

**GRADUATE
STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

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This Graduate Student Handbook has been designed to assist graduate students in Electrical and Computer Engineering as they progress towards meeting degree requirements. The Graduate Student Handbook is a supplement to the Colorado State University *Graduate and Professional Bulletin* whose regulations govern all advanced degrees in the University. Students working toward advanced degrees in Electrical and Computer Engineering must meet the graduate school requirements and, hence, should make themselves familiar with the *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*.

Revised March 2010

Electrical and Computer Engineering Graduate Student Handbook

Introduction

Graduate programs began at Colorado State University in 1891. Graduate programs in Electrical and Computer Engineering leading to Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees were instituted in 1957. The program leading to a Master of Electrical Engineering (M.E.E.) was instituted in 1999 and replaced with the Master of Engineering (M.E.) in 2001. The M.E. concentration in Systems Engineering was introduced in 2008. These programs provide broad-based, high-quality education in the rapidly advancing scientific and technological aspects of Electrical and Computer Engineering. The graduate curriculum is structured to provide a wide spectrum of courses leading to a research specialization in an area of interest to the student. Appendix A, listing the Electrical and Computer Engineering faculty and their research interests, should be consulted when seeking an M.S. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation research advisor.

Admission Requirements

Master of Engineering

Admission to the M.E. program from the MS program requires the student to have at least a 3.00 GPA in ECE courses taken to date (effective Fall 2000).

To graduate with a M.E. degree requires the student to have at least a 3.00 GPA in ECE courses taken (effective Spring 2001).

In both above cases, the ECE GPA will be calculated based on all ECE500 level and above courses taken at Colorado State (with the exception of thesis and independent study credits), no more than 6 credits of ECE400 level courses at Colorado State, and no more than 6 credits of ECE500 level and above courses from another university.

Associate degrees and Bachelor of Electrical Engineering Technology (BSEET) degrees do not provide adequate background for admission to the M.E. program in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Master of Science

Faculty in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) seek to make graduate study a personal experience. Graduate students can tailor their study according to their goals, whether through a research-oriented plan of study involving a thesis, or through a coursework-only plan. Students doing thesis research work very closely with a faculty member, and, to a certain extent, are “hand picked” by the faculty to work on specific research projects. Students planning to work toward the M.S. degree should apply for admission as early as possible, preferably two semesters (including summer) before their intended date of entrance to give the faculty an opportunity to review their application materials.

Admission to the M.S. program generally requires a B.S. degree from an accredited electrical and/or computer engineering program and an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.50 (A = 4.00) or better (see exceptions below). In addition, the general test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required. The department may petition to defer this requirement for students with outstanding academic credentials or when there are time constraints. In those cases, the student will be required to take the GRE during his/her first semester at Colorado State University.

Associate degrees and Bachelor of Electrical Engineering Technology (BSEET) degrees do not provide adequate background for admission to the M.S. program in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Doctor of Philosophy

Students who have received a Master of Science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering or equivalent will be considered for admission to the Ph.D. program. No student will be admitted to the program unless they are academically sponsored by a member of the Electrical and Computer Engineering faculty. Students who have not yet received a Master of Science degree may be admitted as 72 hour Ph.D. candidates upon approval of a member of the Electrical and Computer Engineering faculty willing to serve as such student’s academic sponsor.

The general test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required for application to the graduate program in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Electrical and Computer Engineering Students with a GPA < 3.50

Applications in such cases are considered on a case-by-case basis, but there must be documented indications that the student is capable of maintaining at least a “B” average in graduate courses. Strong letters of recommendation, high GRE scores, good grades (B or better) in any graduate courses taken beyond the B.S. degree, and significant improvement during the course of undergraduate study are factors that may be considered. If admitted, these students must take courses specified by the student’s advisory committee and must earn a grade of “B” or better in each of the first 4 courses taken. Failure to meet this grade requirement will be cause for immediate dismissal from the program. The student’s advisory committee may impose additional requirements at its discretion.

Master of Engineering Program

The Master of Engineering Degree (M.E.) is designed for those who desire a level of education beyond that typically afforded by a BSEE program but who are not interested in pursuing a traditional research oriented M.S. Degree. The M.E. degree is based entirely on coursework and offers considerable flexibility for designing a program of study consisting of courses in electrical and computer engineering in addition to credits in other areas such as business or computer science. The Department offers a general M.E. as well as an M.E. with a concentration in Systems Engineering.

General Program Details

- Thirty semester credit hours of coursework.
- No thesis or final report/defense is required.
- No final oral exam is required.
- No GRE examination is required for admission.
- An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher is required for admission to the degree.
- There are no required courses. The program of study can be customized to meet the needs of the student (except for Systems Engineering)
- Up to 15 credits of coursework may be taken outside of electrical and computer engineering, subject to approval by the M.E. advisor and the Electrical and Computer Engineering Graduate Committee.
- Up to 6 credit hours of senior level undergraduate electrical engineering courses can be taken at Colorado State University and used towards the degree.
- Up to 6 credits of graduate level coursework can be transferred from other accredited schools.
- A minimum of 21 credits earned at Colorado State must be in 500 or higher level courses.
- No independent study coursework will be accepted.
- No campus residency is required.
- TA and RA positions are not available for students in this program.

Master of Engineering - Systems Engineering Concentration

The Systems Engineering concentration is intended for individuals charged with managing complex systems or engineering project management, or those interested in transitioning into the systems engineering area. Classes are offered on-campus and via distance education, synchronously and asynchronously. Courses are intended to be taken in progression: core courses first, then courses in depth, followed by elective courses and culminating in the Group Study.

Core Courses – 12 credits

ENGR/ECE 501: Foundations of Systems Engineering

CIS 600: Information Technology and Project Management

ENGR/ECE 530: Overview of Systems Engineering Processes

ENGR/ECE 531: Engineering Risk Analysis

A certificate can be awarded upon successful completion of core courses in a non-degree track.

Courses in Depth – Select 9 credits

ENGR/MATH 510: Linear Programming and Network Flows

ENGR 610: Engineering Decision Support/Expert Systems
 MECH 513: Simulation Fundamentals
 CIS 610: Software Development Methodology
 ENGR/ECE 532: Dynamics of Complex Engineering Systems

Electives – Select 6 credits

400 level or above regular course credits consistent with the student's program of study.

Group Study – 3 credits

ENGR 597: Group Study in Systems Engineering

Adviser and Advisory Committee

There is no "Advisory Committee" per se for the Master of Engineering Programs. In both cases only an Adviser is listed and that person is the current Chair of the Graduate Committee – contact Elisabeth Wadman for current information on the Chairperson.

An M.S. advisory committee consists of at least three faculty members, one of whom must be from a department outside of Electrical and Computer Engineering. To a large extent, the success of a graduate student's program can be traced to the choice of advisor and advisory committee; hence some care should be taken in its formulation. The committee provides guidance in prescribing the student's program of study and ensuring that Graduate School requirements and standards are met, and serves as a source of expertise for the student's research studies. The committee is formalized by completion of GS Form 6. This should be submitted prior to completion of 12 credits or the second semester, whichever comes first.

A Ph.D. graduate committee consists of at least four academic faculty members. At least two members must be from the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department and at least one must be from an outside department. Students are encouraged to include an Electrical and Computer Engineering faculty member from outside his/her major area of specialization. It is recommended that a student's committee have several members with expertise in his/her proposed research field. Industrial participation is encouraged if appropriate, however, only academic faculty may vote at the final examination. The student's graduate committee should be formed during the first semester following admission to the program and.

Permanent committee replacements are arranged by filing a GS form 9A. Signatures are required for any member(s) dropped from the committee; additionally, advisor/co-advisor changes require the signatures(s) of the individual(s) added and dropped. This form also requires the signatures of the student, advisor, department head, and graduate school representative.

Whenever a member will be absent for an important function of the committee, or when a member will be absent for a semester or more, a replacement will be designated by the department head with concurrence of the faculty member being replaced. The department head shall designate any eligible replacement by letter to the Graduate School indicating the time period during which the replacement shall serve. At the expiration of the designated time period, the original member shall resume membership.

Program of Study and Coursework

GS Form 6, the Program of Study, must be filed prior to completion of 12 credits or the second semester, whichever comes first. The purpose of the program of study is to ensure the graduate student is working toward well-defined goals approved by his/her advisory committee while meeting departmental and graduate school standards. The Graduate School reviews each GS-6 and determines whether or not

the program of study conforms to University policy. Problems are reported to the student and department so that they can be corrected. Assistance in completing the GS6 form is available on the ECE Department website.

M.E. both plans require a minimum of 30 regular coursework credits, no Independent Study, Thesis or Dissertation are permitted. The Systems Concentration requires completion of a Group Study (ENGR597) and there are a number of required courses (see page 5). Contact Elisabeth Wadman for assistance with or questions regarding completion of form GS6.

M.S. Plan A requires a thesis and completion of a minimum of 30 credits. Of this 30, 21 credits must be in regular course work other than independent study or research. No more than 6 credits are allowed at the 400 level. The remaining credits must be 500 level or above.

M.S. Plan B requires a minimum of either 32 credits of regular courses (other than independent study or research), or 27 credits of regular courses (other than independent study or research) and 3 credits of independent study with the submission of a report. No more than 6 credits are allowed at the 400 level. The remaining credits must be 500 level or above. The Plan A and Plan B options will involve a final examination as described below (see the “Final Examination” section).

Both Plan A and Plan B students may take up to 9 regular course credits outside of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department.

Under extremely unusual and extenuating circumstances a student may petition the ECE Graduate Committee to change from the Plan A program of study to Plan B. This change must be approved by the student’s advisor and must clearly describe the extenuating circumstances involved, in writing, to the Chair of the ECE Graduate Committee. Extenuating circumstances may include, for example, financial exigencies or the advisor leaving the university. Electrical and Computer Engineering Graduate Committee approval will be **required** prior to the change.

Ph.D. A minimum of 42 semester credits is required beyond the M.S. level. Eighteen of these credits must be in regular graduate course work (other than independent study and research). However students who, as a result of their research, have two or more papers accepted for publication in peer review journals or peer review conference proceedings may petition their Graduate Committee to approve an “Independent Study” (ECE795) course to replace three of the required 18 credits of formal course work. At least 6 credits, exclusive of “Independent Study” credits, must be at the 600 level or above. Courses at the 400 level and below will not be accepted towards the Ph.D. The courses taken for these credits can be in any technical area which is approved by the student’s committee subject to the Course Requirements section below. (See also the Ph.D. qualification section).

Students pursuing a 72 credit Ph.D. program will be required to meet the “Program of Study” requirements for both the Ph.D. and M.S. programs of the Department. This includes, 42 credits of regular graduate course work, other than independent study and research. No more than 6 of these credits are allowed at the 400 level and at least 6 must be at the 600 level or above. The remaining 32 credits can be in any technical area which is approved by the student’s committee subject to the Course Requirements section below (See also the Ph.D. Qualification section).

The Ph.D. graduate student should arrange a formal meeting with his/her committee to review and approve the program of study which must be reported to the Graduate School using form GS6. Following admission to the Ph.D. degree program, the student must be on campus at Colorado State University for at least two academic year semesters, or two consecutive semesters, one of which may be a summer session, and must earn at least 9 credits during each of these two semesters/sessions.

Changes in the GS Form 6

Changes to the Program of Study are recorded on the GS Form 25 which is filed during the semester of graduation and prior to the published deadline (approximately 6 weeks after the beginning of the semester). For more information about the GS Form 25 see **Application for Graduation** on page

Modifications to the GS Form 6 must be formally approved by the graduate advisor and advisory committee. Courses that have been taken and for which a grade has been received (A through F, I, S or U) may not be removed from the Program of Study. Changes in the program of study should be made with extreme care since the Graduate School makes no additional comprehensive checks until the time of graduation.

Transfer Credit

For the Master of Science degree, a minimum of 24 credits must be earned at Colorado State University, 21 of which must be earned after admission to the Graduate School. No more than 6 credits from an institution other than Colorado State may be applied toward the M.S. degree. Students petitioning the advisory committee to transfer credits from another institution must attach a description of the courses taken (course content, text, grade) to their GS Form 6 so that an effective evaluation can be made. Courses accepted for transfer must be at the equivalent of the 500 level or above. Credits earned at institutions not accredited by one of the major regional accrediting agencies are not acceptable for transfer except that the Department may petition the Graduate School to have graduate level courses earned from a foreign institution accepted as transfer credit. Grades in courses accepted for transfer will not be included in calculation of the grade point average. No courses will be accepted for transfer with a grade less than B.

Distance learning students should apply for formal admission to either the Master's Plan A or Plan B or the M.E. program by the time they have completed 9 credits of graduate work.

For Ph.D. students, up to ten credits may be accepted for transfer if recommended by the student's graduate committee. Students petitioning for acceptance of transfer credit must submit descriptions of the courses taken (content, text, and grade) to the departmental graduate committee with their GS Form 6. Courses accepted for transfer must be at the equivalent of the 500 level or above. Credits earned at institutions not accredited by one of the major regional accrediting agencies are not acceptable for transfer; except that the Department may petition the Graduate School to have graduate level courses earned from a foreign institution accepted as transfer credit. Grades in courses accepted for transfer will not be included in calculation of the grade point average. No courses will be accepted for transfer with a grade less than B. Transfer students must complete a minimum of six credits of formal coursework at the 600 level or above at CSU.

Examinations

M.S. Degrees

During the last semester of a graduate student's M.S. program a final examination will be administered by the student's committee.

- (A) Plan A: The examination will be an oral defense of the M.S. thesis. Fundamentals from course work may also be covered. Upon completion of the final examination it is the student's responsibility to submit the GS Form 24 (Report of Final Examination Results) to the Graduate School. This form must be received in the Graduate School within TWO working days after the examination results are known.
 - (B) Plan B (with Independent Study): Students in the Plan B option will submit a report based on their Independent Study project; evaluation of this report constitutes the M.S. final examination. Upon completion of the final examination it is the student's responsibility to submit the GS Form 24 (Report of Final Examination Results) to the Graduate School. This form must be received in the Graduate School within TWO working days after the examination results are known.
- Plan B (Coursework only): No action on the part of the student is required. The Department will handle processing of the GS Form 24. The Final Examination will consist of verification of satisfactory performance in course work.

All examinations are held on the Colorado State University campus and should be scheduled approximately **one month** before the examination date. The form for scheduling an exam is on the ECE Department web page. This form requires approval of the Adviser and is automatically mailed to the adviser and all committee members. Announcement of exams is made on the ECE Department web page. Any additional announcement shall be the responsibility of the student and or his/her adviser.

Ph.D.

Ph.D. Qualifying Exam

Before the end of the third semester following admission to the Ph.D. program, students will take an oral qualifying examination. The student's advisor, in agreement with his/her committee, will choose one or more "classical" published papers. The student will present an analysis, critique and discussion of the papers, and may be questioned on the contents of the presentation by committee members and others in attendance. The student may also be questioned on coursework. The title of these papers shall be given to the candidate no more than two weeks prior to the scheduled examination. Anyone failing the qualifying exam will have the option of taking a second qualifying examination no more than one semester after the date of the previous exam. Scheduling and announcement of the Qualifying exam is processed through the ECE Department website.

Ph.D. Preliminary Examination

Approximately one year (no less than two semesters) before graduation, a Ph.D. candidate in good standing must take an oral preliminary examination focusing on his/her proposed dissertation research. The purpose of this examination in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department is to determine if the Ph.D. candidate has achieved sufficient maturity in the program of study to be given final approval for completion of the research. Preliminary examinations must be announced to the Department in advance via a form on the ECE Department website.

To assist the committee in its evaluation, the student will prepare a dossier containing his/her resume and copies of published reports and papers. In consultation with his/her advisor, the candidate will prepare a clear statement of proposed continuing research activity. One copy of these materials must be delivered to each committee member **one week** prior to the examination. Based on the examination results, the student's committee will recommend one of the following courses of action:

- (A) that he/she be endorsed as a Ph.D. candidate,
- (B) that he/she submit to another preliminary examination no sooner than 2 months and no later than 12 months after the first exam, or
- (C) that he/she withdraw from the Ph.D. program.

A report of the results of the preliminary examination must be submitted to the Graduate School by the student within two working days of the exam on GS Form 16.

Ph.D. Final Examination

At least **one month** before the final examination the student's advisor will determine the nature and scope of the examination and so inform the student and the committee. In general the format will be that of an oral defense, although the advisor may require an additional written and/or oral examination of any part of a student's program of study. It is the policy of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering that attendees at the final examination be allowed to ask questions.

The final examination is to be scheduled and announced through the Department website.

The report of the results of the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate School on GS Form 24 by the student within two working days of the exam.

Application for Graduation

Before the end of the sixth week of the semester in which the student plans to graduate, or end of the first week of the eight-week summer term, a GS Form 25 and GS Form 25A must be filed with the Graduate School. Any changes to the original GS Form 6 (courses added or dropped) are to be made on

this form and approved by the student's advisor and the department head. A sample GS25 is available on the ECE Department web site. It includes mouse over of sections with explanations of how to complete some portions of the form. Please note that the Department Deadline for receipt of the form is 10 days PRIOR to the Graduate School deadline.

Graduate degree candidates must be either enrolled for at least one credit or must register for "CR", *Continuous Registration*, (see page 9 for an explanation of "CR", Continuous Registration) during the term (fall, spring, or summer) in which they complete their degree requirements.

Scholastic Standards

To meet the requirements for graduation and to remain in good academic standing, a student must demonstrate acceptable performance in course work after being admitted to a graduate program. This requires a cumulative 3.00 grade point average in all regular course work. Regular course work is defined as courses other than independent or group studies, research courses, open seminars, thesis/dissertation credits, study abroad, U.S. travel, supervised college teaching, student teaching, practicum, internship, field placement, unique title courses offered through the Division of Educational Outreach, and any courses graded pass/fail. Overall a 3.00 grade point average must be maintained in regular and non-regular courses graded traditionally (A through F). Grades of C or higher must be earned in all courses on a program of study (GS Form 6) and the grade point average in courses included on the approved program of study must equal at least 3.00.

In addition, good academic standing requires *satisfactory progress* in the overall graduate program. Students' individual graduate advisory committees may render judgments as to whether satisfactory progress is being made toward the degree, taking into account all aspects of academic performance and promise, not necessarily course work alone. A positive judgment is required to remain in good academic standing.

Failure to maintain good academic standing results in being placed on *academic probation*. (New regularly admitted students will not be placed on probation until they have completed 12 credits or two semesters of graduate work, whichever comes first.) The probationary period extends for one semester beyond the one in which this status is acquired. Students on probation are subject to dismissal by the academic department or the Dean of the Graduate School at the end of the probationary semester unless good academic standing has been regained. This requires adequate improvement in cumulative grade point averages (3.00) and/or satisfactory progress as determined by the student's graduate advisory committee.

A student's graduate advisory committee or an appropriate departmental graduate committee may recommend immediate dismissal upon a finding that the student is making unsatisfactory progress toward the degree and that satisfactory progress cannot reasonably be anticipated. Such a recommendation must be documented in writing with substantive justification for this action in lieu of probation. It must be referred to the Department Head for approval and the Dean of the Graduate School for final action. The student may appeal such an immediate dismissal through the existing Graduate School appeals procedure.

Continuous Registration ("CR")

All graduate students at Colorado State University are required to be continuously registered in the fall and spring semesters throughout their degree programs. This policy applies from the time of the first enrollment through the graduation term. Registration is also required during the summer term if University resources are used. Students may fulfill this requirement by registering for any graduate credit-bearing course. As an alternative, students may opt for Continuous Registration (CR) status. Registration for CR status is accomplished in the same way as registration for courses. The course reference numbers (CRN) for Continuous Registration appears in the class schedule under the symbol CR.

CR students are assessed a fee to cover their use of certain University resources. CR students have access to the Library, computer, and research laboratories, or other University facilities as determined appropriate by their advisors or as generally available with payment of part-time student fees.

Graduate Student Responsibilities

Graduate students are responsible for knowing any special expectations and requirements of their department and program and are expected to remain in good academic standing by making satisfactory degree progress and must at all times have an adviser.

Students judged to be making unsatisfactory progress toward a degree or whose work is not of the quality expected by the student's adviser and/or graduate committee may be recommended for academic probation or immediate dismissal from the graduate program (see "Scholastic Standards" in the Graduate and Professional Bulletin) and/or termination of assistantship (see "Assistantships" in the Graduate and Professional Bulletin).

The Dean of the Graduate School will be informed of students who are making unsatisfactory progress.

With regard to meeting graduate school deadlines, ultimate responsibility for a graduate student's program lies with the student. The graduate student's advisor, committee, the graduate school office, the Electrical and Computer Engineering department office, and the Electrical and Computer Engineering graduate committee are all available to help and advise. Several deadlines are critical; for example, failure to file the GS Form 6 before the end of the second semester will prevent the student from registering for further courses. Each semester the Graduate School publishes a list of deadlines which must be met in order to graduate during that term. It is also important that the graduate student provide his/her committee with ample time (at least 2 weeks) to read the student's thesis or dissertation before the final examination. In addition, the Department Head requires that a student meet with him for approximately 30 minutes during which time he will sign signature pages for a student's thesis or dissertation. All committee signatures must already have been obtained at the time of this meeting. M.S. Plan A and Ph.D. students **must** provide a final copy of their thesis and dissertation, respectively, to the department to be bound and kept in the departmental library. The cost of this binding is currently borne by the department. Students may order additional copies for themselves but must bear the cost of those copies.

Graduate Student Appeals Procedure

Graduate students may appeal decisions concerning unsatisfactory performance on graduate preliminary or final examinations, academic probation for reasons of unsatisfactory progress toward the degree other than insufficient grade point average, termination of an assistantship for reasons of unsatisfactory performance, or dismissal from the graduate program.

The Dean of the Graduate School and the Judicial Affairs Officer shall examine the appeal and determine whether the actions are disciplinary or academic.

If deemed to be disciplinary, the Dean of the Graduate School shall refer the complainant to the University Discipline Process.

If deemed to be an academic matter other than a grading decision, the Dean of the Graduate School shall implement the Appeals Procedures as outlined below:

- A review panel, composed of two faculty members and a graduate student, will be appointed;
- The Review Panel will consider the case in detail;
- The Panel will make appropriate recommendations to the Dean of the Graduate School;
- The Dean of the Graduate School and the dean of the college involved shall jointly review the case;
- Following consultation with the Provost/Academic Vice President, the Dean of the Graduate school shall make the final decision.

Graduate Student Representation

The Graduate Student Council represents and advocates for Colorado State University graduate and professional students within CSU and beyond. The goal of the council is to improve the experience of graduate education at CSU, through:

- representing graduate and professional students within the [Associated Students of CSU \(ASCSU\)](#), the campus-wide student government,
- representing graduate and professional students on committees of Faculty Council, boards overseeing student fee areas, and other university committees,
- advocating for the concerns of graduate and professional students beyond the university, to the state legislature and other bodies,
- spending fee money allocated to the Graduate Student Council by ASCSU and other entities for the benefit of graduate students,
- building relationships with university administrators to advocate for changes to policies, procedures, and programs that benefit graduate and professional students,
- bringing students from diverse graduate and professional programs together for the purposes of networking, collaboration, and advocacy on issues of common concern.

How to become involved:

- [attend the next GSC regular meeting](#) – they usually meet once each month during the semester, on the first Monday.
- [represent the department or program](#) (.doc) - being a representative for the department doesn't require a heavy time commitment -- just attending monthly GSC meetings and being generally available as a conduit for students in this program to communicate with the GSC. [Are we represented?](#)
- [represent graduate and professional students on a university committee](#) - committees on which grad students get a vote do everything from approve academic standards to deciding how student fee money is spent; serve as a representative or alternate to a committee that interests you.
- join one of the GSC's email discussion groups where students are working together on issues affecting grad students:
 - [Academics discussion group](#)
 - [Health Insurance discussion group](#)
 - [Legislative lobbying discussion group](#)
- [email your suggestions to the GSC President](#)