



Graduate Student Survival Manual (in a nutshell)

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Programs (highlights)

MS

- 42 course units (up to 12/16 can be from UG senior electives)
- course requirements (area dependent)
- two options: thesis or exam (98% students do exam, but thesis may simplify degree equivalence outside US)
- typical duration 4-6 quarters

PhD

- 12 units/quarter (any courses, TA units – ECE502, research units – ECE596, exam preparation units – ECE597, etc.)
- exams: screening, qualifying, and dissertation defense
- no course requirements (* CE), but GPA ≥ 3.3 (B⁺)
- average duration 6 years
- Only grades ≥ 3.0 (B) count towards degrees
- GPA < 3.0 will get you on probation (possible dismissal)

Attention!



Exams

Screening exam

- administered twice a year (beginning of Fall & Spring)
- 3 oral exams in major area
- 2 oral exams in minor area
- required for PhD students
- counts as MS comprehensive exam

Qualifying exam

- MS degree completed & course requirements
- scheduled by candidate & committee
- oral presentation followed by questions
- only PhD students



Academic Integrity

- UCSB takes the issue of academic integrity very seriously.
- Collaboration
 - integral part of scholarly activities, *but not always appropriate in a course*
 - never appropriate unless due *credit is given to all participants*
 - this goes for ideas, programming or other work
 - it is YOUR responsibility to find out *what is and is not allowed*
- Examples:
 - Typically allowed: Discussion of lecture and textbook materials
 - Sometimes allowed: Discussion of how to approach assignments, what techniques to consider, what textbook or lecture material is relevant
 - Typically not allowed: Sharing ideas in the form of code, pseudocode, or solutions
 - Never allowed: Turning in someone else's work as your own, even with that person's permission.
 - Never allowed: Allowing someone else to turn in your work as his or her own.
 - Never allowed: Turning in work without proper acknowledgment of the sources of the content (including ideas and web) contained within the work [plagiarism].



FAQ

I'm an MS student but I want to pursue a PhD, what do I do?

1. take and pass screening exam
2. find a faculty willing to advise and support you
3. submit a new application for the PhD

Why was I automatically assigned a faculty advisor?

1. all students need a faculty advisor for coursework consultation and to sign forms
2. PhD students still need to find a research advisor
3. Notify Val of any advisor changes



FAQ

How do I find a research advisor for my PhD?

1. do very well in all your course work
2. if you are a TA, do well there
3. get to know the faculty, especially the ones in your area
4. start some independent research project, perhaps as a follow up on a course project
5. start to plan your first Summer well in advance (mid-Winter/early Spring) – faculty often use Summer projects to try students out

Once you have an advisor, the rest of the PhD committee is selected by student in consultation with advisor.



FAQ

What to do if I need to take ECEXXX, but it is full/not-offered this year?

- Take a different course now and enroll early the next time ECEXXX is offered.
- Find an alternative course that may be appropriate for your needs (perhaps in a different dept., e.g., CS, Math, ME, Statistics)
Val and your advisor may help here.

When will ECEXXX be taught again?

- The basic high-enrollment graduate courses are taught every year
- More specialized courses are taught when there is enough student demand & there is a faculty available
- The faculty listed in the catalog for that course (or the faculty that taught it last) are the ones more likely to give you a precise answer.