

Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering
M.Eng.ME Programs Office

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
for M.Eng.ME Students

2020-2021



**Grainger College
of Engineering**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Updated January 2021

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MECHSE GRADUATE PROGRAMS OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

The Associate Head for Graduate Programs leads the Graduate Programs Office (GPO). The MechSE Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) is comprised of MechSE faculty who are appointed annually and provide governance with regard to graduate program policies and procedures. Day-to-day operations of the GPO are administered by Amy Williams (*prospective MS/PhD students*), Susan Roughton (*prospective and current M.Eng.ME students*) and Kathy Smith (*current MS/PhD students*). Dr. Jiajun He is Faculty Director for the M.Eng.ME program. For M.Eng.ME Advising, please contact Dr. He at jiajunhe@illinois.edu. For Admissions and most other needs, start by contacting Susan Roughton at rougton@illinois.edu and she will help you or direct you to the correct person.



Dr. Jiajun He
*Faculty Director,
M.Eng.ME Program*



Susan Roughton
*M.Eng.ME Programs
Coordinator*

Professor Petros Sofronis, *Associate Head for Graduate Programs, MechSE*

Amy Williams, *Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions; Primary contact for MS/PhD Admissions*

Kathy Smith, *Graduate Programs Supervisor; Primary contact for MS and PhD students*

M.Eng students should contact the GPO for all academic matters, including, but not limited to:

- Applying & Admissions (Susan)
- Academic progress (Jiajun)
- Registration problems (Susan)
- Graduate Petitions (Jiajun or Susan)
- Degree time extensions (Jiajun or Susan)
- Degree audits (Jiajun)
- I-20 issuance, extensions, or changes (Jiajun or Susan)
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) (for international students only) (Jiajun or Susan)

INTRODUCTION, ADMISSIONS, AND ORIENTATION

Introduction

Graduate students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (Illinois) are members of a home department (MechSE), a College (The Grainger College of Engineering), and the Graduate College. In addition to fulfilling degree requirements of the home department, graduate students are responsible for complying with the regulations of The Grainger College of Engineering and the Graduate College.

MechSE M.Eng.ME students should receive guidance from their advisor, MechSE academic staff, The Grainger College of Engineering, and the Graduate College in order to reach their educational goals within a timely fashion. Students should refer to the [Grainger College of Engineering Handbook](#) and the [Graduate College Handbook](#) for additional policies. The purpose of the M.Eng.ME Graduate Student Handbook is to supplement these handbooks and to indicate MechSE's policies, procedures, and additional requirements for our M.Eng.ME graduate students. **All M.Eng.ME students are required to submit a Plan of Study at the beginning of their graduate study in the program.** The Plan of Study will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Director of the M.Eng. Program. Any changes to the Plan of Study must be approved by the Faculty Director.

MECHSE ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Applying

In order to be considered, prospective students must apply to the M.Eng.ME program at MechSE, and the M.Eng.ME Admissions Committee reviews the application. Applications must be submitted by the deadline posted by the MechSE department; late and/or incomplete applications are not accepted. Application requirements are explained on the [Applying to M.Eng.ME website](#). An application is complete when the department has received all parts of the application. Admissions decisions are final.

It is the applicant's responsibility to upload correct and updated documents such as the personal statement and resume. Only official test scores and online letters of recommendation can be added to the application after submission.

Applying From Another Illinois Department (Transferring Departments)

If a graduate student in another department (Urbana-Champaign campus only) wishes to transfer into the M.Eng.ME program, they may apply to transfer to MechSE M.Eng.ME via a [Graduate College Petition](#). Submission of a petition is not a guarantee of acceptance into the M.Eng.ME program.

Deferring Admission

Admitted students may request to delay their matriculation by up to one academic year. Such requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Faculty Director.

Orientation Sessions

MechSE hosts an annual orientation session at the start of the Fall semester. The GPO notifies students of the session via email. There may be orientation sessions for students starting in the Spring depending on the number of new entrants.

Other units on campus also provide helpful orientation information through presentations and/or online resources. A few of these units are the [College of Engineering Graduate and Professional Programs Office](#), the [Graduate College](#), and the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services](#).

NEW STUDENT CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

International Students

- Upon arrival, all international students should check in at the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), located in Room 432, Student Services Building, 610 E. John St., Champaign. Additional information can be found at <http://iss.illinois.edu>. FAQ for international students can be found at http://iss.illinois.edu/students/student_faqs.html.

Other Information for All Graduate Students

- i-Card: Each student is issued a permanent photo identification card that must be retained by the student as long as s/he is registered at the University. The i-Card office is located on the first floor of the Illini Union Bookstore, 809 S. Wright Street (corner of Wright and John Streets). More i-Card information can be found at: <http://www.icard.uillinois.edu>. (On campus students only).
- University of Illinois email account: **It is imperative that all students check email daily because it is the main form of communication for faculty, staff, and students.** Students are responsible for all communications, policies, and deadlines that are sent to their University email accounts. Please see the [Graduate College Quick Guide](#) for instructions on setting up the University of Illinois email account. Graduate students should not forward their University emails to a personal email address.
- Health forms: Submit health forms (by mail or in person upon arrival) to the McKinley Health Center, 1109 S. Lincoln Avenue, Urbana. More information about required health forms may be found out <https://mckinley.illinois.edu/new-students/welcome>. (On campus students only).
- Course registration: Register for courses through the [Course Explorer](#). The student Net ID is required for registration. Follow the [Graduate College Quick Guide](#) for instructions on setting up the student Net ID and password. Students can register prior to arriving on campus. Additional information regarding registration can be found in Registration Requirements section of this Handbook. Please contact the GPO for questions regarding registration.
- Deadlines: Students should note the academic deadlines for each semester. Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to all academic deadlines, which are posted online at <http://illinois.edu/calendar/list/557>.
- Final transcripts and certifications of degree(s): Please mail or hand deliver your final, **sealed** credentials to the Graduate College upon arrival (outlined in your official admission letter from the Graduate College) or have your prior institution(s) mail final, sealed credentials directly to the Graduate College. **The Graduate College is located at 507 E. Green Street, Suite 101, Champaign.**

M.ENG.ME REQUIREMENTS, REGISTRATION, COMPLETION, AND ADVISING

Degree requirements are posted both in the academic catalog and on the departmental [website](#). A blank Plan of Study form for the M.Eng.ME Program may be requested from the Graduate Programs Office. Please note that only classes which are assigned a letter grade may be used towards the M.Eng.ME degree.

If a CR/NC grade is selected by the student, this course will not apply to graduation requirements (unless specifically noted such as for Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 due to COVID-19). Only grades of C- and higher may be applied to the M.Eng.ME degree.

Advising

The primary advisor for the M.Eng.ME program is Dr. Jiajun He, the program's Faculty Director. The Plan of Study and any course changes must be approved by Dr. He.

Degree Requirements

Please see the MechSE website for the degree requirements for your program. Students who wish to check their progress toward the degree requirements of their program can request a degree audit appointment by contacting Dr. Jiajun He at jiajunhe@illinois.edu. Please allow for a minimum of 1 business day for an appointment to be scheduled. Students are encouraged to request a degree audit just prior to the beginning of their final semester. In addition, any time a student updates his/her Plan of Study, the new Plan will be checked to make sure it still meets graduation requirements.

Registration Requirements

M.Eng.ME students register for courses online through the [Illinois Course Explorer](#) and should do so prior to the first day of classes for the semester. The Office of the Registrar posts the academic calendar and deadlines online. Students are responsible for knowing and adhering to these academic deadlines.

For both the Fall and Spring terms, M.Eng.ME graduate students must register for courses by the 10th day of classes. Failure to do so may result in late fees, loss of valid visa status for international students, loss of assistantship, and unapproved leave of absence. All MechSE graduate students, except those on an approved leave of absence, must register for both the Fall and Spring terms until they graduate.

All international on campus students must be registered full-time no later than 10 calendar days into each semester. At 12:00 PM CST on the 11th calendar day of each semester, Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is obligated by law to terminate the F-1 or J-1 immigration status for students who are not registered full-time. Full-time status is considered to be a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. Although ESL classes do not count towards a degree, ESL course hours do count towards the 12 hours for visa eligibility status. For example, a student who is taking 8 hours of coursework and a zero credit, 4 hour ESL class, is counted as taking 12 hours and meets the minimum visa eligibility criteria.

Late Registration

Late registration begins at 5:00 PM CST on the first day of classes. Students who are not registered at that time have approximately two weeks to complete registration. After the late registration period, students lose the ability to register themselves and must use the [Late Registration Form](#). The M.Eng. Program Office must approve this form prior to final approval by the Graduate College. There is a penalty of \$15.00 (subject to change) for late registration, which will be added to the student's bill.

Adding/Dropping Courses

After the 10th day of classes, registration changes must be made by submitting a [Late Registration Form](#). Students must obtain approval from the instructor and the M.Eng. Program Office prior to submitting the form to the Graduate College.

Academic Standing

M.Eng. students should read and be familiar with the [Graduate College Handbook](https://grad.illinois.edu/sites/grad.illinois.edu/files/pdfs/handbook.pdf) in its entirety (<https://grad.illinois.edu/sites/grad.illinois.edu/files/pdfs/handbook.pdf>). Section 3.2 details requirements for remaining in good academic standing, including GPA requirements. Please be advised that M.Eng.ME students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher to remain in good academic standing and to graduate. If a student's GPA falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on Academic Probation for one semester. The student will be given a grace period of one semester to raise their GPA above 3.0. If at the end of that semester the student's cumulative GPA is still below a 3.0, the student will face dismissal from the university. Students who are admitted to the program on limited status for a GPA below 3.0 are not given this grace period during their first semester and are expected to earn a 3.0 or above during their first semester in the program.

Transfer Credit Policies

MechSE will allow M.Eng.ME students to transfer graduate-level coursework as long as the transferred coursework has not been used to fulfill degree requirements for another degree. M.Eng.ME students can transfer a total of 8 credit hours from an outside institution. If the student is transferring coursework from the University of Illinois at Chicago or the University of Illinois at Springfield, the maximum transferable credit hours increases to 12. Additional requirements apply.

- The student must have completed at least 8 credit hours of graduate credit at Illinois.
- The course must have been taken within the past 5 years at an accredited institution.
- The course must be a graduate-level course at that institution.
- The course cannot apply to another degree, and the petition must include verification from the other institution that the course(s) was (were) not used toward a degree.
- The student must have received a grade of B or higher.
- The petition must include an original, official transcript unless it is already on file.
- A copy of the course syllabus for each petitioned course must be provided.
- The transfer petition must receive both departmental and Graduate College approval.
- Assignments, quizzes, and/or tests from the course may be requested.
- In documenting the petitioned course, please be sure to list comparable courses at Illinois (Urbana-Champaign campus only).

Due to the complex nature of credit transfers, it is strongly recommended that students who are considering transferring credit contact the M.Eng Program Office to confirm the specific requirements based on the details of the student's request.

OTHER MECHSE POLICIES

Petitions (Graduate Student Requests)

The [Graduate Student Request Form](#) (petition) is used to request any changes to a student record or program. Examples of requests that would require a petition include curriculum changes, transferring credit, etc.

Transferring Academic Programs

Transferring Programs within MechSE

M.Eng.ME students may not transfer to MSME programs within MechSE. Upon completion of the Master of Engineering degree, students are eligible to apply to the PhD program. If an M.Eng.ME student has been offered a research assistantship (RA) appointment by a MechSE faculty, that student does not need to apply to the PhD program and instead, may submit a Graduate Student Record Form to petition for entry to the PhD program. If an M.Eng.ME student has not been offered an RA appointment by a MechSE faculty member, then that student should apply to the PhD program using the [regular application system](#). All applications are subject to any posted application deadlines.

Transferring from MechSE to another Department within the Graduate College

Students can request to transfer to another department's program via a [Graduate Student Request Form](#). Students are encouraged to talk to both their advisor and the proposed department prior to submitting the request to transfer. The proposed department may have additional procedures and requirements that must be completed.

Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)

Credit/no credit is a permanent notation on the academic record that may be requested by a student with the advisor's approval. **Courses taken as CR/NC cannot count toward the formal graded hours needed for the degree. No more than one course per semester may be taken as CR/NC. Once a course is taken as CR/NC, it cannot be retaken at a later date for a grade.** Therefore, any course for which a student wants to obtain a grade should not be taken as CR/NC. Students are advised not to select CR/NC for courses significant to their research/focus of study. Additional details can be found in the [Graduate College Handbook](#). The timeline for changing a course to CR/NC is set by the Graduate College and is listed on the [Graduate College Academic Calendar](#).

Auditing

An auditor is a listener in the classes attended; s/he may not participate in any part of the exercises. An audited course will appear on the student's transcript with a grade of AU and does not count toward the GPA or degree requirements. **Once a course is taken as an audit, it cannot be retaken at a later date for a grade.** Therefore, any course for which a student wants to obtain a grade should not be audited. Students are advised not to audit courses significant to their research/focus of study. The deadline for submitting the [Auditor's Permit](#) to the Graduate College is the 10th day of instruction in the Fall and Spring terms. See the [Graduate College Academic Calendar](#) for Summer term deadlines. Students who are registered for fewer than 12 credit hours, not including the audited course, and who do not have a tuition waiver will be charged a \$15 audit fee.

Withdrawing

Students should consult with their advisor and or Faculty Director prior to completing this process. The student's advisor and/or Faculty Director, must formally approve withdrawal from the University. The Banner application system will not allow students to drop all courses because this constitutes a withdrawal. Students must complete the [Withdrawal Form](#). International students must have formal approval from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) to withdraw.

Academic Leave and Re-entry Process

Students who wish to take a leave of absence from the program must submit a request using the [Academic Leave of Absence Form](#). Additional information about taking an Academic Leave of Absence can be found

in the [Graduate Student Leave Policies](#). A student who takes a leave of absence without MechSE approval will be required to reapply if s/he requests to return.

EXIT INTERVIEW AND GRADUATION

Exit Interview Process

M.Eng.ME students should complete an Exit Interview with the M.Eng.ME Faculty Director once the last final exam/project is completed. To schedule the Exit Interview, please contact the M.Eng.ME Faculty Director. In the event that an in-person exit interview is not possible, a written exit interview may be given.

Graduation Process and Convocation

Students who are ready for degree conferral must place their names on the degree conferral list using the UI Integrate Self-Service before the deadline for that term. This alerts the GPO and the Graduate College that the student plans to graduate within that semester. Students who do not complete this step by the deadline must wait until the next semester to graduate.

All graduate students are invited to participate in the Grainger College of Engineering and the University convocations upon degree completion. It is important that students sign up to participate before the deadlines. To learn more, please see [Grainger College of Engineering Commencement Information](#) and [Campus-wide Commencement Information](#).

GRADUATE STUDENT RESOURCES

Grainger College of Engineering Career Services

The Grainger College of Engineering Career Services Office (ECS) offers services to help prepare graduate students for the job market. ECS offers assistance with identifying internships, writing resumes, mock interviews, employment searches, and more. To learn about the services that are available, visit the [ECS website](#) or the ECS office at Suite 3270, Digital Computer Laboratory (DCL). The [University Career Center](#) also holds various events and workshops.

Graduate College Career Development Services

The Graduate College Career Development Services Office fosters personal growth and professional development for graduate students. This office assists students with exploring careers, applying for jobs and/or faculty positions, interviewing, negotiating offers, and more. To learn more about the services and seminars that are held throughout the year, visit [Graduate College Career Development](#).

Code of Conduct Policy

MechSE and the College of Engineering require all students to act in a professional manner, which includes all written and verbal communications, with any faculty, staff, students, outside vendors, or research partners. Harassment of any kind is prohibited. No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks about an individual or group's race, religion, national origin, physical attributes, or sexual preferences are permitted. In addition, students are held accountable to the [University of Illinois' Code of Student Conduct](#). Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from the University. Students who are accused of a violation have 8 days to appeal to MechSE's Grievance Committee. Failure to appeal within this time frame or a denied appeal will result in disciplinary action.

Technology Services

Mechanical Engineering Laboratory (MEL) 1005 is the Engineering IT Helpdesk and is open 9:00 AM–12:00 PM and 1:00 PM–5:00 PM CST Monday through Friday for walk-in questions and assistance requests. You can also email engrit-help@illinois.edu. Computers must be brought to the desk for support.

Engineering IT highly discourages the use of personally-owned computers for performing University research and/or storing University data. Students should talk with their advisors about computer access within their research groups. Wired network connections for personal computers are only provided where wireless is not available and on a network that matches IllinoisNet wireless. Network access can be requested by emailing engrit-help@illinois.edu. Students who contact Engineering IT to request network access must include the room, the otherwise unused network jack number, and their advisor's name. Approval of such a request is not guaranteed.

Additional IT information is provided to students as part of the new student orientation.

Printers

U of I students can pay for printing with Illini Cash.

Student Ethics

MechSE and The Grainger College of Engineering strictly enforce student ethics and will not tolerate cheating within a course or plagiarism on course-related papers, published papers, or within theses. The College uses [Section 1-402](#) of the Student Code to define cheating and plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to read through this section carefully. Students who are accused of such a violation may face some or all of the consequences below:

1. Receive a grade of zero on the assignment or exam.
2. Receive a failing grade for the course.
3. Dismissal from the program.

All cases are documented within the student's departmental file, at The Grainger College of Engineering, and at the Graduate College. A student who is accused of such a violation has 8 days to respond to the professor in writing (usually via email). In the meantime, the professor will alert the student's home department of the accused violation. If the violation still holds after discussing the accusation with the professor, the student has the right to appeal to The Grainger College of Engineering within 15 days of notification. To learn how to file an appeal, students should contact the Faculty Director of the M.Eng. Program or the M.Eng. Program Coordinator. If the student does not appeal, the matter will be closed and one or all of the above consequences will be applied. Students who receive penalty 2 or penalty 3 above will not be allowed to drop the course. Students with repeated violations may be dismissed from the program.

Grievance Policy and Procedural Appeals

The faculty, staff, and students within The Grainger College of Engineering departments are a diverse group, and sometimes conflicts may arise. Most conflicts can be resolved informally between the two parties. However, there may be times that conflicts cannot be resolved informally. In these cases, students may file a formal grievance with the Faculty Director of the M.Eng. Program or may file one directly with the Graduate College. Consult the [Graduate College Handbook](#) for more information.

Disability Services

Students who have a medically documented disability may obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids through the Disability Resource and Educational Services (DRES). Students are responsible for contacting their course instructors and providing them with their DRES letter to receive academic adjustments. To contact DRES, visit 1207 S. Oak Street in Champaign, call at 217-333-4603, or email disability@illinois.edu.

Counseling Services

All University students have access to the campus' Counseling Center. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center offers educational programming initiatives, training programs, outreach and consultation activities, and self-help materials. The staff members have extensive training and experience with assisting graduate students. **Visits with a counselor are confidential and are not shared with the student's home department or faculty advisor.** To learn more about the services they offer, visit [Counseling Center](#) or call 217-333-3704.