

Frequently Asked Questions:

Applying to the doctoral program in Instructional Technology and Learning Sciences at Utah State University

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What are useful resources for preparing a successful application?

The ITLS PhD webpage: <https://cehs.usu.edu/itls/programs/doctor-of-philosophy>

The USU School of Graduate Studies Admission Policies and Requirements webpage: <https://gradschool.usu.edu/admissions/>

Before You Apply

What is the application deadline?

The application deadline is December 1.

What if I miss the application deadline?

If you miss the December 1 deadline, you will need to wait and then apply the following year. Applications received after December 1st will not be considered.

Do I need to contact faculty before applying?

Yes. As a first step, you should review the profiles of current ITLS faculty members and identify one or two whose research aligns with your interests. Read their online bios, look at their recent publications, and find one or two professors whose research aligns with your interests. You are expected to reach out to them via email to see if they are accepting new PhD students for the upcoming academic year before you apply. Identifying faculty will help the admissions committee determine fit with the program.

What should I include when emailing a potential faculty advisor?

When reaching out to a faculty member, your email should:

- Briefly introduce yourself.
- State your specific research interests.
- Note that you plan to apply to the ITLS PhD program.
- Ask if they are accepting new students for the upcoming year.
- Include your CV as an attachment.

What are application requirements? What are the minimum degree and GPA requirements?

- A bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited institution, completed before the program starts.

- A GPA of 3.0 or higher over your last 60 semester (or 90 quarter) credits.
- Three letters of recommendation.
- Official Transcripts.

What supplementary materials is required?

- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Statement of Purpose (2-3 pages). See below for more information.

Are the GRE, MAT, or a separate writing sample required?

No. The ITLS department does not require the GRE or MAT for admission, and a writing sample is not required for the PhD application.

What are the English language proficiency requirements for international applicants?

International applicants must meet the following minimum scores:

- **TOEFL:** 79 (Internet-based), 214 (Computer-based), or 550 (Paper-based).
- **IELTS:** 6 (Overall score) with subscale scores of at least 5.
- Alternatively, candidates can complete two years of college from an approved country in English. See <https://gradschool.usu.edu/admissions/policies> for details.

How long should my Statement of Purpose be, and what should it cover?

Your SOP should be 2 to 3 pages long. It is your opportunity to demonstrate why you are a good fit for the ITLS PhD program. Consider the following questions:

- Why do you want to pursue a PhD in Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences?
- What specific research problems or topics do you want to investigate? Be as clear as possible.
- What academic, professional, research, or design experiences have prepared you for doctoral study?
- How have these experiences shaped your interest in getting a PhD?
- Why are Utah State University and the ITLS department the right place for you to pursue your PhD?
- Name the faculty member(s) you wish to work with and explain why. You should also reference your prior communication with them if possible.
- What are your goals after completing your PhD?
- How will a doctorate from ITLS help you achieve these goals?

What are additional resources on writing your Statement of Purpose?

- [Applying to Graduate Schools in the US: The Statement of Purpose: Excerpts from an article on statement of purpose writing by Dr. Steven Olswang, University of Washington Provost, written for the Fulbright Commission.](#)
- [A Guide to Writing the Statement of Purpose for Graduate School Applications](#) by Erin Today.

Submission & Next Steps

Where do I submit my application?

Once your materials are ready, submit your complete application through the USU School of Graduate Studies <https://gradschool.usu.edu/admissions/>
Pay close attention to the application deadline on the admissions page.

Is there an interview process?

Yes. Promising PhD applicants will be invited to a virtual interview with faculty members via Zoom. These interviews typically take place between late January and early February, so applicants should keep their schedules relatively flexible during this window. The purpose of the interview is to assess applicants' fit with the program and qualifications.

What happens after the interview, and when will I hear back?

After interviews are complete, the faculty committee meets to decide on admissions outcomes. There are three possible outcomes: admission, waitlist, or rejection. Admitted students will receive initial notification with a note that funding decisions are still pending. Funding decisions are made separately in early February. Waitlisted students will receive notification of acceptances throughout the spring semester as spaces become available.