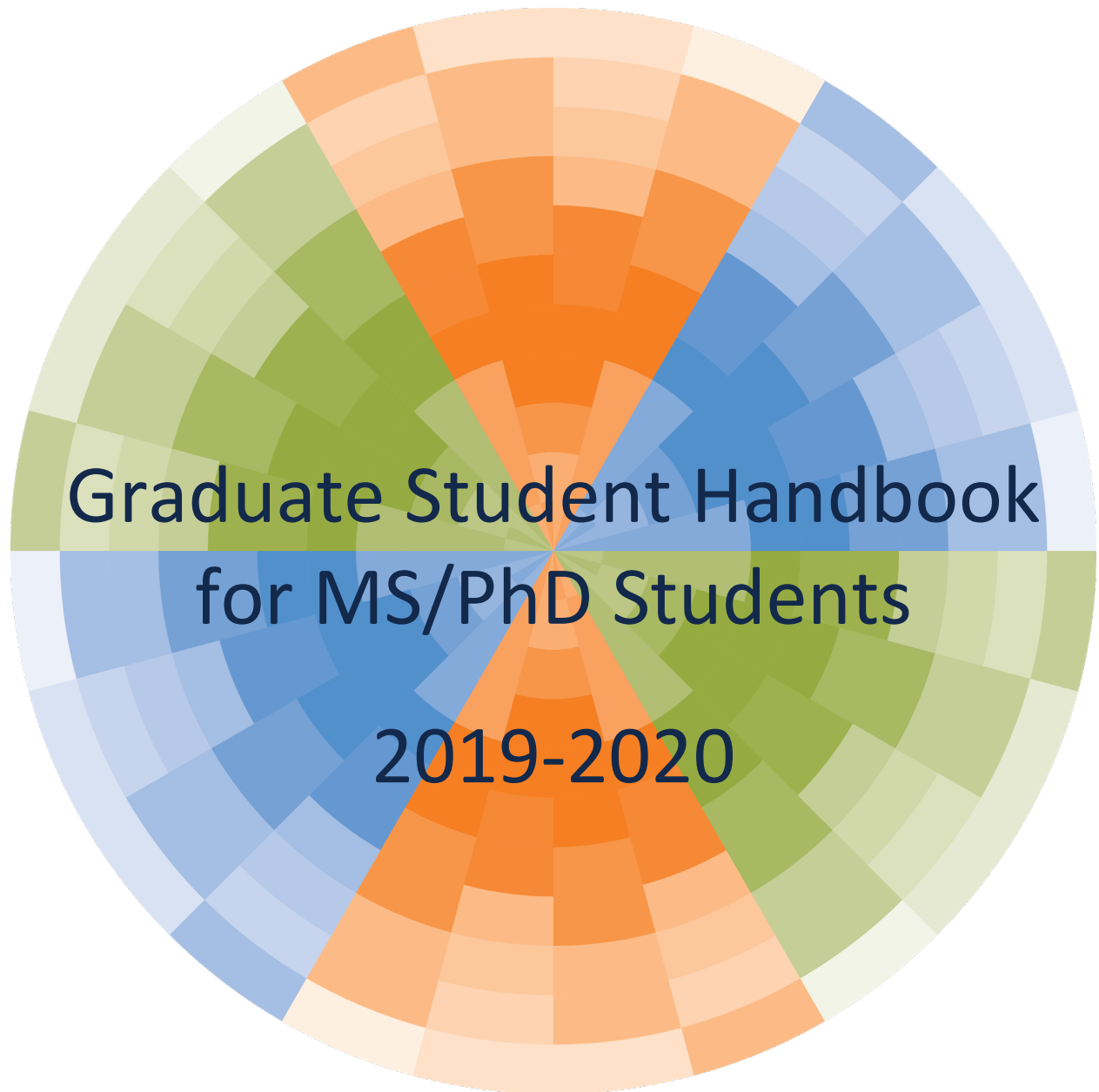


MechSE Graduate Programs Office



I ILLINOIS

Mechanical Science & Engineering

GRAINGER COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

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MechSE Graduate Programs Office Administration

The Associate Head for Graduate Programs leads the 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 Cates, Susan Roughton (prospective and onboarding new students) and Kathy Smith (current students).



*Dr. M. Taher Saif,
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*Kathryn Smith
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Students should contact the GPO for all academic matters, including, but not limited to:

- Applying
- Admissions
- Finding a research advisor
- Teaching assistantships
- Fellowships
- Academic progress
- Registration
- Graduate Petitions
- Degree time extensions
- Degree audits
- Scheduling of PhD exams
- Thesis format checks
- I-20 issuance, extensions, or changes
- Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) (for international students only)

Introduction, Admissions, and Orientation

Introduction

Graduate students at the University of Illinois at 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 College of Engineering and the Graduate College.

MechSE graduate 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 MechSE Graduate Student Handbook is to supplement these handbooks and to indicate MechSE's policies, procedures, and additional requirements for our graduate students.

MechSE Admissions Policies

Applying

In order to be considered, prospective students must apply to the department, and the MechSE GPC 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 MechSE website](#). An application is complete when the department has received all parts of the application, including three letters of recommendation.

Application deadlines are posted on the MechSE website. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply in advance of the deadline as the GPC cannot make exceptions for failure to submit all required materials by the deadline.** GPC 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) has a research advisor within MechSE who has agreed to provide a research assistantship of 25%¹ or higher to the student, the student may apply to transfer to MechSE via a [Graduate College Petition](#). Submission of a petition is not a guarantee of acceptance into a MechSE program.

If a graduate student does not have a research assistantship of 25% or higher from a MechSE faculty member, s/he must apply as a new applicant to MechSE and must follow all application instructions, including posted deadlines. A student who fails to meet the application deadline may apply for the next term.

¹ A 25% appointment is a half-time appointment. Approximately 10 hours per week of work for the appointment is expected. A 50% appointment is a full-time appointment. Approximately 20 hours per week of work for the appointment is expected. Both 25% and 50% appointments generate tuition and partial fee waivers.

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 Associate Head for Graduate Programs and Research. Neither MechSE departmental funding offers nor Grainger College of Engineering fellowship offers will be deferred for any reason.

Orientation Sessions

MechSE hosts an annual orientation session at the start of the Fall semester. The GPO notifies students of the session via email. The MS/PhD orientation is separated into two parts: 1) administrative details (e.g., registering for classes, getting started on campus) and 2) research. 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.
- Students who have a departmental financial aid offer should apply for a social security number after arrival on campus. Students will be given instructions for how to apply for a social security number during check-in with ISSS.

Research Assistants (RA), Teaching Assistants (TA), and Hourly Position Holders

- **Students must complete check-in in person with the MechSE Payroll Office before the first day of the appointment in order to fill out the required I-9 Employment Eligibility Form. Check-in for an appointment cannot be completed remotely.** International student employees should bring:
 - Passport
 - I-94 document
 - I-20 (for F1) or DS-2019 and Letter of Employment Authorization (for J1)
 - i-Card. **Students should obtain their i-Cards before visiting the MechSE Payroll Office.** Each student is issued a permanent photo identification card that must be retained by the student while 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.illinois.edu>.
- Domestic student employees should review the I-9 website: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-9.pdf>, specifically page 9, for the list of acceptable documentation. **Under federal law, students may not begin working until the I-9 form has been completed. This must be done on or before the start date of an appointment (August 16 for Fall entrants) to receive full pay.** Failure to

complete these steps may result in a reduction of salary and could possibly affect tuition waiver benefits generated by the appointment.

- Other required forms will be completed online in the NESSIE New Hire program. Students will receive an email with further instructions after their information has been entered into the payroll system. Students are encouraged to submit all required forms as soon as possible to ensure that their appointment is finalized promptly.
- TAs must adhere to the MechSE TA policies that are outlined in the TA policies section of this Handbook.

Fellowship Award Holders

- Fellowship holders must sign a Notification of Appointment (NOA) form and return it to the Graduate College Fellowship Office in Coble Hall. Students who have not received an NOA for their fellowship awards should contact the GPO.
- Fellowship holders must contact the University Payroll Office, Room 100A Henry Administration Building, to complete a Tax Status Review/ITIN appointment.
- Other required forms will be completed online in the NESSIE New Hire program. Students will receive an email with further instructions after their information has been entered into the payroll system. Students are encouraged to submit all required forms as soon as possible to ensure that their appointment is finalized promptly.
- MechSE departmental fellows should review the MechSE Departmental Fellowship Policies that are outlined in this Handbook.

Paydays for RAs, TAs, and Fellowship Holders

Students who are on an assistantship or a fellowship are paid on the 16th of each month. If the 16th falls on a weekend, students will receive payment on the Friday before the 16th.

Waiver-generating Appointments

Most waiver-generating appointments include coverage of the service fee, health service fee, AFMFA fee, and the Library/Technology fee. The University pays for 87% of the health insurance fee and pays 100% of the University vision insurance and dental insurance fees. Please see <https://cost.illinois.edu/> to estimate your cost of attending.

Other Information for All Graduate Students

- Finding a research advisor: MS and PhD students who do not have a research advisor should contact faculty to inquire about joining a research group. **It is solely the student's responsibility to find a research advisor.**
- 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>.
- 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>.
- 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 in Room 204 Coble Hall, 801 S. Wright St., Champaign.

MechSE Graduate Degree Programs and Advising

MechSE Degree Programs

Degree requirements are posted both in the academic catalog and on the departmental website. The graduate degrees offered include the following:

[Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering \(MSME\)²](#)

[Master of Science in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics \(MSTAM\)](#)

[Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering \(PhDME\)](#)

[Doctor of Philosophy in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics \(PhDTAM\)](#)

The PhD in Mechanical Engineering or in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics can be done in conjunction with the MS degree or alone (aka Direct PhD). Most students joining the department enter the PhD program in Stage 1, during which they complete their MS degree in Mechanical Engineering or Theoretical and Applied Mechanics. The steps toward completion of the PhD are explained on the MechSE website.

Advising

The graduate student-advisor relationship is vital to a student's successful completion of MechSE's MS and PhD programs. Academic advisors are chosen by mutual agreement between the student and faculty member. Students can begin looking for an advisor immediately after receiving an offer of admission from the department or anytime thereafter. Applicants are advised not to contact faculty until an offer of admission has been received from the department.

² Offered on campus and online.

MechSE Graduate Advisors		
Program	Advisor	Assignment Process
MSME – online	Non-thesis track – AH	Non-thesis track – Default
	Thesis track – Faculty Member	Thesis track – student sought
MSME – on campus	Faculty Member	Student sought
MSTAM	Faculty Member	Student sought
PhDME	Faculty Member	Student sought
PhDTAM	Faculty Member	Student sought

MS and PhD students usually secure a research advisor during the first semester on campus. MS and PhD students are required to secure a research advisor by the end of the first academic year. Choosing a research advisor is one of the most critical and impactful decisions students must make in a graduate program. The advisor-student relationship is fundamental to the success of both the student and advisor. The research advisor has great influence not only on the research direction, but also on promoting the career of the student. In most cases, the student-advisor relationship is one that will last a lifetime. It is important for each student to find a research advisor who matches his or her own research interests, work style, career goals, and even personality. Some students may find a research advisor within the first few weeks while other students may carefully explore and evaluate many options over the first year.

Failure to Find an Advisor

If, at the end of the first academic year, a student does not have a research advisor, s/he will be required to meet with the Associate Head for Graduate Programs for a progress review. Unsatisfactory progress toward finding an advisor may result in a mandatory transfer to a non-thesis program or dismissal from the program.

Advisors from Outside MechSE

MechSE graduate students can seek advisement from faculty in other departments. If a student reaches this mutual agreement with a faculty member in another department who is not a MechSE-affiliated faculty member, a co-advisor from within MechSE is required. Note that MechSE Teaching Assistantship (TA) positions and MechSE Departmental Fellowships are reserved for MechSE students who are working with faculty whose primary appointments are in the MechSE department.

Notifying the GPO of Advisor Status

When a mutual agreement has been made, students (including new students) should notify the GPO by submitting an advising agreement in the My.MechSE system. To do this, complete the following steps:

1. Log into [My.MechSE](#).
2. Select “Thesis Advising Agreement” under the “Academic Apps” menu.
3. Complete the form and submit.

The advisor will be notified via email. The advising status is updated when the advisor has completed his or her portion. It is **critical** that students file the advising agreement in a timely fashion because many functions (e.g., annual reviews and teaching assistantships) are connected to the student-advisor relationship as noted in the database. Failure to file the thesis advising agreement may affect a student’s annual review and/or eligibility for teaching assistantships.

Annual Review Process

Academic reviews are completed annually at the end of the Spring semester through an online 3-step process.

1. Student self-evaluation.
2. Faculty advisor reviews student portion and submits a separate evaluation.
3. Students receive review result within a week of the closing of the review process.

When the portal is open, the GPO will notify the students and include the deadline for students to submit their portion. Failure to submit the student self-evaluation by the announced deadline results in the student's forfeiture of his or her right to appeal the evaluation of the faculty member.

Students who wish to appeal an annual evaluation can submit the appeal in writing to the GPO. This appeal will be reviewed by the Associate Head for Graduate Programs and, if necessary, the GPC. The Associate Head and/or GPC will determine if further information is needed from the advisor. Once a decision has been reached, the Graduate Programs Office will send the student and advisor a written response to the appeal.

Graduate Student Funding

MS and PhD students may be funded via fellowships, RAs, TAs, or through a combination of these sources. Beginning with the Fall 2020 semester, all PhD students in the Grainger College of Engineering will receive obligated funding for the first five years of their academic program, pending satisfactory progress. Students whose first language is not English must pass test of oral English proficiency to be eligible for the obligated funding and can become eligible after admission upon passing such a test. Additional information can be found in the [Grainger College of Engineering Graduate Student Handbook](#) as well as in the [Graduate College Handbook](#).

Graduate students who are awarded a research or teaching assistantship must complete the required paperwork **in person** each semester to finalize their appointment prior to the appointment start date – August 16 for the Fall term and January 1 for the Spring term. To complete the appointment process, visit the MechSE Payroll Office. **Students who fail to complete this process by these dates each semester will delay their appointment start dates, which will result in reduced pay. Students cannot submit the paperwork electronically.**

The acceptance of an appointment requires students to be present and available to their supervisor during the appointment dates – August 16 to December 31 for the Fall term and January 1 to May 15 for the Spring term. If students must be away from their responsibilities, they must receive prior approval from their supervisor and the Academic Office. Failure to be present may result in the termination or non-reappointment of an assistantship. Students should schedule vacations for time periods during which the University is closed for a holiday or for after the appointment dates. For more information regarding the Graduate College and University guidelines on graduate assistantships, see the [Graduate College Handbook](#) and [Academic Human Resources](#).

For International Students Only: Social Security numbers are only issued to students who are employed on campus. This includes students who hold an assistantship or hourly appointment. Prior to securing a social security number (SSN), the University issues a Temporary Control Number (TCN), which will be needed to process the assistantship or graduate hourly appointment. Students on a fellowship will need the TCN number (but not an SSN) to process their paperwork. The TCN number is available at the ID

Production Office at the Illini Union Bookstore. If this number was not issued when receiving the i-Card, please return to that office and request it.

MechSE Departmental Fellowship Policy

A student's fellowship offer letter is the official explanation of the terms of the student's fellowship award. To retain a MechSE fellowship, students must make satisfactory academic progress under the supervision of a MechSE faculty advisor. A student who joins a faculty group outside of MechSE forfeits the MechSE departmental fellowship.³

Teaching Assistantship (TA) Policies

The GPO accepts TA applications each semester: in October (for Spring semester positions) and in April (for Fall semester positions). Students are emailed when the application system is available. Applications are not accepted after the deadline.

TA positions in MechSE are assigned on the following priority basis.⁴

1. To fulfill any funding obligations outlined in a student's admission letter⁵
2. TAM PhD students who need to complete their teaching requirement
3. Remaining PhD students
4. Remaining MS students

Prior performance as a TA and ICES scores are considered. All applicants must also meet English language requirements, explained in the Requirements for Non-Native English-Speaking TAs section of this Handbook.

TA Orientation Program

All new teaching assistants are required to attend the Graduate Academy for College Teaching pre-semester orientation program(s) that are given each semester. A copy of the agenda, including dates and times, and a brief description of the activities are provided to all teaching assistants when TA assignments are made. **Attendance at this orientation is required as a condition of the assistantship appointment.**

MechSE Departmental TA Training

New TA appointees in MechSE must complete a one-semester TA Training Course, ENG 598, Teaching and Leadership. This is a 1-credit hour course that is graded on a satisfactory-unsatisfactory basis. All new TAs must complete the course.

Requirements for Non-Native English-Speaking TAs

All non-native English-speaking graduate students, regardless of citizenship, who wish to be employed as TAs at the University of Illinois must first satisfy the English language requirement for TAs set by the State of Illinois. Additionally, PhD students who are non-native English-speakers will not gain eligibility for five years of obligated funding until passing a test of oral English proficiency. Non-native English speakers must achieve a minimum score of 24 on the speaking portion of the TOEFL or a minimum score of 8.0 on the speaking portion of the IELTS. Students who are already at Illinois can fulfill this requirement with a

³ A faculty member whose primary appointment is not in the MechSE Department is considered outside of MechSE.

⁴ A limited amount of flexibility is built into this process to allow for course instruction consistency and/or special requirements of a particular course.

⁵ MechSE Departmental Fellowship Policies apply.

passing score on the English Proficiency Interview (EPI), which is the on-campus assessment through the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL). Students can sign up for the EPI once they are enrolled as a graduate student and located on campus. Sign up information is emailed to students when exam dates have been posted by CITL. **No exceptions are made to the English requirements; this policy is required by the State of Illinois.**

Degree Requirements, Registration, and Completion

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 the MechSE Graduate Programs Supervisor in 155 CAB. Please allow for a minimum of 1 business day for an appointment to be scheduled. Degree audits are not conducted during walk-in hours.

Registration Requirements

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, MechSE 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. Students on an approved internship must register for 0 credit hours of Thesis Research for that semester.

All international students must be registered full-time no later than 10 calendar days into each semester. At 12 PM CST on the 11th calendar day of each semester, ISSS is obligated by law to terminate the F-1 or J-1 immigration status for students who are not registered full-time. Students on assistantships that generate a tuition waiver must register by the 10th calendar day of the term or risk losing the assistantship and tuition waiver.

Late Registration

Late registration begins at 5 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 student's advisor and the GPO 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.

Registration Credit Hour Requirements

Funding type	Minimum credit hours per semester
Research assistantship, teaching assistantship	12 credit hours per semester
Fellowship, Self-funded	16 credit hours per semester

The maximum course load per semester is 20 credit hours – taking over 20 credit hours in a semester requires the approval of a petition for overload registration.

A typical semester consists of:

- 4-12 credit hours of formal, graded graduate-level letter-grade courses (1-3 courses).⁶ Students on an RA or a TA should not take more than two formal, graded courses per semester.
- 1 credit hour of MechSE Seminar (ME 590 or TAM 500; 1 credit hour)* MS students must enroll each semester until all coursework is completed. PhD students must enroll until the preliminary exam is completed.
- ME 599 Thesis Research: The number of credit hours that a student should register for ME 599 in a semester will vary depending on the number of graded courses being taken in that semester. Students who have a research advisor should register using the unique CRN assigned for that advisor. Students who do not yet have a research advisor may register for ME 599 using the department CRN numbers: 23435 for ME or 28195 for TAM.

Lab Safety Course Requirement

MSE 492 Lab Safety is **required** and must be completed within the first two semesters of the student's graduate program. MSE 492 Lab Safety is an 8-week, 1 credit-hour course that will count toward a student's required hours for the semester but will not count toward the credit hours needed for the degree.

Summer Registration

Summer is not a mandatory registration term for most students, with two exceptions: 1) students who are on a fellowship that is paid over the summer, and 2) international students for whom summer is their first or last semester. In these cases, thesis-track MS and PhD students may register for 0 credit hours of ME 599. Non-thesis-track MS students can register for their last course.

Part-time Registration

Part-time registration is granted only for students in the following programs:

- M.Eng.ME (on campus and online)
- MSME online

In rare circumstances, students who have completed all other degree requirements and are working on completion of a thesis/dissertation may be allowed to enroll part-time.

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, advisor, and GPO prior to submitting the form to the Graduate College.

Seminar Requirement

Continuous enrollment in either ME 590 or TAM 500 is required for MS and PhD students. **Students must be enrolled in the MechSE seminar for every semester until all required coursework is completed, including sufficient hours of thesis research.** PhD students must continue to register for the MechSE seminar until the preliminary examination is completed. Students must attend a minimum of 4 approved

⁶ It is important to note that registering for 0 credit hours renders a student ineligible to access the McKinley Health Center, the Activities and Recreation Center, and the free bus pass. Students can elect to "buy back" these services by paying the Health Service Fee, the Student Initiated Fee, and the Transportation Fee. Students who register for a minimum of 3 hours will receive these services.

seminars each semester. An exception can be made if the student is off campus for a semester. Students in the online MSME program are not required to register for ME 590.

Seminar Requirement Conflict

Students enrolled in a course that conflicts with ME 590 or TAM 500 must still register for either ME 590 or TAM 500 and are required to attend alternate seminars.

To complete seminar registration with a conflict:

1. Request a registration override by emailing the Undergraduate Programs Office at mechse-ug-advise@illinois.edu. The email should include student name, UIN, and information about the course that is in conflict with the seminar.
2. Students will receive an email when the override is entered.
3. Students **must** register for ME 590/TAM 500 after the override is entered.

To receive credit for alternate seminars:

1. Alternate seminars include ME 591 MIG, ME 591 BIG, TAM 539, and other seminars in Engineering, Math, or Physics
2. Download the [Attendance Verification Form](#) and have it signed by the seminar host (not the speaker). **Students must return the signed Attendance Verification Form to the GPO no later than 5 business days after the date of the alternate seminar. Attendance Verification Forms that are submitted more than 5 business days after the seminar will not be accepted.**

Transfer Credit Policies

MechSE will allow MS students (Stage 1) to transfer graduate level coursework as long as the transferred coursework is not used to fulfill the prerequisites for a qualifying exam.⁷ Stage 1 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 GPO to confirm the specific requirements based on the

⁷ MS students are referred to as Stage 1 doctoral-track students. A student who has earned an MS is considered a Stage 2 doctoral student and is not eligible to transfer credit.

details of the student's request.

How to Switch to the Non-Thesis-Track MSME

All MS students are admitted as thesis-track students. If an ME student wishes to change to the non-thesis track, s/he should consult the Graduate Programs Supervisor. A departmental Request to Switch to Non-Thesis form must be completed. All non-thesis students must complete 4 hours of ME 597 Independent Study. Before the request to switch to non-thesis can be submitted, the student must have secured a faculty advisor for the independent study.

Thesis Preparation and Submission

Students are required to submit an electronic copy of the thesis/dissertation to the MechSE Graduate Program Supervisor prior to the Graduate College deposit deadline. Graduate College deadlines can be found on the [Graduate School Academic Calendar](#). An email from the GPO is sent to students each semester outlining the MechSE-specific dates and deadlines for degree certification and thesis submission.

Doctoral Examinations, Milestone Expectations and Time Limits

The MechSE website explains the qualifying, preliminary, and final exam processes for both the Mechanical Engineering Doctoral Examination and the Theoretical and Applied Mechanics Doctoral Examination. The time by which a graduate student is expected to complete all degree requirements varies. Please see this section of the [Graduate College Handbook](#) for additional information. The table below explains key milestones that students complete as they work toward the degree.

Milestone	Expected Completion
Secure a research advisor (including determining research interest)	Typically secured during the 1 st semester, no later than the end of the 1 st academic year
MS Completion	Within 2 years of initial enrollment
Qualifying Exam	Varies, see MechSE website for additional details
Preliminary Exam (Thesis Proposal)	Within 3 years of starting the PhD program (Stage 2)
Final Exam (Thesis Defense)	Within 4-5 years of starting the PhD program (Stage 2)

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, adding/dropping a minor or concentration, transferring credit, etc. Petitions are reviewed by the Graduate Programs Committee.

Transferring Academic Programs

Transferring Programs within MechSE

M.Eng.ME students may not transfer to MSME programs within MechSE. A student in a MechSE M.Eng.ME program may request to be considered for the PhD program by submitting a [Graduate Student Request Form](#), official GRE scores, and 2 letters of recommendation from MechSE faculty. If approved for admission to the PhD program, the student may start the PhD program after completing the M.Eng.ME program.

Students may request to transfer from MSTAM to MSME or from MSME to MSTAM. Please note that transferring from MSME to MSTAM may lead to a significant delay in completing the degree as MSTAM requirements are different and less flexible than MSME requirements.

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 ME or TAM degrees. 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.

***In absentia* registration**

In absentia is a registration type designed for students who wish or need to remain registered but who plan to study or do research for at least one semester 50 miles or more away from campus. Students may register *in absentia* for any number of credit hours. There is no decrease in tuition rates when a student is registered *in absentia*, and tuition assessment will be based on the student's college and curriculum of enrollment, residency status, and the number of credit hours for which the student is registered.

In absentia registration recognizes that such students do not access the full range of campus services and resources while away. Therefore students registered *in absentia* are only assessed the general fee. Payment of the general fee provides students with access to their University e-mail and access to library services. Because *in absentia* students are not assessed other fees they are not eligible for services associated with those fees. For example, if students registered *in absentia* wish to have health insurance they must make alternative arrangements. For a list of [services](#) each fee includes and [amount](#) of each fee, refer to the Office of the Registrar.

A student must submit an [in absentia Registration Form](#) to Graduate Student Academic Services (GSAS) to request *in absentia* registration. An approved request allows a student to register *in absentia*, but the student must complete the registration using the [UI-Integrate system](#).

In absentia registration is typically used when a student has completed all requirements except for completion of the final exam and thesis deposit.

Withdrawing

Students should consult with their advisor and the Graduate Programs Supervisor prior to completing this process. The GPO, in cooperation with the student's advisor, 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

PhD students should complete an Exit Interview with the MechSE Department Head once the final exam is completed. To schedule the Exit Interview, please contact the staff in the Department Head's office.

Graduation Process & 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](#).

The Graduate College Fellowships Office

The Graduate College Fellowships Office establishes and implements policies governing the numerous fellowships and traineeships that students hold. In addition, the Office of External Fellowships provides services to help students locate external funding opportunities, learn how to write grant proposals, and submit competitive applications. Please see [Graduate College Fellowships](#) for more information.

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 AM -12 PM and 1 PM -5 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

Graduate students may print within their department or research group. In addition to using departmental printers, graduate students may use the EDW lab printers for no extra charge because this is covered by the student fees paid each semester. If engineering graduate students print at the Grainger Library using either the 4th floor's central computers or the lower level east side computers, they can print up to 300 pages for no extra charge. Any pages in excess of 300 that are printed under an individual student's Net ID will result in an automatic additional charge to his/her student account.

Student Ethics

MechSE and the 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 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 College of Engineering within 15 days of notification. To learn about how to file an appeal, students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies or the Graduate Contact in their home department. 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 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 department's Director of Graduate Studies 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 Counseling Center. In addition to offering counseling services, the 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.