



MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2019-2020

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

ME GRADUATE PROGRAM POLICIES

1. Transfer of Credits Taken at Other Universities

Petitions to the Graduate Division for transfer of credits will be considered by the Graduate Committee when the work is necessary to fulfill graduate degree requirements.

The total number of units that a student will be allowed to transfer into their graduate record at UCR from institutions from non-UC campuses is eight (8) quarter credits. These units must have been taken in graduate status in an institution of recognized standing with a grade of “B” or better and cannot be used to reduce the minimum residency requirement or minimum requirement of 200 series courses taken at UCR.

Credit for graduate work completed at other UC campuses may be granted in excess of the eight units. Up to one-half of the units required for a Master’s degree may be transferred from other UC campuses including 200 series unit requirements. Students receive both units and grade point for this work when it is transferred to UCR. Approval from both the Graduate Committee and the Graduate Division must be obtained before such units can be accepted for credit.

2. Grading

For a Graduate Student, only the grades A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C and S represent satisfactory scholarship and are applied toward degree requirements. Graduate Students must be doing work equivalent to letter grading of B to be given an S grade in a class. A UCR course taken during graduate status in which a grade of C- or better is earned may be accepted in partial satisfaction of the degree requirements if the student has a grade point average of at least 3.0 in all courses applicable to the degree. These include all upper division undergraduate and graduate courses in the student’s program of study, and that are taken while registered in graduate status. A grade point average below the B level (3.0) is not satisfactory, and a student whose grade point average is below that level is subject to academic disqualification.

Individual study and research, or other individual graduate work undertaken by a Graduate Student, is normally evaluated by means of the grades Satisfactory/No Credit. No academic work applicable to a graduate program may be graded S/NC unless the course descriptions so indicate. Undergraduate courses, which are pure electives, that is, which do not have any significant relationship to the graduate program, may be taken S/NC with the approval of the Graduate Dean. Such courses do not count towards the student’s degree objective. A grade of S is equivalent to a grade of B (3.0) or better. No credit is given for a course in which a grade of NC is assigned.

The grade Incomplete (I) is given only when a student's work is satisfactory but is incomplete because of circumstances beyond his or her control, and the student has been excused in advance from completing the quarter's work. Although Incomplete grades do not affect the student's grade point average, they are an important factor in evaluating academic progress. Students may not be employed as TA's, GSR's, Teaching Fellows, or Associate-Ins if they have more than 7 units of "I" grades.

The incomplete portion of the work needed to earn a grade must be received by the instructor no later than the last day of the quarter following the assignment of the "I". If not made up within the time allowed, the "I" lapses to an F or NC. An advanced degree cannot be awarded if there is an Incomplete on the student's record.

3. Plagiarism

At UCR, honesty and integrity are fundamental values that guide and inform us as individuals and as a community. Students must represent themselves truthfully, claim only work that is their own, acknowledge their use of others' words, research results, and ideas, using the methods accepted by the appropriate academic disciplines and engage honestly in all academic assignments. Both students and faculty are responsible for ensuring the academic integrity of the University. Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records. Examples include: cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, facilitating academic dishonesty, interference or sabotage, fabrication, retaliation, and failure to comply with research regulations (excerpt from the Dean of Students Office). Students that have plagiarized materials will be examined on a case-by-case basis and reported directly to the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Office. This may lead to a failing grade on the affected assignment or in the class, suspension, and even dismissal.

If a student wishes to use their own published materials as a part of their thesis/dissertation, they must first get permission from the copyright holder and file the Permission to Use Published Material in Dissertation/Thesis form. *Should you discover (or suspect) any form of cheating from a fellow graduate student and/or undergraduate, bring the issue to the course instructor immediately.* For more information on campus policies regarding academic integrity and to report any incidences, please visit www.conduct.ucr.edu. Students may also refer to the [Resources for Current Graduate Students](#). After reviewing these materials, any graduate student still unsure of what this section entails should refer to The graduate advising staff member for clarification and assistance.

4. Student Progress

Students are considered to have made insufficient progress if:

- They have 12 or more units of "I" grades (incomplete course work) outstanding

- The overall GPA falls below 3.00. Students with a GPA of less than 3.00 will be placed on probation.
- The quarterly GPA falls below 3.00 for two consecutive quarters
- They fail to fulfill program requirements such as examinations or research in a timely and satisfactory manner, or
- They have not completed their programs within one year after reaching normative time or
- They fail to pass comprehensive or qualifying exams in two attempts or
- They fail to make progress in research for two consecutive quarters

5. Filing Fee Status

Students nearing completion may petition to be on Filing Fee Status for one quarter. During this quarter they are restricted to 12 hours of faculty time per week. **Filing Fee is to be used only for students with thesis or dissertation drafts that require minor adjustments prior to the final submission, or, if on the MS Plan II and all requirements have been met except for the comprehensive exam.** Students are required to submit their petition AND the draft of their M.S. thesis, M.S. project or dissertation prior to the start of the quarter (Ph.D. petition, M.S. petition). Graduate Students on Filing Fee status only pay one-half the registration fee, are not permitted to enroll in courses and may not be employed as a Teaching Assistant or Graduate Student Researcher. On filing fee status students only retain library privileges and will need to purchase health insurance separately through the Campus Health Center. For complete information, please refer to the [Resources for Current Graduate Students](#). *If a student uses filing fee during the year and wishes to graduate during summer, they must enroll in (and pay for) 2 units during the summer of graduation (ALL graduate students). Filing Fee Status will not be approved for an international student that has already been enrolled in less than 12 units (see next section on Half-Time Status) in their final quarter.

6. Half-Time Status

Half-time status (quarterly registration for 6 units or less) is approved on a case-by-case basis, and only for students who cannot attend full-time for reasons of occupation, extenuating family responsibilities, or health. Half-time students are not eligible for fellowships, GSR, or TA appointments. Students must complete and submit the [Half-Time Status Request form](#) to the department. For complete information and instructions, please refer to the [Resources for Current Graduate Students](#). The Department of Homeland Security requires international students with F and J immigration status to complete a full course of study every quarter (12 units). However, the United States immigration regulations DO allow international students to reduce their course load if a “student is completing his/her program of study and needs less than 12 units in the final quarter”. The form must be submitted and approved prior to the quarterly enrollment deadlines. It cannot be submitted if a student has already been on filing fee status. Full-time fees will be charged for international students below 12 units during the quarter on this program and it may only be approved in the final quarter of study (without exception); graduation is expected for the following quarter.

7. Leave of Absence

A graduate student is expected to enroll for each regular academic session unless a formal Leave of Absence is granted. To be eligible for a Leave of Absence, students must be in good standing and have been enrolled for at least one quarter. Graduate students granted a Leave of Absence forfeit the use of University facilities and faculty time, and cannot take any examinations or receive academic credit for work done during the Leave period. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and are not normally granted for more than one year. Students who must leave the academic program for more than three quarters normally should withdraw and apply for readmission at the time they expect to resume graduate study at UCR. Students who have not attained the academic objective for which they were admitted and who fail to enroll or secure a formal Leave of Absence lose graduate standing with the University. Students wishing to request a Leave of Absence must complete and submit a Leave of Absence form through the R'Grad app. The graduate advising staff member. **LOAs will not be approved for financial reasons alone.* The immigration status of foreign students might be affected by a Leave depending on circumstances and whether they are staying in the U.S. or returning to their own country. It is imperative that foreign students considering a Leave of Absence seek counseling at the International Education Center. For complete information (including examples of situations where a Leave of Absence is approved) please refer to the [Resources for Current Graduate Students](#).

8. Normative and Maximum Time Limits for Degree

The normative time for a student to complete the M.S. degree under either Plan I or Plan II is six (6) quarters. The formal residence requirement of the MS degree is three quarters (one academic year).

The suggested time allotments for an M.S. student, entering the program with a Bachelors degree are given below:

- Nine months, or 3 academic quarters for M.S. coursework;
- Nine months, or 3 academic quarters to formulate research plan and complete dissertation.

Full-time, self-funded students may be able to complete these requirements earlier.

Although the formal residence requirement of the Ph.D. degree is six quarters (two academic years), most student spend three to four years (nine to twelve academic year quarters) in full-time study beyond the Master's degree. The normative time to complete the Ph.D. degree for a typical student appointed as an RA or TA (50% time) may vary from 3 to 4 years (9-12 quarters) for students holding an M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering, or a closely related field, and 4-6 years (12-18 quarters) for those entering the program without an M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering or a closely related field.

II. GRADUATE STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Assistants are expected to aid faculty members in the instructional or research programs. A 50% appointment requires an average of 20 hours per week. Administration and selection of Teaching Assistants (TAs) is done by the department. Research assistantships (GSRs) are selected by the faculty members directing the project and are supported by research contracts or grants. However, faculty members consult with the Graduate Advisor and SAO concerning the availability of qualified students seeking support. The department does not typically award employment to international MS students.

Graduate student employment is considered a financial award, which includes research or teaching assistantships, and fellowships. Typically, teaching and research assistantships are awarded annually on a competitive basis, and include:

- Full or part-time salary of up to approximately \$16,000 per academic year and, in addition,
- Payment of the Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP) fee and a Partial Fee Remission (PFR).

*****International students may apply for a social security card when they become employed as a GSR or TA; fellowship students are not eligible until they secure employment.***

Recipients of campus employment and fellowships must adhere to the following regulations:

- Must maintain a 3.0 GPA for fellowship, TA, and/or GSR.
- Must enroll in and complete a full course load (12 graduate units or the equivalent).
- Must have no more than 7 units of incomplete grades.
- Any change in student status (leave of absence, withdrawal, etc.) must be reported immediately to the graduate advising staff member.
- Changes in degree objective or degree program may affect the student's eligibility for fellowship awards.
- Fellowships are awarded to students to free them from the need for employment. Awards with a stipend greater than or equal to \$10,000 can be supplemented with prior approval of the Department and the Graduate Dean, after completing the [supplementation request form](#). This form may also be used to continue employment for students having difficulty meeting the minimum eligibility requirements. Fellowships that do not allow supplementation include the GAANN, Eugene Cota-Robles Award, Dissertation Year Fellowship, Humanities Research Assistantship, and Research Assistantship/Mentorship Program.

For complete information, please refer to the Graduate Division [fellowship regulations](#) and the [regulations for holders of teaching and graduate research assistantships](#).

1. Graduate Student Researchers (GSR)

A GSR position is appointed by a ME or cooperating faculty member and is reported to the Graduate Program Coordinator for processing. Graduate students are responsible for securing an advisor in a timeframe that allows them to advance to candidacy prior to the sixth quarter, or complete their M.S. project or thesis by the end of their second year. Having an advisor is technically different from receiving a GSR position, and does not apply to MS students under Plan II. For Ph.D. students, it is crucial to secure and/or maintain their position working with a Principle Investigator in order to continue to maintain, or retain the possibility of funding. Without securing an advisor before then, a student is not guaranteed department funding after the (typically one-year) fellowship award expires. A student enrolls in ME 299 if the research *is* instead directly related. Graduate students with a new GSR appointment must check-in with the Graduate Student Affairs Officer and ME Payroll office to complete new-hire paperwork and obtain a social security card (if not done so previously). GSR offers made by a PI (primary investigator/professor) may be rescinded at any time, at the discretion of the PI and for fund availability.

2. Teaching Assistants, the SPEAK Test and ME 302

A Teaching Assistant position is designated by a combination of efforts in the department and is processed by the department. TAs are responsible for the instruction of a particular lab section, and report directly to the supervising instructor. All TAs are required to take the [TADP workshop series](#) offered by the Learning Center at the beginning of every quarter. The TA training should be completed in the first quarter a TA begins teaching. Students register for the workshop series [online](#).

ME graduate students whose native language is not English or have completed the majority of their undergraduate study (possibly including high school) in a non-English speaking institution, must pass the SPEAK Test or must score 23 or above on the Speaking portion of internet-based TOEFL (iBT) test. The purpose of both tests is to evaluate English proficiency and comprehension. There is a \$70 fee to take the test. Test date and time are sent to students via email every quarter. Scores on the SPEAK Test are as follows:

5. Clear Pass	6. Conditional Pass	7. Fail
8. 50 – 60	9. 40 – 45	10. 20 – 35

The SPEAK Test is administered quarterly by the UCR Extension Center (students are responsible for the test fee), but arrangements may be made to take the test off-cycle. Graduate students that do not receive a Clear Pass score and do not have a Clear Pass in the SPEAK Test must attend the English language classes offered at the UCR Extension Center until a Clear Pass is obtained. *Students are provided with one quarter of free instruction at the UCR Extension Center.* Students still not able to obtain a Clear Pass are responsible for paying for the instruction until a Clear Pass is obtained on the SPEAK Test. A student with a Conditional Pass

can be appointed as a TA, but these appointments will only be approved for one quarter at a time and must be approved by the Graduate Dean.

All TAs must enroll in ME 302 Apprentice teaching. This course meets once per week (dates, times, and duration may change, depending on the flow of the meeting sessions) and provides a place for TAs to receive advice, support, and meet with other TAs each quarter. Should another UCR course conflict with the 302 meeting(s) the student must receive permission from the instructor of the 302 course.

3. Student Assistants (Domestic & International)

Student Assistant positions are used in cases where a new graduate student those on filing fee status may be employed by a professor. Employment as a TA or GSR is not permitted for new graduate students until they become official and active students on campus. New students may participate in paid research in a lab during the summer prior to their fall quarter start, as a Student Assistant. Students on filing fee also are not permitted to be employed as a TA or GSR, but may be a Student Assistant.

Student Assistants have hourly and do not receive any benefits (the position does not cover any fees or health insurance), thus they are responsible for securing health insurance separately during the time of this employment (GSHIP can NOT be paid by the advisor).

4. Internships

Students participating in an internship **during a quarter** (either full or part-time) must enroll in ME 298I under their advisor. International students who wish to complete an internship at any point during the year must also complete a CPT application; complete the CPT Certification Form at myforms.ucr.edu (you must upload your offer letter and faculty advisor recommendation letter).

International students on summer internship are expected to be enrolled in one unit of CS 298I during summer. This is done through UCR Summer Sessions Office and students must pay the one-unit summer fee prior to registering in the course.

5. In Absentia

In absentia is a form of registration available to academic and professional graduate students undertaking coursework or research related to their degree programs **outside of California**. Students registered for *in absentia* are assessed full health insurance fees and 15% of the tuition and student services fee. Students are also assessed non-resident tuition and/or professional school fees if applicable.

Eligibility Criteria

The student must be enrolled full-time (12 units). Students in self-supporting programs or exchange programs are not eligible for *in absentia* registration.

Students may apply for *in absentia* status if the following criteria are met:

- The research or coursework is of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of the state of California for at least one full quarter.
- The work away from the UCR campus is directly related to the student's degree program as evidenced by faculty approval.
- The work involves only indirect supervision (correspondence or review of written work) from UCR faculty during the *in absentia* period.
- The work involves no significant collaboration with UCR faculty during the *in absentia* period.

Doctoral students must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be advanced to candidacy by the time *in absentia* period begins.
2. May only use *In absentia* registration for a maximum of 6 quarters. Student may apply for only one year at a time.

Master's only and graduate professional (e.g. MBA) students must meet the following criteria:

1. Must have completed at least one year of course work by the time the *in absentia* period begins.
2. May only use *in absentia* registration for a maximum of three quarters.
3. Students in self-supporting programs (e.g., Flex MBA) are not eligible for *in absentia*.

Students may apply for and receive University fellowships and research assistantships, but not teaching assistantships or serve as readers or tutors.

All applications are due by **September 1** for Fall Quarter, **December 1** for Winter Quarter and **March 1** for Spring Quarter.

III. MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) DEGREE PROGRAM

The M.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering can be earned by either one of two plans:

1. by completion of a thesis ([Plan I](#)), which reports a creative investigation of a defined problem
2. by passing a comprehensive examination ([Plan II](#)).

For the M.S. degree, students must meet a minimum residency requirement of three quarters, one complete academic year, in the University of California. At least two of these three quarters must be spent at UCR. Registration in at least 4 units of 100 or 200 level course work is necessary for each quarter of academic residence. Students should enroll in 12 units each quarter unless the Graduate Advisor grants an exception.

1. Master of Science Plan I (Thesis)

The M.S. degree Plan I (Thesis) requires completion of a minimum of 36 units of upper-division and graduate-level approved course work and submission of an acceptable thesis. At least 24 of these units must be in graduate courses (200-series courses), a minimum of 16 units of these being Mechanical Engineering graduate courses (ME 200 or higher, excluding ME 250, ME 290, ME 297, and ME 299). The student must take 3 units of seminar (ME 250) and at least 7 but no more than 11 units of directed or thesis research credits (ME 297 or ME 299). No more than 8 units of course work may be satisfied with directed studies (ME 290). Students must defend a thesis. For detailed course descriptions please consult the [ME Catalog of Courses](#).

Course work used to satisfy the student's undergraduate degree requirements may not be applied toward the 36 unit M.S. requirement. However, UCR Undergraduates who have no more than two courses or eight units of course work remaining in their Bachelor Degree program, and who have been admitted to graduate status may begin course work for their advanced degrees at the beginning of the final quarter of undergraduate study. Bringing forward units from undergraduate studies requires that students inform their college offices before beginning the course work in question. After entering the graduate program, these students may petition to transfer these units to their graduate record. These units cannot have been used towards the Bachelor's Degree.

An acceptable M.S. thesis must be submitted. The M.S. thesis may be based on:

- a research or advanced design project, either analytical, computational or experimental;
- an extensive report consisting of theoretical, computational or experimental contribution to mechanical engineering.

The student's M.S. Thesis Committee is responsible for approving the thesis. The thesis committee is composed of three members (including the research advisor).

After submission of the M.S. thesis, the student is required to defend the thesis in a defense.

An abstract and title should be submitted to the Graduate Student Affairs Officer at least 10 days prior to the scheduled defense so that it can be advertised to the public for a period of at least one week. No exceptions will be made for late abstracts.

The student will then modify the thesis based on comments received during the defense. Upon approval, two unbound copies of the final thesis in a format compatible with the guidelines set forth by the Graduate Division must be submitted to the Graduate Division.

2. Master of Science Plan II (Comprehensive Exam)

The M.S. degree, Plan II (Comprehensive Examination) requires completion of a minimum of 36 units of upper-division and graduate-level approved course work and successfully passing a comprehensive examination. At least 24 of these units must be in graduate courses (200 series courses), a minimum of 16 of these being Mechanical Engineering graduate courses (ME 200 or higher, *excluding* ME 250, ME 290, ME 297, and ME 299). The student must take 1 unit (ME 250) and no more than 7 units of directed studies (ME 290). One additional 4 unit course is required for completing the requirements of the MS Plan II. For detailed course descriptions please consult the [ME Catalog of Courses](#).

The M.S. Comprehensive Examination will be prepared and administered by the Graduate Examination Committee. The exam typically takes place at the end of spring quarter. The written examination is designed to test understanding of graduate-level mechanical engineering concepts and methods. It covers three subject areas to be selected by the student among the following: **materials structure & properties, control systems, engineering analysis, fluid mechanics, heat transfer, thermodynamics, solid mechanics**. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the relevant graduate-level course work for the selected subject areas:

Topic	Relevant course work	Quarter offered
Materials Structures & Properties	ME266	Winter 20
Control Systems	ME/EE235	Winter 20
Engineering Analysis	ME200	Fall 19
Fluid Mechanics	ME240A	Fall 19
Heat Transfer	ME241A	Winter 20
Thermodynamics	ME243	Fall 19
Solid Mechanics	ME261	Fall19

Students will be notified at least one month in advance of the Preliminary Exam Dates.

Subsequent to the examination, the Graduate Examination Committee will issue a passing or failing grade. If a student fails in the first attempt, he or she may retake the examination at the next scheduled comprehensive examination period. No more than two attempts to pass the exam are allowed. The second comprehensive examination is typically scheduled towards the end of summer.

Students will be notified about permitted material such as calculators and hand-written notes as specified by the examiners.

Notes:

1. A student, who plans to take the M.S. comprehensive exam, must submit a formal request to the Graduate Program Assistant by the deadline announced by the Graduate Program.
2. The Graduate Committee will review the exams in a timely manner and make recommendations for ME Faculty's approval.
3. Students are recommended to take the ME graduate and undergraduate courses offered during the Fall and Winter quarters to prepare for the exam.

IV. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) DEGREE PROGRAM

The Ph.D. degree provides an opportunity for students to pursue a program of research in a specialized area and to develop a dissertation that "embodies the results of original research and gives evidence of high scholarship". The procedures for satisfying the requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Mechanical Engineering at UCR will consist of four (4) principal parts, each of which is discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections:

1. Successful completion of an approved program of course work;
2. Passing of a written and oral preliminary examination;
3. Oral defense of a dissertation proposal written and submitted by the candidate
4. Defense and approval of the dissertation

The Graduate Committee administers the first two requirements while the Ph.D. The Qualifying Committee and the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee oversee the third and fourth requirements respectively. In addition to these requirements, students must meet the minimum residency requirement of six quarters in the University of California, three of which must be spent in continuous residence at UCR. A student must maintain continuous registration until all degree requirements have been fulfilled. If such registration is not possible, the student must secure an approved leave of absence from the department and the Graduate Division.

1. Course Work

The course work should be formulated by the student and his/her faculty advisor within the first quarter year after admission to the Ph.D. program and must be approved by the student's Ph.D. advisor and Ph.D. Examination Committee. It is understood that changes to this may occur as the student's research progresses. These changes should be documented after consultation with the Ph.D. advisor and Ph.D. Examination Committee.

The Ph.D. degree will require completion of a minimum of 72 units of upper-division undergraduate or graduate-level approved course work. At least 24 of these units must be in graduate courses (200-series courses), a minimum of 8 of these being Mechanical Engineering graduate courses (ME 200 or higher, *excluding* ME 250, ME 290, ME 297, ME 298I, and ME 299). The student may apply a maximum of 8 units of upper division undergraduate level courses towards their 72 unit requirement. The student must take 6 units of seminar (ME 250) and at least 36 units of directed or thesis research credits (ME 297 or ME299). Students may petition to transfer up to 2 graduate courses to apply towards the Ph.D. course requirement if those graduate courses have not been used to complete a degree. These transferred courses cannot substitute for the necessary UCR ME graduate course requirement mentioned above. Courses taken as part of the Ph.D. requirement can be used to satisfy the course requirements for an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering at UCR and vice versa. For detailed course descriptions please consult the [ME Catalog of Courses](#).

2. Preliminary Examination

The purpose of the Ph.D. preliminary examination is to screen candidates for continuation in the Ph.D. program. The Ph.D. preliminary examination must be completed in the graduate student's first year.

The examination is administered by the graduate program committee and has two components:

1. The written examination is designed to test understanding of graduate-level mechanical engineering concepts and methods. It covers three subject areas to be selected by the student among the following: **materials structure & properties, control systems, engineering analysis, fluid mechanics, heat transfer, thermodynamics, solid mechanics**. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the relevant graduate-level course work for the selected subject areas:

Topic	Relevant course work	Quarter offered
Materials Structures & Properties	ME266	Winter 20
Control Systems	ME/EE235	Winter 20
Engineering Analysis	ME200	Fall 19
Fluid Mechanics	ME240A	Fall 19
Heat Transfer	ME241A	Winter 20
Thermodynamics	ME243	Fall 19
Solid Mechanics	ME261	Fall19

2. Oral component assess the student's ability to conduct independent research. This examination is administered by a committee of 3 faculty members selected by the candidate in consultation with the advisor. The student is required to submit a [form](#) that lists the committee members and the outcome of the exam signed by the committee chair. The oral exam has to be completed within the first two weeks after the start of the Fall quarter following the written exam. For instance, if a student takes the written examination in Spring 2020, he/she is required to take the oral part of the preliminary examination within the first two weeks of Fall 2020. Failure to take the oral exam on time constitutes non-satisfactory progress and disqualifies candidate from awards, fellowships, teaching assistantships and relevant benefits reserved for students in good standing. If the student fails the oral exam the first time, they will be required to retake the exam before the start of the upcoming fall quarter.

It is necessary to pass both components to advance to the dissertation proposal.

First year students will be notified at least one month in advance of the Preliminary Exam Dates. They must submit the [Intent to Register Form](#) for the Preliminary Examination form, signed by their advisor prior to the deadline set by the Graduate Committee.

Based on the results of the written examination, the Graduate Committee makes a decision by majority vote. The committee will recommend that the student, either passes or fails the examination. If the student passes, he/she will be permitted to develop a Ph.D. dissertation proposal. If the student fails the examination, he/she is given a second and final opportunity to retake either all, or a portion of the examination at its next offering.

If a student fails the preliminary examination during the second attempt, then one of the following will occur:

1. If the student fails more than one written examination, then the student will be required to withdraw from the Ph.D. program.
2. If the student fails no more than one examination and, in the committee's judgement, the student has demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter, but has some weaknesses, the examination committee may grant a conditional pass. The committee will recommend additional course work and acceptable satisfactory grades for the course work. Once the additional course work is completed satisfactorily, the student is declared to have passed the examination. If the committee does not grant a conditional pass, then the student will be required to withdraw from the Ph.D. program.

A student who withdraws from the Ph.D. program may petition to be change his/ her degree objective to an M.S. If the student has completed all requirements for the M.S. degree, he/she will be awarded the M.S. degree at that time. If the M.S. degree requirements have not been met, the student will be permitted to continue in the program, complete these requirements, and receive the M.S. degree.

The oral exam has to be completed within the first two weeks after the start of the following Fall quarter. The exam evaluates the readiness of students for the dissertation work at the early stage. This exam should be given by a committee, consisting of three faculty members: the dissertation advisor (committee chair) and two members of the Academic Senate, of which one must be a ME regular or collaborative faculty member. The committee members shall be selected by the student together with his/her dissertation advisor. Students must submit a 1-page abstract to the oral examination committee 5 days before the date of the examination. Students should consult their advisor to coordinate. The committee should submit a written recommendation to the Graduate Committee within 2 business days of the examination.

Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal and Qualifying Committee (The Qualifying Exam)

After successfully completing the Ph.D. preliminary examination, the student, with advice from his/her advisor, recommends a Ph.D. Qualifying Committee and prepares a dissertation proposal. The Ph.D. Qualifying Examination committee consists of 5 members including the student's research advisor and one faculty member from outside the department.

The student must submit *Form 2*, electronically through R'Grad, in order to nominate their committee at least 2 weeks prior to the Qualifying Exam date. At the time that the exam is taken, the student must submit the *Form 3* reporting their results, this form also serves as the

form that nominates the Dissertation Committee. The *Form 3* must be submitted to the Graduate Student Affairs Officer (GSAO) no later than 48 hours after the exam. All forms should be submitted via the SAO and under no circumstances taken to the Graduate Division by the student. *More information about special forms can be found here:*

<https://www.me.ucr.edu/academics/graduateresources>
<https://graduate.ucr.edu/petitions-and-forms>

The dissertation proposal consists of a written document and an oral presentation or defense. The procedure for initiating a Qualifying Exam involves the first step by the Ph.D. student, by submitting a complete dissertation proposal to the Graduate Student Affairs Officer before submitting it to his/her Ph.D. Qualifying Committee and/or scheduling the exam date. The Qualifying Exam will not be scheduled if the proposal is not in the appropriate format or does not have the appropriate content. The GSAO will provide the first “check” of this submission. Once the proposal has been accepted, the student may arrange an exam date with his/her committee. The Ph.D. Qualifying committee chairperson will normally schedule an oral defense within one (1) month of the written proposal submission. The presentation is given only to the Ph.D. Qualifying Committee members.

The written dissertation proposal should be typewritten, 15 pages maximum (references not included), double-spaced, in standard typeface (12 pt) with 1" margins all around. Written document has to follow the National Science Foundation (NSF) proposal guidelines. As per NSF, the proposal has to include 1 page Project Summary that includes Intellectual Merits and Broader Impacts with possible Transformative Nature of the proposed research. In addition to the Project Summary, the write-up has to include up to 15 pages of the Project Description. Last part of the write-up is list of references (not included in 15 pages limit). Details of the NSF proposal format requirements are available at the NSF web site: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf14001/gpgprint.pdf> , Chapter II, Page II-1 (Page 18). Project Summary is described at page II-9 (Page 25) and Project Description and References Cited are described from II-9 to II-11 (Pages 25-27).

Suggested organization for the Ph.D. dissertation proposal is as follows:

Introduction: This section should include the purpose, the objectives (or accomplishments), and the scope of the proposed research.

Background: This section should include a summary of the literature concerning research work related to the proposed dissertation and how the proposed research builds on or relates to previous work.

Approach and Methodologies: A narrative of how the research is to be conducted, including an overview of the general research approach and techniques. Also, any experimental designs, statistical methods, and conceptual or mathematical models to be developed or employed should be discussed.

Preliminary Results and Discussion: Presentation of preliminary research results and their relevance to the proposed dissertation.

Significance of the proposed research: The purpose of this section is to explain why the proposed research is relevant and needed.

Literature cited: All publications referenced within the proposal should be cited in the reference section.

The oral presentation of the proposal focuses on the dissertation. The student should demonstrate considerable depth of knowledge in the student's area of specialty and a clear understanding of the research methods that are needed for successful completion of the dissertation research. The oral presentation will begin with a presentation by the student on his/her dissertation topic and will be followed by questions and suggestions from the Ph.D. Qualifying Committee.

The student is advanced to candidacy after successfully completing this examination. Students who fail the qualifying examination are given a second opportunity to take the examination. The committee will typically give suggestions to modify or enhance his/her proposal. Students who fail the examination at the second attempt will be required to withdraw from the Ph.D. program.

Ph.D. Dissertation Defense

Following advancement to Ph.D. candidacy, the student formally begins his/her dissertation research. The progress of the dissertation is monitored by the student's Ph.D. Dissertation Committee. The Ph.D. Dissertation Committee consists of 3 members. It is recommended that the Ph.D. candidate interact frequently with members of his/her dissertation committee to ensure that dissertation progress is acceptable.

After completion of the dissertation research, a written draft copy of the completed dissertation must be submitted to the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee for review, evaluation, and determination of whether the draft thesis is ready for oral defense. Once a draft has been approved for defense, an oral defense of the dissertation will be scheduled. The oral defense is open to the entire academic community. It consists of a presentation followed by a question/answer period conducted by the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee and the audience.

An abstract and title should be submitted to the Graduate Student Affairs Officer at least 10 days prior to the scheduled defense so that it can be advertised to the public for a period of at least one week. No exceptions will be made for late abstracts. Dissertation Committee members should fill out the *Form 5* and return it to the Graduate Student Affairs Officer as soon as possible after the defense. *Please contact the Graduate Assistant for Form 5.*

Based on the written dissertation and the oral defense, the Ph.D. Dissertation Committee decides to 1) accept the dissertation and recommend to the Graduate Division that the Ph.D. degree be awarded, 2) ask that the dissertation be modified and re-defended, or 3) decline acceptance of the dissertation (normally, only after a second opportunity is given).

V. MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Student ID Card – Card & Key Access

All graduate students should have a student ID card and may receive one for a fee, at the Highlander Student Station. For more information, visit <https://ucrcard.ucr.edu/>. Access to research laboratories must be requested on a quarterly basis by the faculty member supervising the specific research laboratory. The Department Chair grants access to instructional laboratories to TAs on a quarterly basis. If regular keys are required for a specific door, a written request, approved by the student's advisor and must be submitted to the ME department office.

Building Access

Once you have your ID card, students should register with the systems administrator so that he can give you access into the building. Winston Chung Hall is locked at 5:30PM and does not reopen again until 7:30AM.

Office and Desk Space

Office and desk space, if available, is assigned to full-time students by the Graduate Adviser. Preference is given to full-time students with teaching assistantships, full-time students with research assistantships, other full-time students, and finally part-time students, in that order. It may not be possible for every student to be assigned desk space.

Machine Shop

The machine shop facilities are located in the ground floor of the laboratory wing of Bourns Hall, room B155. Students may borrow equipment and use certain machine tools with supervision and prior approval of the Principal Mechanician or Machine Shop Manager. Such use is limited to research and is not for personal work.

In order to work in the shop, students must have completed the UCR's EH&S online Safety Laboratory training, review and sign the Machine Shop Chemical Hygiene Plan, and must pass the basic shop safety test. To use the lathe and the mill, students must complete the training and pass the test. Students are required to wear a name badge while working in the shop. Student's UCR ID card will be needed to insert it into the plastic name badge holders provided at the shop entrance.

If you require machining work from the Principal Mechanician or Machine Shop Manager, you will need to complete a requisition form so that we can track the actual progress of work in the shop.

Afterhours Access to the Shop: If you have been certified and have afterhours access, you will need to review and sign the Machine Shop's Chemical Hygiene Plan.

Mail

Incoming mail and intercampus notices may be picked up from mailboxes in the mailroom, A304 Bourns Hall. Outgoing intercampus mail and official university mail can be deposited in the main office, A342. Students should send and receive all personal mail (e.g. personal letters, bills, non-technical magazines) from their personal residences. *The department is not responsible for missing items. Please do not send personal mail to the department.*

Copying

The department has only one copier and is used exclusively for faculty and staff. Teaching Assistants may use the printer and scanners in the TA room on the third floor. Copies should only be used for academic purposes; personal copies are not permitted. Copy codes can be obtained by Juana Guerrero, Assistant in the ME department.

Fax

The department has only one fax. The fax machine is located in the main suite room A342. The fax number is 951-827-2899. Personal faxes are not permitted.

*****Please note that ME graduate students leaving UCR without a degree will result in the termination of department services listed above (building access, office space, etc.), effective at the end of the quarter of enrollment. These students will be eligible for e-mail forwarding and will need to address this with the department Systems group. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis and all requests must originate from the supervising active faculty member.***

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