



## **CEE Graduate Studies Policy**

**(Effective: August 16, 2013; Last Revised June 2017)**

Mississippi State University's Bagley College of Engineering offers programs of study leading to Masters and Doctoral degrees in Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) with specializations in the following areas:

- Construction Engineering and Management
- Construction Materials Engineering
- Environmental Engineering
- Geotechnical Engineering
- Structural Engineering
- Transportation Engineering
- Water Resources Engineering

The basic requirements for graduate studies and degrees are established by Mississippi State University (MSU) and are found in the Graduate Bulletin. Additional requirements and procedures established by the CEE Faculty are described below. Where there is a conflict, the Bulletin takes precedence.

For further information on CEE studies, see the departmental web site:

<http://www.cee.msstate.edu>

or email the graduate coordinator:

[grad-coordinator@cee.msstate.edu](mailto:grad-coordinator@cee.msstate.edu)

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## ADMISSION

Students are admitted to graduate study in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) upon approval of the Mississippi State University (MSU) Office of Graduate School (OGS), the Departmental Graduate Coordinator, and the Department's Graduate Faculty. Admission is based on the criteria listed below. Application forms and instructions are available at the website of the Office of the Graduate School ([www.grad.msstate.edu](http://www.grad.msstate.edu)).

### Regular Admission

Applicants meeting the following requirements are eligible for regular admission:

1. Possess qualifications and interests indicating the applicant will be successful in the MSU CEE graduate program.
2. Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from a program accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET ([www.ABET.org](http://www.ABET.org)) and includes core competency in the sub-discipline in which the student will focus their graduate studies. Regular admission for a student from a non-accredited CE program requires an evaluation and recommendation by the applicant's sub-discipline selection committee.
3. For Ph.D. students a Master's degree Civil Engineering from a program accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET ([www.ABET.org](http://www.ABET.org)).
4. Minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale as computed for courses that comprise the last two academic years of the degree program, or a minimum of 3.0 on graduate degree(s) as appropriate
5. GRE for all applicants but this may be optional for those with an ABET-accredited civil engineering degree program.
6. International students must obtain a minimum TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 550 (written test, PBT), 213 (computer-based test, CBT) or 79 IBT. As an alternative, an international student may take the IELTS (International English Language Testing Systems) exam on which they must obtain a minimum score of 6.5.
7. Be accepted by a faculty member in their sub-discipline area willing to serve as their major professor.

### Contingent Admission

Applicants failing to meet the requirements for regular admission may be considered for contingent admission. Contingent admission may be granted under the following conditions:

1. Applicants with Civil Engineering undergraduate degree or appropriate undergraduate degrees in other engineering disciplines, mathematics, or science who have undergraduate GPA between 2.75 to 3.0 may be admitted on contingent status provided they satisfy the TOEFL/IELTS criteria.

- a. If a Masters student is recommended for contingent admission, the faculty member sponsoring the student (serving as their major professor) would prepare a list of background and prerequisite courses and assemble a committee consisting of sub-discipline faculty and/or potential committee members (minimum of three). The committee would then review the contingencies and if approved by majority vote submit them (on a POS continuation form along with their signatures) with the signed application flow chart. The contingencies for that student would then be specified to the graduate school along with the acceptance recommendation.
    - b. Exceptions would require a memo from the faculty member accepting the signature for approval by the graduate coordinator and department head. An example could be a recommendation for regular admission for an applicant with a CE degree but not from an accredited university.
  2. Ph.D. students without a Masters in Civil Engineering may be granted contingent admission.
    - a. If the B.S. is not in CE, then the same contingency process as for the M.S. contingent admission would apply
    - b. If the M.S. is not in CE or the student is admitted without a M.S. (a direct admit), then the student would be required to complete 42 hours of coursework total (24 equivalent M.S. + 18 hours in doctoral studies) in addition to 20 research hours (62 hours total). Of these the 24 hours equivalent to M.S. would have the same minimum and maximum hour requirements as stipulated for the thesis M.S. student (excluding research hours; see tables below under M.S. requirements).
    - c. If a Ph.D. student with a Masters that is not in CE is recommended for contingent admission, the faculty member sponsoring the student (serving as their major professor) would evaluate the applicant's transcripts and where appropriate prepare a list of courses that could be transferred or substituted as part of the 24 hours M.S. equivalent requirement. The faculty member would assemble a committee consisting of sub-discipline faculty and/or potential committee members (minimum of three). The committee would then review the recommendations and if approved by majority vote submit them as exceptions (see attached form). Exceptions would require a memo from the faculty member accepting the signature for approval by the graduate coordinator and department head. Any exceptions for the 12 hours of CE courses would require a memo from the faculty member requesting approval through the graduate coordinator and department head to the Dean.
  3. To be admitted under a contingent status the GRE is required. The GRE score must be competitive, as determined by the applicant's sub-discipline selection committee
  4. Students meeting the requirements above but with TOEFL/IELTS scores below the Departmental Minimum may be admitted on a contingent status but must satisfy the
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English as a Second Language (ESL) course requirement(s) as specified in the graduate bulletin.

5. To be removed from contingent status, the student must successfully complete the specified requirements defined by their graduate committee with a grade of B or better for each course.
6. Upon completion of the specified requirements, removal of the student from the contingent status will be documented in the department through a letter by the major adviser co-signed by the department graduate coordinator.
7. Undergraduate sub-discipline prerequisite courses may not be used for graduate credit.
8. Students that do not satisfy the stipulations for removal from contingent status in a timely manner will be dismissed from the graduate program.
9. While in the contingent status, a student is eligible to hold a graduate assistantship but must, within the first award enrollment period, satisfy regular admission requirements. An assistantship award will be terminated if these requirements are not met.

### **Provisional Admission**

Applicants failing to meet the requirements for regular admission may be considered for provisional admission. Provisional admission may be granted under the following conditions:

1. Master's applicants failing to meet the undergraduate minimum grade point average (3.0) may be admitted to a degree program as a provisional student if approved by the graduate coordinator. The minimum acceptable undergraduate grade point average for admission as a provisional student is 2.5 on a 4.0 scale when computed for courses that comprise the last two academic years of the degree program. To be removed from provisional status, the student must earn a 3.0 GPA or higher on the first nine graduate credit hours applicable to their program of study taken at MSU. Courses with an S grade, transfer credits, or credits earned while in Unclassified status cannot be used to satisfy this requirement.
2. Upon completion of the specified requirements, removal of the student from the provisional status will be reported to OGS through a letter by the major adviser co-signed by the department graduate coordinator.
3. Students that do not satisfy the stipulations for removal from provisional status in a timely manner will be dismissed from graduate study. A student cannot graduate while in a provisional status.
4. While in the provisional status, a student is not eligible to hold a graduate assistantship.

### **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Once admitted to the CEE graduate program, a student who fails to maintain a satisfactory academic record will be considered to be on academic probation. A graduate GPA will be computed for each student at the end of each semester. The student's graduate GPA is the average of all graduate courses attempted while in the CEE graduate program.

1. A student whose graduate GPA drops below 3.0 is automatically on academic probation.
2. A student who obtains a grade below B on a prerequisite course is automatically on academic probation.

To be removed from academic probation, the student, by the completion of the next nine credit hours of progress toward the degree, must:

1. Achieve a graduate GPA of 3.0 or above.
2. Earn a grade of B or above on any prerequisite core of which a grade lower than B was previously obtained before the subsequent course(s) may be taken.

At the beginning of each semester CEE Department will evaluate the records of all CEE graduate students currently on probation, as well as students making a grade of D, F, or U during the previous semester. Such students may be dismissed from the CEE graduate program if:

1. The student was admitted on contingent status due to deficiencies in prerequisite coursework and fails to make satisfactory progress toward completion of prerequisites.
2. The student was admitted on provisional status and makes less than a B in completion of the first 9 hours of graduate studies.
3. The student is on academic probation and is unable to meet all requirements for good academic standing by the completion of the next nine credit hours of progress toward the degree.
4. The student makes a grade of D or F in a graduate or undergraduate course attempted while in the CEE graduate program.
5. The student receives a grade of U (unsatisfactory) in a course for which a grade of S (satisfactory) is required.

A graduate student cannot graduate with:

- A GPA lower than 3.00 for all courses attempted for graduate credit after admission to a particular degree program, or
- A grade of less than a C on the program of study, or
- More than 6 credit hours of C grades earned for all courses since admission to the program, including those outside the program of study, or
- An I grade on his/her transcript (per Graduate Council March 25, 2011).

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### Master of Science (MS)

1. Masters students may elect either the thesis or non-thesis option. Course requirements for each are tabulated below.

	Course hours required	Minimum research hours	Total
Thesis Option	24	6	30
Non-Thesis Option	33	0	33

2. Of the total course requirements, the specific course requirements for Civil Engineering, full graduate (7000 and/or 8000 level classes), engineering and research are tabulated below.

	Of the total, the minimum number of course hours in:				
	CE	CE Full Graduate	Full graduate	Engineering	Research (CE 8000)
Thesis Option	12	9	12	15	6
Non-Thesis Option	18	12	15		

3. In addition, there are a maximum number of specific courses allowed on the program of study:

	Maximum number of course hours in:			
	Business	7000	unclassified	Transfers
Thesis Option	6	6	9	9
Non-Thesis Option	6	6	9	9

4. Thesis students are expected to fully prepare and/or submit peer reviewed journal or conference paper
5. Non-thesis students may select from two options for an exit examination:

- a. Project and examination - a project in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements. A written report on the project in thesis format will be submitted and a formal oral presentation of the work will be made to the committee. The committee will inquisitively review the work with the student during the presentation. The report must be approved by the committee and oral examination successfully completed.
  - b. Examination only - a comprehensive examination over all graduate coursework and core competency areas will be successfully completed. The format and content of the exam is at the discretion of the graduate committee.
6. The time limit on credits earned that can be accepted toward fulfilling the requirements for a Master of Science degree is eight years. The years are counted from the semester and year of admission. Example: If a master's student was admitted in Spring 2015, the student's time expires in Fall 2022. Extensions may be requested using forms on the Graduate School website under Other Student Forms.  
<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>.
7. Transfer and Sharing of Credit Hours: As approved by the student's committee, a total of 9 credit hours can be shared between two MSU degrees in which a student is enrolled concurrently. For those cases other than dual degrees, a total of 9 credit hours can be shared or transferred to a student's program of study. The two potential sources of credit hours are one or both of the following: those earned as a student in a graduate program at another university, whether or not used to satisfy the requirements of a previously earned degree (transferred) and those earned in another graduate program at MSU, whether or not used to satisfy the requirements of a previously earned degree (shared). Students who transition from an unclassified admission into a degree program may also apply up to 9 hours of unclassified graduate work. Credit hours can be shared between or transferred to degrees of the same or different level.

### **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

1. For students with regular admission status, requiring B.S. and M.S. degrees in CE, the course requirements are 18 hours of coursework approved by their committee and a minimum of 20 hours of research (CE 9000).
2. For Ph.D. students admitted under a contingent status based on degrees, the student would be required to complete 42 hours of coursework total (24 equivalent M.S. + 18 hours in doctoral studies) in addition to 20 research hours (62 hours total). Of these the 24 hours equivalent to M.S. would have the same minimum and maximum hour requirements as stipulated for the thesis M.S. student and the minimums include:
  - 12 hours in CE courses, nine of which are at the full graduate level,
  - 12 hours at the full graduate level, and
  - 15 hours in Engineering.

3. Pass two examinations (Qualifying and Comprehensive), and submission and defense of an acceptable dissertation.
4. Fully prepare and/or submit two peer reviewed journal papers
5. The time limit on credits earned that can be accepted toward fulfilling the requirements for a PhD is five years following satisfactory completion of the preliminary and comprehensive exams. Extensions may be requested using forms on the Graduate School website under Other Student Forms. <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>.
6. Direct Admit Doctor of Philosophy (PhD): Three cases exist for direct admit students as outlined in the table below. An option exists to obtain a PhD without obtaining a master's degree with less requirements, but to obtain master's and PhD degrees under direct admit status has the same cumulative requirements as if the degrees were obtained separately.

Case	Degree(s) Awarded	Required Minimum Coursework	Total Minimum Hours Required
1	Doctor of Philosophy	51 coursework	71
	Master of Science: Non-Thesis	20 dissertation (CE 9000)	
2	Doctor of Philosophy	42 coursework	68
	Master of Science: Thesis	6 thesis (CE 8000) 20 dissertation (CE 9000)	
3	Doctor of Philosophy	42 coursework 20 dissertation (CE 9000)	62

Note 1: CE 8000 or CE 9000 implies successful completion of a thesis or dissertation.

Note 2: that all specific course breakdown requirements and publishing requirements still apply as specified in the master's thesis and PhD sections listed previously.

7. Transfer and Sharing of Credit Hours: see the section under Master of Science (MS)'s degree requirements.

### **EXCEPTIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Exceptions and substitutions to the above policies requested by a student's major professor and committee require approval by the graduate coordinator and Department chair. Examples include:

- Recommend that the applicant's degree(s) be considered equivalent to the CE degree and that the student be accepted under regular admission
- Recommending a student not be required to take prerequisites or core background courses in addition to those that will be included on their program of study

- Recommend for Ph.D. students with non-CE M.S. degrees that courses from the applicant's transcripts be used to meet the 24-hour M.S. equivalent course requirements.

Note that course substitutions to the 12 hour Civil Engineering requirement (for M.S. students or the M.S. equivalent for Ph.D. students) will require a memo from the student's graduate committee (through the graduate coordinator and Department chair) and approval by the Dean of the College of Engineering.