



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Current Graduate Students

Graduate Programs Committee
Department of Computer Science & Software Engineering
Auburn University

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1. How can I register for courses?

Answer: You will need to go through AU Access to register. On the "My Academics" tab you can click "look up classes" towards the bottom and see what is offered if you search the semester (e.g., Fall 2021) and Computer Science and Software Engineering.

2. Can I identify my research focus areas and my advisor (major professor)?

Answer: Yes, you can. It is flexible for you to choose your focus areas and your advisor referred to as major professor in our department.

3. Are there concentration areas predetermined in our department?

Answer: Although there is no concentration area, our department offers three master's degree programs: (1) Master of Science in Computer Science and Software Engineering, (2) Master of Science in Cybersecurity Engineering, and (3) Master of Science in Data Science and Engineering. If you are a doctoral student, you will discuss with your advisor to determine your research concentration areas. The research expertise of our faculty includes cybersecurity, data science, software engineering, artificial intelligence, machine learning, deep learning, big data, cloud computing, computer networks, high-performance computing, and autonomous vehicles.

4. What steps do I need to complete once I select my advisor?

Answer: After you select your major professor, you follow the requirements (see details in the following webpage) to pursue your degree.

<https://aub.ie/requirements-and-regulations>



For details about the research interests of our faculty members, and other information about our program, please visit our website at (<http://www.eng.auburn.edu/comp>).

5. How to apply for a Ph.D. proposal defense (General Oral Exam)?

Answer: Ph.D. *proposal defense* is also referred to as *general oral exam*. A doctoral student seeking to take a general oral exam (i.e., proposal defense) should carry out the following steps:

- **Step 1:** Write a dissertation proposal
- **Step 2:** Prepare proposal presentation slides
- **Step 3:** Schedule a proposal defense date and time with the supervisory committee
- **Step 4:** Reserve the seminar room (Shelby 3129) for the defense
- **Step 5:** Submit the general oral exam application to the Graduate School. The link of the application form can be found here:
<https://gradforms.auburn.edu/forms/form-c.aspx>
- **Step 6:** Receive Form B (i.e., Announcement of General Oral Exam) and Form C (i.e. Report on the General Oral Exam) from the Graduate School; print and post Form B; bring the hardcopy of Form C to the supervisory committee on day of your proposal defense.
- **Step 7:** Present and defend the proposal
- **Step 8:** The committee makes a final decision on the oral exam by signing Form C, which an official report on the general oral exam.
- **Step 9:** If you pass Step 8, your title will be changed from “Ph.D. Student” to “Ph.D. Candidate”. Congratulations to you!

6. What is the minimum number of credit hours a GTA/GRA must be enrolled in each semester?

Answer: In general, GTAs/GRAs must be enrolled in nine (9) graduate credit course hours in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering per Fall or Spring semester. In summer semesters, GTAs should be enrolled in at least three (3) graduate credit course hours. Although exemptions may be approved by the director of graduate programs (GPO), the minimum number of credit hours is three (3) per semester.

7. What are suggested courses for the first semester?

Answer: If you are a master’s student, you may start your graduate study by taking COMP 6700/6 Software Processes and COMP 6710/6 Software Quality Assurance. You may also take one of the three core graduate-level courses (COMP7300 Advanced Operating



Systems, COMP7500 Advanced Computer Architecture, and COMP7270 Advanced Algorithms). If you are a Ph.D. student, please consult your advisor or the GPO (Dr. Qin) for your plan of study.

8. Can undergraduate students take graduate-level courses?

Answer: Yes, you can. You are suggested to apply to the accelerated Bachelor's/Master's program (ABM) offering outstanding CSSE students an opportunity to earn both the bachelor's and the master's degrees in less time and at less cost than usual. The ABM program allows exceptional CSSE students to count up to nine (9) hours towards both Bachelor's and Master's degrees. The detail information on the ABM program can be found [here](#).

9. How to apply for optional practical training (OPT)?

Answer: The detailed information pertaining to OPT application can be found here:

http://www.auburn.edu/academic/international/iss/opt_info.php

If you have a major professor, your major professor will (1) sign the OPT application form and (2) write a recommendation letter to support your application.

The application form is available here:

<http://www.auburn.edu/academic/international/iss/docs/opt.pdf>

The advisor recommendation form is available here:

<http://www.auburn.edu/academic/international/iss/docs/optlet.pdf>

For further questions on your OPT application, please contact Dir. Budic (omb0010@auburn.edu) at the Office of International Programs.

10. How to apply for curricular practical training (CPT) prior to summer internships?

Answer: After you accept a summer internship offer, you should carry out the following two steps.

Step 1: You must apply for curricular practical training or CPT. You will have to provide an official offer letter describing your summer internship position and salary. Detailed information pertaining to the CPT application can be found here:

http://www.auburn.edu/academic/international/iss/cpt_info.php

Step 2: You must register at least 1 credit hour directed study (i.e., COMP 7930 for Master's Students and COMP 8930 for Doctoral Students) in the summer during which you secure the internship. The directed study must be related to your summer internship project.



11. How many credit hours can I transfer from other institutions? [4]

Answer: If you are a Master's degree student, you may transfer up to 6 credit hours.

Doctoral students may transfer a total of 30 credit hours. Please note that

- Transfer credits must fall within the time limits of the degree (five years for MS and no limit for PhD).
- Transfer credits must be approved by the advisory committee and the dean of the Graduate School.
- You must provide an official transcript showing credit earned for the course and documentary evidence that the course is comparable to similar graduate courses in the programs in our department
- No course on which a grade lower than B was earned may be transferred.
- Credit will not be allowed if the combined GPA on graduate work taken at other schools is less than 3.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- You may not use the same graduate course for both undergraduate and graduate credit.

12. How to transfer credit hours from other institutions? [4][5]

Answer: You must specify your transferred credit hours in your committee selection form, which identifies student, committee chair, and members.

- Committee Selection Form: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/committee-selection/>

Notes:

- Transfer credits must be approved by the advisory committee (see also Committee Selection Form) and the dean of the Graduate School.
- Course-only master's students must form advisory committees to transfer credits from other institutions
- GPO is a default committee chair for course-only master's students.
- For all the transfer-credit cases, only graduate-level courses which resulted in a grade of "B" or better are eligible for transfer.
- You may download the policy on transfer credits from the link below:
<https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universypolicies/Policies/PolicyonTransferofCreditfromOtherInstitutions.pdf>
- If you are pursuing both MS and Ph.D. degrees from our department, your Auburn MS course work doesn't need to be listed in the Ph.D. Committee Selection form. If your committee approves, all the MS coursework would apply towards the doctoral degree.

13. How can I apply to the Ph.D. program as a current master's student?



Answer: There are two options for you.

Option 1: You can directly apply for the Ph.D. program to the graduate school. After you submit your application, please let me know. I will speed up your application process. Please bear in mind that you don't have to pay the application fee, because the application fee can be waived for current Auburn student. You may need to contact the graduate school to seek the application fee waiver.

Option 2: If your major professor (i.e., advisor) endorses your application for the Ph.D. program, then you can file the curriculum change form to update your graduate program from MSc to Ph.D .

Please find the curriculum change form here:

- Curriculum Change Form (Domestic Students):
<https://gradforms.auburn.edu/CurriculumChangeDomestic.aspx>
- Curriculum Change Form (International Students):
<https://gradforms.auburn.edu/CurriculumChangeIntl.aspx>

14. How can I add the Master's program into my PhD program?

Answer: You have to consult your major professor (i.e., advisor) about adding Master's program into your curriculum. After your advisor's approval, you should file the curriculum change form by adding the M.Sc. graduate program into your curriculum. Please keep in mind that you don't replace the Ph.D. program with the M.Sc. program; rather, you add M.Sc. while keeping your Ph.D. program.

Please find the curriculum change form here:

- Curriculum Change Form (Domestic Students):
<https://gradforms.auburn.edu/CurriculumChangeDomestic.aspx>
- Curriculum Change Form (International Students):
<https://gradforms.auburn.edu/CurriculumChangeIntl.aspx>

15. How to change Master's program from thesis option into non-thesis option?

Answer: If your major professor (advisor) endorses your program-change plan, then you can file the curriculum change form to update your graduate program from MS thesis option to non-thesis option

Please find the curriculum change form here:

- Curriculum Change Form (Domestic Students):
<https://gradforms.auburn.edu/CurriculumChangeDomestic.aspx>



- Curriculum Change Form (International Students):
<https://gradforms.auburn.edu/CurriculumChangeIntl.aspx>

After your advisor and the GPO (Dr. Qin) sign the form, you submit this form to the graduate school.

16. What is my security concern when work late in my lab in the Shelby Center?

Answer: Though Shelby is generally locked during nights, it is possible that non-authorized persons are able to gain entry to the building during these hours. A few incidents of unidentified person trying to enter a CSSE lab at around 2 am have been reported in the past. When you are working late in a lab, please make sure that the lab door is closed/locked, and do not open the door for anyone that you do not recognize.

If you see anything suspicious, call AU Threat Assessment Team at 844-5010 (the phone line is manned 24/7) or email them at autat@auburn.edu. If you feel threatened, call the police at 911 if an emergency, or at 501-3100 if a non-emergency.

17. Where can I apply for internships?

Answer: Mr. Lovelace announces internship opportunities through the CSSE-graduate-student mailing list if companies plan to hire interns from our department. You may search internship positions on indeed.com, dice.com, and [LinkedIn](http://LinkedIn.com).

18. Can I take a directed study course without an advisor?

Answer: In most cases, you must have an advisor (major professor) before registering for a directed study course. If a professor, who isn't your advisor, is willing to supervise you a directed study, you may take the course even without an advisor.

19. Can outside members serve on a graduate student's supervisory committee?

Answer: The Ph.D. supervisory committee must consist of four (4) Auburn Graduate Faculty members; the outside member will need to be the 5th member. The major professor and at least one committee member must be a resident member of the CSSE department and a member of the graduate faculty. Similarly, the MS-CSSE supervisory committee must consist of three (3) Auburn Graduate Faculty members; the outside member will need to be the 4th member. The Graduate School will need the graduate student to attach the curriculum vitae of the outside member, when the student submits his or her plan of study/committee notification.

20. How to have my plan of study approved by my supervisory committee?

Answer: Starting in the spring 2020 semester, your plan of study is no longer required by the graduate school. Nevertheless, it is prudent to lay out your plan of study with your advisor. The



sample form can be found here: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/faculty-staff/plan-of-study-instructions/>

In case you would like to transfer any credit hours and have exceptions approved, you should specify the transferred hours and exceptions in your committee selection form to be approved by your advisor and supervisory committee. See the detailed instructions on the committee selection form here: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/committee-selection/>

21. Who can clarify line items on my recent E-Bill?

Answer: E-Bill is administered by student financial services.

<http://www.auburn.edu/administration/business-finance/sfs/index.html?0>

Questions regarding specific charges need to be directed to the originating department.

- Athletic Tickets - Ticket Office (334) 844-4040
- Dining Plan - Dining Office (334) 844-8504
- On Campus Housing - Housing & Residence Life (334) 844-4580
- Panhellenic/Greek Student Life (334) 844-4600
- Parking Permits/Fines (334) 844-4143
- Tuition/Financial Aid- Student Financial Services (334) 844-4634
- Tuition Insurance/GradGuard (866) 724-4384
- Other Charges - Originating Department

If you receive a research or teaching assistantship award, you should contact Ms. Julie Reece (reeceju@auburn.edu) regarding your tuition fellowship award (a.k.a., tuition waiver). You may find details on your health insurance here: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/graduate-student-health-insurance-program/> If you have question on your health insurance fee, please contact Aime McCorcle at 334-844-5012 or by email at insurance@auburn.edu.

22. What is the template for our proposals, theses, and dissertations?

Answer: The proposal/thesis/dissertation template guideline can be found here:

<http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/etd-samples/>

23. Can I reapply to your graduate program after I am academically dismissed from the Graduate School?

Answer: Unfortunately, no. Once a student is academically dismissed from the Graduate School, the student cannot reapply to the Graduate School.

24. Can I obtain an electronic version of my graduate degree? (New)

Answer: You can't obtain an electronic copy of your Diploma, because it's mailed directly from the printers. Students can request a transcript, which verifies the degree has been conferred. This can be done via the link from the Registrar's website below:



<https://tsorder.studentclearinghouse.org/school/ficcode/00100900>

25. How to request my official transcripts from Auburn University? (New)

Answer: If you need help or have questions about the Clearinghouse's Transcript ordering service, contact our office at (334) 844-2544 or via e-mail at transcripts@auburn.edu or contact the National Student Clearinghouse at (703) 742-4200.

26. How to request my employment verification? [6] (New)

Answer: In 2016, Auburn University implemented a new service to execute employment and wage verification requests of former and current employees. These requests are directed to i2Verify, an income and employment verification company which provides immediate access to employment and wage data. Please refer to the link below for instructions on how to submit your employment verification request using i2Verify at

http://www.auburn.edu/administration/human_resources/i2verify.html

27. What should I do after I am placed on probation? [7] (New)

Answer: Once you are placed on probation, you have two semesters to bring your GPA up to 3.0. Failing to do so will push you to the suspension state. Nevertheless, you may be readmitted only after completion of a remediation plan recommended by the academic unit and approved by the dean of the Graduate School. If you fail to complete the remediation plan, you will be dismissed from our programs. Please refer to the Graduate School Policy on Academic Standing for details [7].

28. How should I apply for graduation? [1][5] (New)

Answer: There are three steps toward graduation application.

- Step 1: You must submit your committee selection form prior to applying for graduation. The online submit committee selection form can be found here [5]:
<http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/committee-selection/>
If you are an MS-CSSE (Non-Thesis Option) or MS-DSE student, you choose Dr. Qin (xzq0001@auburn.edu) as your advisor without adding any other committee members. In case you plan to transfer any credit hours from your former institutions, you should check the exception box in the form.
- Step 2: After your committee selection form is submitted and approved, you will proceed to applying for graduation. One term before you plan to graduate, you must fill out your Graduation Application (under AU Access, on My Academics) here:
<https://auaccess.auburn.edu/web/auaccess-home/my-academics>



- Step 3: You must register for two 0-hour courses – GRAD 7000 Clearing Registration and UNIV 4AA0.

29. What’s the difference between the degree names of MS (Thesis) and MS (Non-Thesis)? (New)

Answer: See snippet of the MS and MSNT transcript below.

Primary Program

Master of Science (non-thesis)

Program:	MS Cmp/Sftwr Eng, Non-Thesis
College:	College of Engineering
Major and Department:	Computer Sci & Software Engr, Computer Sci & Software Engr.

***Transcript type:Unofficial Transcript is NOT Official ***

AWARDED:

Awarded: Master of Science (non-thesis) **Degree Date:**

Curriculum Information

Master of Science

Program:	MS Comp Sci & Softw Eng Thesis
College:	College of Engineering
Major and Department:	Computer Sci & Software Engr, Computer Sci & Software Engr.

***Transcript type:Unofficial Transcript is NOT Official ***

AWARDED:

Awarded: Master of Science **Degree Date:**

Curriculum Information

30. What’s the difference between COMP 7930 and COMP 7980? (New)

Answer: Both COMP 7980 Capstone Engineering Project and COMP 7930 Directed Study are research and software development orientated courses. There are the following few differences between these two courses. (1) COMP 7980 is a required course for MS-CYBE and MS-DSE students; COMP 7930 is an elective course for Master’s degree students. (2) COMP 7930 requires you to submit a directed study form to register for the class. Your major professor must create a dedicated syllabus for your COMP 7930. The policy on COMP 7930 can be found here: <http://www.eng.auburn.edu/comp/academics/graduate/current-graduate-students/guidelines-policies/directed-study.html>

(3) You must click here to register for COMP 7980:
https://auburn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aaDReFSyXfx8HmR



31. How many credit hours will be covered by my tuition fellowship? [8] (New)

Answer: University funded tuition support will be limited to 110% of the number of hours required for a graduate degree. For example, a doctoral student continuously supported with a qualifying assistantship is in a program that requires a minimum of 66 hours to complete. The maximum Graduate Tuition Fellowship support available to the PhD student is 110% of 66 hours, which is 72 hours. If the student has not completed the degree in 72 supported hours and she/he retains an assistantship, tuition and fees will be charged at in-state rates thereafter.

32. How to track my university-paid tuition record? [8] (New)

Answer: The *Graduate Tuition Fellowship System* (GTUFS) shows you (1) the number of hours taken toward their degree as of the current semester, (2) the number of hours allowed under the tuition waiver, and (3) the number of tuition hours remaining to be covered by the waiver.. The system indicates the number of credit hours to be covered by the tuition fellowship in the future semesters.

GTUFS: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/guidelines-for-graduate-tuition-fellowships/>

You may follow the steps below to access GTUFS:

- Log-In to AU Access
- Click-on the Student Menu option of the My Academics tab.
- On the “Student” tab, click Graduate Tuition Fellowship System (GTUFS).

33. Who is my point of contact at the graduate school? (New)

Answer: For questions, contact your Graduate School adviser, Ms. Mackenzi Griggers (mrg0014@auburn.edu) for last names A-I, Mr. Ibrahim Kareem (ilk0001@auburn.edu) for last names J-R, and Dir. Sherry Ray (raysher@auburn.edu) for last names S-Z.

34. When will I receive my degree awarded by the graduate school? (New)

Answer: The Registrar’s office will roll degrees by the end of the semester, in which you are graduating. Then, the print request will be sent to the printers - an outside company for printing. This company processes the order and mail the diplomas to the addresses supplied in the diploma application. Generally, it takes 9 to 10 weeks from graduation. The final transcript will be available for order after the commencement.

35. Can I pursue both MS-CSSE and MS-DSE degrees? (New)

Answer: Yes, you can pursue both MS-CSSE (Master of Science in Computer Science and Software Engineering) and MS-DSE (Master of Data Science and Engineering – Data Engineering Option) degree programs. 6 or 9 credit hours will be double counted towards to these two degrees, depending on how you intend to handle the credit-hour transfer. You can opt for one of the two paths. (1) If you first complete MS-DSE degree that entails 30 credit hours, you can



transfer 9 credit hours to MS-CSSE (non-thesis option) program that requires 33 hours. If you first finish your MS-CSSE program, you can only transfer 6 hours from MS-CSSE into your MS-DSE program. To save your tuition cost, you should elect path 1 - being admitted into the MS-DSE program first, followed by the MS-CSSE program.

36. Can graduate students receive honors upon their graduations? (New)

Answer: Auburn's graduate-level honor is Phi Kappa Phi, which requires a 4.0 and membership. You may find more information about Phi Kappa Phi here: https://aub.ie/phi_kappa_phi

References

- [1] Graduation Information: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/#1464968981414-6a80020b-54ab>
- [2] Doctoral Completion Checklist: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/doctoral-completion-checklist/>
- [3] Master's Completion Checklist: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/masters-completion-checklist/>
- [4] Graduate School Policy on Transfer of Credit from Other Institutions: <https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonTransferofCreditfromOtherInstitutions.pdf>
- [5] Committee Selection: <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/committee-selection/>
- [6] Wage and Employment Verification (i2Verify): http://www.auburn.edu/administration/human_resources/i2verify.html
- [7] Graduate School Policy on Academic Standing <https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/GraduateSchoolPolicyonAcademicStanding.pdf>
- [8] Guidelines for Graduate Tuition Fellowships <http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/guidelines-for-graduate-tuition-fellowships/>