university setting. Some students also pursue research positions in government or media. Our program **does not offer any hands-on skills training** (e.g., media production or film).

Please see our website for faculty and student specializations:

<https://comminfo.rutgers.edu/directories/faculty>

<https://comminfo.rutgers.edu/directories/doctoral-students>

Q. Will priority be given to those who submitted their application early?

A. All applications will be reviewed by the entire department faculty after the application deadline of 15 December 2024. We do not review any applicant materials before that date.

Late applications (or applications that are missing components) will not be reviewed.

Q. Do I need to submit GRE scores?

We currently do not require GRE scores from applicants. We do require TOEFL/IELTS scores from international applicants.

Paper-based TOEFL score: 550. Computer-based TOEFL score: 213.
IBT-internet-based TOEFL -- Writing 24, Speaking 24, Reading 22,
Listening 19. IELTS score: bandwidth 7.5.

We do not accept Duolingo scores at this time.

Q. Do I need to submit TOEFL/IELTS scores?

Non-native English-speaking applicants must submit TOEFL or IELTS results. Results must be from within the last three years. You are exempt from submitting TOEFL or IELTS scores if you have already completed (at the time of application submission) **three or more consecutive academic years** in an undergraduate or graduate curriculum where the only language of instruction was English.

Paper-based TOEFL score: 550. Computer-based TOEFL score: 213. IBT-internet-based TOEFL -- Writing 24, Speaking 24, Reading 22, Listening 19. IELTS score: bandwidth 7.5.

Q. Are there any exceptions for not meeting the GPA or TOEFL/IELTS score requirement?

Not really, because we receive so many applications.

We only accept scores submitted at the time of application.

TOEFL/IELTS scores must be **from within the last three years** (from the time of application).

Minimum GPA = 3.0 or B level (or equivalent).

Q. I am an international student. Can I upload an unofficial transcript on the application portal and provide the official transcript after the start of the program, if admitted?

We prefer that you upload official documents only.

Q. Can I apply for an application fee waiver?

Please contact the Rutgers Office of Graduate and Professional Admissions to request a fee waiver.

<https://gradstudy.rutgers.edu>

Q. Why do international transcripts need to be evaluated by NACES?

If you have completed undergraduate/graduate education outside the United States, we need the evaluation to determine the equivalency of your education to the education system in the United States.

RUTGERS

School of Communication
and Information

Thank You

PhD Director: Dr. Melissa Aronczyk
Email: PhDDirector@comminfo.rutgers.edu