Track III - Accelerated BS/Master’s Program

FOR STUDENTS IN ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Students with strong scholarly and/or research interests may apply for admission to a combined bachelor's and master’s degree program to begin their graduate program during senior year of undergraduate study. This plan allows for flexibility in the scheduling and completion of upper division undergraduate requirements while concurrently fulfilling graduate course requirements for the Master of Engineering (ME) or Master of Science (MS) degree in the department. Students who are accepted into this program have the GRE requirement waived and are allowed to apply credits of 500-level course work toward both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. Before applying to this program, interested students should review the ECE Graduate Student Handbook. Please read all sections of this document.

To apply, students must be enrolled in the bachelor’s degree program in electrical and computer engineering and have:

- Cumulative GPA of 3.25 or above
- Grades of B or better in ECE311, ECE331, and ECE341 (electrical engineering concentration)
- Grades of B or better in ECE311, ECE331, and ECE451 (computer engineering concentration)
- Completed 75 credits of course work towards the undergraduate degree
- Students must maintain at least a 3.25 GPA to remain in the program and may elect out of the accelerated program at any time without affecting undergraduate status.

Graduate Level Course Work

During the senior year of undergraduate study in electrical and computer engineering, Track III students may take graduate level classes that can count toward both the undergraduate and graduate degrees. They may select from electrical and computer engineering senior technical electives and related courses in science and mathematics. For courses to count towards both the undergraduate and graduate degrees, they must be:

- Regular credit courses (no independent study)
- 500-level
- Passed with a grade of B or better
- Students in the electrical engineering concentration can double-count up to 5 credits; students in the computer engineering concentration can double-count up to 7 credits.

The BS degree will be awarded upon completion of undergraduate requirements and the ME or MS degree will be awarded upon completion of all graduate requirements.
**Application Process**

1) Apply to the CSU Graduate School

Click on “Prospective Students”, “Apply Now”. Select “Go To Online Application” and follow the prompts. When prompted for admission type, indicate Track III. When prompted to input your “essay”, you will leave this area blank.

2) Email current resume to the ECE undergraduate advisor along with your one page Statement of Purpose which includes:

- A statement regarding your educational goals
- A summary of long-term professional and personal goals
- A statement indicating how participating in the combined degree program will contribute to your long-term goals

3) Letters of recommendation should be emailed directly from recommending parties to the ECE undergraduate advisor. Recommendations should come from at least one ECE faculty member whose course(s) you have taken. Emails are acceptable. Other recommendations can be submitted by faculty outside of the ECE Department, or a research supervisor, academic advisor, or work supervisor. In this instance, a formal letter is required.

5) Generally, Track III candidates apply during the fall semester of the senior year, for graduate school admission the following spring. In some rare situations, students may apply in their junior year when they have very few credits remaining toward their BS degree. Applicants should submit all materials by July 15 for admission during the Fall semester, and by November 15 for admission during the Spring semester.

**Important Financial Considerations**

Once Track III students are admitted to the Graduate School, your status changes from an undergraduate student to graduate student, and tuition and fees increase. This means full time status is achieved with 9 credit hours instead of 12. It is up to the student to determine the best course of action in terms of finances. **It is also important to note that students receiving undergraduate scholarships from the University and/or outside sources may lose scholarship funds once accepted into a graduate program because of your change in status from an undergraduate to a graduate student.** To offset these financial limitations, many Track III students finish their graduate degrees one semester early.

**Admissions Process**

Applications are first reviewed by the department, and should the student qualify for Track III, the application is forwarded to the Graduate School for final evaluation. Students who are admitted to the Track III program receive notification from the Graduate School in the mail.
**After Admission**

During the first week of the semester, Track III students should schedule meetings with the departmental graduate advisor for required paperwork.

Within the first 30 days of the semester, students are required to submit an Exclusion Form with their graduation contract for the bachelor of science degree and an GS6 (Program of Study form) for the graduate degree.

Students pursuing the MS Plan A degree (research and thesis) should have a commitment from an electrical and computer engineering faculty member to serve as their faculty advisor. To complete the GS6 form, the student selects a graduate committee that includes a faculty advisor, an additional electrical and computer engineering faculty member, and a faculty member from outside the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department. All parties are required to sign the form before it is submitted to the ECE graduate advisor. It is in the student’s best interest to begin planning to get commitments from faculty in the final semester of the junior year and to have the faculty selections made by the first semester of the senior year. It is reasonable to expect that the letters of recommendation required for the application come from the student’s committee members.

**TIME LINE**

**JUNIOR YEAR – SECOND SEMESTER**

Determine the degree you plan to pursue:

1.) ME Master of Engineering (coursework only; no research/thesis; broad-based with no specific area of concentration or study)

2.) MS Master of Science in Electrical Engineering – Plan A option - research with thesis; or, Plan B option - coursework only or, coursework with project.

**ME Option**

Meet with an ECE academic advisor for program details.
Choose credit hours of 500-level courses to take in the fall and/or spring semesters of the senior year to count towards both degrees.

**MS Option Plan A or Plan B**

Meet with an ECE academic advisor for program details.
Determine research area (if selecting the MS Plan A option).
Get commitment from a faculty member to serve as your advisor (if selecting the MS Plan A option).
Choose credit hours of 500-level courses to take in the fall and/or spring semesters of the senior year to count towards both degrees.
SENIOR YEAR – FIRST SEMESTER/FALL SEMESTER

- Complete all tasks above in early November.
- Complete Online University Application for Spring admission to Graduate School.
- Submit application materials to the ECE academic advisor.

SENIOR YEAR – SECOND SEMESTER

If you are admitted to the program, this will be your first term in graduate school under the higher graduate tuition and fee schedule. You are now considered a graduate student by the university and CSU’s Graduate School, and no longer hold undergraduate status, even though you are still completing undergraduate credits.

ME Option

- Meet with graduate advisor in ECE to complete your BS graduation contract and exclusion form to indicate the courses that will be used for both degrees.
- Meet with graduate advisor in ECE for instructions on the required GS6 form – Program of Study.
- Complete the online GS6 form through your RamWeb account, print and submit to ECE graduate advisor.

MS Option

- If MS Plan A, meet with faculty advisor to discuss your plan of study.
- Meet with graduate advisor to complete your BS graduation contract and exclusion form to indicate the courses that will be used for both degrees.
- Meet with graduate advisor for instructions on the required GS6 form (Plan of Study).
- If MS Plan A, or Plan B with project, confirm members of your graduate committee.
- Meet with faculty adviser for assistance with course selection (program of study).
- Complete the online GS6 form through your RamWeb account and print, obtain adviser and committee member signatures, and submit to the ECE graduate advisor.

This policy was updated in September 2014