

## APPLICANT QUESTIONS:

### 1.) How can I apply to the Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science?

Applicants **must** apply through [Columbia Engineering](#).

*Do not submit an online application for admission to the Columbia Journalism School.*

### 2.) When is the application deadline?

The application deadline for the Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science is 11:59 p.m. (EST) on January 15, 2012.

### 3.) Are applications taken after the deadline?

Yes, applications received after the deadline will be considered on an ongoing basis. If applying after the deadline, please contact Columbia Engineering at: [seasgradmit@columbia.edu](mailto:seasgradmit@columbia.edu), or call: 212-854-6456 for more information.

### 4.) What are the application requirements?

The following must be submitted with the online application for admission:

- Official transcript(s)
- Three Letters of recommendation
- GRE General Test (GRE subject tests are not required)
- TOEFL or IELTS (International applicants for whom English is not their native language).
- Autobiographical essay & professional essay
- Resume/CV
- Writing samples
- Writing Test (Administered by the Columbia Journalism School)
- Non-refundable application fee: \$100

### 5.) Where do I submit my transcripts?

In order to expedite the decision process, you must upload an electronic or scanned-in version of your official transcript from each of your previous academic institutions. After

you have begun your online application, have a copy of your official transcripts, sealed in an envelope from the institutions, sent by postal mail to:

Attention: Graduate Application Material  
Dual MS in Journalism and Computer Science  
Office of Graduate Student Services  
Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science  
500 West 120th Street  
524 SW Mudd, MC 4708  
New York, NY 10027

Do not send your transcripts to the Graduate School of Journalism.

**6.) My original transcript (mark sheet, diploma, academic record, or degree certificate) is not in English. What should I do?**

If the institution you attended does not provide a translation of your official transcript into English, you must submit a notarized translation to English for each of your non-English transcripts along with proof of graduation. You may find and select a translation service of your choice. However, for a list of providers send email to:

[seasgradmit@columbia.edu](mailto:seasgradmit@columbia.edu). We do not provide referrals. Both the official or original language transcript and translated version must be mailed, in separate sealed envelopes from the institution and translation service, to the Office of Graduate Student Services.

Additionally, you must upload separate electronic or scanned-in versions of your official transcript and notarized translation (for each of your non-English transcripts) onto your online application.

**7.) What type of background do you look for in applicants? What type of undergraduate education is expected? Are there any specific fundamental courses you look for?**

*For Computer Science:* We are looking for people with a strong computer science background, acquired formally or through considerable experience. You should have an undergraduate degree in computer science or related discipline.

If your undergraduate degree is in a different field, you are required to have completed at least four computer science courses covering foundations of the field and basic programming, and two mathematics courses. You should also have good programming skills in a real programming language like Java, C, C++, or Python. See the [course list](#) for more details. There are no specific pre-requisite courses to apply as long as the above requirements are met.

*For Journalism:* The Columbia Journalism School does not require that applicants have a specific major or take prerequisite courses to apply. You will need a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university or its equivalent outside the

country. We seek students for our degree programs that are skilled writers, curious about the world, interested in searching for the truth and writing about it, determined and resourceful, motivated to dedicate their careers to journalism, and who exhibit leadership potential.

We take a holistic approach to each application. Journalism experience is one element that the admissions committee will consider. Many applicants who may not have significant experience in journalism show strong potential in writing and can thoughtfully articulate and explain their goals and passion for working in the journalism industry.

**8.) My GRE score(s) will expire soon. How do I know if the scores are still valid?**

Scores are valid for 5 years. Contact the [Educational Testing Service](#) Office (ETS) if you are not sure exactly when your scores expire. The GRE test requirement is firm and will not be waived.

**9.) How do I submit GRE general test scores?**

All applicants to the Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science must self-report unofficial scores on the online application and request that the official score report be sent from [ETS](#) to Columbia Engineering institutional code 2111. No departmental code is necessary.

**10.) What is the desired GRE score range?**

To remain competitive, the nominal GRE verbal target is 600-650. Quantitative scores should fall between the 700-750 range. Occasionally, we may accept master's students with lower scores than this.

**11.) What is the TOEFL/IELTS requirement?**

Applicants must submit current official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scores unless both of the following are true: (1) they are native speakers of English, and (2) their undergraduate university education was conducted in English.

**12.) How do I submit TOEFL test scores?**

All applicants to the Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science must self-report unofficial scores on the online application and request that the official score report be sent from [ETS](#) to Columbia Engineering institutional code 2111. No departmental code is necessary.

To send official [IELTS](#) scores, the scores should be reported to school: "Columbia Engineering", with address: "Office of Graduate Student Services, 500 W. 120th Street,

MC 4708, New York, NY 10027" and enter the TRF number onto your online application.

### **13.) What does the Journalism Writing Test entail?**

The Journalism Writing Test administered by the Columbia Journalism School is taken from mid-January through the month of February. Test instructions will be sent after the application has been submitted to [Columbia Engineering](#) by January 15. It may be taken in New York City, or administered with an alumni proctor in your area. You are not required to come to New York City to take the test. We do not have a sample test online. The Writing Test is a 90-minute computer exercise that will examine your problem solving and critical thinking skills. The test will give the admissions committee a good picture of your reporting and writing skills as well as your current events and historical facts knowledge. The test is short answer and open ended.

### **14.) Who should I ask to write my letters of recommendation?**

We require electronic submission of recommendations. Paper copies of letters of recommendation will not be accepted and exceptions cannot be made. You will be asked to include three names and email addresses for your recommenders. The email address should correspond to the main institution (e.g., university, company) with which the recommendation provider is affiliated. For your letters of recommendation, we encourage you to ask employers, professionals or faculty who best know you and your specific interest in Journalism and/or Computer Science.

### **15.) What writing samples should I submit?**

We require applicants to submit two or three examples of their journalistic or other written work in support of their application. Upload these samples (in PDF or Word format) into the online application. Please submit no more than a total of 15 pages. We will not accept, via post, any clips or writing samples, permanently bound or laminated work, notebooks, magazines, newspapers, books, etc. Do not submit work you have not written yourself or copyedited. For applicants who do not have clips, the admission committee wants to see writing samples that demonstrate your ability to distill and interpret information, e.g. blogs, press releases, or short writing samples. For any audio or video clips we highly recommend you post your work to an appropriate web site, e.g. YouTube.com or Vimeo.com. We strongly recommend that you shorten your hyperlink using <http://bitly.com>. Please upload a document (word or PDF) with the correct link to your audio or video clips. We will not accept any DVD or CD disks with audio or video clips. Any materials submitted that do not meet these criteria will not be considered.

### **16.) What should be discussed in my essays?**

**A. Autobiographical Essay** - In a short autobiographical essay, tell us about yourself. You can write about your family, your education, your talents, or your passions about significant places or events in your life; about books you have read, people you have met,

or work you have done that has shaped the person you have become. Our only requirements are that the essay be informative, well written, and reflective of your own voice; our only cautions are that you avoid poetry, purple prose, or writing about yourself in the third person. (750-word limit)

**B. Professional Interests** - - What led you to your interest in the dual degree MS in Journalism and Computer Science? What experience, if any, do you have in Computer Science or Journalism? What do you hope to gain through your work at Columbia University? In addition, explain any strengths or weaknesses you may have in your application, for example a low grade point average, lack of experience, and/or significant interruption in work or studies as well as any other information you feel a need to tell us. (750-word limit)

**17.) Can I apply for an application fee waiver?**

There is a \$100 nonrefundable application fee. Please see the “Application Fee” page of your online application to see what restrictions qualify for application fee waivers. You can **only** use a credit card to submit your payment.

**18.) Are interviews required for the application process?**

We do not require an interview for M.S. candidates. Please do not request an interview. You will be contacted by faculty or administrators if more information is needed.

**19.) Can I e-mail my transcripts, letters of recommendation, or other supplemental material?**

We do not accept e-mailed copies of any supplemental application materials. You must upload copies of all documents to your online application. After you have begun your online application, have another copy of your official transcripts, sealed in an envelope from the institutions, sent by postal mail to:

Attention: Graduate Application Material  
Dual MS in Journalism and Computer Science  
Office of Graduate Student Services  
Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science  
500 West 120th Street  
524 SW Mudd, MC 4708  
New York, NY 10027

Do not send your transcripts to the Graduate School of Journalism.

**20.) If I am not admitted to the computer science program, may I still be considered for the journalism program?**

Yes, please indicate your interest in being considered for the Master's program in Journalism on your online application.

**21.) If I am not admitted to the journalism program, may I still be considered for the computer science program?**

Yes, please indicate your interest in being considered for the Master's program in Computer Science on your online application.

**22.) Who should I contact to confirm the receipt of my official documents?**

Due to the high volume of inquiries, requests to check the receipt of materials cannot be granted. The application is reviewed online, and if materials are missing, the Office of Graduate Student Services will contact you by email. If it is necessary to contact us, you can send email to: [seasgradmit@columbia.edu](mailto:seasgradmit@columbia.edu) or call: 212-854-6456.

**23.) I'm having problems entering data and/or uploading documents in the online application system. What can I do?**

Make sure your internet browser is the most up-to-date version as possible; older versions can cause problems with the system. Try working on a different computer if your problems persist. Make sure that you are not attempting to upload non-supported file formats. Documents must be uploaded in PDF or plain text format and must not exceed the maximum size indicated on the online application. If you still have a problem, please notify the webmaster directly from your online application.

**DECISION**

**1.) When will I receive a decision on my application?**

The Master's Committee reviewers evaluate all applications and make admission decisions. As soon as that decision is made, you will be notified by email to the address specified on your online application.

**2.) I submitted my application a while ago and still have not heard about a decision yet. Has a decision been made?**

If you have not received the email notification yet, that means the application is still being evaluated. As soon as a decision is made, you will be notified automatically via email by the application system. Due to the high volume of applications, we request that you do not contact the department inquiring about the decision.

**3.) I received an email notice that I have been recommended for admission and/or my status shows accepted on the online application. When will my official admission letter be sent to me?**

Your application has been forwarded to the Office of Graduate Student Services (GSS), which is in the process of verifying the application information. This process can take around two weeks. When completed, an official admission letter will be sent to you electronically and you will be able to respond to the offer online. Official admission letters are not sent by postal mail unless a special request is made and granted by GSS. Should any documents still be required by GSS to process your official admission, you will be contacted by email to resolve any issues.

**4.) I have been admitted to the Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science, but cannot enroll for some reason. May I defer the admission offer to another term?**

Yes, you may defer your admission for up to one year only. Please contact the admissions offices of journalism: [admissions@jrn.columbia.edu](mailto:admissions@jrn.columbia.edu) and computer science: [seasgradmit@columbia.edu](mailto:seasgradmit@columbia.edu) to request a deferment as soon as possible.

Please note: Columbia Engineering does not defer admission to other graduate engineering programs.

**5.) If I am denied admission, may I receive feedback on the reasons behind the decision?**

Unfortunately, due to the high volume of applications received, it may not be possible for the department to either admit all of the highly-qualified persons that apply to the Masters program or to provide specific feedback on the decisions made.

**SCHOLARSHIP AID:**

**1.) Is scholarship aid available for this program?**

Scholarship aid is available for students admitted to either the Dual M.S. Degree in Journalism and Computer Science or to the M.S. Journalism degree.

**2.) How do I apply for scholarship aid?**

Admission decisions are made without regard to applicants' financial need. M.S. applicants, both domestic and international, who wish to be considered for scholarship assistance, must submit The Columbia Journalism School [Scholarship Aid Application](#). The Scholarship Aid form for 2011 will be available in December 1, 2011. It will be due February 1, 2012.

U.S. citizens and permanent residents must also submit the 2012-13 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The school code for the Graduate School of Journalism, which is required to complete the form, is E00122. The FAFSA will be available on January 1, 2012. Your Scholarship Aid Form and FAFSA are due February 1, 2012.

Scholarship award decisions are based on both merit and need. The Journalism School Scholarships and fellowships are administered by the School's Office of Admission and Financial Aid; all student loans are processed by the University's Office of Student Financial Planning.

**3.) What supporting documents must be submitted with The Graduate School of Journalism Scholarship aid Application?**

Please submit these documents after you have completed a Scholarship Aid Form. All U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents must submit a 4506 form for each tax return submitted to the IRS. This permits a third party to receive a copy of your 1040 form directly from the federal government. If Columbia requests the 1040 form, the student will be notified in advance. International students must provide bank statements verifying the income and asset information provided in the scholarship form.

**4.) When is the scholarship aid application deadline?**

For 2012 applicants, the 2012-13 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will be available January 1, 2012 and The Columbia Journalism School Scholarship Aid Application will be available December 1, 2011. All scholarship aid documents will be due February 1, 2012. You may submit your online application before you complete your scholarship aid applications. All international students must provide documentation verifying the income and asset information provided in the scholarship application form by February 1, 2012; examples of these documents are: tax forms, statement from employer, bank statement, etc.

**5.) When will I be notified of my scholarship aid award? When will I be notified of my federal financial aid?**

All admission decision emails will be sent to the applicant at the end of March. All scholarship aid award emails will be sent to the applicant in mid-April. In order to be eligible for federal financial aid, you must submit the 2012-13 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This will be available January 1, 2012. We ask students to complete the Scholarship Aid Form and the FAFSA by February 1, 2012. The Office of Student Financial Planning will notify you of your federal financial aid package once you complete the FAFSA.

**6.) What percentage of students are recipients of financial aid?**

The Graduate School of Journalism offers approximately \$4 million annually in fellowships and scholarships to students who demonstrate high academic achievement, financial need, and exceptional promise for leading careers in journalism. In conjunction with the University's Office of Student Financial Planning, we work with each student to ease the cost of attendance through a combination of scholarships and need-based programs, including grants and federal and private loans.

For the incoming 2011 class, about 65% of our students utilized some sort of financial aid, including grants, loans or scholarships. To apply for scholarship aid from the Journalism School, submit the Journalism School Scholarship Aid application found on our Web site. You will then be considered automatically for merit and need-based scholarships. Admission decisions are need-blind.

## **7.) What are the tuition and fees for the Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science?**

### **Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science 2011-12 (10 Months)**

Tuition (28 points)	\$44,230
Health Service Fee	\$1,008
Standard Medical Insurance	\$1,826
University Fees	\$704
Transcript Fee (one-time fee)	\$95
Technology Fee (one-time fee)	\$1,000
Enrollment Fee (nonrefundable)	\$1,000
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TOTAL	\$49,863

### **GENERAL PROGRAM QUESTIONS:**

#### **1.) What are the motivation and goals of the Dual MS Degree in Journalism and Computer Science?**

The dual-degree program will prepare a new generation of professionals with skills in the technical aspects of both digital media and news production. It is designed to provide graduate students with both the editorial and technological skills to produce new applications and online tools that could help redefine journalism in a fast-changing digital media environment.

#### **2.) How will the program be organized?**

Admitted students will enroll for a total of five semesters – approximately three in the engineering school and two in the journalism school. Students in the program will take classes at both schools during each of their five semesters. This will be a true dual-degree program, in which students will use the content of one discipline to inform their execution of the other.

Students will attend a seminar and workshop designed specifically for the dual-degree program. The seminar will teach students about the impact of digital techniques on journalism; the emerging role of citizens in the news process; the influence of social media; and the changing business models that will support newsgathering.

### **3.) What programming skills or languages will students learn?**

The goal is to provide a solid foundation in several areas, such as databases, natural language processing, security/privacy or user interfaces. Java is a common language learned. However, the emphasis is not so much on learning programming languages, but on acquiring a conceptual grounding in these topics. Students can pick up additional languages in courses we offer, but that is not a graduation requirement.

### **4.) What are possible career paths for a graduate of this program?**

Students will earn a Computer Science degree, which is highly sought on the job market. They will acquire skills that will make them unique or at least rare in the Journalism market. They will work on exciting projects co-supervised by CS and Journalism.

Students can become:

- a) online editor/ manager of IT at a large news organization (skill set includes: knowledge of software creation, databases, user interfaces, security, large-scale text processing)
- b) data mining experts for journalistic applications/ investigative journalism (skill set includes: knowledge of statistics, machine learning, advanced language progressing techniques)
- c) entrepreneur/founder of media startup (skill set includes: strong editorial background and knowledge about the business of journalism; social media)
- d) web designer for news site (skill set includes: interfaces and graphics to inform, entertain and connect through news portals, web sites, mobile devices).

### **5.) What courses will I be taking in this dual degree program?**

For a course sequence, see here: <http://www.cs.columbia.edu/education/ms/journalism>