
CIT Graduate Student Policies

In Graduate Education programs, students work closely with the department faculty in their chosen field. However, the College of Engineering establishes standards for graduate education that apply across all programs. These policies are on the following pages.

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Cross Registration

Cross-registration is available through neighboring institutions (e.g., the University of Pittsburgh, Duquesne University). The grade earned for courses completed during the Fall or Spring semester will appear on the Carnegie Mellon transcript. Course and/or distribution credit may be granted by petition to the department for courses not used for a previous degree requirement.

Grading Policy

The general grading policy used by CIT is described on the university grading policy page as follows:

A University Policy is a rule that has been officially sanctioned by the president of Carnegie Mellon University, and that generally has university-wide applicability. A policy may include governing principles, it may either mandate or constrain action, it may ensure compliance with laws, or it may mitigate the university's risk. It must be approved by the President's Council, a senior-level decision-making body of Carnegie Mellon, and ultimately by the president, before it becomes official policy.

Many departmental or divisional procedures and guidelines, although useful and important, do not meet the criteria above, and therefore they are not considered university policies. Some department/division practices are linked to this site (e.g., bookstore practices) as a convenience to the Carnegie Mellon community. Some other information, such as the NSF Grant Policy Manual, is not specific to Carnegie Mellon but is included for convenient access.

The policies and guidelines presented here are generally broken into two sections. The section at the beginning of each (the "editor's notes") identifies a contact person or department who can help with specific questions about that policy. It may also contain other pertinent information or links to related documents. This section is not part of the official policy, but is merely supplemental information. It is followed by the actual text of the university policy.

The following are CIT-specific policies for graduate grading.

Project Work

Project work may be given an S (Satisfactory) grade on a semester-by-semester basis, but a letter grade (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, or R) must be given in the final semester for a multi-semester project. The units with an S grade are counted toward degree requirements but are not included in computing the average grade.

Course work or graduate project units with a grade of C- or lower are not acceptable toward graduate degree requirements.

MS Degree

Most, but not all, CIT MS programs require 96 units. For those that require 96 units, the average grade of 96 units applied to the degree shall be at least B, and the student may

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choose any 96 units of the first 120 units attempted to compute the grade average. Individual departments and programs may have specific requirements regarding grades in certain courses. For MS programs that require more than 96 units, such as the programs of the Information Networking Institute, the program-specific grading policies and degree requirements apply and should be consulted.

(policy updated 5/21/2009)

Policy on Course Drop and Withdrawal by Graduate Students

CIT graduate students may *drop* a course on-line on or before the deadline published in the official university calendar. This deadline is two weeks after mid-semester grades are due. The deadline to drop a half-semester mini course is the last day of the fourth week of the mini course. When a course is dropped by the deadlines, the course is removed entirely and disappears from a student's academic record. After the official university deadline to drop, graduate students may *withdraw* from a course on-line on or before the last day of classes, excluding final examinations. The deadline to withdraw from a half-semester mini course is the last class day of the mini course. When a CIT graduate student withdraws from a course between the official university deadline to drop a course and the last day of classes, a "W" (Withdrawal) is assigned as a grade, which appears on the student's academic record. This "W" grade does not affect a student's QPA. A graduate student can petition the department head to remove a W grade from their transcript if there are extenuating circumstances.

(policy created 5/21/2009)

Double Counting of Course Units for MS and PhD Degrees

No course that has been counted toward another degree can be counted toward fulfilling course requirements in graduate programs, unless explicitly authorized for a particular program as set forth in the specified requirements for the program, or by the department head(s) of the primary department(s) of the graduate student.

(policy created 4/14/2009)

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Graduate Student Consulting

Full time graduate students within the College of Engineering are ordinarily expected to devote their full attention and energies to their educational and research endeavors. Classwork and research assignments are planned to completely occupy full time students, thus effectively precluding outside employment and consulting.

All full time students are generally advised to decline such work and concentrate on their graduate studies. In exceptional cases, there may be opportunities for outside consulting or employment that would provide helpful experience in addition to financial remuneration.

Before assuming such commitments, all full time graduate students are urged to consult their academic advisors and/or department heads about such opportunities. Students receiving financial aid in the form of research or teaching assistants or fellowships are required to obtain consent from both their academic advisor and department head for any such outside employment or consulting.

Interdisciplinary Degrees

If the formal graduate curricula do not suit the needs of a student, an individual curriculum can be designed to meet the student's abilities, interests, and professional objectives utilizing the educational resources of Carnegie Mellon.

The student is encouraged to consider courses offered by the other colleges of Carnegie Mellon, such as the Mellon College of Science, the School of Computer Science, the Heinz School, and the Graduate School of Industrial Administration.

The student obtains a faculty advisor, who, together with two other Carnegie Mellon faculty members for a master's degree and at least three other faculty members for a Ph.D. degree, constitute an advisory committee to oversee the student's research, specify degree requirements (within the general requirements of the university) and recommend the student for the degree upon completion of the program.

The degree attached to the particular program generally will not be offered by Carnegie Mellon departments since the intention of the individualized program is to increase the options available to students.

All curricula and degrees must be reviewed by an Ad Hoc Committee on Interdisciplinary Studies and written approval should be obtained from the committee before starting a

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curriculum program. This committee is chaired by the Associate Dean, who, with at least two other CIT faculty members, makes a recommendation for approval to CIT College Council. Students who are interested in this program should contact the CIT Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

The degree would be offered by CIT. Requests for Interdisciplinary degrees are reviewed by the Associate Dean with advice from CIT faculty, and approved by CIT College Council. Normally for Ph.D. students the faculty advisor and home department would be within CIT. Interdisciplinary Ph.D. students in CIT must usually satisfy one component of an engineering department Ph.D. comprehensive examination.

M.S. Degree

A candidate for the Master of Science degree must complete satisfactorily the requirements specified by the major department or program in addition to the general requirements of CIT. The degree usually requires one academic year of full-time study beyond the B.S. degree.

The general requirements include the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 96 units of academic work at Carnegie Mellon. A minimum of 60 units must be graduate level work in the major department or program including graduate project units. The satisfactory completion of a master's degree comprehensive examination may also be required according to departmental policy. A master's thesis may be required by the major department in lieu of, or in addition to, other requirements. Specific requirements can be obtained from each department or program.

If a thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of degree requirements, it must meet the approval of the instructor in charge of the work, the department head, and the dean. The completed thesis should be prepared following the CIT formatting specifications for dissertations and theses and must be presented to the dean not less than two weeks before commencement. Any publication derived from the thesis should be prepared in consultation with the faculty advisor, and should acknowledge that the manuscript was derived from a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at Carnegie Mellon.

(policy revised 8/12/2009)

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Ph.D.

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is granted by Carnegie Mellon to candidates who give evidence of proficiency, high attainment, and research ability in the field of their major work, and who have satisfied the specific coursework and other requirements of the department in which they are enrolled. Doctoral candidates are required to maintain full-time residence at Carnegie Mellon for a minimum of one year.

Policies specifically related to the Ph.D. qualifying examination, thesis proposal and the dissertation process are provided here.

Part-Time Graduate Programs

For part-time students, certain graduate courses may be offered on a rotating basis in two- or three-year cycles. The Master of Science degree requirements can usually be completed on a part-time basis within three to four years, in part through the substitution of additional course work, or project work for a graduate research thesis project according to the departmental stipulations. All students are encouraged to complete the degree program as rapidly as possible.

All part-time Ph.D. degree candidates must complete one academic year (two full semesters) in residence on a Carnegie Mellon campus after beginning studies in the Ph.D. program. The two semesters in residence do not have to be contiguous. The purpose of the residency requirement is to ensure that all Ph.D. graduates of CIT have spent time interacting closely with CIT faculty members and graduate students as part of their Ph.D. experience. The time in residence also ensures an adequate opportunity to prepare for and complete the Ph.D. qualifying examinations at the beginning of Ph.D. studies. Consequently, students intending to become Ph.D. degree candidates must consult their faculty advisors concerning the appropriate format and timing of their qualifying examinations and residency before or upon initiation of Ph.D. studies. Special situations may warrant modifications of the residency requirement, e.g., pursuit of a Ph.D. degree by a Carnegie Mellon staff member. Petitions for modification of the residency requirement must be approved by the relevant department head(s) and the Associate Dean for Graduate and Faculty Affairs.

(policy revised 4/14/2009)

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Resolution of Grievances

Graduate students are expected to discuss any concerns or grievances initially with members of their academic departments, including their academic advisor and Department Head, as appropriate. If a student wishes, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the College of Engineering is available for consultation. All such discussions will be considered confidential at the request of a student.

If resolution of an academic grievance or concern cannot be obtained within their academic departments, graduate students may file a formal appeal of academic actions to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the college. In accordance with the Carnegie Mellon Student Handbook, such appeals will ordinarily be heard and decided by the CIT (Engineering) College Council. Written materials and findings of such appeal processes are considered confidential for all parties involved.

If a resolution cannot be reached by this process, an appeal may be made to the Provost at the request of either the student or the college.

Contacts for the college and departments:

CIT

Pradeep Khosla, Dean
David Dzombak, Associate Dean for
Graduate and Faculty Affairs

Biomedical Engineering

Yu-li Wang, Department Head
Brendan Kerr, Graduate Study
Coordinator

Chemical Engineering

Andrew Gellman, Department Head
Toni McIlhrot, Assistant Head

Civil and Environmental Engineering

James Garrett, Department Head
Maxine Leffard, Graduate Program
Administrator

Electrical and Computer Engineering
T.E. Schlesinger, Department Head

Engineering and Public Policy
M. Granger Morgan, Department Head

Information Networking Institute
Dena Haritos Tsamitis, Director

Materials Science and Engineering
Greg Rohrer, Department Head
Suzanne Smith, Administrative
Associate/Graduate Coordinator

Mechanical Engineering

Nadine Aubry, Department Head
Chris Hertz, Graduate Program
Administrator

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Thesis Due Dates

August and December Graduates:

Theses and Dissertations are due in the Dean's office by the date that grades are due.

May Graduates:

Theses and Dissertations are due in the Dean's office not less than 10 days before commencement.

Transfer Credit & Special Students

Applicants with a degree of Bachelor of Science may be admitted as part-time special students with no intention of working toward a graduate degree. Some of them may wish to become degree candidates later. Even though the applicant may have been admitted as a non-degree student, courses taken at Carnegie Mellon with a grade of B or better will be counted toward the degree, provided that such courses fall within the requirements of the degree sought.

Up to 24 units (two courses) of graduate work completed at other universities, with a grade point average of 3.0 or better, may be given transfer credit, provided that such course work is part of the graduate program leading to the degree sought. Such transfer credit is not granted prior to admission to the graduate program and must be approved by the department after the student has satisfactorily completed at least 36 units of graduate courses at Carnegie Mellon.

This policy is subject to change within the individual academic departments and programs.

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CIT Policy on Joint Degrees with EPP

The unique CIT doctoral program in Engineering and Public Policy provides opportunities for advanced graduate study of both the technical and policy aspects of a broad range of topics at the interface of technology and policy. EPP and any CIT department can agree to offer a joint Ph.D. degree (i.e., one degree with two fields listed in the title) to a particular student.

Students interested in pursuing a joint Ph.D. degree must apply to the second department within the first academic year of Ph.D. study. Students cannot apply for a joint Ph.D. degree program upon initial entry; initial Ph.D. applications must be to one department only. If both departments agree to admit a student to a joint Ph.D. program, the student must either pass the Ph.D. qualifying exams of both departments or pass a mutually agreed upon shared exam.

In addition, the student must either meet the course requirements of both departments or meet a mutually agreed upon set of course requirements. The doctoral committee for a joint Ph.D. student must include representation from both departments involved, and the dissertation topic should make significant contributions in both fields. The extent to which the dissertation research speaks to both fields must be discussed explicitly at the proposal stage and revisited by the doctoral committee over the course of the degree program.

(policy created 9/27/2007)

CIT Policy on Statute of Limitations for Masters Degree Studies

All units required for a masters degree in the College of Engineering, whether earned in residence or transferred from another institution, must be recorded on the transcript within six years of the date on which the student enrolled in the program. This statutory period can be extended by the CIT Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for special circumstances that do not make it possible for the student to complete the requirements within the statutory period. Any request for a waiver of the statute of limitations for masters degree studies must be approved by the head of the department or program offering the masters degree, and by the CIT Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The waiver request must explain the exceptional circumstances that warrant an extension. For cases in which a waiver is granted, the waiver will cover specific courses and will specify a time period for completion of the program.

(policy created 2/26/2009)