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Colorado State University
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE)
Graduate Program Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.)

Contents

Where do I start the application?	2
How do I submit transcripts?	2
What are the deadlines for the on-campus program?	2
Do I need an advisor prior to applying?	2
When can I expect to hear back from the university regarding a decision on my application?	2
Who is eligible for a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA)?	3
What are the primary sources of funding graduate students?	3
What are the tuition and fees for students?	3
What is the difference between the Master of Science (M.S.) and Master of Engineering (M.E) degree?	3
Can I take courses outside of civil engineering and have them count towards my graduate degree?	4
Can I complete my degree 100% online?	4
How do online classes work?	4
I do not have a bachelor's degree in engineering. Can I still pursue a master's degree in civil engineering?	5
I do not have a bachelor degree in engineering. However, I have been working at an engineering firm for many years. Do I need to take any background courses?	5
I have a bachelor degree not in civil or environmental engineering. Do I need to take any background course?	5

Where do I start the application?

Please go to <https://gradadmissions.colostate.edu/apply/> to start your application. The program name is 'civil engineering.'

How do I submit transcripts?

The Department and University require official transcripts.

Most U.S. institutions allow for official e-transcripts using a third party secure system. Transcripts may be emailed to gradadmissions@colostate.edu Emails from with you with a transcript attached are not considered official.

International students: If you have official transcripts, you can provide certified copies by going to a notary and mailing those certified copies. Please note, if your transcripts are not in English, we will need translated copies.

Send paper copies to:
Graduate Admissions
Colorado State University – Office of Admissions
1062 Campus Delivery
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1062

What are the deadlines for the on-campus program?

If you are applying for fall semester, the priority deadline is February 1. This allows your application to be considered for Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs). There is no additional application to apply for a GTA position other than having your application complete by February 1. If you do not wish to be considered for a GTA position, you may apply until May 1. Please note, M.E. student are not eligible for a GTA position.

If you are applying for spring semester, please have your application submitted by December 1 (the earlier the better, since there is such a short period between fall and spring semester).

Do I need an advisor prior to applying?

No. In fact, it is recommended you apply first so faculty can review your application and see if there are any opportunities in your area of interest.

When can I expect to hear back from the university regarding a decision on my application?

The Department reviews completed applications regularly throughout the spring and fall semester. After your application is complete, you can expect to hear back from the university in about 4 weeks.

A completed application means all materials have been received by Colorado State University. In the application portal you will see a green checkmark next to all the materials received and a red cross next to all the materials not yet received by the University.

Who is eligible for a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) or Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA)?

Master of Science (M.S) and Ph.D. students are eligible for Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Graduate Research Assistantships.

Master of Engineering (M.E.) and distance students are not eligible for a GTA or GRA position.

What are the primary sources of funding graduate students?

The Department has two primary mechanisms for funding students- Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA). The Department reviews all completed applications that have been submitted by the priority deadline for GTA positions. If the Department feels your background would make you a potential GTA, you will receive a survey to complete.

GTAs are placed in our undergraduate labs and are typically responsible for two lab sections, grading lab assignments, and holding office hours each week. GTAs work with faculty for the lab/class and the other GTA(s) in that lab. GTAs are responsible for completing a short online training prior to the semester their assistantship begins.

Another form of funding is through Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA). GRAs are offered directly from faculty and are based on faculty funding and faculty-student research interest. Research Assistantships are offered to graduate students at all times of the year. For example, it is not uncommon for a student to receive an assistantship after their first semester or at the end of their first year. Again, this is because faculty research funding comes in at all times of the year.

When it comes to securing a funded research position, completing your application as early possible will increase your chances. This allows faculty to review your application and see if there is a fit with any available research in their labs/ groups.

What are the tuition and fees for students?

Tuition and Fee tables can be found at <https://financialaid.colostate.edu/base-tuition/> Look at the following tables: graduate, graduate differential tuition, and additional charges & fees. Fees and tuition are based on the number of credits you are enrolled in and on Colorado residency.

International Programs has great information on estimating costs for international students: <https://international.colostate.edu/isss/resources/finances/estimated-expenses/>

What is the difference between the Master of Science (M.S.) and Master of Engineering (M.E) degree?

We offer a Master of Science (M.S) and a Master of Engineering (M.E.) The M.S. degree has a thesis or engineering report option, while the M.E. is a coursework only degree. If you think you want to pursue a Ph.D. in the future, consider the M.S. option. If want to gain depth of knowledge in a specific area and do not need/want to engage in research or creating an engineering report, consider exploring the M.E. degree.

Students who are looking to sit for the F.E. exam and are not interested in research, tend to pursue the M.E. option. Based on experience, the engineering profession views the M.E. and M.S degrees as equal. Graduates of both degrees are able to obtain employment in government, non-profit, industry, and consulting.

The M.S. degree is 30-32 credits and takes about 2-2.5 years to complete. The M.E. degree is a 30 credit coursework only degree and can be completed in as quickly as 1 year by taking 15 credits during the fall and spring semester. Please note, 15 credits of graduate level coursework is very heavy. Most M.E. students taken 1.5-2 years to complete the degree.

M.E students do not receive financial support, while some M.S students receive support in the form of a graduate teaching assistantship, graduate research assistantship, or as hourly students.

Both degrees allow for you to work with your advisor to find class that fit your professional goals. Additionally, both programs allow you to complete the degree as quickly or as slowly as you would like.

Can I take courses outside of civil engineering and have them count towards my graduate degree?

Yes! You and your advisor will determine which courses will help you with your personal and professional goals. We have students take courses from departments across campus, including watershed sciences, soil and crop sciences, systems engineering, computer science, mathematics, statistics, and from the School of Global Environmental Sustainability.

Can I complete my degree 100% online?

The Department has a Master of Engineering (M.E.) with a focus in water resources that can be completed 100% online. The degree requires 30 credits of courses. Typically, this is ten 3-credit courses. The faculty who teach in our on-campus courses are the same faculty who teach our distance courses. Additionally, the degree earned is from Colorado State University and does not indicate the degree was earned at a distance.

To learn more about our distance degree, please go to <https://www.online.colostate.edu/degrees/civil-engineering/>

How do online classes work?

The degree earned at a distance is the exact same degree earned on campus. Furthermore, the water resource program we offer online is same offered on campus and taught by the same faculty. Lectures and group discussions take place asynchronously, so you can "attend" class when it is most convenient for you.

Also, you can access useful University resources, such as Morgan Library electronic resources, writing guides and consultation services at the Writing Center, resources for disabled students, veterans, adult learners, and international students, and much more.

I do not have a bachelor's degree in engineering. Can I still pursue a master's degree in civil engineering?

We have many students in our graduate program that do not have an engineering background! There are background courses these student take, in addition to their graduate coursework. Some students take a few courses prior to applying to the graduate program and others take the courses while a graduate student. You can take the background courses at a community college or a 4-year regionally accredited institution. Background course do not count towards your graduate degree.

For students wanting to take background courses prior to applying, we offer several of the background courses online through CSU Online (<https://www.online.colostate.edu/>).

Taking the background courses, allows you to sit for the Fundamentals of Engineering (F.E.) exam.

The background courses for students without a degree in engineering can be found at <https://www.engr.colostate.edu/ce/non-engineering-bs-applicants/> .

To find out which background courses you need to take, please reach out to the CEE Graduate Advisor (susheela.mallipudi@colostate.edu) with a copy of your transcript.

I do not have a bachelor degree in engineering. However, I have been working at an engineering firm for many years. Do I need to take any background courses?

The Department does not waive the background course requirement based on work experience. All students who do not have a bachelor degree in engineering are required to take courses listed at <https://www.engr.colostate.edu/ce/non-engineering-bs-applicants/> .

To find out which background courses you need to take, please reach out to the CEE Graduate Advisor (susheela.mallipudi@colostate.edu) with a copy of your transcript.

I have a bachelor degree not in civil or environmental engineering. Do I need to take any background course?

The background courses you take are dependent on your area of interest and your transcript.

There may be a few background courses you need to take depending on the area you would like to pursue for your master's degree: <https://www.engr.colostate.edu/ce/engineering-bs-applicants/>