

Requirements & Procedures for the Masters of Science Degree

The Master of Science (MS) degree in Computer Engineering requires at least 24 regular course credits plus up to 6 credits of CS/ECE 8999 (Master's Thesis Research) for a total of 30 credits. Degree requirements set by the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) are given in the SEAS Graduate Record and are additional to the following CpE graduate program requirements.

By the end of the first semester in the Program, the student in consultation with the advisor must develop and submit a Distribution Course Form to the CpE Graduate Director. When properly completed and approved, the Distribution Course Form outlines the courses used to meet the curriculum requirements for that student's degree. A revised Distribution Course Form must be submitted should the course curriculum change. The Form is available from the Graduate Curriculum Website.

The time limit for degree completion after entering the Masters of Science program is five years although the average time for completion is two years. Graduation procedures are outlined in detail on the SEAS Graduate website.

500-Level and Independent Study

No more than six credits of 5000-level courses can be applied to a graduate degree. Also, no more than one Independent Study course (three credits) may be applied towards an MS degree.

Transfer Credit

Subject to approval from the CpE Graduate Director, MS candidates may transfer a maximum of six credits of approved graduate courses into the program. Students may only transfer courses in which they earned a grade of B or better. Requests for transfer credit should be accompanied by a Distribution Course Form and a List of Courses Completed (available on CpE Graduate Website).

English Language Proficiency

All new graduate students whose native language is not English are tested for English proficiency near the beginning of their first semester at UVa. All non-native speakers of English must take the Virginia Language Proficiency Exam (UVELP) administered by the Center for American English Language and Culture. If the student is being appointed to a Graduate Teaching Assistant position (CS 8897, CS 9897, ECE 8897, ECE 9897), he/she will take the SPEAK test instead. Portions of the Virginia Language Proficiency Exam and the SPEAK Test are merged into a single composite exam.

The exam is used to assess the students English skills and to place the student in the appropriate ESL course administered by the Center for American English Language and Culture. The student must meet the minimum requirements in English prior to defending the thesis.

Thesis Requirements

A thesis describing research of publishable quality is expected of all MS students. In this spirit, at least one paper submission to a refereed conference/journal is required of all MS candidates. The research and development of the thesis will be directed by the student's advisor or advisory committee. Once the thesis has been written and approved by the advisor, a public oral defense is required. The format of the oral defense is a presentation by the student (maximum 30 minutes) followed by a question and answer period. This defense is open to the public.

The examination committee for the MS oral defense consists of a minimum of three faculty members. The chair of the committee cannot be the advisor and must be from either the CS or ECE Department. This examining committee is selected by the student and the advisor and approved by the CpE Graduate Committee Chair.

Assessment Requirements

Outcome assessment for Master of Science degree programs in SEAS is based on the thesis and its oral defense. The assessment form for the MS thesis must be submitted with the Report on Final Examination and Thesis and Dissertation Assessment forms. The assessment form is prepared by the student with the help of the Graduate Coordinator and is given to the chair of the examining committee at the beginning of the examination and defense.