

**CIVIL  
AND MATERIALS  
ENGINEERING  
COLLEGE OF  
ENGINEERING**



**Graduate Student Handbook**

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## Welcome to CME

Karl Rockne, Interim Department Head



The Department of Civil and Materials Engineering (CME) offers programs leading to the Bachelor of Science (BS), Master of Science (MS) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in Civil Engineering, and the Master of Science (MS) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in Materials Engineering.

Civil engineering is a broadly based discipline that encompasses many specialties in the areas of Structural engineering, Mechanics, Construction Materials, Environmental engineering, Water Resources engineering, Geotechnical & Geo-environmental engineering and Transportation engineering. By careful selection of elective courses, a student may choose to specialize in one or two technical areas. The civil engineering curriculum provides students with a strong background in engineering and applied sciences for professional careers in industry or government and for further graduate studies in civil engineering.

The Materials Engineering Graduate Program is an interdisciplinary program designed for students who will be comfortable moving among disciplines, and facilitating interactions among scientists and engineers with different backgrounds. The program is research based, emphasizing hands-on involvement of students. The program is centered in the College of Engineering. A small core of fundamental courses on the chemical, physical, and mechanical properties of materials is offered in the Civil and Materials Engineering Department, but the strength of the program is the variety of specialized materials related courses offered throughout the University.

The Institute for Environmental Science and Policy (IESP) is a cross-campus center organized under the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research at UIC. Its mission is to advance multidisciplinary research and scholarship within the environmental health sciences and engineering, economics, social thought, and policy among UIC's faculty and students, transmit workable solutions for environmental problems to the public sectors, and to prepare the next generation of environmental decision-makers. IESP's core theme is to advance the understanding of how urbanization affects environmental and human well-being.

Chicago is a living transportation laboratory for researchers at the civil and Materials engineering department. Some of their activities are being conducted through interdisciplinary forums at the University Transportation Center (UTC).

## The Civil and Materials Engineering Graduate Office

The Civil and Materials Graduate Office serves graduate students in pursuit of advanced studies at UIC and administers their academic records on behalf of and in cooperation with the Graduate College. Feel free to check with the Graduate Office located in 2095 ERF regarding all academic affairs during your CME MS or PhD studies. Office hours and contacts are listed below:

### Director of Graduate Studies:

Dr. Abolfazl Mohammadian      [kouros@uic.edu](mailto:kouros@uic.edu)      2087 ERF      Phone: 312-996-9840

### Graduate Program Coordinator:

Sara Arevalo  
Office Hours: M-F 9:00am-5pm      [sareva2@uic.edu](mailto:sareva2@uic.edu)      2095 ERF      Phone: 312-996-3411

## **Civil Engineering**

Civil engineering can be loosely described as the application of engineering to civil society. Civil Engineers apply the principles of engineering to meeting society's fundamental needs for housing, transportation, sanitation, and the other necessities of a modern society. As a consequence, civil engineering is a broad-based discipline that encompasses many specialties in the areas of structural engineering and mechanics, environmental engineering, geotechnical engineering, and transportation engineering. The CME Department offers programs that provide advanced education and research opportunities for talented and ambitious students at the post baccalaureate level. In general, graduate students in the CME Department will specialize in one of the major specializations in civil engineering listed above. However, the programs are designed to be flexible enough to permit crossover between the specialties and interdisciplinary programs between civil engineering and other academic specialties relevant to civil engineering problems. Activities in the major specialty areas are described in the brochures below.

[Environmental and Water Resources Brochure](#)

[Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Engineering Brochure](#)

[Structural Engineering Brochure](#)

[Transportation Engineering Brochure](#)

### **Ph.D. in Civil Engineering**

To participate fully in the research and take a leadership role in the development and implementation tasks needed to change society, a student should consider earning a Ph.D. degree. The CME Department offers programs leading to the Ph.D. Degree in Civil Engineering both directly from the B.S. degree and after earning an M.S. degree in a relevant field. The requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Civil Engineering are outlined below.

### **M.S. in Civil Engineering**

The M.S. degree may be appropriate for students who wish to expand their knowledge base in the field beyond the B.S. level, but are not able to commit to the Ph.D. degree program. The CME Department offers M.S. programs, both with and without a thesis requirement. The thesis option provides students with an opportunity to obtain research experience and sometimes obtain funding career advice from research sponsors in the field. The non-thesis option is intended for students who are seeking additional course work knowledge, and can be pursued on a part-time basis. The M.S. degree can be helpful for engineers who wish to obtain a professional license in the field.

## **Civil Engineering Areas of Concentration**

Civil engineering is a broad-based discipline that encompasses many specialties in the areas of structural engineering and mechanics, environmental engineering, geotechnical engineering, and transportation engineering. By careful selection of courses, a student can tailor a program to meet his/her interests and needs.

### **Structural Engineering and Structural Mechanics**

Graduate study and research in structural engineering and structural mechanics includes static and dynamic analysis of linear and nonlinear structures including modal analysis, the behavior of structural materials, and the design of structural systems in concrete and steel. The curriculum provides a strong basis for advanced work in professional practice, research, and teaching. Graduates of the CME program have gone on to very successful careers in private consulting or construction firms, industrial and governmental research laboratories, and in universities. Education in structural engineering and structural mechanics at UIC addresses both current and potential problems. Research is focused on the failure process of concrete structures; bridge rehabilitation and rating; linear and nonlinear finite element analysis; structural dynamics and seismic response of structures; concrete fracture, damage, and creep; microstructures of materials; and other related areas.

### **Environmental Engineering**

Our faculty's research and teaching interests extend beyond traditional engineering bounds such as: surface and groundwater hydrology and hydraulics; evaporation and other interactions between the land surface and the atmosphere; groundwater contamination and transport; geoscience aspects of waste disposal; management of stored and spilled hazardous waste; and other environmental science and water resources problems. Faculty members from several other UIC departments such as Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, Geology, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Chemistry, Biological Sciences, and Mathematics, have interests in related areas. By utilizing various faculty's expertise, the CME Department is able to offer participating students the opportunity to concentrate in a wide variety of topics within the water resources/environmental engineering field.

### **Geotechnical Engineering**

Graduate study in geotechnical and geoenvironmental engineering offered at UIC encompasses classical geotechnical engineering (analyzing and designing foundations, retaining structures, and underground structures), as well as environmental geotechnics (designing waste containment systems and performing remediation studies). The research interests of the faculty address a variety of subjects including environmental geotechnics (e.g. the characterization, containment, remediation, and performance of contaminated materials), earthquake engineering, pavement analysis, and geomechanics.

## **Transportation Engineering**

Teaching and research in transportation engineering is oriented towards methods for the planning, design, and operation of surface transportation systems. Solutions to problems in surface transportation facilities (infrastructure) are sought through the application of optimization and simulation methods, as well as knowledge-based systems. In recent years, the faculty has also engaged in the design and evaluation of intelligent transportation systems.

## **Materials Engineering**

Materials engineering addresses the design, manufacture, and characterization of engineering materials for specific applications. Materials development is an enabling step to the production of advanced engineering devices. Materials selection is a key element in the design, manufacturing, and quality control of structures and devices. Materials, including metals, intermetallics, polymers, ceramics, composites, and electronic materials are critical to modern industrial society. As a consequence, Materials Engineering is also a broad-based discipline that encompasses many specialties and offers many opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. Because the University of Illinois at Chicago does not support a B.S. program in Materials Engineering, interdisciplinary activity is emphasized, and it is normal for students with degrees in relevant subjects other than Materials Engineering to enter the Materials Engineering graduate program. Individualized graduate programs, which make use of the strengths in a student's background are designed. Activities in Materials Engineering are described in the brochure below.

### **Ph.D in Materials Engineering**

To participate fully in the research and take a leadership role in the development and implementation tasks needed to change society, a student should consider earning a Ph.D. degree. The CME Department offers programs leading to the Ph.D. Degree in Materials Engineering both directly from the B.S. degree and after earning an M.S. degree in a relevant field. The requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Materials Engineering are outlined below.

### **M.S. in Materials Engineering**

The M.S. degree may be appropriate for students who wish to expand their knowledge base in the field beyond the B.S. level, but are not able to commit to the Ph.D. degree program. The CME Department offers a research oriented M.S. program in Materials Engineering with a thesis requirement. The thesis provides students with an opportunity to obtain research experience and sometimes obtain funding career advice from research sponsors in the field.

## **Materials Engineering Areas of Concentration**

Materials engineering addresses the design, manufacture, and characterization of engineering materials for specific applications. Materials development is an enabling step to the production of advanced engineering devices. Materials selection is a key element in the design, manufacturing, and quality control of structures and devices. Materials, including metals, intermetallics, polymers, ceramics, composites, and electronic materials are critical to modern industrial society. Through courses and research activities, the College of Engineering offers graduate programs leading to M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in materials engineering.

## **Materials Processing and Characterization**

Crystallography and x-ray diffraction, materials synthesis and processing, processing and properties of ceramic materials, polymer science and engineering, corrosion, principles of deformation processing, welding, structure and properties of composite materials.

## **Mechanics of Solids**

Continuum mechanics, elasticity, viscoelasticity, plasticity, fracture mechanics, wave propagation, mechanics of composite materials, and finite elements.

## **Materials Engineering**

Properties of materials, thermodynamics of materials, experimental fracture mechanics, kinetics of reaction and phase transformation, diffusion phenomena in solids, deformation mechanisms, and dinterfacial phenomena.



## Admission Requirements

Admission to the department is granted to well-prepared and highly motivated students, who satisfy the entrance requirements of the Graduate College and Civil and Materials Engineering Department.

Students with deficiencies in their prior coursework may be admitted on “limited standing”. Such students will be required to take additional courses and/or meet specific academic performance goals.

Applicants are considered on an individual basis. In addition to the Graduate College minimum requirements, applicants must meet the following program requirements:

- *Baccalaureate Field:* An undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering or Materials Engineering, or a degree in a related area with substantial coursework in Civil or Materials Engineering.
- *Grade Point Average:* A cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale based on the last 60 hours of coursework
- *Tests Required:* GRE general, **PhD Only**. A total score of 301 or above on the Revised GRE General Exam (1100 or above on prior). Scores must be submitted via ETS to institution code 1851, Scores are only valid up to 5 years from test date.
- *Minimum English proficiency scores:* TOEFL 80, with sub-scores of Reading 19, Listening 17, Speaking 20, and Writing 21 (iBT Internet-based) or IELTS 6.5, with sub-scores of 6.0 for all four sub-scores. Students may request a TOEFL waiver provided they have completed a minimum of two years of full-time, transferable study at the secondary or collegiate level in a country where English is the primary language as well as the language of instruction, or worked full time in the United States for one year. *Requests for a English waiver must be made in writing to the Office of Graduate Admissions and included with your application materials. Employment related waiver requests must be accompanied by a letter from a supervisor (on company letterhead) certifying that the applicant has English proficiency and verifying the length of employment. Please note that the CME department is not responsible for employment letters not approved by the Admissions office. If your letter is not approved for whatever reason, you must submit a TOEFL or IELTS score to comply with their requirements.*
- **PhD Only Required:**
  - Letters of Recommendation:* Three required
  - Personal Statement:* Required
  - CV/Resume:* Required

**\*ALL DOCUMENTS MUST BE UPLOADED. DO NOT SEND ANY PHYSICAL DOCUMENTS, e.g. PACKAGES VIA UPS, FEDEX, or DHL TO THE CME DEPARTMENT.**

## Limited Standing admission

The Graduate committee may admit only competent applicants, who do not meet all of the above requirements, on a limited standing basis. Graduates of other engineering fields must show considerable evidence of their ability to complete the CME graduate program. This probationary status, depending on individual qualifications and the applicant's academic history, may also require the student to complete deficiency courses. If the undergraduate preparation is inadequate, the student may first develop a background equivalent to an undergraduate degree in Civil and Materials Engineering to improve their chances of admissions.

Students must complete their deficiency courses within the specified time range indicated on their admissions letter and receive grades of A or B in these courses in order to continue in the graduate program. Substitutions for deficiency courses will not be permitted.

Once the limited standing requirements have been met, it is the student's responsibility to request a status change from limited to full. Requests are to be made in the CME Graduate Office as soon as the limited standing conditions have been satisfied.

Applicants who need to take a considerable number of undergraduate CME deficiency courses should consider applying to our undergraduate program in the College of Engineering towards a bachelors in Civil Engineering.

## Non-degree Program

Non-degree status is designed for:

- Those applicants who hold a bachelor's degree and do not wish to pursue a degree but want to take courses for professional or scholarly reasons or personal enrichment.
- Those applicants who do not hold a degree in Civil Engineering and wish to pursue an MS in Civil Engineering.

The Graduate College minimum requirements for non-degree admission are as follows:

Graduate College application - [Apply Online!](#)

**Prior Degrees:** A baccalaureate or its equivalent from an accredited college or university. Non-degree applicants must submit proof of the degree with their application.

**Transcripts:** Required by the CME department to calculate the last 60 hours of the students GPA (2.75 minimum).

**Other Requirements:** International students who require certification of admission (I-20 or IAP-66) sent to the Immigration and Naturalization Service will **not** be admitted as non-degree students.

Permanent Residents who studied outside the United States may be required to still submit a TOEFL or IELTS score.

**Switching from Non-degree to Degree seeking:**

Non-degree students who wish to be considered for a degree program must complete a Graduate Application and submit all missing credentials by the deadline for degree applications. Admission to a degree program is not automatic nor guaranteed. Students admitted as non-degree may not change to degree status in their initial term of non-degree enrollment (for that same term). Only a total of 12 hours of non-degree graduate coursework (A or B only) will be transferable between a non-degree to a degree seeking program.

## **Applying to the CME Graduate Program**

### **Step 1: Applying to the UIC Graduate College**

The UIC Office of Graduate Admissions is responsible for the initial evaluation of all graduate student applications. Your first step is to complete the Graduate College Application.

[On-line Application.](#)

The Civil and Materials Engineering curriculum code for M.S. **Civil Engineering** applicants is **20FS0106MS**, **20FS0106PHD** for [PhD](#) applicants and **20FS0106NDEG** Non-Degree applicants; M.S. **Materials Engineering** applicants is **20FS1434MS** and **20FS1434PhD** for [PhD](#) applicants.

Official transcripts must be uploaded to the UIC system via the graduate upload application link provided by admissions when you complete your application.

·The application fee for graduate and professional applicants (domestic and international) is \$70, effective July 1, 2015 (subject to change).

·The new international credential evaluation fee will be \$30, effective August 1, 2015. This fee is assessed on any applicant presenting international course work requiring an evaluation regardless of residency (subject to change).

**ALL Transcript, Degree and TOEFL/IELTS** related questions should be directed to the Admissions office: 312-996-3450. Please do not contact the CME department directly.

*Please note that the Civil and Materials Department cannot act on your application in any way until you have submitted your application, application fees, transcripts, certificates and official TOEFL/IELTS and GRE scores to the Office of Admissions and Records.*

## Step 2: Declaration and Certification of Finances

International applicants only. If you are an International applicant, you must complete the Declaration and Certification of Finances form and mail it to the Office of Graduate Admissions. This form is **not** required for U.S. applicants. The university considers any student who currently holds a visa of any type or is seeking a visa to be international. Even if you do not require a student (F or J) visa to attend UIC, you are viewed as an international applicant. Most policies that apply to those seeking student visas will apply to holders of other types of visas.

For the university's purposes, this is anyone who currently holds a visa of any type or who is in need of an I-20 or DS-2019.

## Step 3: Submitting supplementary materials to the Civil and Materials Department

A few days after you have submitted your application materials to the UIC Office of Graduate Admissions, links will be sent to you via email to upload the following if required by the program which you are applying for in CME:

- **Letters of Recommendation:** The CME Department requires three letters of recommendation for applicants to the [PhD](#) program. These letters should be written by people who are familiar with your academic and/or professional work and are able to communicate your potential success in a competitive graduate program.
- **Statement of Purpose:** Explaining who you are, what has influenced your career path so far, your professional interests and where you plan to go from here. 2-3 page maximum.
- **Other materials:** Additional information that you would like to provide regarding your candidacy for admission or consideration for financial aid can include research work/publications, etc. These materials are *not required*, but any materials sent will be used to evaluate your application.
- **TOEFL and GRE scores:** should be sent to institution code 1851. We do not use a department code.

## Financial Aid

There are several different forms of financial aid available to incoming graduate students.

- 1) Educational loans, which are applied for through the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) located on the second floor of the Student Services Building (312) 996-3126. These loans are federally guaranteed but based on need. Cost beyond what a student is able to contribute and beyond amounts borrowed under a federally guaranteed loan can often be met with a Supplemental Loan for Students (SLS). For complete details, contact OSFA at the above number. Loans are available for domestic students only.

- 2) Teaching (TA) positions are appointments funded by the CME faculty. As a TA you assist a particular instructor in some aspect of a course he/she is teaching that semester. This may include grading homework, holding office hours for tutoring students, leading review sessions, and presenting material in lecture. These positions are limited in number. This position includes a monthly stipend and a tuition and service fee waiver. The student will be required to pay some student fees. Please note that PhD applicants have precedence over MS students for TA's.
  
- 3) Research (RA) positions are probably the most common type of support for graduate students. This employment entails assisting an investigator with some aspect of his/her research. The appointments are generally 50%, which carries a commitment of 20 hours/week, a stipend, and a tuition and service fee waiver. The student will be required to pay some student fees. Generally these assistantships are awarded to continuing students whom faculty members have come to know through their courses and work on campus. However, a growing number of research assistantships are awarded to incoming students based on their prior work. If you are an especially strong candidate with research experience, you should email individual faculty and inform them of your interest and experience. Please be selective and email only the faculty whose research interests match your own; faculty are generally non-responsive to "broadcast" appeals for financial aid, particularly from students whose background and interests do not match the research of the faculty members. Please also be aware that our faculty receive large volume of emails, **please do not send repeat emails**. Faculty will respond to your email request if they are interested in considering you for an RA position. The yearly contract term runs for 9 months. Please note that PhD applicants have precedence over MS students for RA's.
  
4. Tuition and Fee waivers - A limited number are available on a competitive basis for graduate students. These cover the cost of UIC tuition (including non-resident tuition) and certain fees per term only. Selection is based on the students file and academic performance. These waivers are usually not awarded until the semester begins. If interested and wish to be put on the waiver list, please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator. Please note that PhD applicants have precedence over MS students for waivers.

## Academic Advising

Academic advising is mandatory for both MS and PhD students during the Spring and Fall terms. The Graduate Program Coordinator will email all current students the week before advising week. Students must meet with their assigned advisor and obtain approval of next terms courses before registration. The Graduate advising form must be completed and signed by the advisor approving courses.

## **Transferring Credit**

*Can I transfer credit towards my UIC graduate degree in Civil and Materials Engineering?*

Consideration is given to the transfer of credit in three categories:

- Previous graduate work for which a degree was not awarded.
- Graduate work completed elsewhere after admission to UIC and for which a degree was not awarded. Students considering taking graduate work elsewhere during a leave of absence should consult their advisor and Director of Graduate Studies about such plans and the courses that may be considered for transfer.
- Graduate work completed in the senior year at UIC that was not applied to the baccalaureate.

To be considered for transfer, graduate work must have been completed in an accredited institution approved by one of the regional accreditation associations or by the agencies recognized by the Council on Post-Secondary Education, and must meet the quality and content standards of courses offered at UIC.

For probation and graduation purposes, transfer credit is not computed in the cumulative grade point average or graduate degree GPA unless such credit was earned in courses taken at UIC.

### **Procedures**

*A Graduate Petition for Transfer Credit Toward an Advanced Degree* is required for all transfers of credit except the 32 hours of credit for a prior master's degree (see below). The graduate program evaluates the student's petition and makes a recommendation to the Graduate College. The petition should show the courses recommended for transfer by the graduate program and the number of semester hours of credit received. Students must attach to the petition an original transcript showing grades if courses were not taken at UIC, and a certification from the registrar or college dean of the applicable institution stating that the courses are graduate-level and were not used toward fulfillment of the requirements for a degree if not self-evident from the transcript itself.

### *Credit for Prior Master's Degree*

Doctoral candidates who have previously earned a master's degree or its equivalent approved by one of the regional accreditation associations or by the agencies recognized by the Council on Post-Secondary Education may be granted 32 semester hours of credit toward the doctoral degree if approved by the program and the Graduate College. The 32 hours are subtracted from the total hours required for the PhD. The 32 hours are not counted toward the maximum allowed transfer credit limit or computed in the cumulative GPA or degree GPA. A General

Graduate Petition is required, along with a copy of the student's MS transcript with specification on the transcript that the MS was awarded.

## **Petitions**

*What are petitions used for?*

Students may petition the Dean of the Graduate College for exceptions to certain college regulations, but may do so only after consulting with their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies, whose recommendations must appear on the petition. Petition forms may be obtained from the Graduate College and from the graduate program office and must be accompanied by a full explanation of the circumstances and any appropriate forms and supporting documents required for processing a requested change. ***Petitions should be filed within 30 days*** from the time an individual knows, or reasonably should have known, that an occurrence has affected his or her status.

The CME department will severely restrict student petitions. Unless clearly explained by both the student and his/her advisor, the department will not routinely grant petitions.

Although there are some "acceptable" petitions such as one-time zero-hour registration, other petitions including degree transfer and extension of academic probation will no longer be automatically granted.

## **Probation**

*What does it mean if I am on academic probation?*

Academic probation is the Graduate College's mechanism for warning students that their GPA has fallen below the minimum standard of 3.0. If you are placed on probation, you have two terms of enrollment after the term in which your GPA falls below 3.0 to remove yourself from probation. If you fail to raise your average to 3.0 or to otherwise fulfill the terms of your probation within the deadlines you will be dismissed from the university.

Students may not hold graduate appointments such as GA, TA, or RA or receive tuition and service fee waivers if they are currently on academic probation. Since losing this option for financial support may cause a great deal of hardship or high loan amounts, it is very advisable to maintain your GPA well above 3.0/4.0.

## Leave of Absence

*What if I need to take a leave of absence?*

Except for international students whose visas require continuous registration, and doctoral students who have passed their preliminary exams, graduate degree-seeking students may take one semester (fall or spring) plus the summer session off without formal leave approval from the Graduate College. Degree students who desire to take an additional consecutive semester off, for a total maximum of three consecutive terms, must file a *Graduate Petition for Leave of Absence* by the tenth day of the semester for which leave is requested.

International students who hold an F-1, J-1, A-1, A-2, or H-1 visa must register each fall and spring semester due to visa requirements. Such students must file a *Graduate Petition for Leave of Absence* for any fall or spring semester they wish to take off, obtaining written authorization on the petition from the Office of International Services. If remaining in the country, such leaves are rarely granted by that office.

Upon receipt of a leave of absence petition from the department/program, the Graduate College will automatically approve the first leave, up to one year maximum. At least one term as a graduate degree student must be completed before being eligible for a leave. After returning to the program from an approved leave, a second leave is not automatic and will only be granted by the Graduate College for medical or other extraordinary reasons.

Leave will not be granted to doctoral candidates who have passed the preliminary exam, except for students whose programs require a formal off-campus activity (e.g., internship), or for documented medical or other extraordinary reasons. If this situation occurs, a *Graduate Petition for Leave of Absence* must be submitted to the Graduate College, and is not automatic.

Non-degree students are not eligible for a leave of absence.

Time spent on leave approved by the department and the Graduate College does not count towards the time to complete the degree.

Students who have already registered for the term for which leave is requested must complete either a *Cancellation of Registration* before the first day of the term, or a *University Withdrawal*



by the tenth day of the semester (fifth day in summer). Students are responsible for filing the appropriate forms and resultant charges; the leave of absence petition itself does not alter existing registration.

Students who are on an approved leave of absence will not be covered by the health and personal accident insurance plan until they return to active registration.

Petition forms may be obtained from the Graduate College, 606 University Hall, or from the CME graduate program office.

## **ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY: QUALIFYING AND PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS (PhD Only)**

### Qualifying Exam

Qualifying Exam: The PhD-seeking student is expected to attempt and pass the written and oral exam (referred to as qualifying exam) by the end of their 3<sup>rd</sup> semester at UIC (5<sup>th</sup> semester for direct PhD without MS).

### **NEW Qualifying Exam as of Spring 2016:**

The qualifying exam will be implemented from January 2016 and students (with MS degree) who started their PhD studies in Fall 2014 should take the test in January 2016.

- With the approval of student's advisory committee, part time students can take the test later.
- Each program will form a "qualifying exam sub-committee" involving all faculty in that program.
  - The sub-committee will choose two courses for the general section of the exam and will prepare/seek questions of the two selected topics for the program.
  - For each student, the program sub-committee will appoint 3 faculty (including the advisor) to serve as the exam committee, to design the specialized section of the qualifying exam, and to conduct the oral part of the exam. The committee will be chaired by a faculty other than the candidate's advisor. The three member committee could involve faculty from other departments.

- The grading will be in Pass/Fail format.
- There will be an oral exam that will take place about one week after the written part is completed. The oral exam will be 1 to 2 hours long.
- If the candidate fails the written part, no oral exam will be scheduled and the student will have one more chance to take the test in the following semester.
- Each program should submit the list of PhD students who are required to take the qualifying exam in January to graduate program coordinator by early November.
- The exam for the first group of students who will be taking the qualifying exam in January will be scheduled in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January (2<sup>nd</sup> week of classes). · The next exam (for those started those students who may fail the qualifying exam in January and wish to retake it) will take place during the “finals week” in May.

#### Preliminary Exam

- a) The preliminary exam committee consists of 5 faculty members. A Committee Recommendation Form must be submitted to the Graduate College three weeks prior to the exam. Please visit: <http://grad.uic.edu/graduate-student-forms> to obtain a copy of the form. The committee must be approved by the Graduate College on the recommendation of the student’s department or program. Specific requirements for the committee include:
- at least 3 CME faculty, full members.
  - Chairperson of the committee must be a full member of the UIC Graduate College faculty.
  - It is recommended at least one faculty must come from outside of the CME department or UIC.
  - At least 2 faculty must be tenured.
  - preferably, the preliminary exam committee will remain the same and become the final dissertation defense committee

The Examination Report Form must be completed, signed, and dated by your committee, then submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Graduate College within two business days of your preliminary exam. The committee vote is “pass” or “fail.” A candidate cannot be passed if more than one vote of “fail” is reported.

## Thesis Defense, MS & PhD

Provided that the student has completed all graduation requirements and is in good academic standing, he or she is now ready to defend their thesis before a committee.

The student must submit a copy of his or her thesis to each member of the thesis defense committee prior to the defense date. If requested, the defense can be open to the academic community of the university and be publicly announced one week prior to its occurrence. Students are responsible for e-mailing the Graduate Program Coordinator at least one week prior to the defense date with the announcement (date, time, location, advisor) and abstract. The defense announcement will be distributed to the students and faculty one week prior to the presentation date.

The thesis committee must be approved by the Graduate College on the recommendation of the student's department or program. The committee consists of at least three persons for MS and five for PhD. Please refer to the **Committee Recommendation Form** for membership and tenure-ship requirements. If an outside member is required, e.g. outside of the department, academic unit, or outside the university, the member must demonstrate equivalent academic standards and his or her curriculum vitae must accompany the Committee Recommendation Form.

Please visit <http://grad.uic.edu/> to download a copy of the form. This form must be submitted to the Graduate College three weeks prior to the thesis defense. It must be typed (handwritten versions will not be accepted) and must be signed by your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies before it is sent to the Graduate College for approval. The thesis title may not exceed 105 characters, including spaces, and may not include any abbreviations. The thesis title on the committee recommendation form must match the title of the thesis that is submitted.

The Graduate College and the Graduate Program Coordinator will provide the examination report after your committee has been approved. The examination report form must be completed, signed, and dated by every member of your committee. A candidate cannot be passed if more than one vote of "fail" is reported. The completed examination report form must be submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Graduate College within two business days of the thesis defense. The committee must approve the thesis upon the completion of the defense.

The Graduate College Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) guidelines and the Thesis Manual can be found at <http://grad.uic.edu/electronic-thesisdissertation> and will assist you in preparing and submitting your thesis. Following your defense, the final version of your thesis must be reviewed by your advisor and the Graduate Program Coordinator before it is submitted to the Graduate College through the ETD

Submission System. Master's students and PhD students are required to submit a bonded copy of their thesis to the Graduate Program Coordinator to be placed in the CME Library.

## GRADUATION PROCEDURE

In order to graduate you must file your intent to graduate on the my.uic.edu page within the first 2 weeks of the semester you wish to graduate (1<sup>st</sup> week in summer). Please see <http://grad.uic.edu/graduation-deadlines> for complete information. Refer to the Graduate College website for thesis and graduation deadlines.

**Thesis bound students:** You must also submit a copy of your dissertation to the Graduate College through the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) submission system. One additional bounded copy of the thesis or dissertation must be delivered to the Civil and Materials Engineering Department. For further information regarding the submission of your thesis/dissertation to the Graduate College, please visit <http://grad.uic.edu/electronic-thesisdissertation>.

## PROGRAM TRANSFER

Transfer within the Graduate College (student must initiate the transfer request from current department by filling out a change of graduate program form and seeking department approval):

- Students who wish to transfer from their current program to the CME MS or PhD program, must submit the following documents to the CME Program Coordinator, eight weeks prior to the start of semester that the student is applying for:
  - Personal statement (PhD Only)
  - Three letters of recommendation (PhD Only)
  - CV (PhD Only)
  - Letter of financial support from a research advisor or self-funded letter (PhD Only)
  - GRE scores (within 5 years) (PhD Only)
  - Copy of file from current program at UIC (MS & PhD)
  
- Current students in the CME department who wish to transfer from the MS program to the PhD program must submit the following:
  - Personal statement
  - Three letters of recommendation
  - CV continued on next page....

- GRE Scores (within 5 years)
- Letter of financial support from a research advisor or self-funded letter

## **ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Admission**

*Am I eligible for admission to your program?*

Please go over the "Admission" section for our admission requirements. Due to high volume of such requests, we do not prescreen applicants to help them determine if they are qualified to apply to our program.

### **Advisors**

*Who is my advisor?*

When you are recommended for admission at UIC, a temporary advisor will be appointed to you in order to assist you in choosing your first semester classes. As you become better acquainted with the department and its faculty, you may change to a different advisor if your area of concentration changes. The thesis advisor may also serve as the academic advisor. Should you change advisors at any time during your studies, please notify the Graduate Program Coordinator. Your advisor will provide many types of support, including recommending courses, approving schedules, and providing contacts with other areas of the university. As you choose an academic area of concentration, it may be useful to choose an advisor closely associated with this area. This advisor must be a member of the CME faculty.

### **Registration**

*What courses are offered during the upcoming semester?*

A listing of upcoming CME courses is available in the CME office, or on the Schedule of Classes web site: [https://ossswebcs.admin.uillinois.edu/portal\\_uic/classsch.html](https://ossswebcs.admin.uillinois.edu/portal_uic/classsch.html)

*How do I register?*

Detailed instructions are on the Registrar's website at <http://registrar.uic.edu>. Students should consult with their advisor in order to choose the appropriate schedule. The main method to register is through the my.UIC student portal at <http://my.uic.edu>.

### **Courses**

### *How do I select my courses?*

Select your courses by referring to the required course list and consulting with your advisor. It is generally advisable to finish most of your coursework in your first years in the program. Also, since most courses are not offered every semester, and many not be offered every year, careful planning is required to ensure progress towards your anticipated degree.

### *What if I don't have a prerequisite for a course but want to take it?*

In general, prerequisites should be taken for every course. However, since many graduate students come from different schools, provisions are made for substituting equivalent courses. Ask your advisor or the course instructor about registering for courses without the UIC prerequisites. If you are not sure whether your background has prepared you sufficiently for a particular course, the best thing to do is to ask the opinion of the instructor. In some cases they may be able to recommend materials to help you overcome deficiencies before the semester begins.

### *What is the average course load for a CME graduate student?*

Full-time students usually enroll for 12 to 16 credit hours each semester. In exceptional cases, the advisor and Director of Graduate Studies may permit a student to enroll for up to 20 hours. Registration for more than 20 hours is not recommended. Full-time load is defined by the university as registration of 9 hours.

Tuition and service fee waiver-holders must register for at least 12 hours of credit per fall and spring semester and 6 hours of credit per summer semester as long as they hold the award.

Assistantship-holders with a 50% appointment must register for at least 8 hours of credit each semester, excluding summer. There are no tuition and service fee waiver benefits for students employed with less than 25% or more than 67% appointment. Assistants who qualify for a Spring tuition and service fee waiver automatically receive a summer waiver if registered in at least 3 hours in summer unless they hold a summer appointment above 67%. Note that 8 hours of registration (fall and spring) with an assistantship will satisfy the requirements of the assistantship and waiver, but will not qualify as being full-time. 9 or more hours of registration is considered full time, with or without an assistantship.

International Students: If on a student visa (F-1 or J-1), full time for graduate students is defined as registration in 9 hours in Fall and Spring Semesters and 5 hours in Summer, although registration for Summer is optional in most situations. International students are required to register for more than 9 hours (5 in Summer) for a number of reasons, such as, but not limited to:

- You hold a fellowship from the Graduate College (12 hours, 6 in Summer).
- You hold a Graduate College tuition and service fee waiver without an assistantship (12 hours, 6 in Summer).

International students with a 50% assistantship are required to register for a minimum of 8 credit hours and those with anything less than a 50% assistantship are required to register for a minimum of 9 hours of credit.

Students on an F-1 visa may be eligible to register for zero hours if all requirements are complete except for project or thesis, and a petition must be submitted to the Graduate College and approved. The petition must be endorsed by the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies as well as the Office of International Services.

**Note for Student Visa Holders:** Current SEVIS (federal immigration) regulations do not allow an international student on a student visa to register for more than zero (0) hours in a subsequent term if the student was registered for zero (0) hours previously, unless the student is admitted into a different program. This precludes accepting an assistantship or tuition waiver for future terms after a zero-hour registration occurs. The rationale for the regulation is that zero-hour registration is allowed for students on a visa only if all requirements other than the thesis or master's project are completed, and registration for more than zero hours indicates that they did not originally qualify, and, are thus out of status. Unfortunately, flexibility to take a course for intellectual development or to register for hours to qualify for an assistantship or tuition waiver after zero hour registration does not exist currently. Consult with the Office of International Services (OIS) if there is a question on this issue.

*What is zero hour registration?*

This is a special circumstance which allows doctoral students to remain enrolled at UIC while being applied the most minimal tuition. It applies only to students who have fulfilled all of their requirements except defending the dissertation, and is contingent upon continued satisfactory progress. MS students who have finished all coursework but are still completing the thesis do

not have to maintain registration unless registration is required by immigration regulations. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they have completed all requirements prior to attempting to register for zero hours.

#### *How do I add or drop a course?*

Courses may be added to your schedule through the last day of the second week of the Fall or Spring semesters, or the last day of the first week during the Summer session. Courses may be dropped without academic penalty by this same deadline. To initiate an add or drop after this date, visit the departmental office for the course in question and obtain a Registration Revision Form. Adding a course during this time requires the signature of the instructor or other suitable authorization as determined by that department. Please note that dropping a course after the registration deadline will not be pro-rate your tuition bill unless you withdraw from the university. Please refer to the Pro Rata Refund Schedule for more information.

If you hold a fellowship, assistantship, tuition and service fee waiver, or student visa, you must maintain the required minimum number of credit hours throughout the semester, or you risk losing your assistance and/or visa.

#### *How do I audit a course?*

Graduate students, as well as persons not registered at the University of Illinois at Chicago, may audit courses with the permission of the instructor and Dean of the college offering the course (not the Graduate College). The privilege of attending class as an auditor (visitor) is granted on or after the first day of instruction and only by the instructor of the class with the approval of the dean of the college concerned. Visitor permit forms may be obtained from the Office of Registration and Records no later than the tenth day of the semester (fifth day of summer session). Visitors are not permitted in laboratory, military science, or physical education classes nor are visitors allowed to write an examination (including a proficiency examination) for course credit or to participate in class activities. A \$15 fee is charged for the privilege of visiting/auditing a class. A full-time registered student or a person who is a permanent support staff employee of the university does not pay the visitor fee.

#### **Bank Statement**

*I am an international student; should I send the bank and financial statement now?*



No, it is not necessary to submit these materials until you are admitted. They are needed for official admission if the department admits you. However, the Office of Graduate Admissions will continue to send reminder notifications that these documents are missing, you can ignore them. If you receive admission, they need to be turned in to the Office of Graduate Admissions immediately if you plan to attend the university. Students who receive an assistantship must also complete the Declaration of Finances form and submit any additional bank statements if requested by OIS.

### **I-20**

*When will I get my I-20?*

The I-20 will be processed about 3 weeks after all the documents required by Office of Graduate Admissions are received. They are sent by regular mail to your current address. The department does not express mail the I-20s. If you would like a friend or family member to collect it for you, contact the Office of International Services to make special arrangements. All inquiries regarding I-20's should be directed to the Office of International Services and not the CME department.

*I have had no response from the Office of International Services (OIS) and I eagerly need my I-20, can the CME department help Expedite the issuance of it?*

Unfortunately, the CME department has NO authority to expedite any government documents issued by the Office of International Services. During the month of May/June, OIS is the busiest. Please be patient as many International students have the same concerns as you. Again, CME cannot expedite the issuance of I-20's. Any concerns should be strictly directed to OIS.

### **Defer**

*I did not attend UIC in the term I originally applied for, can I skip this term and begin the next?*

If you do not attend in the term you applied for, you cannot register the following term unless you previously deferred your admissions to that specific term. If you did not defer, you will need to RE-APPLY for admissions. Please note that deferring is NOT an option for Non-Degree admitted students.

### **Residency**

*I am an International student currently residing or attending another college in the United States, do I complete the international application if I plan to transfer to UIC or do I apply as domestic student?*

All applicants who hold a VISA regardless of attending another US school or living in the US, must apply and meet the International Deadlines for the admissions application process (Feb. 15th for the Fall term and July 15th for the Spring) There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.