DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
2018-2019

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

COMPUTER SCIENCE ACADEMIC OFFICE, 1210 SIEBEL CENTER

ILLINOIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Information ***1***
CS @ Illinois History 1
CS Graduate Programs 1
Admission Requirements ***2***
Change of Curriculum within CS 3
Financial Aid ***3***
Open Offer Policy ***4***
Graduate Assistantship Assignments ***5***
Teaching Assistantship Appointment in CS ***5***
Research Assistantship Appointment in CS ***6***
Planning Document for Assistantships in CS ***6***
Graduate Assistant Benefits Overview ***6***
Spoken English Proficiency Requirement ***7***
Limited Status ***9***
Not Sure Who to Contact or What to Do? ***9***
University & Department Directory Information ***10***
Professional M.C.S. Program ***10***
M.S. Program ***12***
Program Requirements 13
M.S. Thesis Advisor 14
Ph.D. Program ***14***
Purpose 14
Estimated Timeline 15
First Year Milestones 15
Coursework 16
Finding a Thesis Advisor ***18***
Ph.D. Qualifying Exam ***18***
Purpose 18
Deadline 18
Qualifying Exam Policies 18
Qualifying Exam Statements & Scheduling 19
Conditional Pass on Qualifying Exam 19
Failed Qualifying Exam 19
Guidance on How to Prepare 19
Ph.D. Committees ***20***
Purpose 20
Timeline for Establishing Committees 20
Committee Members 20
Advice on How to Form the Committee 21
Preliminary Exam ***21***
Purpose 21
Exam Policies 21
Guidance on How to Write the Proposal 22
Final Exam ***23***
Purpose 23
Exam Policies 23
Guidance on How to Prepare 24
Graduate Annual Evaluations ***24***
Thesis Deposit ***24***
Graduation Process ***25***
Registration ***26***
Full-Time Status 26
Late Registration 27
Adding/Dropping Courses 27
Withdrawing 27
Credit/No-Credit 27
Minimum Grade Requirements 28
Re-entry into the CS Graduate Program ***28***
Graduate Petitions ***29***
Transfer of Coursework ***29***
Probation ***30***
Special Grades ***30***
Code of Conduct Policy ***30***
Student Ethics and Academic Integrity ***31***
Grievance Process ***32***
When to Visit the Academic Office ***32***
Fall/Spring Internships for CS Grads ***32***
Curricular Practical Training (CPT) ***33***
Occupational Practical Training (OPT) ***35***
Graduate Study Committee ***36***
Counseling Services ***36***
College of Engineering Career Services ***36***
Engineering Technical Services Group ***36***
CS & ECE Corporate Connections Program ***36***
Graduate Office Space and Mailbox ***37***
Communication Skills ***37***
General Advice for CS Graduate Students ***38***
Opportunities to be a Leader ***39***
Academic Office Graduate Program Staff ***40***
Computer Science Student Organizations ***40***
Important Websites ***42***
Advice from Fellow Grads & Faculty ***43***
Important 2016-2017 Dates & Deadlines ***45***
New Graduate Student Checklist ***48***

GENERAL INFORMATION

Computer Science Public Website: www.cs.illinois.edu

Computer Science Graduate Home Page: http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate

CS @ Illinois History

The Department of Computer Science is one of the longest established computer science departments in the world. As the Digital Computer Laboratory, it was the home for the design and construction of the first two ILLIACs. It evolved into a department in 1964 and went on to create the ILLIAC III and IV computers.

As the home to one of the nation's leading Computer Science programs, the Thomas M. Siebel Center for Computer Science serves as a living laboratory for exploring and evaluating emerging computing environments. The Center encompasses more than 225,000 square feet of classrooms, laboratories and offices. It features a computing and communications infrastructures integrating ubiquitous digital audio/video capture facilities, high-resolution display devices, touch screen information panels, high-performance wired and wireless networking, and handheld, clustered and desktop computer systems. The department can use the Center as an intelligent information system, making it a helpful tool in everyday research and tasks. Users can control the building's systems to customize their work environment. New applications for this environment are continuously developed by students, faculty, and staff and deployed in the Center. In short, the department provides its members with an integrated, state of the art education and research facility. It is an environment that allows researchers to investigate and apply technologies related to pervasive computing, social computing, multimedia infrastructure, building intelligence, security, and privacy on the building itself – an environment that is attracting faculty and students who promise to shape the future of computing for Illinois and the world. Currently, the department has approximately 70 faculty members and four graduate programs enrolling over 600 students. The undergraduate programs enroll approximately 1775 students in the CS major and six "CS + X" blended programs with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Grainger Engineering Library and Information Center is located conveniently a block away from the department. It is the center of one of the national Digital Library Initiatives and has worked with several publishers to transform their materials into electronic form and make them accessible via the network. The Grainger Library is part of the University of Illinois Library *(one of the largest in the country)* and, together with libraries at 28 other academic institutions in the State of Illinois, is accessible from any terminal via a computerized catalog.

The University of Illinois has an international reputation as a research institution. Research facilities abound in many departments, which allow ample scope for interdisciplinary studies. It is also a cultural center, offering many of the amenities of a large city, such as Krannert Art Museum and the Krannert Center for Performing Arts, with its year-round program of concerts, theatre, and dance, given by both local and visiting artists. For more information, visit the university's main website, www.illinois.edu.

CS Graduate Programs

The Department of Computer Science offers graduate programs leading to the degrees of M.S., Ph.D., Professional M.C.S. (online or on campus) and M.S. in Bioinformatics. The M.S. requires 28 credit hours of coursework and 4 credit hours of thesis, and may be counted toward a Ph.D. The Ph.D. requires a

minimum of 96 credit hours—minimum of 48 credit hours of coursework and minimum of 32 credit hours of thesis. The Professional M.C.S. requires 32 credit hours of coursework and no thesis.

The Department of Computer Science also offers the Professional M.C.S. degree online, which delivers the course content through digital audio and video technology. The online M.C.S. program offers flexibility to students and allows them to participate in the program as either a full-time, part-time, or non-degree student. Full-time M.C.S. students typically enroll in 12 credit hours of coursework per semester. Part-time students, who are usually employed full-time, typically enroll in 4 or more credit hours of coursework per semester. Beginning in Fall 2016, the Professional M.C.S. degree launched a track in Data Science (M.C.S.-DS) delivered on the Coursera platform. Effective Spring 2019, all students admitted to the online M.C.S. program receive course content delivered on Coursera's massive open online course (MOOC) platform.

Students do not need to be admitted to the University of Illinois graduate program to register as an off-campus non-degree student. Non-degree students interested in completing the M.C.S. degree are strongly encouraged to complete the admissions requirements within the first semester, as only 12 credit hours of non-degree courses may be transferred to the degree program.

Current University of Illinois undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Engineering with a junior standing can enroll in the BS-MS program or the BS-MCS program, which are both five-year programs.

Ph.D. students entering with a bachelor's degree may earn an M.S. on their way to the doctorate. Within the first four semesters, students will demonstrate core knowledge in particular areas of computer science by completing specified courses. The Qualifying Examination, which must be attempted by fourth semester, focuses on the student's individual research interests. The two other examinations completed by Ph.D. students are the Preliminary Examination, which is the thesis proposal and initial research results, and the Final Examination, which is defense of the thesis at the conclusion of the research.

Students who are completing the M.S. degree have 5 semesters to complete the degree *(not counting summer term)*. Students who complete the Professional M.C.S. degree on campus have 3 semesters to complete the degree *(not counting summer term)* and online students have up to 5 years to complete the program. Students who are completing the Ph.D. degree have up to 7 years to complete the program and 6 years with an approved M.S.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS
PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS & CURRENT STUDENTS

Students who apply to the M.S. and Ph.D. programs will be considered for fall admission with a December 15th application deadline. The on-campus professional M.C.S. program also considers applications for fall admission with a January 15th deadline. M.S. Bioinformatics program has both a fall and spring admission with an application deadline of October 15th for spring term and January 15th for fall term. The online professional M.C.S. program admits students to Fall, Spring, and Summer terms. Application deadlines for all degree programs are available at http://www.cs.illinois.edu/admissions/graduate/application-deadlines. All application materials, including (unofficial) transcripts, reference letters, and test scores, must be received by the Academic Office by the deadline, regardless of financial aid consideration.

For information about the application process, go to http://cs.illinois.edu/admissions/graduate.

Note: Current University of Illinois graduate students in other departments may apply to any CS graduate degree program by submitting a formal application through the Graduate College.

Changing Curriculum within Computer Science

M.S. to Ph.D.

Effective Fall 2018, current CS graduate students who are in the M.S. program must follow the same application process as all other applicants to the Ph.D. program. **All application materials must be submitted by the application deadline of December 15th.**

M.S. to Professional Master's (M.C.S.)

Students must submit the Graduate College Curriculum Change form, http://www.grad.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/curriculum_transfer_form_offline.pdf, to the Academic Office requesting a curriculum change no later than the end of the term prior to graduation *(e.g., by December for May graduation)*. If a thesis advisor was already secured, the advisor must endorse the petition stating that the student has informed the advisor they no longer wish to complete the thesis research and would like to complete the Professional M.C.S. degree program and leave the University. If the student has been accepted for the CSE option in either the M.S. or Ph.D. program, the advisor's written consent to change to Professional M.C.S. is also required. Please note that students who switch from the M.S. to Professional M.C.S. will not be allowed to switch back to the M.S. degree program.

FINANCIAL AID

Most M.S. and Ph.D. CS graduate students are on a fellowship, research assistantship, or a teaching assistantship.

The number of financial aid offers depends on the department's available financial resources and are competitively made to those students who place in the top rankings by the FAA committee. Renewal of an assistantship or fellowship is based solely on the academic progress of the student, work performance of the student, and obligation by the department as determined by the original letter of admission. The award of funding is based on the degree program to which the student applied. If the department approves a change to the degree program during the time period of the award, renewal and/or continuation of funding may be affected.

Assistants work under the supervision of individual faculty members and assist with research or teaching. Assistantships in the Department of Computer Science are usually 50% appointments. A 50% appointment requires students to devote an average of 20 hours per week to the appointment. A limited amount of assistantship support is available for the two-month summer session. Students on a teaching *(TA)* or graduate *(GA)* assistantship belong to the bargaining unit of the Graduate Employees' Organization *(GEO)*. The GEO is recognized by the university as the exclusive representative for wages, hours, terms and conditions of employment for all employees within the bargaining unit. The current collective bargaining agreement is available at http://humanresources.illinois.edu/assets/docs/GEO-2017-22-Contract.pdf.

Fellowships are competitively awarded based on performance and other conditions stipulated by a fellowship. Some fellowships provide complete support, including tuition and fee waivers, for one or more academic years. Other fellowships may be combined with a research or teaching assistantship, thereby providing fellows with a larger overall stipend. Qualifying fellowships, as well as assistantships that are

between 25% and 67% time, include a tuition and service fee waiver. Students who hold a fellowship are required by the department to be registered for a minimum of 8 credit hours to qualify for the tuition and service fee waiver for fall and spring term and a minimum of 4 credit hours for summer term. If the terms of external fellowships require enrollment in a greater number of credit hours, fellows on such external fellowships must meet the terms of the external fellowships.

Students who hold these awards during any given spring semester may also register for the following summer session without having to pay tuition or service fee. There are approximately $600 per semester of miscellaneous fees that are not covered by tuition and service fee waivers. The current starting salary for half-time assistants in the Department of Computer Science is around $21,600 for the nine-month academic year.

All students whose native language is not English, regardless of US Citizenship, are required by state law to submit a passing score from the campus-based EPI test *(passing score is 5 or higher)*, TOEFL iBT-speaking subsection *(passing score is 24)*, or IELTS-speaking subsection *(passing score is 8)* to be eligible for a Teaching Assistantship *(TA)*. Please be aware that a passing score on an English exam is not an automatic award of a TA. Students interested in exploring teaching assistantship opportunities should contact Kara MacGregor at kmacgreg@illinois.edu.

Graduate students who are not on a department assistantship may seek employment opportunities in other departments and administrative units on and off campus. However, the department has no mechanism for reporting or informing students of these employment possibilities. To learn about these opportunities, visit the Graduate College Campus Job Boards web page, https://grad.illinois.edu/current/job-boards, which lists the hourly positions and assistantships available to graduate students.

OPEN OFFER POLICY

The Department of Computer Science offers some incoming graduate students an "Open Offer", which means they will hold either a teaching or research assistantship or a fellowship for the duration of their program. For an M.S. student, this is no more than 5 semesters; and for a Ph.D. student, this is no more than 5 years. Students who receive an "Open Offer" financial assistance are required to meet the following criteria in order to maintain their "Open Offer" status. The student must:

- secure a thesis advisor by the end of the first academic year.
- complete any required ESL courses by the end of the first academic year *(for international students only)*.
- attempt the qualifying exam by the 4th semester and pass the qualifying exam by the 5th semester *(for Ph.D. students only)*.
- not take a leave of absence from the program.
- not have D's or F's in any courses and less than 3 C's in all coursework.
- not be on probation status *(overall graduate GPA is below 3.0)*.
- submit or publish at least one paper by the preliminary exam.
- have met with advisor at least once a month.
- complete the Planning Document *(funding request for the upcoming term)* by the deadline.
- complete the Graduate Student Self-Evaluation by the deadline.
- have a satisfactory progress on the Graduate Student Annual Evaluation at all times.

In addition, Ph.D. students are expected to pass the Prelim exam by the 8th semester.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP ASSIGNMENTS

Graduate students who are awarded a research or teaching assistantship must complete the required paperwork each semester to finalize their appointment prior to the appointment start date – August 16th for fall term and January 1st for spring term. To complete the appointment process, contact the Computer Science Business Office in 2210 Siebel Center. Failure to complete this process by the specified dates each semester will delay students' appointment start date as well as the first paycheck.

The acceptance of an appointment requires students to be present and available to their supervisor during the appointment period – August 16th to December 31st for fall term and January 1st to May 15th for 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. Vacations must be scheduled when the university is closed for a holiday or outside the appointment dates. For more information regarding the Graduate College and University guidelines on graduate assistantships, visit www.ahr.illinois.edu/Grads/index.htm and http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/2/chapter8/assistantships.

For International Students Only: Social Security numbers are only issued to students that are "employed" on the campus. This would include 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 only need the TCN number 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.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENTS IN CS

The department is committed to maintaining a high level of quality with the teaching assistant *(TA)* appointments and program. Students have to meet the following requirements in order to be eligible for a TA appointment in Computer Science.

- Must be in good academic standing in their graduate program.
- Must have a passing spoken English proficiency score *(for international students only)*: 24+ TOEFL iBT; 8+ IELTS or; 5+ on EPI *(University's SPEAK Exam).* Must complete the CS Assistantship Planning Document by the stated deadline.
- All new TAs must complete the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning (CITL) TA Orientation the week prior to the start of classes and enroll in the CS 591 TA seminar.
- Returning TAs who did not receive a satisfactory evaluation from their faculty supervisor for their previous TA appointment will be allowed one semester to improve performance. In addition, they will be required to complete or retake the CS 591 TA seminar.
- TAs cannot switch from a TA to an RA appointment after July 15st for fall term and December 15th for spring term. If you are expecting an RA appointment, please consult with the relevant professor(s) before these deadlines.

The TA appointments are under the oversight of Professor Brian Bailey *(bpbailey@illinois.edu).* The primary contact person to inquire about TA appointments is Kara MacGregor *(kmacgreg@illinois.edu).* TA contracts for summer/fall terms are generally posted by the end of April and for spring term by the end of November.

TA Evaluation Process

Each semester, TAs will be required to complete a self-evaluation. In addition, faculty supervisors will complete a TA evaluation form, which includes a section for them to share feedback with the TA in efforts to help them learn and grow from their TA experience. The TA evaluation process takes place at the end of October for fall, at the end of March for spring, and at the end of July for summer.

Continuous TA Training

All TAs, including students completing a summer internship or a vacation between fall and spring term, need to be back on campus at the beginning of the appointment period, generally a week prior to start of classes. Each semester will start with a mandatory TA Kick-Off meeting that will take place on the first day of class. In addition to this Kick-Off meeting, all students have the opportunity to attend additional teaching workshops from the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning (CITL). The times of these workshops will be posted at http://illinois.edu/calendar/list/836. CITL also offers a Teaching Certificate Program that students interested in teaching can complete.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP APPOINTMENT IN CS

All research assistant *(RA)* appointments are made directly by the faculty. Students who are interested in securing an RA appointment need to consult with the faculty. Kim Bogle *(kbogle@illinois.edu)* in the Business Office, 2210 Siebel Center, issues all RA contracts after the faculty member has confirmed the RA appointments in their research area. Faculty are to inform students of RA appointments by November 15th for spring term and May 15th for fall term.

PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR ASSISTANTSHIPS IN CS

Each semester, fall and spring, all Ph.D. and M.S. students in the department are required to complete the "Planning Document", which is a form that informs the department and the thesis advisor what type of appointment you are requesting for the upcoming term. The Planning Document is located in my.cs.illinois.edu under the "CS Tools" menu.

GRADUATE ASSISTANT BENEFITS OVERVIEW

Below is a high level overview of the types of benefits available to graduate assistants. For detailed information, visit http://humanresources.illinois.edu/employees/current-employees/graduate-employees/index.html.

Insurance and Health Care: Students are eligible to participate in the University Graduate Student health insurance plan. The university provides services at McKinley Health Center and Counseling Center. Coverage may also be purchased for spouses, dependents, and same-sex domestic partners. To review the student insurance policy and premiums, visit http://www.si.illinois.edu/ or call 333-0165.

Tuition and Fee Waiver: Students who hold an assistantship appointment between 25-67% time for at least three-fourths of a term (91 days in fall and spring terms; 41 days in the summer) are eligible for a tuition and partial fee waiver. Students must be enrolled and in good academic standing during their appointment.

University Holidays: The following holidays will be observed by the university. Students are not required to work on these days if on an appointment.

- Christmas Eve & Day
- Memorial Day
- Thanksgiving & day after
- New Year's Day
- Labor Day
- Other days determined by the President of the University
- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
- Fourth of July

Sick Leave: Can be accrued depending on appointment. Please visit the "Summary of Benefits by Employment Category Chart" located at http://humanresources.illinois.edu/employees/current-employees/graduate-employees/index.html for more information.

Bereavement Leave: Eligible for three days of paid leave for an immediate family member, same-sex domestic partner or household member, in-laws, grandchildren, and/or grandparents, and are eligible to receive one day of paid leave for a relative other than the above, who is not a member of the graduate assistant's household.

Unpaid Leave: May be granted during the appointment upon request to and at the sole discretion of the Department and University.

SPOKEN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT *(NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKING STUDENTS ONLY)*

This section is for all students whose native language is not English, regardless of permanent residency status of the United States *(green card)*. To check for exemptions from this requirement based on country of citizenship, visit www.grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/exemptcountries. The Department of Computer Science requires all Ph.D. students admitted to the program in Fall 2011 or later whose native language is not English, to have a passing spoken English proficiency score before taking the Qualifying Exam. (Please note this requirement may be different from the Graduate College admissions requirements.) Ph.D. students admitted prior to Fall 2011 whose native language is not English, must have a passing spoken English proficiency score prior to attempting the Preliminary Exam. All students must also have a passing score to be eligible to hold a TA position. Criteria for exemption from demonstrating oral English proficiency to hold a Teaching Assistantship are available at https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/measurement-evaluation/english-proficiency-interview. Students who do not have a passing score on the TOELF iBT *(24)* or IELTS *(8)* must complete the University of Illinois' English Proficiency Interview *(EPI)* exam or retake the TOEFL iBT or IELTS SPEAK exam. For Illinois' EPI exam, students are allowed three chances to pass *(5 or higher)*. The department's guidelines and policy for the EPI exam are outlined below.

- Students must register for the EPI exam through Kathy Runck (krunck@illinois.edu) in the Academic Office.
- Students may take the EPI a maximum of three times and only once per semester.
- If the student comes in late to the exam, does not show up for the exam, or cancels less than 7 days prior to the exam might not be able to get another EPI appointment the same semester.
- All incoming students who have a TOEFL iBT speaking section score that is below 22 or an IELTS speaking section score that is below 6 must complete either 1) 10 hours of approved tutoring sessions or 2) ESL 504, 506, or 510 before taking the EPI exam.

- Any student who fails their first attempt at the EPI exam must complete one English improvement activity during a semester after the most recent EPI. These student can either 1) complete at least 8 weeks of tutoring with an approved EPI tutor or 2) enroll in ESL 504, 506, or 510 before they will be eligible to take the EPI a second time.
- All students who receive a "Conditional Pass" on the EPI exam must enroll in ESL 508 and receive a passing grade "S" in the course to earn a passing EPI score. All CS graduate students with a conditional pass must first complete and pass ESL 508 before being awarded a TA assistantship *(this is the department's policy)*.

EPI Scoring Process

The EPI assesses test takers' speaking ability in terms of five features: Fluency, Linguistic Accuracy, Discourse Management, Question Handling and Listening, and Listener Effort.

- ***Fluency***: smoothness in delivery and amount of hesitations and re-starts.
- ***Linguistic Accuracy***: includes clear pronunciation, grammar without noticeable errors and sophisticated vocabulary.
- ***Discourse Management***: the ability to develop and organize ideas and speak at length.
- ***Question Handling and Listening***: the ability to give appropriate answers and negotiation skills for communication.
- ***Listener Effort***: the ease or difficulty in understanding the examinee's speech.

Description of EPI Scoring Levels

Level	Description	Result
6	Communication is always effective; speaker has sophisticated language skills appropriate for a teaching context.	Pass; student is permitted to be a TA with no restrictions.
5	Communication is generally effective; speaker has satisfactory language skills at ranges appropriate for a teaching context.	
4CP	Communication is generally effective; however, due to isolated weakness, communication is occasionally difficult. Further ESL coursework is required during or before the first semester of teaching in order to refine the speaker's language skills for a teaching context.	Conditional Pass; CS requires student to successfully complete ESL 508 before they can hold a TA appointment.
4	Communication is somewhat effective. Inconsistent performance indicates speaker is not ready to be a classroom instructor.	Non-passing; student is NOT permitted to be a TA and must retake the exam.
3	Communication is marginally effective; speaker has limited language skills for a teaching context.	
2	Communication is generally not effective; speaker has unsatisfactory language for teaching context.	

Scores of 2, 3, 4, and 4CP *(conditional pass)*: The raters determined that the following aspect*(s)* of the candidate's oral English proficiency were of critical concern.

- Fluency *(flow and smoothness of speech)*
- Language form accuracy
  - ✓ Pronunciation
  - ✓ Grammar
  - ✓ Vocabulary

- Idea development and organization
- Question handling and listening skills
- All of the above factors were salient in the decision.

More information on the EPI exam is located at https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/measurement-evaluation/english-proficiency-interview. To review the English language proficiency policy for TAs, visit http://www.grad.illinois.edu/admissions/taengprof.htm.

LIMITED STATUS

A student who does not meet one or more of the graduate admissions requirements may be approved for admission with "Limited Status". Some of the most common reasons for limited status are

- course deficiencies, as determined by the department,
- low undergraduate GPA *(below a 3.0)*,
- no comparable bachelors degree, or
- a lack of demonstrated English language proficiencies.

Students admitted with limited status must address deficiencies the first semester in the program in order to continue.

English Language Proficiency *(for international students only)*

International students who do not meet the required English language proficiency standards may be placed on "**Limited Status**" by the Graduate College at the time of admissions. International students who are on limited status are required to take the ESL Placement Test *(EPT)* when they arrive on campus. The Department of Linguistics administers the test. The results of the exam will determine whether the student will be required to enroll in English as a Second Language course*(s)*, which may reduce the number of academic courses for that given term. Enrollment in an ESL course can only take place after the placement results are received. Students must meet all conditions, which include passing all ESL coursework, of their limited status within the first year of their graduate studies. Students are required to complete these requirements in order to earn a degree from Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Additional information about the EPT test: https://linguistics.illinois.edu/languages/english-placement-test-ept.
EPT Registration information for graduate students: https://linguistics.illinois.edu/languages/english-placement-test/ept-information-and-registration-graduate-students-visiting.
Information about the ELS courses: https://linguistics.illinois.edu/languages/english-second-language.

NOT SURE WHO TO CONTACT OR WHAT TO DO?

Not sure who is the right person to contact or what the correct process is? Stop by the Computer Science Academic Office in 1210 Siebel Center and the staff can direct you to the right person or process. In addition, if you have any comments, concerns, or ideas on non-academic related topics, please send an email to academic@cs.illinois.edu or stop by the office to provide the staff with feedback. This feedback is used to help enhance the non-academic part of the CS Graduate student life.

STUDENT UNIVERSITY & DEPARTMENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Graduate students may withhold their home address and phone number from the University Student/Staff Directory. To suppress this information and learn more about the university directory system, visit https://answers.uillinois.edu/illinois/page.php?id=48872. For additional information, contact CITES Helpdesk at consult@illinois.edu or at 333-7500.

PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S (M.C.S.) PROGRAM

Professional Master of Computer Science *(M.C.S.)* program is a non-thesis, non-research program and is a terminal degree. It is designed to allow students to complete this 32 credit hours program in as little as one year or within a maximum of three semesters for on-campus students and up to five years for online students. The Professional M.C.S. program options include a Comprehensive M.C.S. program available both on-campus and online, and an online M.C.S. track in Data Science (MCS-DS). The MCS-DS track is offered in partnership with the University of Illinois School of Information Science and the Department of Statistics. Effective Spring 2019, all M.C.S. students admitted to the online program (including the MCS-DS track) receive course content through Coursera's massive open online course (MOOC) platform.

Students in the Comprehensive on-campus M.C.S. program are required to register for 12 credit hours per semester. Students with fewer than 12 credit hours remaining in their final semester may request permission to register for under 12 credit hours. In addition, students in this program are not eligible to switch to the M.S. program.

Viveka P. Kudaligama kudaliga@illinois.edu serves as the academic advisor for all M.C.S. students to assist with all matters relating to the academic program, including course selection and degree progress. Students are encouraged to communicate with Viveka to review their academic progress.

Comprehensive M.C.S. Program Requirements

The comprehensive Professional Master of Computer Science *(M.C.S.)* is a non-thesis degree that requires 32 hours of graduate coursework.

1) Breadth Requirement: 12-16 credit hours. Students must complete four different courses, each from a different area, from the following eight core areas with a minimum grade of B-.
   - Architecture, Compilers, and Parallel Computing: CS 426, 431, 433, 435, 462, 483, 484, 526, 533, 536
   - Artificial Intelligence: CS 440, 443, 445, 446, 447, 543, 544, 546, 548
   - Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (effective Fall 2017): CS 466, 581
   - Database, Information Systems: CS 410, 411, 412, 510, 511, 512
   - Programming Languages, Formal Methods, and Software Engineering: CS 421, 422, 427, 428, 476, 477, 522, 524, 527, 528, 576
   - Graphics/HCI: CS 417, 418, 419, 445, 465, 467, 519, 565
   - Systems and Networking *(includes real-time systems and security)*: CS 414, 423, 424, 425, 438, 439, 461, 463, 523, 525, 538, 541, 545, 563

- Scientific Computing: CS 450, 457, 482, 554, 555, 556, 558
- Theoretical Computer Science: CS 473, 475, 571, 573, 574, 579, 583

* Breadth requirements for the online M.C.S. students:
http://www.cs.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/docs/Prof%20Online%20MCS%20%28CP%29%20Degree%20Program%20Worksheet_1.pdf

2) Students must complete 12 hours of 500-level computer science coursework-CS 500 through CS 590 or CS 598. CS 597 or an approved non-computer science 500-level course may satisfy four credit hours of this requirement.

3) A maximum of 4 hours of CS 591 and/or CS 491 may be applied toward degree.

4) A minimum of 24 hours of M.C.S. coursework must be taken in computer science courses offered by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

5) Up to 12 semester credit hours of previous graduate course work that is approved by the department may be transferred and applied to the Professional M.C.S. degree requirements.

6) Degree requirements must be completed in no more than three semesters *(summer is not counted)* for on-campus students and no more than 5 years for the online students.

For students who wish to complete the program in one year, below are two examples of how to complete the requirements.

Example One (Fall and Spring)

Term	Course	Credit Hours	Requirement
Fall Term	CS 598	4	500-level Requirement
	CS 411	4	Breadth Requirement (DAIS Group)
	CS 440	4	Breadth Requirement (AI Group)
	CS 425	4	Breadth Requirement (Systems & Networking Group)
Total Credits		**16**	
Spring Term	CS 511	4	500-level Requirement
	CS 543	4	500-level Requirement
	CS 418	3	Breadth Requirement (Graphic/HCI Group)
	CS 597	4	Elective Course
	CS 591	1	Elective Course
Total Credits		**16**	

Example Two (Fall, Spring, Summer)

Term	Course	Credit Hours	Requirement
Fall Term	CS 598	4	500-level Requirement
	CS 411	3	Breadth Requirement (DAIS Group)
	CS 440	3	Breadth Requirement (AI Group)
	CS 591	1	Elective Course
	CS 591	1	Elective Course
Total Credits		**12**	
Spring Term	CS 511	4	500-level Requirement
	CS 543	4	500-level Requirement
	CS 418	3	Breadth Requirement (Graphic/HCI Group)

	CS 426	4	Breadth Requirement (Architecture Group)
	CS 591	1	Elective Course
Total Credits		**16**	
Summer Term	CS 597	4	Elective Course
Total Credits		**4**	

Students who plan to complete the degree requirements in three semesters (not counting summer term) would complete 12 credit hours in their first semester, 12 credit hours in the second semester, and 8 credit hours in their last semester. International students will need to complete the "Coursework Under-Load" form at the ISSS office since the final semester in the program is below 12 credit hours.

M.C.S. Data Science Track (MCS-DS) Program Requirements

The Professional MCS track in Data Science is a non-thesis (no research) degree that requires 32 credit hours of graduate coursework. This program is completed online. Students can complete the eight courses required for the MCS-DS at their own pace, within a five-year window.

1) Breadth Requirement: 16 credit hours. Students must complete four different courses, each from a different area, from the following four core areas with a minimum grade of B-.

   - Artificial Intelligence: Applied Machine Learning
   - Database, Information Systems, Bioinformatics: Text Information Systems, Introduction to Data Mining
   - Graphics/HCI: Data Visualization
   - Systems and Networking *(includes real-time systems and security)*: Cloud Computing Concepts, Cloud Computing Applications, Cloud Networking

2) Students must complete 12 hours of 500-level computer science coursework-CS 500 through CS 590 or CS 598.

   Pick from among: Practical Statistical Learning, Multivariate Analysis, Foundations of Data Curation, Theory Practice of Data Cleaning, Data Mining Capstone, Cloud Computing Capstone.

3) Elective course requirement: 4 credit hours of approved coursework.
4) A minimum of 24 hours of M.C.S. coursework must be taken in computer science courses offered by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
5) Up to 12 semester credit hours of previous graduate course work that is approved by the department may be transferred and applied to the MCS-DS degree requirements.
6) Degree requirements must be completed no more than 5 years (for students in online programs).

M.S. (WITH THESIS) PROGRAM

The M.S. program is a research-thesis based master's program and allows students the opportunity to apply to continue their education with the Ph.D. program. This degree requires 28 credit hours of graduate coursework and 4 credit hours of thesis research for a total of 32 credit hours to be completed within a

maximum of 5 semesters, not including summer term. Students enrolled in the M.S. program may be awarded an assistantship.

The Academic Office serves as the advisor until a M.S. student submits a thesis advisor agreement. When the thesis advisor is secured, he/she assumes the responsibilities for academic advising, in addition to directing thesis research. It is recommended that students meet with their advisor on a regular basis to ensure they are on track academically, both with coursework and research.

Program Requirements

The Master of Science *(M.S.)* is a research-oriented degree that requires 28 hours of graduate coursework and 4 hours of thesis research. It fulfills the first stage *(32 hours)* of the 96-hour computer science Ph.D. program.

1) Breadth Requirement: 9 – 12 credit hours. Students must complete three different courses, each from a different area, from the following eight core areas with a minimum grade of B-.
    - Architecture, Compilers, and Parallel Computing: CS 426, 431, 433, 435, 462, 483, 484, 526, 533, 536
    - Artificial Intelligence: CS 440, 443, 445, 446, 447, 543, 544, 546, 548
    - Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (effective Fall 2017): CS 466, 581
    - Database, Information Systems: CS 410, 411, 412, 510, 511, 512
    - Programming Languages, Formal Methods, and Software Engineering: CS 421, 422, 427, 428, 476, 477, 522, 524, 527, 528, 576
    - Graphics/HCI: CS 417, 418, 419, 445, 465, 467, 519, 565
    - Systems and Networking *(includes real-time systems and security)*: CS 414, 423, 424, 425, 438, 439, 461, 463, 523, 525, 538, 541, 545, 563
    - Scientific Computing: CS 450, 457, 482, 554, 555, 556, 558
    - Theoretical Computer Science: CS 473, 475, 571, 573, 574, 579, 583
2) Advanced Coursework: 12 credit hours.
    - Course must not have been completed in the breadth requirement.
    - An additional course at the 500-level must be completed in one of the three core areas the student has chosen, which means at least two courses are completed in one core area.
    - Two additional 500-level courses must be completed, which may be chosen from any CS course numbered 500-590 or 598. (Note: CS 597 or 591 cannot be counted towards advanced coursework).
    - CS 599 (thesis) may satisfy four credit hours of this requirement but does not count towards the need for two courses in one core area and is not counted towards the total 28 hours of coursework required for the degree.

Example of Breadth and Advanced Coursework Requirements

- ***Breadth Requirement****: CS 433 (Architecture), CS 523 (Systems & Networking), and CS 450 (Scientific Computing)*

- ***Advanced Coursework**: CS 538 (2nd 500-level course in Systems and Networking), CS 598, and CS 599*

3) A master's thesis and registration in four credit hours of CS 599 associated with the thesis research is required. It is the student's responsibility to secure a M.S. thesis advisor and start work on thesis research no later than the beginning of their third semester in the program.
4) A minimum of 16 hours of coursework hours must be taken in computer science courses from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
5) A maximum of 4 hours of CS 591 and/or CS 491 may be applied toward either degree.
6) Up to 12 semester credit hours of previous graduate course work that is approved by the department may be transferred and applied to the M.S. degree requirements.
7) Degree requirements must be completed in no more than five semesters *(summer is not counted)*. A Ph.D. student obtaining an M.S. degree along the way to their Ph.D. has flexibility as to when to complete the M.S.
8) Students in the M.S. program who are offered admissions into the Ph.D. program must complete their M.S. degree prior to starting the Ph.D. degree.
9) International students who are on an F-1 student visa must be registered in the semester they deposit their M.S. thesis if their 1-20 is still valid in that semester.

M.S. Thesis Advisor

Students are required to secure their thesis advisor no later than end of their first academic year. Once a thesis advisor is identified, the "CS 599 Thesis Advisor Agreement" form must be completed. Students can complete the online form located at my.cs.illinois.edu in the "Grad Student Toolbox" or the paper form located at http://cs.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/docs/Advisor Agreement (599) revised Apr15.pdf. Once the completed form is submitted, M.S. students can contact Kathy Runck in 1210 Siebel Center (CS Academic Advising Office) to request the appropriate CRN *(course registration number)* to register for the advisor's section of CS 599. Only 4 graduate hours of CS 599 are allowed for the M.S. degree program.

PH.D. PROGRAM

Purpose

The Ph.D. program is designed to guide students through the difficult process of becoming an independent researcher and educator. The goals of Ph.D. students should be

1) to become a scholar by absorbing large bodies of research literature and critically analyzing the state-of-the-art, including its shortcomings,
2) to become an effective communicator by learning how to express ideas clearly in writings, individual meetings, and public seminars, and
3) to become an innovator by creating new theories, technologies, or paradigms that advance the state of the art.

By the end of the Ph.D. program, the student has become an expert in a research field and a colleague of the faculty. Successful students are driven by a passion to develop creative ideas and make an impact through their intellectual contributions.

Estimated Timeline

Students can take anywhere from 4 to 7 years to complete the Ph.D. program. Student who enter the program with

- an approved external M.S. degree have a maximum of 6 years to complete the program *(see section Minimal Requirements below)*.
- a bachelor's degree and earn an M.S. from Illinois along the way to a Ph.D. have a maximum of 7 years to complete the program.
- an M.S. degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign prior to entering the Ph.D. program have a maximum of 7 years from the time a they started their M.S. degree to complete the program *(2 years for the MS degree and 5 years for the Ph.D. degree)*.

The average student who enters the program with a B.S. degree in Computer Science takes 5 years to complete the Ph.D. program. This variation is due to many factors, such as prior experience, career goals, and the type of research. Students who are interested in a faculty position may take 6 years because of the substantial time required to develop a solid publication record and become known by others in the research community. Students, together with their advisor, will have to determine the appropriate pace when completing the Program of Study form *(see below).*

A typical schedule for a student entering with a B.S. in Computer Science is shown below. ***Students must attempt the Qualifying Exam by the 4th semester***. The other milestones are guidelines.

Year	***Semester***	***Milestones***
1	1 2	Design and submit a Program of Study Select a Ph.D. advisor Complete ESL requirements and pass Speaking exam *(international students only)*
2	3 4	 Take Qualifying Exam
3	5 6	
4	7 8	 Preliminary Exam *(Thesis Proposal)*
5	9 10	 Final Exam *(Thesis Defense)*

The First Year Milestones

- Students should determine their research interests and find a Ph.D. advisor.
- Students should plan out Ph.D. coursework that will prepare them for the Qualifying Exam and their research.
- Students ***must*** complete the Program of Study form by December 15th of the fall term and obtain approval by all three Program of Study committee members. This process is described in the "Coursework" section below.
- Students must find a thesis advisor. Students must secure a thesis advisor before they can take the Qualifying Exam. Once an agreement is made between a faculty member and a student, the "CS 599 Thesis Advisor Agreement" form must be completed. Student can complete the online form located at

my.cs.illinois.edu in the "Grad Student Toolbox" or the paper form located at http://cs.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/docs/Advisor Agreement (599) revised Apr15.pdf. Students will then be given the appropriate CRN *(course registration number)* to register for the advisor's section of CS 599, which usually occurs either after the qualifying exam is passed or with the advisor's approval during the semester the qualifying exam is taken. Please contact Kathy Runck in 1210 Siebel Center (CS Academic Office) to request the appropriate CRN *(course registration number)* to register for CS 599.

- Students must complete their Ph.D. self-evaluation form, which is an annual process, by April 1st. In the self-evaluation, students must outline what they have accomplished the first year in the program – coursework, progress in securing a thesis advisor and identifying possible research projects, etc.

Coursework

The Ph.D. coursework requirements are redesigned to allow students flexibility to customize their program of study through close interaction with their Program of Study committee.

Purpose of Ph.D. Curriculum

- Provide students with knowledge, understanding, and perspective that are helpful toward their research.
- Develop a context in which students and faculty can get to know each other to help aid in the process of selecting an area of research and advisor.

Minimal Requirements

A prior Master's degree from another university may be "approved" as satisfying "Stage I" *(the first 32 hours)* of the Ph.D. The Academic Office certifies a Master's degree as "approved" often before the student enters. However, a transcript and proof that the prior Master's degree was completed must be submitted to the department in order for the Academic Office to carry out this certification. The Graduate College requires 96 hours *(64 with an approved M.S.)* – minimum of 48 *(16 with an approved M.S.*) of credit hours of coursework and minimum of 32 hours of thesis hours *(CS 599*), which leaves 16 credit hours that can either be coursework or thesis. The CS department additionally requires

1. A minimum of 48 coursework hours *(16 with approved M.S.)*.
2. At least 24 hours *(16 with approved M.S.)* must be 500-level.
3. At least 20 hours *(12 with approved M.S.)* must be CS courses.
4. At least 12 hours must be 500-level CS courses.

Independent study *(CS 597)* and seminar courses *(CS 591 or CS 491)* are given special consideration. Such courses, either from Computer Science or other departments, may be applied toward requirement 1 above. Students should complete no more than 4 credit hours of CS 597 in any given semester. However, no hours of independent study or seminar courses may be used to satisfy requirements 2, 3, or 4 above. Furthermore, no more than 4 hours of seminar courses may be counted towards the total hours needed for graduation. Finally, **all Ph.D. students must take CS 591phd** *(Orientation Seminar)* in their first fall semester.

Coursework Committee and Program of Study

Within the first month of the first semester, students are assigned a Program of Study committee of three-computer science faculty. One member is based on suggestions by the student and the other two members

(*a faculty member from the student's area of interest and a faculty outside the area of interest*) are assigned by the Academic Office.

Students must prepare the Program of Study form online at http://my.cs.illinois.edu (*click on the "Program of Study" link*), in consultation with their Program of Study committee through individual meetings, a group meeting, or other forms of correspondence. The form has three sections:

1) Proposed curriculum—coursework to be completed the meet Ph.D. requirements. A minimum of three courses must be marked as required.

2) Justification for proposed curriculum—brief explanation of the motivation for the choice of coursework.

3) Self-assessment—Assessment of proposed curriculum to ensure all degree requirements will be fulfilled.

Students can continue to revise the online form while they discus the Program of Study coursework with the committee members. When there is consensus among the committee the proposed curriculum is satisfactory, students must "Submit" the online form for Committee Review, "print" the form and have each committee member of the Program of Study committee sign it. Students **must** turn in the completed, signed Program of Study form to the Academic Office by **December 15th**. The student may alter the Program of Study at any time, but a revised Program of Study form must be completed and approved by the Program of Study committee. The revised Program of Study form, with signatures, must be turned into the Academic Office. Requests for a change of Program of Study committee may be submitted to Viveka Kudaligama <kudaliga@illinois.edu> for consideration. For detailed information regarding completing the Program of Study form and to view a sample form, visit http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/phd-program/phd-program-study-process.

Students' progress with respect to their Program of Study and the quality of the Program of Study itself are open to evaluation at the annual area meetings, where all Ph.D. students are evaluated. Students who are not making satisfactory progress in terms of Qualifying Exam preparation, depth of coursework, breadth of coursework, etc., will receive a warning indicating the requirements to be completed.

Earning an M.S. Degree along the Way

For any student who has passed the Qualifying Exam, it is considered routine to earn the M.S. degree with the deposit of an M.S. thesis, provided that the appropriate Graduate College requirements and number of credit hours have been satisfied. Students who wish to earn their M.S. degree must stop by the Academic Office to complete a petition to add the M.S. program code before the M.S. degree can be conferred.

Students who leave the Ph.D. program without passing the Qualifying Exam may petition to switch to the M.S. program, assuming it can be completed expediently and no M.S. had been previously awarded elsewhere in Computer Science. The Graduate Study Committee will consider all petitions on a case-by-case basis. The student may need to take one or more additional courses if M.S. requirements have not been satisfied.

Advice

Three important sources of advice are

- faculty *(especially the Program of Study committee)*
- academic advisors
- other students *(especially those who have passed the Qualifying Exam)*, and

- coursework recommendations located at http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/phd-program/phd-program-study-process.

It is critical in the first semester that students spend significant time talking with their Program of Study committee members to develop a good Program of Study.

FINDING A THESIS ADVISOR

Choosing a thesis advisor is one of the most critical decisions in a graduate program. The advisor-student relationship is fundamental to the success of both the student and advisor. The thesis advisor has great influence not only on the research direction, but also on promoting the career of the student. Most of the time, the student-thesis advisor relationship is one that will last a lifetime. It is important to find a thesis advisor that matches your research interests, work style, career goals, and even personality. Some students may find a thesis advisor within the first few weeks while other students may carefully explore and evaluate many options over the first year. Both scenarios are considered "normal". All M.S. and Ph.D. students must secure their thesis advisor by the end of their first academic year and complete the "CS 599 Thesis Agreement" form. Student can complete the online form located at my.cs.illinois.edu in the "Grad Student Toolbox" or the paper form located at http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-forms-advising-resources/official-forms.

THE PH.D. QUALIFYING EXAM

Qualifying Exam Purpose

The purpose of the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam is for students to convince the faculty that they should be considered a Ph.D. candidate. Faculty evaluate whether the student has the knowledge, experience, perspective, and determination to complete the Ph.D. program. In addition, faculty will evaluate the student's presentation and communications skills to ensure a mastery of English sufficient to teach in a U.S. institution can be achieved by the end of the program. Researchers in various areas may assess these qualities differently; therefore, the format and content of the exam vary significantly across the research areas.

Qualifying Exam Deadline

Students must attempt the Qualifying Exam no later than the fourth semester. Students arriving with an M.S. degree may want to take it sooner based on faculty recommendation. The Qualifying Exam is held over a four-week period, starting on the Monday closest to the third week of each fall and spring semester. Contact Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office with any questions – mmetz2@illinois.edu.

Qualifying Exam Policies

- Students must have a Ph.D. advisor by the time of the Qualifying Exam. An advisor agreement form must be on file with the Academic Office—the "CS 599 Thesis Advisor Agreement" form.
- Students who were admitted to the program in Fall 2011 or later and whose native language is not English, regardless of US citizenship, **must pass EPI *(passing score is 5+)*, the TOEFL iBT-speaking subsection *(passing scores is 24)*, or the IELTS-speaking subsection *(passing score is 8)* prior to attempting the Qualifying Exam.** It is highly recommended that students complete this requirement within their first year of the Ph.D. program to avoid any surprises at the time of the Qualifying Exam.

Students who receive a 4CP on the EPI exam are eligible to complete the Qualifying exam as long as they are registered for ESL 508.

Qualifying Exam Statements & Scheduling of Exam

In the semester prior to the Qualifying Exam, students will be asked to submit a "Qual Statement" on the form located at http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/phd-program/qualifying-exam. This outline of research interest is forwarded to the appropriate research area committee. The area committee appoints three faculty members whose research matches the stated interests as the examining committee. However, in general, the committee will not include the thesis advisor. Students will receive an email informing them of the faculty members serving on their Qualifying Exam Committee. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their committee members to determine the exam schedule and to arrange for exam location (consult your advisor's faculty assistant for assistance with reserving a room). After the location is determined, students must notify all committee members of date, time, and location of their qualifying exam. Please copy Maggie Metzger Chappell <mmetz2@illinois.edu> on your email. The results of the qualifying exam may be pass, fail, or conditional pass *(conditions are usually requirements to take a course or two)*. Qualifying exam results are reported to the Academic Office on an area-by-area basis, so it may take a week or more for students to learn their results.

Conditional Pass on Qualifying Exam

Students who receive a conditional pass on their qualifying exam must meet the condition or conditions within the specified timelines. If the condition is completion of additional coursework, the course(s) must be completed within one academic year. Non-coursework conditions may require the student to meet the condition(s) in less than one year. It is the student's responsibility to notify Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office when the conditions have been met. Once Maggie has confirmed that all conditions have been met, the conditional pass will be changed to a pass.

Failed Qualifying Exam

A student who fails the Qualifying Exam may, at the discretion of the examining committee, be allowed one more attempt to pass it in the semester immediately following the first attempt. If the Qualifying Exam is not passed, the student may petition to switch to the M.S. program, assuming it can be completed expediently and no M.S. had been previously awarded elsewhere in Computer Science. Graduate College does not confer duplicate M.S. degrees. The Graduate Study Committee will consider all other petitions on a case-by-case basis.

Guidance on How to Prepare for the Qualifying Exam

The format and content of the Qualifying Exam varies dramatically depending on the area. For most areas, guidelines appear on http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/phd-program/qualifying-exam. To prepare for the Qualifying Exam, it is highly recommended that students talk with

1) their advisor,
2) faculty in the area,
3) students who have taken the particular exam before,
4) study with other students taking the qualifying exam, and
5) complete practice quals with either senior level Ph.D. students or faculty.

This information is particularly helpful for a student who has research interests that span multiple areas. Occasionally, more than one exam might be appropriate. The student should consult with his/her thesis advisor as to which exam is best for the planned research.

In addition, it is highly recommended that all students start to focus on their presentation and communication skills. Ph.D. students want to work towards a mastery of English that leads to excellence in presentation skills and effective communication, which will play an important role in the Preliminary and Final exams as well as in their profession. Start to master these skills now and make a plan towards improving them before the Preliminary exam.

PH.D. COMMITTEES

Purpose

The role of the Ph.D. committee is to provide frequent feedback and advice to the student. The committee shares the responsibility of guiding the student's research to successful completion. Students should not view the committee members as obstacles, but rather as additional mentors and possible promoters of their thesis research. When applying for jobs, committee members are often the first choice for seeking recommendation letters. It is expected that the Ph.D. advisor work closely with the student in determining the most appropriate committee members.

Timeframe for Establishing Committees

In the semester that the Qualifying Exam is passed, the student is expected to form a Ph.D. committee. The preliminary exam committee and the final exam committee must be appointed before each exam is held. The Graduate College recommends that individuals who served on a student's preliminary examination committee and who are not being appointed to the final exam committee be notified as part of the committee appointment process for the final examination. Please contact Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office with any questions – mmetz2@illinois.edu.

Committee Members

For the initial Ph.D. committee, a minimum of three members is required, two of whom must belong to the faculty of the Department of Computer Science. The Ph.D. advisor is included on this committee.
Once the Preliminary Exam *(Thesis Proposal)* stage is reached, the committee must be changed to satisfy requirements imposed by the Graduate College and the Department of Computer Science:

1) there must be at least four voting members *(normally, all are designated as such)*;
2) at least three and no less than half of the voting members must be members of the Illinois (at Urbana-Champaign) Graduate Faculty;
3) at least two of the voting members must be tenured at Illinois Urbana-Champaign;
4) at least three members must be members of the extended faculty in the Department of Computer Science *(extended faculty of the DCS includes the regular faculty, as well as faculty with non-visiting (assistant/associate) professor appointments in DCS that carry one or more of the following modifiers—adjunct, affiliate, research or emeritus)*, two of whom must be full-time Computer Science department members *(non-affiliate)* at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and
5) at least one member must be from outside of the University of Illinois. The outside member cannot have been a student of the current thesis advisor or any other University of Illinois committee member

nor have been a University of Illinois student within the last five years, and must have independent and relevant publications that occurred after earning their Ph.D. degree.

Note: *The outside member must have a Ph.D. and does not need to be a university faculty member. For example, this member could belong to an industrial or government research lab. If necessary, teleconferencing technology may be used for the Preliminary Exam. For approval of the outside member, the Computer Science Department and the Graduate College require their CV (resume) and a brief statement of why they were chosen. If the outside member is a Post-doc, he/she can serve as a non-voting member only.*

The five requirements above are imposed on the Ph.D. committees for the Preliminary and Final Exams *(although the committees may be different).* In addition, students can designate a Co-Chair. The Chair and Co-Chair must be a member of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Graduate Faculty and must be pre-approved by the department and the Graduate College in the initial planning stages. Both the Chair and Co-Chair must be present at the exam. In addition to these requirements, all other Graduate College requirements must be satisfied.

Advice on How to Form the Committee

- It is good for students to involve additional researchers in their efforts as early as possible. Remember, students are not locked into particular committee choices until their Preliminary Exam. In some sense, the Ph.D. committee is just a formal mechanism to stimulate interaction between faculty and students.

- It is generally recommended that a student have at least one committee member who is not a specialist in the general area of research pursued in the thesis. The ability to explain and justify research to outsiders is crucial to the success of a researcher.

- It is fairly common to have more committee members than the minimum of four. This helps to further enhance the quality and visibility of the work. Furthermore, it may be easier to satisfy the five requirements on Ph.D. committees by having more members. However, in all cases, for voting purposes, the majority vote should be CS faculty at Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

PRELIMINARY EXAM *(THESIS PROPOSAL)*

Prelim Exam Purpose

Writing a good proposal is an important part of being a successful researcher. The Thesis Proposal *(Preliminary Exam)* is viewed as an important milestone that helps students develop this skill. The Ph.D. student writes a proposal that is submitted to the Ph.D. committee prior to the exam. The Thesis Proposal presentation gives the Ph.D. committee a formal opportunity to evaluate the research progress and goals of the student. Thus, the two main purposes of the Preliminary Exam are to develop proposal-writing skills and to obtain feedback on the research plan from the Ph.D. committee.

Prelim Exam Policies

- The Thesis Proposal presentation *(Preliminary Exam)* must be taken within 5 semesters of passing the Qualifying Exam with approval from the advisor. There must be at least 4 months between the Preliminary and Final exam. Furthermore, the Preliminary and Final exam may not be taken within the same semester. All students must be registered for the term in which the Preliminary exam occurs.
- Students who entered the program prior to Fall 2011 and whose native language is not English, regardless of US citizenship, **must have met the spoken English proficiency requirement prior to**

attempting the Preliminary Exam. This requirement is met by passing one of the following: the EPI *(passing score is 5+)*, the TOEFL iBT-speaking subsection *(passing scores is 24*), or the IELTS-speaking subsection *(passing score is 8)*. It is highly recommended that students complete this requirement prior to taking the Qualifying Exam to avoid any surprises at the time of the Preliminary Exam. (Students who were admitted to the program in Fall 2011 or later and whose native language is not English, regardless of US citizenship, are required to have met the spoken English proficiency requirement prior to attempting the Qualifying Examination. This policy is detailed above in The Ph.D. Qualifying Exam section.)

- The Thesis Proposal must be submitted to the Ph.D. committee at least three weeks prior to the exam. This gives the committee sufficient time to carefully read the proposal and evaluate the ideas. Failure to submit the proposal on time may result in having to reschedule the exam.
- The Ph.D. committee for the exam must satisfy the five criteria given in the Ph.D. Committee section. The proposed committee and exam date must be submitted to Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office at least three weeks prior to the exam by submitting the Prelim-Final form, http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-forms-advising-resources/official-forms. The Graduate College requires this time to approve the committee and officially appoint it.
- The student, Chair (and Co-Chair if one is designated) of the Committee, and at least one voting member must be physically present for the exam. The remaining committee may participate in the exam via teleconference or other electronic communication media.
- Students are required to be registered in the term in which they take their Prelim. This includes Summer terms.
- Contact Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office with any questions – mmetz2@illinois.edu.

Guidance on How to Write the Proposal

- A balance must be struck between satisfying severe space limitations and providing the most critical details. The proposal is not a binding agreement between the student and the Ph.D. committee on the precise tasks that must be accomplished. Through frequent interactions with Ph.D. committee members, the student can adapt the specific thesis accomplishments as necessary.
- The Thesis Proposal should be between 15 and 25 pages *(when in single-column, single-spaced format)*. Bibliographic references are not included in this page count *(having more references is encouraged)*. There are no explicit page limits or formatting requirements. If proposals are much shorter or longer than the norm, the Ph.D. committee will question the reasons for this. If the proposal is too long, the committee may recommend rescheduling the exam after the proposal is rewritten.
- Three main criteria are usually applied in evaluating a proposal. The first two are similar to the National Science Foundation's guidelines for evaluating research proposals.
  1. Intellectual merit: What is the importance of the activity to advancing knowledge or understanding?
  2. Expected impact: What impact can be expected in terms of particular research communities and on society in general?
  3. Feasibility: How likely are the stated goals to be achieved by the candidate?
- Based on these criteria, the Thesis Proposal should contain:
  - An overview of the state of the art, which helps to show that the candidate has a good grasp of the relevant research fields.

- A brief summary of research results obtained so far by the candidate. This includes citing prior publications and current submissions produced by the student.
- A clear description of the remaining problems and goals.
- Some details of the proposed technical approach.
- Clear arguments as to why the work is relevant in terms of intellectual merit and expected impact.
- An explanation of how the goals can be accomplished within the expected amount of time.

- The Thesis Proposal should **not** be
  - A preliminary draft of the thesis.
  - Particular chapters or parts of the thesis.
  - A survey of the candidate's research field.
  - An existing publication or technical report.

FINAL EXAM *(THESIS DEFENSE)*

Final Exam Purpose

The Final Exam represents the last significant opportunity for the Ph.D. committee to ask questions and provide comments on the thesis work. It also serves to disseminate the work to the public *(including faculty, students, colleagues, friends, and family)*. In many ways it represents a celebration of the completion of the work. Unlike the Preliminary Exam, which is closed, the Final Exam is open to the public and announced along with other public seminars.

Final Exam Policies

- The Thesis Defense must be taken at least four months after passing the Preliminary Exam and cannot be completed in the same semester as the Prelim.
- The Ph.D. committee guidelines in the "Ph.D. Committees" section must be followed. The committee for the Final Exam does not have to be the same as for the Preliminary Exam, although it often is. The Graduate College recommends that individuals who served on a student's preliminary examination committee and who are not being appointed to the final exam committee be notified as part of the committee appointment process for the final examination.
- The student, Chair (and Co-Chair if one is designated) of the Committee, and at least one additional voting member must be physically present for the exam. The remaining committee may participate in the exam via teleconference or other electronic communication media.
- A full thesis draft must be submitted to the Ph.D. committee at least three weeks prior to the scheduled defense. Furthermore, a request to schedule a defense, including the names of the committee members, must be submitted to Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office no later than 30 days prior to submitting the thesis draft to the committee by completing the Prelim-Final form, http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-forms-advising-resources/official-forms.
- The defense itself usually proceeds as follows:
  1) a few minutes of private discussion by the committee;
  2) a public presentation presented by the Ph.D. candidate, typically lasting for 45 minutes;
  3) questions from the committee, in front of the public;

4) questions from the public;
5) questions from the committee without the public present;
6) private discussion by the committee; and
7) outcome decided and announced to the candidate.

- Contact Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office with any questions – mmetz2@illinois.edu.

Guidance on How to Prepare for the Final Exam

- You should not rush to schedule a Final Exam if the work is not completely finished or the thesis is not completely written.
- It is common for the committee to suggest some minor improvements or corrections to the manuscript; however, it is usually not the case that substantial new work is expected. If there is any risk of the committee requesting further work, be prepared to allot the time necessary to make the recommended changes or enhancements to the thesis. Consult your advisor on this point.
- It is important to attend other defenses to understand the whole Ph.D. process and to learn valuable skills from other students' defenses.

GRADUATE ANNUAL EVALUATIONS

All M.S. and Ph.D. graduate students go through an annual evaluation by the faculty members in their area. M.C.S. students go through an annual evaluation by the department. All graduate students **must** complete a self-evaluation during the last part of March. An email will be sent to students by the Academic Office informing them to complete their self-evaluation. Students who fail to complete the self-evaluation by the deadline will receive an automatic lack-of-progress warning. For more information on how to complete a self-evaluation, visit http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-forms-advising-resources/graduate-student-annual-evaluation-process.

After self-evaluations are completed, faculty within the different areas will meet to review the M.S. and Ph.D. students' academic progress within the program, their performance as a research or teaching assistant, publications, and their self-evaluation. This process occurs in April. In addition, the M.C.S. students are reviewed in April by the department to ensure academic progress in their coursework is being made.

All graduate students can view their feedback regarding their progress by the first week of May by visiting http://my.cs.illinois.edu. There will be one of four outcomes:

- sufficient progress,
- condition to be met *(e.g. pass Prelim by end of fall),*
- lack-of-progress warning *(students issued two warnings in a row will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program)*, or
- unsatisfactory progress.

Unsatisfactory progress may result in removal from the program or termination of the department's financial commitment for continued support.

THESIS DEPOSIT

Thesis deposits are required for the M.S. and Ph.D. students. Students are strongly encouraged to use the CS Department Thesis Template. They must submit a PDF copy of the thesis to Maggie Metzger Chappell <mmetz2@illinois.edu> in the Academic Office *(1210 Siebel Center)* by the posted departmental deadline for a departmental format review. After Maggie confirms the thesis format review is complete, students must then submit their thesis electronically to the Graduate College Thesis Office. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their committee has approved the final version of their thesis before it is submitted for the departmental format review. Thesis/Dissertation Approval form (TDA) must be completed and signed by all committee members to complete the departmental format review.

The Academic Office will assist Ph.D. students to secure signatures of committee members. For an M.S. thesis deposit, it is the student's responsibility to obtain the thesis advisor's signature. The form (https://grad.illinois.edu/files/pdfs/thesis-masters-tda.pdf) with the thesis advisor's signature should be submitted to the CS Department Thesis Reviewer, Maggie Metzger Chappell, to obtain the Department Head signature. All other forms required by the Thesis Office other than the TDA can be submitted electronically.

It is highly recommended that all students begin the electronic deposit of their thesis at **LEAST three days prior** to the Thesis Office deadline. Students who wait until the last minute to deposit their thesis may not make the deadline. A thesis submitted electronically is placed in a queue once uploaded to the Thesis Office database and will be processed in the order in which it is received. **Any theses that are still in the queue at 4:45 p.m. on the deadline or need additional changes will not be accepted by the Graduate College for deposit and the student will not have their degree conferred until the next conferral term.** For more information on the Graduate College Thesis Office process, fees and deadlines, please visit www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis/.

Students are responsible for understanding the deadlines for adding their name to the graduation list, departmental format check, and thesis deposit in the Graduate College. (Please review emails sent out with dates and deadlines each semester by the department, College of Engineering, and the Graduate College.) For all questions regarding the departmental format check, please contact Maggie Metzger Chappell in the Academic Office at mmetz2@illinois.edu.

GRADUATION PROCESS

Students who are ready to have their degrees conferred must place their name on the degree conferral list using the UI Integrate Self-Service. This alerts the Academic Office and the Graduate College that students plan to graduate within that semester. Students **MUST** add their name to the degree conferral list before the deadline for that term. Students who fail to add their name by the deadline will have to wait until the next semester to graduate.

In addition, students must also add their name to the commencement list if they wish to participate in commencement ceremonies. To learn about the College of Engineering commencement dates and process, visit https://engineering.illinois.edu/graduation/. To learn about the campus wide May commencement and process, visit http://commencement.illinois.edu/. Information about the Graduate College Doctoral Hooding Ceremony for Ph.D. students is available at https://grad.illinois.edu/hooding/ceremony.

***Reminder**: Ph.D. students must be registered for the term in which they complete their final exam. M.S. international students on an F-1 visa must be registered the term they deposit if they have a valid I-20.*

REGISTRATION

Registration for the ***spring term begins in late October*** and ***early April for the summer and fall terms***. The Office of Admissions and Records *(OAR)* provides a website, http://www.registrar.illinois.edu/online-registration, for students to find their earliest registration time. Graduate students begin registering after several other student groups *(e.g., graduating seniors, honors students, band, and other groups have first priority registration times)*. The Banner application system *(also known as "UI Integrate Self-Service")* is used for registration and any modifications to course schedules through the 10th day of instruction. Students can also print an unofficial transcript and add their name to the appropriate graduation list through this system.

***Important Notice:** All CS graduate students **MUST** be **REGISTERED** for fall and spring term **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 CS students, except those on an approved leave of absence, must register for fall and spring term until they graduate. Students on an approved internship must register for 0 thesis hours.*

Full-time Status

- All graduate students are expected to be registered as full-time students each fall and spring semester *(12 graduate hours)*. Students on an assistantship of 25% or more can register for a minimum of 8 hours to be considered full-time. Students with outstanding student loans may also be required to be full-time to avoid having the loan called. All Professional M.C.S. on campus students are required to register for 12 credit hours unless a reduced course load is approved in their final semester.
- Students awarded qualifying Fellowships and/or tuition and fee waivers not associated with an assistantship are required to be registered for a minimum of 8 credit hours. Students receiving external Fellowships may need to register for more than 8 credit hours in order to meet terms of their fellowship. International students on fellowships are generally required to be registered for 12 credit hours. Please contact the Graduate Academic Office if clarifications are needed.
- Students are not required to register for summer term unless they are on CPT or on a fellowship. Summer registration for fellows is 4 graduate hours (*unless external fellowships require a higher number of credit hours)*. Students who hold a 25% or higher assistantship may register for 4 credit hours to be considered full-time. Students considering dropping their summer registration or withdrawing from summer registration should contact the Academic Office as early as possible for information about financial implications.
- Students who have less than 12 hours to complete the degree program only need to register for the number of hours required to graduate. However, students with undergraduate loans in deferment are strongly encouraged to consult with OAR regarding whether or not their enrollment constitutes full-time status for the purpose of keeping their loans from going into repayment.
- Credit hours can be in the form of traditional coursework, independent study *(under the supervision of a faculty member)*, thesis research, or seminars.
- All international students **must be** registered as a full-time student no later than 10 calendar days into the semester. At noon on the 11th day, ISSS is obligated by law to terminate the F-1 or J-1 immigration

status for all students not registered. Students on an assistantship that provides a tuition waiver need to be registered by the 10th day of the term or they may lose their assistantship.

Late Registration

Late registration begins at 11:55 p.m. of the first day of classes. Students who are not registered at that time have approximately 2 weeks to complete registration. After the late registration period, students lose the ability to register themselves and must use the Late Registration form, http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-forms-advising-resources/official-forms. The course instructor and the Academic Office must approve this form prior to final approval by the Graduate College. Students will also be assessed a $15.00 *(subject to change)* for late registration penalty.

Adding/Dropping Courses

- Each semester has add/drop course deadlines for registered students. Some deadlines, particularly for dropping CS courses, may be different than those set by the Graduate College. Students can find these early deadlines by checking the OAR website, http://www.registrar.illinois.edu/academic-calendars.
- The department posts these dates on the "Academic Deadlines" calendar, http://illinois.edu/calendar/list/2654
- The Late Course Change form, which is required to add or drop a course past the deadline, can be found at http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-forms-advising-resources/official-forms. The instructor (to add late), advisor, and Academic Office must approve the change prior to submitting the form to the Graduate College.

  Note: *Students must maintain full-time status throughout the semester.*

- The department will not support a petition to drop a course after the final exam has been completed or the semester has ended. Students will be required to complete the course if an "I" grade is given or accept the grade they received. Please be sure to evaluate your status in each course prior to Reading Day.

Withdrawing

Students should make sure they understand the consequences of withdrawing from the university prior to completing this process. The Academic Office, in cooperation with the student's advisor, must approve withdrawal from the university. The Banner application system will not allow students to drop all courses, as this constitutes a withdrawal. Students must complete the Graduate Petition indicating a complete withdrawal, http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-forms-advising-resources/official-forms. International students must have approval from the Office of International Student and Scholar Services *(ISSS)* to withdraw.

Credit/No-Credit

Electing credit/no-credit registration allows students to enroll in a course for a simple pass/fail grade, rather than the conventional letter grade. If a C- or higher is earned, the grade that is entered on the transcript is "S" *(satisfactory)*. **The department does not allow the credit/no-credit option for CS courses, courses related to computer science, engineering courses, or any 500-level course used toward the degree.**

Minimum Grade Requirement for CS Coursework

CS graduate students are required to earn a C or higher in all CS graduate level coursework in order to have it count toward their total hours of coursework required for their graduate degree. MS and M.C.S. students must earn a minimum grade of B- for a course to fulfill a breadth requirement.

RE-ENTRY INTO THE CS GRADUATE PROGRAM

Approved Leave of Absence

There are no formal leaves of absence for graduate students. For emergencies, however, a student may sometimes be granted an "Approved Leave of Absence" from the department. Students who have an emergency arise that will cause an interruption to their program need to work closely with their thesis or faculty advisor and the Academic Office and complete the necessary paperwork. Please be aware that the timeframe in which you must complete your graduate degree is still in effect while on an approved leave.

Unapproved Leave of Absence

A student taking an unapproved leave of absence subsequently cannot register without an approved petition for re-entry, whether the degree program remains the same or is a different one. An unapproved leave of absence occurs if an "Approved Leave of Absence" is not granted to a student and

- **a domestic student** has not enrolled in any of the past three semesters *(including summer term)*, or if
- **an international student has** not enrolled in the last semester *(not including summer)*.

When leaving for one or more terms, a student with educational loans should consult the Financial Aid Office and/or the lender before terminating student status.

Students taking an unapproved leave of absence jeopardize their chances of completing their graduate degree. Students who would like to re-enter the program must complete a Graduate Petition for re-entry. The petition must include the following information:

- The reason you left the department prior to completing your degree.
- Your justifications for re-admission and an anticipated completion date.

In addition, your must submit the following documents with your petition:

- A letter from your faculty academic advisor or thesis advisor indicating support and estimated time frame for completion.
- A copy of the your most recent thesis proposal, if applicable.

The Fellowships, Assistantships, and Admissions (FAA) committee will review the petition during the next enrollment period to decide if a recommendation should be sent to the Graduate College for final approval of re-entry. The FAA committee may establish new time limits for the student to successfully complete all requirements, which may include some additional coursework. In addition, any guaranteed funding that was in effect prior to leaving the program may or may not be granted upon re-entry. International students should note that their visa status may be changed by an unapproved leave of absence and this should be discussed with the office of International Student and Scholar Services *(ISSS)*.

GRADUATE PETITIONS

The online Graduate College petition form accessed at http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gsas/graduate-student-request-form, is used to request any exception to the Graduate College rules or policies. Below are a few examples.

- Transfer of credit
- A time extension
- In absentia registration
- A curriculum change

Students should complete the petition and submit electronically. The CS Academic Office will then review the petition. For Ph.D. and M.S. students, the Academic Office may seek the faculty advisor's recommendation prior to submitting departmental approval. If approved, the electronic petition will be forwarded to the Graduate College for final review. The student and the department are notified via email of the Graduate College's decision. Graduate College petitions take roughly 10-14 business days to process, once they are received at the Graduate College.

Students are encouraged to contact the CS Academic Office prior to submitting the petition if they have any questions.

TRANSFER OF COURSEWORK

There are two types of credit that a graduate student may wish to transfer. Students may wish to transfer credit from one graduate degree to another graduate degree within the Graduate College at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Alternatively, a graduate student may wish to transfer graduate credit completed at another accredited institution. Different rules apply to each type.

Generally, a maximum of twelve semester hours of graduate coursework completed outside the University of Illinois Graduate College may be counted toward a graduate degree. Work completed outside the University of Illinois Graduate College that can be transferred includes these four types:

1. Graduate level work taken as an undergraduate at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, but not used toward a degree.
2. Graduate level work taken through Guided Individual Study at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign.
3. Graduate level work taken at another accredited institution, but not used toward a degree.
4. Graduate Level work done while enrolled as a non-degree student at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign.

Up to 12 hours of graduate credit taken while enrolled as a non-degree student, as described in point 4 above, may be petitioned to apply toward a student's graduate degree, in addition to an additional 12 hours of credit taken at another institution as described above in point 3.

Transfer coursework must be less than 5 years old, equivalent to courses offered by Illinois' Department of Computer Science, have received a grade of B or higher, and not applied to another degree. Students must complete a petition *(see above for directions to submit a petition)* to request courses be transferred. Along with the petition, they must also submit an official transcript (*which can be sent to the Department of*

Computer Science's Academic Office) as well as a letter from the appropriate authority stating that the credit hours have not been used towards a prior degree. A student requesting to transfer courses under point 4 above can do so at the start of their program. Student requesting to transfer any other courses must complete 8 credit hours within their program before submitting the petition.

PROBATION *(GPA)*

A minimum 3.0 grade point average *(GPA)*, corresponding to a grade of B, must be maintained to stay in all graduate programs and to graduate. Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 will receive a warning letter stating that unless the GPA is raised to 3.0 after the subsequent semester, they will not be permitted to continue in the program. All courses taken while at University of Illinois as a graduate student affect the graduate GPA. Therefore, it is advisable to take non-CS undergraduate-level courses under the credit/no credit option.

SPECIAL GRADES *(I, DFR, ABS, NR)*

- DFR *(Deferred)* grades are issued at the end of the term only for CS 599. DFR grades will only be changed to an "S" grade once the thesis is deposited – 4 hours of CS 599 for M.S. and all CS 599 credit hours for a Ph.D. The Academic Office completes the grade changes only for CS 599 hours.
- I *(Incomplete)* grades are issued at the end of the term when students have not completed the required work for the course. The time limit for students to complete the work is as follows:
  - 5:00 PM of Reading Day of the next semester in which the student is registered, if next semester of registration is within a year
  - if not registered in a graded course within a year, one year

  After the deadline, the Graduate College will automatically change an "I" grade to an "F by Rule". This failing grade will be reflected in the student's GPA until the instructor changes it.
- If a student fails to appear for a course final exam, the instructor must issue an ABS *(Absent)* grade no matter how well or poorly the student has done in the course. An ABS grade is failing. In some cases, as approved by the instructor, the student may be allowed to take a special exam and the ABS grade can then be changed.
- NR *(no record)* is the automatically assigned grade if an instructor enters no grade before the grade submission deadline.
- A grade of C or higher must be earned in all CS graduate level coursework to be considered a passing grade. Breadth Requirements in the MS and MCS programs require a minimum grade of B-.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

The Department of Computer Science requires all students to act in a professional manner, which includes all written and verbal communications with any faculty, staff, student, or any 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. Students are held accountable to the University of Illinois' Code of Student Conduct as outlined at http://studentcode.illinois.edu/. In addition, University of Illinois requires all students to complete

Sexual Misconduct Training. Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from the Department of Computer Science graduate program.

Students who are charged with a violation have 8 days to appeal to the Department of Computer Science Grievance Committee. Failure to appeal within this time frame or if appeal is denied, charges will stand and university disciplinary action will be enforced.

STUDENT ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Department of Computer Science expects all its graduate students, as members of the University of Illinois community, to uphold high standards in their conduct, ethics, and integrity. Students are expected to fully familiarize themselves with these standards, including policies and practices related to cheating and plagiarism on course work, exams, publications, and thesis. The department uses section 1-402 (*http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-402.html*) of the University of Illinois Student Code which identifies six types of academic integrity infractions: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; facilitating infractions of academic integrity; bribes, favors, and threats; and academic interference. It is each student's responsibility to carefully read through all parts of Section 1-402.

Students are also encouraged to review additional information on academic integrity and plagiarism available at https://wiki.cites.illinois.edu/wiki/display/undergradProg/Honor+Code, and http://www.library.illinois.edu/learn/research/.

In addition, all new Ph.D. students complete Responsible Conduct of Research ethics training in the CS 591 PHD seminar in their first semester. All new M.S. students are required to attend a mandatory Responsible Conduct of Research ethics training session, offered by the department each Fall term. Students will be informed via email about the time and location for this session.

The department recognizes that there may be ambiguous situations where the right course of action is not easy to infer from the stated rules and regulations. Therefore, students are strongly encouraged, when in doubt, to seek clarification from appropriate sources: course instructors, research supervisors, thesis advisors, fellow students, and academic staff. The Graduate Academic Office has an open door policy to address all student questions and concerns. Please make use of these resources to ensure you uphold departmental and university standards in conduct, ethics, and integrity.

Students who are charged with violating the Student Code 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 alleged violations are documented within the student's departmental file as well as documented at the College of Engineering and the Graduate College. A student who is alleged 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 Academic Office of the alleged violation. If the violation still holds after discussing with the professor, the student has the right to appeal to the College of Engineering within 15 days of notification. To learn more about the grievance process and/or to file an appeal, please contact Professor Lenny Pitt at pitt@illinois.edu. If the student does not appeal, the matter shall be considered closed and one or all of the above consequences will be applied. Students who receive penalties 2 or 3 above will not be allowed to

drop the course. Students charged with violations of the Student Code can face additional university-level disciplinary action and could be dismissed from the program and the university.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The faculty, staff, and students within the Department of Computer Science are a diverse group and from time to time conflicts or problems can arise. Most of these conflicts or problems that arise can be resolved informally between the two parties. However, there may be times that these conflicts cannot be resolved informally. In these cases, students, faculty, and staff can either elect to file a formal grievance with the department by contacting Professor Lenny Pitt *(pitt@illinois.edu)* or file one directly with the Graduate College. The Graduate College process is located at http://www.grad.illinois.edu/policies/gc_grievances.

WHEN TO VISIT THE ACADEMIC OFFICE-1210 SIEBEL CENTER

Students should see the Academic Office for all academic matters, including but not limited to the one listed below.

- Academic progress
- Graduate petitions
- Degree time extensions
- Degree audits
- Scheduling of the qualifying, prelim, and final exams
- Thesis format checks
- I-20 extensions or changes
- Curricular Practical Training *(CPT)* or Optional Practical Training *(OPT) (for international students only).*
- Submitting forms *(CS599 Thesis Advisor, CS 597 Independent Study, Prelim-Final, etc.)*

A useful publication regarding academic matters for graduate students is the Graduate College Handbook, which can be viewed and printed at www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/.

FALL/SPRING INTERNSHIP FOR CS GRADS

If a student wishes to hold an internship, the department encourages them to do this during the summer term, pending approval from their thesis advisor. Ph.D. students who have passed their Qualifying Exam may be approved to do an internship during the fall or spring term, depending on how the internship relates to their PhD research. Ph.D. students who want to hold a fall or spring internship must follow these steps:

1. Provide the Academic Office with a letter from their thesis advisor explaining how the internship will help them progress in their PhD research and prepare them for their Prelim exam.
2. If approved, domestic students must register for 0 thesis hours (CS 599) and international students must register for ENG 510 for the semester on internship. This means that students will be responsible for paying their own tuition costs for that semester. Students are not eligible to hold a TA or RA appointment. Students who hold a fellowship may not be eligible for an internship depending on the regulations of the fellowship and registration requirements.
3. Students are still required to make progress on their research and publications. Students are still

required to complete the CS planning document and the graduate self-evaluation form by the deadline. The research area will still evaluate the student's progress in the program to determine if satisfactory progress has been made for the academic year.

Ph.D. students are required to complete the Ph.D. milestones on the same 6-year timeline. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all coursework is completed and Ph.D. milestones are met. International students are responsible to ensure they are in compliance with all visa regulations related to internships by visiting with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services.

M.S. and M.C.S. students are not eligible to complete a fall or spring internship. They must be registered as full-time students during these terms.

Note: International students who are approved for a fall or spring internship must consult with the Academic Office to complete the CPT paperwork required to hold the internship and register for ENG 510. CPT and visa requirements impose restrictions upon how long an international student may intern and still qualify for OPT at the end of their degree.

CURRICULAR PRACTICAL TRAINING *(CPT)*
(INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY)

CPT is for graduate students who 1) are on an F-1visa, 2) have completed one year of academic coursework, and 3) wish to complete an internship during the summer term. **All CPT paperwork must be approved and signed off by the CS Grad Academic Office.** Failure to go through this office will result in an unapproved leave of absence and may result in dismissal from the program. The primary contact to assist students with CPT is Kara MacGregor (kmacgreg@illinois.edu). If Kara is not available, please contact Viveka P. Kudaligama (kudaliga@illinois.edu).

CPT Start and End Dates

Summer CPT start and end dates should be between May 16th or the first day or summer term (whichever is earlier) and August 15th.

- All start dates must be after the last day of spring term and all end dates must be before the first day of fall term.
- For advanced PhD students only: An end date after August 15th requires department approval and has to be approved no later than May 15th.
- Start and end dates for TA appointments will not be adjusted. Students on a TA appointment must start a CPT after May 15th and must end their CPT by August 15th. The department funds TA appointments and the contract dates will not be adjusted.

Vacations During CPT

Students **MUST** plan any summer vacation after their CPT is complete. If vacation dates run past August 16th, please seek approval from your RA supervisor. The department will not approve start and end dates that fall outside of May 16th and August 15th due to a vacation in the middle of an internship. Most companies require a 12-week internship that starts on a Monday and ends on a Friday, which can easily be accomplished between May 16th and August 15th.

Application Process for CPT

In order to apply for CPT, all international students must complete the steps below:

1. Complete the ISSS CPT form
   - Read instructions about submitting the ISSS CPT form at http://isss.illinois.edu/download_forms/istart/cpt_istart_instruct.pdf.
   - Student submits an electronic ISSS iStart portal at https://sunapsis.illinois.edu/istart/controllers/start/start.cfm.
   - A copy of the internship offer letter must be uploaded when the CPT form is submitted.
   - Please make sure to indicate the course name and number of credit hours for the summer CPT experience - CS 599 or ENG 510. *(See important notes below.)*
     - Ph.D. students with a thesis advisor who have passed the qualifying exam and have a thesis title established can register between 0 and 4 credit hours of CS 599.
     - Ph.D. students who have not passed their qualifying exam must contact Kara MacGregor <kmacgreg@illinois.edu>.
     - M.S. and M.C.S. students must register for 0 credit hours of ENG 510. Please review College of Engineering CPT/ENG 510 course policy, including approved internship dates, at https://engineering.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/eng-510-cpt-policy.html.

The ISSS CPT form will be electronically routed to the CS Academic Office. The CS Academic Office serves as the "Official Advisor" when it comes to applying for CPT training and will verify the required information prior to approval.

2. For advanced (post-quals) PhD students only: If your CPT appointment date end after August 15th and you are on an assistantship, download the Department of Computer Science CPT Approval form and complete Sections one and two on this form. Submit the completed form to the CS Academic Office.

Information about Summer Registration, Tuition & Fees, and McKinley Health Center Coverage:

Registration:

Students must register for summer and fall terms prior to leaving for their training. In addition, the department requires that students are in full-time status *(see p. 26)* during fall and spring terms following their CPT training *(unless they are graduating at the end of fall term)*.

> ***Students Registering for ENG 510****: Registration in ENG 510 is a two-step process in conjunction with completing the ISSS CPT approval process:*
>
> ***1)*** *International students must first request permission from the College of Engineering to enroll in ENG 510. To apply for COE approval, please review information at http://engineering.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/eng-510-cpt-policy.html and submit the ENG 510 CPT Request Form. Students should expect this step to take 1-2 business days. Therefore, early submission of requests is encouraged.*
>
> ***2)*** *After the request is reviewed and approved, students will receive an e-mail from the College of Engineering granting them permission to enroll in ENG 510. Students must then enroll in ENG 510 via UI Integrate Self-Service, before the ADD deadline. Early completion of step 1 will allow sufficient time for students to register in ENG 510 before the ADD deadline.*

Summer Tuition and Fees: The number of credit hours students enroll in either CS 599 or ENG 510 will determine the tuition and fee rates that will be assessed. Summer tuition and fee schedule for graduate students can be accessed at https://registrar.illinois.edu/tuition-fees/tuition-fee-rates/.

- *Health Service Fee:* (McKinley) Health Service Fee will not be triggered for summer enrollment of 0-2 hours. Students who need access to McKinley services during summer should consult McKinley Health Center Business Office about their eligibility to purchase a summer extension. Contact information is available at http://mckinley.illinois.edu/contact/contact-us.

Additional Information *(Please read through this carefully)*

Eligibility

To be eligible for CPT training, students must have completed one academic year of studies *(fall and spring term).*

Length of Training

CPT training may begin on or after May 16th and run through August 15th for summer. Students who participate in twelve months or more of full-time curricular practical training will lose eligibility to apply for twelve months of Optional Practical Training (OPT) after graduate studies are completed. Participation in part-time curricular training programs does not affect a student's eligibility for post-completion OPT.

Change of Address

Once your CPT is approved, students need to update their address in the UI Integrate system to match the address of their CPT training, for the period of their training. Once students return to campus, they must update their address back to their address within the Champaign/Urbana area.

OCCUPATIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING *(OPT)*
(INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY)

OPT is for graduate students who are on an F-1 visa and wish to complete one year of practical on the job training after graduation. In order to start the OPT training paperwork, students must follow the steps below. The primary contact to assist students with OPT is Maggie Metzger Chappell *(mmetz2@illinois.edu)*. If Maggie is not available, please contact either Viveka P. Kudaligama *(kudaliga@illinois.edu)* or Kara MacGregor *(kmacgreg@illinois.edu)*.

1. Review information available at the International Student Services Office OPT website at http://www.isss.illinois.edu/students/employment/f1opt.html
2. Submit the OPT request through the ISSS electronic portal (iStart e-form). This form will be electronically routed to the CS Academic Office. The Academic Office serves as the "Official Advisor" when it comes to applying for OPT training. The Academic Office will
   - verify student has met the degree requirements;
   - indicate the student's anticipated graduation date; and
   - sign the form.

It is recommended that students plan at least 90 days in advance when applying for OPT training. For more information, please visit http://isss.illinois.edu/students/employment/f1opt.html.

GRADUATE STUDY COMMITTEE

All matters relating to the proper running of the graduate programs are in the scope of the Department of Computer Science Graduate Study Committee. Concerns may be sent to the Committee Chair. Please contact the CS Graduate Academic Office for the Committee Chair information.

COUNSELING SERVICES

All students at University of Illinois have access to the Counseling Center to assist them to gain a balanced Illinois experience. Their services range from various counseling services, educational programming initiatives, training programs, outreach and consultation activities, and self-help materials. The staff members have extensive training and experience with assisting college students. In addition, visits with a counselor are confidential and are not shared with the CS Academic Office or the faculty advisor. To learn more about their services, visit http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/ or call them at (217) 333-3704.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING CAREER SERVICES

The College of Engineering Career Services offers a variety of services to help prepare graduate students for the job market. They offer assistance with identifying internships, resume writing, mock interviews, employment searches and much more. To learn about all the services available, either visit their website at http://ecs.engineering.illinois.edu/ or visit their office at Suite 3270 in the Digital Computer Laboratory *(DCL)*. In addition, to learn about the university career events and workshops, visit http://www.careerservices.illinois.edu/

ENGINEERING TECHNICAL SERVICES GROUP

The College of Engineering IT supports the Department of Computer Science with basic and advanced IT services necessary to support the leading edge educational and research missions of the department. Please visit http://it.engineering.illinois.edu/ for information and resource guides. Additional help can be found at Engineering IT Helpdesk *(2302 Siebel Center or 333-7408)*, or by submitting a helpdesk ticket to engrit-help@illinois.edu. When submitting a helpdesk ticket, it is important to clearly outline the problem and include your NetID.

CS AND ECE CORPORATE CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

The Corporate Connection is a comprehensive program created to help industry connect with faculty and students who are at the forefront of engineering. The Corporate Connection provides a main point of entry for recruiting CS and ECE students at Illinois as well as liaison to collaboration with faculty. Corporate Connection membership fees are used to support program activities, educational and outreach activities, student projects, student organizations, scholarships, and other investments to strengthen the infrastructure of the CS and ECE Departments. The student profile database is a key component and benefit for Corporate Connection members as it creates the ability to target specific students for inclusion in recruiting events, job/internship opportunities and much more. Students benefit from this as they will be invited to events or job postings based on their indications in their profile, ensuring the best match between student and company.

To learn more about the Corporate Connection program and to complete a student profile, visit https://corporateconnection.cs.ece.illinois.edu/index.html or contact Cynthia Coleman at ccoleman@illinois.edu.

GRADUATE OFFICE SPACE AND MAILBOX

New graduate student offices and any reassignments of current graduate student offices are completed in August. Ph.D. and M.S. students with RA appointments will receive an office space and will be assigned space according to their research group. Students with TA appointments will have shared TA office space to meet their work needs. The office assignments will be sent to students via email. Graduate students must swipe their university *i*Card through the office door lock to access their office space. Any difficulties in accessing office space should be directed to Engineering IT at 2302 Siebel Center or by emailing engrit-help@illinois.edu. Any questions or concerns regarding graduate office space or departmental policy on office space should be directed to the Associate Head in the Administration Office, 2232 Siebel Center.

In addition to office space, the department provides all graduate students with a mailbox in 1334 Siebel Center. This mailbox is used for internal and campus communication purposes and should be checked on a regular basis. Please note that these mailboxes are unsecured and therefore, no outside mail *(letters, packages, etc.*) should be sent to this mailbox. Students who are unable to find their mailbox should contact the Academic Office at academic@cs.illinois.edu.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Developing good written and oral communication skills is essential to success in graduate studies and beyond. These skills are necessary for Ph.D. students to successfully complete the various stages of their program including the Qualifying Exam, the Preliminary Exam, and the Final Exam. Students have numerous opportunities to develop these skills while at the University of Illinois; in their courses, research group meetings, public presentations, and other social settings.

The ability of a researcher to communicate well is as important as developing the research results. Developing good written and oral skills during graduate studies will allow students to effectively engage with other researchers and scholars by keeping their attention, making strong arguments, and presenting difficult concepts clearly.

Written communication skills are critical in producing articles published in conference proceedings and journals. Students can develop good technical writing techniques by working closely with their advisor and other faculty, critically reading well-written research articles, obtaining feedback from fellow students, and by seeking outside help from the Internet, books, and writing workshops. The University of Illinois Writer's Workshop at the Center for Writing Studies, http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/ and Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/, are two examples of online resources for improving writing skills.

Several opportunities exist for students to develop good oral communication skills. Students should observe and evaluate presentation styles by attending research seminars in the department and around the university. Students also have opportunities to give presentations or seminars as part of research group meetings or colloquia within the department. We strongly encourage you to give presentations at every opportunity and at least once a semester.

Conferences, workshops, and other research meetings are excellent venues to expand scholarly networks and to learn how to meet people and express ideas. Most experienced researchers can give an impromptu explanation of their research in any time length *(1 minute, 5 minutes, 12 minutes)*, while even tailoring it for a particular audience. Hiring committees are much more enthusiastic when the candidate is known to at least some of them. It often takes years to build a good social network, so students should start early.

Teaching experience is another way to develop good communication skills. Teaching is a valuable art that can serve graduate students well if they master it before taking positions in academia, government labs, or in industry. For Ph.D. students who seek careers in academia, acquiring good teaching experiences is highly recommended—particularly those with the responsibility for an entire course or at least for the development and delivery of a substantial number of lectures for the course.

Non-native speakers of English can access university resources to improve their oral communication skills. Some of these resources include English as a Second Language courses and other resources for international instructors (https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/measurement-evaluation/english-proficiency-interview/resources-for-improving-epi-scores?src=cte-migration-map&url=%2Fresources%2Fenglish.html), INTL Connect (https://www.careercenter.illinois.edu/INTLconnect), and the IHC International Friends Program available through ISSS (http://isss.illinois.edu/involved/ihc_intlfriends.html).

For some students, developing and improving oral communication and social skills may appear to be daunting. By seeking advice and feedback on presentations and by actively interacting with their peers, faculty, and staff, students will be able to overcome such challenges. All students stand to gain from socializing with others from different cultural backgrounds, to improve their cross-cultural communication skills and obtain a broader global cultural perspective.

Many brilliant students fail to achieve the careers they deserve because of limited communication skills. Please use the many resources available at the department and the university, to improve your written and oral communication skills.

GENERAL ADVICE FOR CS GRADUATE STUDENTS

- As undergraduate students, life was centered on courses and interaction with faculty was minimal. In graduate school, interaction with faculty is central and courses are secondary. Therefore, it is important to allow time the first year to spend interacting with faculty and not to overload on coursework.
- The first year of graduate school can be stressful. Most students who join the department have come from an environment where they were a top student. Take advantage of all the talent around to learn, enhance skills, and build networks that will last a lifetime.
- It is important for graduate students not to isolate themselves. Get involved in CSGSO and other student organizations; participate in social activities within the department and with other graduate students, and remember that the other students, faculty, and staff are here to offer support.
- Students who are feeling overwhelmed with personal or academic concerns should not hesitate to contact the free counseling services of the university, http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/. All information is kept confidential between the student and the counselor.

- International students are strongly encouraged to attend the activities hosted by the International Student and Scholar Services *(ISSS)* to help with the adjustment to the U.S. culture. To learn more about the different events, visit http://isss.illinois.edu.
- By the end of the first year within a graduate program, the common goal for MS and PhD students is to have begun research and have a thesis advisor.

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE A LEADER IN CS

As a graduate student in the Department of Computer Science at Illinois, there are many opportunities to help lead and shape the future of the CS graduate programs. These experiences are great resume builders as well as networking opportunities.

CS Graduate Ambassador: Communicates and assists prospective students with their questions about graduate student life within the department and at Illinois. Ambassadors play a very important and active role in the admission recruitment process by having frequent email correspondence with recruits and assisting with activities on scheduled visits. Students who are interested in being an ambassador should contact Viveka P. Kudaligama at kudaliga@illinois.edu by January 1st.

Illinois Student Government (ISG): Works with faculty, undergraduates, and staff to support the university. Students on this committee help address issues important to all students, including tuition, career readiness, prestige of the university, recreational facilities, and many others initiatives. To learn more and how to become in involved in ISS, visit https://isg.illinois.edu/.

Student Advising on Graduate Education (SAGE): Assists the Graduate College and Provost with reviewing and providing feedback regarding academic policies and process for graduate programs at Illinois. To learn more, contact the Graduate College at (217) 333-0035. To review the current membership, visit http://www.grad.illinois.edu/committees/sage.

Engineering Graduate Student Advisory Committee (EGSAC): Advises the College of Engineering on topics that are important to graduate education and that impact the graduate student experience on campus. The committee meets on a regular basis with the Dean of Engineering to share ideas and concerns of the engineering graduate students. To learn more and how to become involved, visit http://publish.illinois.edu/engr-egsac/.

For other leadership opportunities, visit http://cs.illinois.edu/student-life/student-organizations and click on "Engineering Student Clubs".

ACADEMIC OFFICE GRADUATE PROGRAM STAFF

Professor Brian Bailey:	*Director of Graduate Studies* bpbailey@illinois.edu
Viveka P. Kudaligama:	*Coordinator of Graduate Programs & M.C.S. Advisor* kudaliga@illinois.edu
Kara MacGregor:	*Admissions/Academic Advisor* kmacgreg@illinois.edu
Desiree Marmon	*Graduate Program Specialist/Academic Advisor* dmarmon@illinois.edu
Christine Martinez	*Graduate Program Specialist/Academic Advisor* *cmartinz@illinois.edu*
Maggie Metzger Chappell:	*Admissions/Academic Advisor* mmetz2@illinois.edu
Kathy Runck:	*Office Manager* krunck@illinois.edu

COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Department of Computer Science and the University of Illinois have a number of student organizations for graduate students to join. Below are the student organizations within the department.

- ***CSGSO***
  https://wiki.engr.illinois.edu/display/csgso/Home
  Contact Email: csgso-officers@lists.cs.illinois.edu

  The Computer Science Graduate Student Organization is a group dedicated to improving the lives of graduate students in computer science. The organization sponsors talks and seminars, organizes informational and social events, and serves as a liaison between the graduate student body and the department administration. Every Friday, CSGSO hosts its popular Friday Extravaganza! in room 4401, a weekly pizza party where students can relax and catch up with each other after a long week of research.

- ***Women in Computer Science***
  www.illinoiswcs.org
  Contact Email: contact@illinoiswcs.org

  Women in Computer Science is a technical, social, and professional student organization. The group fosters interaction between undergraduate and graduate students, alumni, company recruiters, the Computer Science department, and other student organizations. WCS facilitates technical projects, organizes tech talks and professional workshops, and participates in outreach activities. The group also offers mentoring programs, social events, and academic and Grace Hopper scholarship opportunities for its membership, and much more.

- ***ACM***
  http://www.acm.illinois.edu/
  Contact Email: acm@illinois.edu

  The Association for Computing Machinery chapter at Illinois is currently the largest student chapter in the country and one of the oldest *(Est. 1965).* ACM at Illinois is one of about 430 student chapters, with close to 600 members. The chapter supports Special interest groups *(SIGs)* focusing on fifteen different areas of computing such as computer graphics, mobile computing and artificial intelligence. Besides the SIGs, the group holds many social events, a weekly happy hour, an annual conference, and workshops throughout the year. ACM's office is open to all and houses our cluster and hardware lab as well as being a place to hang out and relax.

- ***SIAM***
  https://www.facebook.com/SIAMatIllinois
  http://go.illinois.edu/siam
  Contact Email: siam-chapter@illinois.edu

  The Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics aims to advance the application of mathematics and computational science to engineering, industry, science, and society. Locally, the chapter seeks to build a community of members interested in the intersection of mathematics, computing, engineering, and science through social and professional events.

- ***Latino-a Computer Science Club***
  https://wiki.illinois.edu//wiki/display/lcsc/
  Contact Person: Simon Garcia de Gonzalo, grcdgnz2@illinois.edu

  The Latino-a Computer Science Club is a great place to interact and have fun with other fellow students. The club was developed with the main goal of creating a special community within the department, one in which Latino students can not only meet each other, but also help each other to be successful. Another main goal of the club involves creating outreach programs and recruiting more Latino students into the studies of computer science. LCSC has hosted an array of social events including an XBOX night, setting up Casino Night at Siebel, and a traditional Mexican Fiesta. We have also hosted exclusive events with companies to further our professional and technical skills. These range from tech talks, private technical tips and presentations, and more. The club is a great opportunity for any CS student!

- **Blacks and African Americans in Computing (BAAC)**
  http://baac.engr.illinois.edu
  Contact Email: baac@cs.illinois.edu

  BAAC strives to become a strong support system for minorities in computing related fields that fosters scholarship, professional development, and a sense of community. Furthermore, we seek to improve the diversity of the workplace in computing fields by holding technical and professional events and conferences for current students in addition to running outreach programs to encourage the next generation of students from underrepresented communities to pursue careers in computing fields.

In addition, there are several different organizations within the university for students. To view a complete list of all the opportunities, visit https://union.illinois.edu/get-involved/office-of-registered-organizations.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES TO VISIT

- CS Course Listing – http://cs.illinois.edu/academics/courses
- University of Illinois – www.illinois.edu
- Graduate College – www.grad.illinois.edu/
    - Getting Started-Grad College Quick Guide - http://www.grad.illinois.edu/quick-guide
    - Graduate College Handbook - www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/
    - Graduate Student Petitions and Instructions - http://www.grad.illinois.edu/petitions
    - Grievance Policies - http://www.grad.illinois.edu/policies/gc_grievances
    - Thesis Handbook - http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-dissertation
- Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research – www.research.illinois.edu
- Computational Science and Engineering Concentration – www.cse.illinois.edu/
- Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering – www.ece.illinois.edu/
- International Student and Scholar Services – www.isss.illinois.edu
- Office of Admissions and Records – http://registrar.illinois.edu/
- Office of Minority Student Affairs – www.omsa.illinois.edu/
- Office of Student Financial Aid – www.osfa.illinois.edu/
- Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students - www.admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/
- Graduate Employee Organization *(GEO)* collective bargaining agreement- http://humanresources.illinois.edu/assets/docs/GEO-2017-22-Contract.pdf
- Housing Information – www.housing.illinois.edu/
- Campus Police – https://police.illinois.edu/
- Counseling Center – http://counselingcenter.illinois.edu/
- DRES *(Disability Resource and Educational Services)* – www.disability.illinois.edu
- The Office of Student Conflict Resolution – www.osja.illinois.edu
- Office of Diversity, Equity, and Access – www.eoa.illinois.edu
- Campus Life and Opportunities *(student organizations)* - https://union.illinois.edu/get-involved/office-of-registered-organizations
- Krannert Center for the Performing Arts - www.krannertcenter.com/

ADVICE FROM FELLOW GRADS AND FACULTY

Some of the best advice on how to survive grad school comes from fellow graduate students and faculty *(who at one time were grad students themselves)*. Take some time to read through or explore the websites recommended below.

Fellow Grad Student Advice

- The Ph.D. is not just a MEANS TO AN END. Achieving publications, fellowships, academic job offers, etc. does not make you a scholar.

- Take GOOD classes and TAKE them SERIOUSLY. I have often heard people say, roughly, "classes aren't important/research is important". This is a reflection of an academic culture that rewards certain accomplishments over others; you simply have to recognize this and decide what is important to you. On the one hand, large publication records and working in a "hot" field can yield great perks, easier access to fellowships and jobs, for example. On the other hand, investing yourself in rigorous classes on fundamental topics *(any topic, it doesn't have to be related to your research)* and taught by great professors is the best way to become a more sophisticated thinker, and therefore scholar.

- What you do…how you do it. Where to go…how to get there. How to make yourself really enthusiastic? Do what you really love to do. Whatever industry, whatever people you are working with, cannot make you happier if you are not doing what you want to do. Make that "what" decision first, worry about the corresponding "how" later.

- Victory comes along with the guy who fights to the last second. Whatever challenges you are confronting, fight to the last second - when you are taking your qual, when you are finding your advisor, or when you are working for your paper.

- Keep notes.

- For your research, know what you have done is important, even if what you have done is wrong.

- Day and night or 9 to 5. Different paces could be taken to get the job done. Sometimes I work day and night, whenever I am awake. It is ***fast for a short while***. Do it only when you are in a short push for something. Do it when you really need it – it's unavoidable. Not only because we are indeed running out of time from time to time we need some proof to ourselves that we mean it. Most of the times, I work 9 to 5. I don't want to die early.

- This is a great survival guide for all graduate students to read: http://www.cs.unc.edu/~azuma/hitch4.html

Faculty Advice

- Professor Amir posts his philosophy on research for Ph.D. students at http://reason.cs.illinois.edu/eyal/for-students/paper-path.html.

- Professor Zilles has Advice for Grads section on his webpage at http://www-faculty.cs.uiuc.edu/~zilles/grad_advice.html.

- Professor Hockenmaier recommends the following websites to grad students to gain advice on how to succeed in graduate school.
  - http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~jasonh/advice.html
  - Marie desJardins' paper is a classic and relevant: https://www.csee.umbc.edu/~mariedj/papers/advice.pdf
  - http://www.bates.edu/psychology/files/2017/09/superstars.pdf
  - Randy Pausch's Time Management lecture: http://www.cs.virginia.edu/~robins/Randy/RandyPauschTimeManagement2007.pdf

- CRA-W Grad Cohort Program for female grad students http://cra.org/cra-w/grad-cohort-workshop/ and other resources http://cra.org/cra-w/for-graduate-students/

- Walking home late at night, use the safe-ride program.

- Advice for graduate students who are TAs:
  - TAs are evaluated by their students. Be sure to ask for a copy of the ICES survey to understand the types of questions asked.
  - TAs with high ICES score or nominated by faculty may receive an award and public recognition from the department.
  - Teaching certificates are available for graduate students.
  - Underperforming TAs may not be asked to teach again and therefore may lose their financial support.
  - Volunteer to give a lecture; e.g., if the professor is going off to a conference.
  - If the course has more than one TA, remember you are part of a team and future employers find ability to work with a team important.
  - Remember the GEO sets rules for allowable vacation time.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE 2018-2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

Below are important academic deadlines set by the Graduate College and important deadlines/events that are internal to the Department of Computer Science. In addition to these dates, please visit http://www.grad.illinois.edu/pubs/gradlinks/ for all the graduate student seminar and workshop dates for the upcoming academic year. To view the department's calendar, visit http://illinois.edu/calendar/list/2654.

Fall 2018 Term

August 1-24, 2018	Incoming CS graduate students arrive
August 15-24, 2018	New M.S. students meet with Graduate Academic Office staff
August 15-24, 2018	New Ph.D. students meet with Professor Bailey (walk-in or by appointment)
August 16, 2018	Fall TA and RA appointments begin
August 20-24, 2018	New M.C.S students meet with Coordinator of Graduate programs
August 20-21, 2018	Graduate Academy for College Teaching Workshop
August 22-23, 2018	90 Minute Micro-Teaching Sessions
August 24, 2018	New Graduate Student Orientation from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in 1404 SC Last business day to cancel fall registration by 5 p.m.
August 27, 2018	First Day of fall term Deadline for degree-seeking students to register for Fall class without late charge ($15), by 11:55 PM
August 30, 2018	CS Departmental ice cream social from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. on Siebel Center lawn
September 3, 2018	Campus Closed – Labor Day
September 10, 2018	**ALL** Graduate Students **MUST** be registered as **full-time** for fall term Last day to add a semester course on Web Self-Services without approval
September 15, 2018	Applications for the B.S./M.S. 5-year program applications due
October 1, 2018	Fall qualifying exams begin
October 31, 2018	Fall qualifying exams end
October 15, 2018	Spring 2018 Admission applications due for the Professional M.C.S. and M.S. Bioinformatics
October 17, 2018	B.S./M.S./M.C.S 5-year program Informational Session, 3 p.m., 2405 SC
October 19, 2018	Last day to drop a grad semester course on Web Self-Service
October 22, 2018	TA Self-Evaluation and Spring Planning Document process starts
October 23, 2018	Graduate School Informational Seminar for Seniors and Juniors, 4 p.m., 2405 SC
October 24, 2018	TA Faculty Student Evaluations starts
October 28, 2018	Last day to add name to December Degree list through Web Self-Services
October 29, 2018	Registration for spring term begins
November 1, 2018	Spring Planning Documents are due by end of the day
November 10, 2018	Fall qualifying exam results due from faculty
November 16, 2018	Last day to withdraw from fall term without a "W" grade and without approval Last day to withdraw from current term without a "W" grade Last day to take the final exam for December doctoral degree

November 17-26, 2018	Fall Break
November 19, 2018	Fall qualifying exam results sent to students
November 22-23, 2018	Campus Closed – Thanksgiving Break
November 26, 2018	Classes resume
	Spring qualifying exam statement due to Academic Office
	Last day for doctoral dissertation format check by Academic Office Spring TA contracts sent
November 30, 2018	Spring TA contracts sent – First Round Last day for master's thesis format check by Academic Office
December 7, 2018	Last day to deposit December doctoral dissertations Last day to change grade option for a semester course
December 12, 2018	Instruction ends
December 13, 2018	Reading day Last day to add/drop a semester course with instructor and departmental approval *(a "W" is recorded)* Last day to change a grade of DFR or I for the previous Spring or Summer term to prevent it from being changed to an F by rule *(this does not apply to CS 599)*
December 14, 2018	Last day to deposit December master's thesis
December 14-20, 2018	Final exams
December 15, 2018	Summer/Fall 2015 Admission Applications due *(including petition applications)*
December 24, 2018	December degree conferral *(no commencement)*

Spring 2019 Term

January 11, 2019	Deadline to cancel spring registration for students who need assistance, 5:00 pm
January 13, 2019	Last date to cancel Spring 2019 registration online via Student Self-Service
January 14, 2019	First day of Spring term
January 15, 2019	Summer/Fall 2019 Applications due for the Professional M.C.S. (on-campus) and M.S. Bioinformatics
January 21, 2019	Martin Luther King Day (all-campus holiday)
January 28, 2019	**ALL** Graduate Students **MUST** be registered as **full-time** for spring term Last day to add a semester course without permission
February 11, 2019	Spring qualifying exams begin
March 8, 2019	TA self-evaluations and Fall Planning Document process starts Spring qualifying exams end Graduate students can access their Graduate Student Self-Evaluation Last day to drop a semester course on Web Self-Service
March 10-12, 2019	CS @ Illinois Grad Student Visit weekend *(by invitation only)*
March 15, 2019	Applications for the B.S./M.C.S. 5-year program applications due
	TA Faculty Student Evaluations starts
March 16-24, 2019	Spring break
March 25, 2019	Classes resume
	Spring qualifying exam results due from faculty

March 31, 2019	Last day to add name to the May degree list. Must use Web Self-Services.
April 1, 2019	Registration for Summer and Fall begins
	Graduate students' self-evaluation are due
April 2, 2019	Spring qualifying exam results sent to students
April 2-April 29, 2019	Graduate student evaluations completed by thesis advisor and area committees
April 5, 2019	Last day to take final exam for May doctoral degree
April 8, 2019	Last day for doctoral dissertation format check by Academic Office
April 12, 2019	Last day to withdraw from spring term without a "W" grade Last day to drop a semester course without a "W" grade Last day for master's thesis format check by Academic Office
April 19, 2019	Last day to deposit May doctoral dissertations
April 22, 2019	Fall qualifying exam statement due to the Academic Office
April 26, 2019	Fall TA contacts are sent Last day to deposit May master's thesis
May 1, 2019	Last day of instruction Graduate Student Evaluation feedback sent to students
May 2, 2019	Reading Day Last day to add/drop a semester course with instructor and departmental approval *(a "W" is recorded)* Last day to change a grade of DFR or I for the previous term to prevent it from being changed to an F by rule *(this does not apply to CS 599)*
May 3-10, 2019	Final exams
May 11, 2019	May degree conferral *(commencement)*

Summer 2019 Term – Please check the Graduate College calendar for current information.

May 13, 2019	First day of Summer term (please refer to course catalog for first day of CS summer courses)
May 27, 2019	Memorial Day (all campus holiday)
June 28, 2019	Last day to take final exam for August doctoral degree (5:00 PM)
July 4, 2019	Independence Day (all campus holiday)
July 5, 2019	Last day for doctoral dissertation format check by Academic Office Last day to add name to the August degree list. Must use Web Self-Services.
July 12, 2019	Last day to deposit August doctoral dissertations
	Last day for master's thesis format check by Academic Office
July 19, 2019	Last day to deposit August master's thesis
August 1, 2018	Last day of instruction (ends at noon)
	Reading Day (starting at noon)
August 2-3, 2019	Final exams
August 5, 2019	August degree conferral *(no commencement)*

NEW GRADUATE STUDENT CHECKLIST

Welcome to the Department of Computer Science. Now that you have arrived safely to campus, there are items to complete prior to the start of the term. Please read carefully and complete each task below before August 27, 2018. If you have any questions, please contact Kara MacGregor at kmacgreg@illinois.edu or the Academic Office at 1210 Siebel Center, academic@illinois.edu or (217) 333-4428.

International Students Only

- ☐ **Office of International Student and Scholar Services** - All international students upon arrival should check in at the Office of International Student and Scholar Services *(ISSS)* Office. Check-in during August 17 – August 23, 2018 will be at the Student Dining and Residential Programs (301 E. Gregory, 2nd Floor, Champaign), including weekend check-in on Sunday, August 19, 12:30-5:00 PM. There will be no check-in on Saturday, August 18, 2018. Additional information on check-in hours and orientation activities can be found at: http://isss.illinois.edu/students/incoming/. This should be one of your first stops upon arrival to campus. Check-in at ISSS is a requirement for all incoming international students.

- ☐ **Social Security Number** – Students who hold an RA or TA **MUST** apply for a social security number as quickly as you can. You will be given instructions for this when you check in with ISSS. This only applies to new students with departmental financial aid offers.

All Graduate Students

- ☐ **Academic Office** – All new students upon arrival should check in with Kathy Runck, Room 1210 Siebel Center, 201 N. Goodwin Avenue, Urbana *(our CS academic office)*. She will have a packet of materials for you and instructions on walk-in appointment hour to meet with a faculty/staff advisor.

    - *Ph.D. students*: Professor Brian Bailey, Director of Computer Science Graduate Programs, will have open office hours for incoming PhD students to meet with him. Prof. Bailey is generally available in his office (4222 Siebel Center) after 10 AM. Feel free to stop by his office and see if he is available. If you would like to set up a specific time to meet, please drop him an email <bpbailey@illinois.edu> including a few time slots that you would like to meet him.
    - *M.S. students***:** Daily walk-in appointments are available August 15-25, from 10:00-11:30 AM and 1:00-4:00 PM. M.S. No appointments are necessary.
    - *M.C.S. students***:** Sign-up at https://doodle.com/poll/d8ymy3hfk27r3gx2 for a group advising meeting with CS Graduate Programs Coordinator, Viveka Kudaligama. (If you have already signed up, there is no need to sign up again.)

- ☐ **Payroll** – If you have been awarded an assistantship, please see Kim Bogle in the Business Office, Room 2222 Siebel Center, to fill out an I-9 Employment Eligibility Form. Under federal law, you may not perform any duties associated with your assistantship appointment or be paid by the University until after these forms have been completed. Failure to complete these steps in a timely manner may result in reduction of your salary and could possibly affect any tuition waiver benefits you might receive from your appointment.

Other required forms will be completed on-line in a program called NESSIE. Once the CS business office has entered your name into the payroll system, you will receive an email with further instructions. Once you fill out these forms, make sure and hit the "submit" button.

- ☐ **McKinley Health Center** – Submit health forms *(by mail or in person upon arrival)* to 1109 S. Lincoln Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801.

- ☐ **I-Card** – Each student is issued a permanent photo identification card, which must be retained by the student while registered at the University. You can get this ID by going to the first floor of the Illini Union Bookstore, 809 S. Wright Street *(corner of Wright and John Street)*. More information and extended office hours for Fall move-in can be found at: https://www.icardnet.uillinois.edu/public/urbana-idc.cfm

- ☐ **Parking** – You need to register your car or bicycle if applicable. Your semester fees do include a bus pass, which we suggest you use. Parking meters cost anywhere from $1.00 to more than one dollar per hour and can be difficult to find at certain times. The parking office is located at 1201 W. University Avenue, Urbana. More information is available at http://www.parking.illinois.edu/

- ☐ **UI-Integrate** – Registration for classes. You have been sent an email from our Graduate Admissions Office letting you know your admission has been finalized. When you log in to read this letter in Apply Yourself *(application system)* – towards the bottom, they invite you to review the Quick Guide to Graduate Life. This guide will give instructions on setting up your NetID and Enterprise ID needed for registration. Make sure and register before the university deadline of Monday, August 27th *(11:55 p.m. - first day of classes)*. After this date, you will be charged a late fee to register.

- ☐ **Timetable** – You can view the upcoming semester course offerings and course catalog with descriptions at the following link: https://courses.illinois.edu/schedule

- ☐ **Housing** – Check out the Champaign News-Gazette on-line at: http://www.news-gazette.com/classified. If you are interested in on-campus housing, please visit the University's housing website at: http://www.housing.illinois.edu

- ☐ **Fall Teaching Assistant Orientation** – If you have been assigned a teaching assistantship *(TA)*, you will be required to attend the Graduate Academy for College Teaching presented by the Center for Teaching Excellence scheduled for August 20th and 21st *(Monday and Tuesday)*. You will receive further details with your assignment notification letter. **Attendance at this orientation is mandatory for anyone holding a teaching assistantship on this campus**. First-time Computer Science TAs must also register for CS 591 Teaching Assistant Training (Section TA; CRN 35986) seminar.

- ☐ **Mailboxes** – Your mailbox will be set up in Room 1334 Siebel Center *(right inside the East entry door)*. When you arrive on campus, please be sure to check your mailbox for any important documents and check regularly after that. Mailboxes are arranged in alphabetical order *(by family/last name)*. Personal mail will not be delivered to these boxes.

- ☐ **Paydays** – Your payday is the 16th of each month. If the 16th falls on a Saturday or Sunday, you will receive a check or pay stub the Friday before. If you are receiving an assistantship or qualifying fellowship, a tuition waiver is included which will also waive the service fee, the health service fee, the AFMFA fee and the Library Technology Fee. You will also be provided with vision insurance, dental insurance, and partial payment of the health insurance fee.

- ☐ **Final Credentials** – Make sure to either mail or hand-carry your final sealed credentials to our Graduate Admissions Office upon arrival *(outlined in your official admission letter)*. They are located in Room 204 Coble Hall, 801 S. Wright St., Champaign, IL 61820.
- ☐ **New Grad Orientation/Welcome** - Attend the CS New Grad Orientation Session on Friday, August 24th, 2:00-3:30 PM in 1404 Siebel Center.
- ☐ **Ice Cream Social** - Attend the CS "Meet and Greet" ice cream social on Thursday, August 30th from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., Siebel Center Courtyard. No RSVP needed.
- ☐ **Other campus welcome events** – Please check out CS @ ILLINOIS Newsletter #3 sent out by Kara MacGregor on August 6th.

CS Academic Office Contacts
Quick Reference Guide

1210 Siebel Center 217.333.4197

Process	Contact Person	Email Address
General Grad Questions	Kathy Runck	krunck@illinois.edu
CS 597 Agreement Form	Kathy Runck	krunck@illinois.edu
Thesis Advisor Agreement Form	Kathy Runck	krunck@illinois.edu
Qualifying/Prelim/Final Exam	Maggie Metzger Chappell	mmetz@illinois.edu
Thesis Format Check	Maggie Metzger Chappell	mmetz@illinois.edu
CPT	Kara MacGregor	kmacgreg@illinois.edu
OPT	Maggie Metzger Chappell	mmetz@illinois.edu
I-20 Extensions	Viveka Kudaligama	kudaliga@illinois.edu
Academic Progress/Degree Audit	Viveka Kudaligama	kudaliga@illinois.edu
Graduate Petitions	Viveka Kudaligama Maggie Metzger Chappell	kudaliga@illinois.edu mmetz@illinois.edu
Online Professional Degree Programs	Christine Martinez Desiree Marmon	cmartinz@illinois.edu dmarmon@illinois.edu
Grad Student Evaluation Process	Viveka Kudaligama	kudaliga@illinois.edu
Registration Overrides	Staff	academic@cs.illinois.edu
TA Assignments	Kara MacGregor	kmacgreg@illinois.edu
RA and TA Contracts	Kim Bogle	kbogle@illinois.edu

Frequently Contacted Departments Quick Reference Guide

Department	Email Address / Web Site	Phone Number
Graduate College	grad@illinois.edu	333-0035
International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS)	isss@illinois.edu	333-1303
Student Health Insurance	www.si.illinois.edu	333-0165
Financial Services-Cashier Office	usfscohelp@uillinois.edu	333-2180
University Policy Department	www.police.illinois.edu	333-1216 (911 for Emergencies)
Counseling Center	www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu	333-3704
Office of Admissions & Records	www.registrar.illinois.edu	333-0210