



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

Attention!

- Only grades ≥ 3.0 (B) count towards degrees
- GPA < 3.0 will get you on probation (possible dismissal)

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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

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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].

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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

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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.

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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.

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