GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDE

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

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Degree Programs
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- **Master of Science (Non-Thesis)**
  - Course Based; Non-Thesis Degree Option

- **Master of Science (M.S.)**
  - Course and Research Based / Thesis Degree Option

- **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**
M.S. (Non-Thesis)*
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- 30 credits of 6000/7000 level graded courses in science/engineering.
- 21 credits of graded courses in MECH 6000/7000 category.
  » Course substitution from other engineering/science disciplines is permitted when appropriate MECH courses are unavailable.
- 9 credits of graded courses from science/engineering category (could include additional courses in MECH 6000/7000 category).
- Three thesis committee members (including a major professor).
- Generally limited to unfunded on-campus or off-campus students.

- On-campus students are required to attend Mechanical Engineering Seminars.

*As of Spring 2011, there is no comprehensive final/oral exam by the committee requirement.
M.S. (Thesis Option)
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- 30 credits (graded courses and research) of 6000/7000 level in science/engineering.
- 21 credits of MECH 6000/7000 level course work (including 6 credits of MECH 7990: Research & Thesis).

   » Course substitution from other engineering/science disciplines is permitted when appropriate MECH courses are unavailable.

- 9 credits of graded courses from any science/engineering category (could include graded courses in MECH 6000/7000 category).
- Written thesis submission required.
- Thesis defense / Oral examination by a committee (Graduate School Form-9 needs to be completed).
- Three committee members including the major professor (two members including the major professor must be members of Auburn University graduate faculty).
- Thesis option required for all on-campus students on GTA/GRA/Fellowship.
- Thesis research typically involves effort well beyond 6 credits of course work.
- Required to attend Mechanical Engineering Seminars.
Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- 60 total credit hours of courses and research beyond B.S. degree.
- Minimum of 30 credits of graded courses at 6000/7000/8000 level.
- 21 credits of graded MECH 7000/8000 level course work.
  » Substitution from other engineering/science disciplines is permitted when appropriate MECH courses are unavailable.
- 9 credits of graded courses in a coordinated MINOR area outside MECH category and in science/engineering areas (e.g., 3 MATH or ELEC courses OR 3 courses in say ‘controls’)
- At least 10 credits of MECH 8990: Research & Dissertation.
- Four committee members including the major professor, one member from the MINOR area (+ 1 Graduate school representative for final dissertation review and defense). A majority of members, including the major professor, must be members of the Graduate Faculty at Level 2.
- Written qualifying exams (Coordinated by candidate’s major professor).
- General oral exam by a committee (submit “General Oral Examination Application Form” to Grad School before the exam).
- Dissertation and final oral exam (dissertation defense) (submit “General Doctoral Examination Application Form” to Grad School before the exam).
- Allow one semester gap between general doctoral exam and dissertation defense.
- Required to attend Mechanical Engineering Seminars.
M.S. to Ph.D.
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- If you are currently an M.S. student, you have the option of seeking admission to Ph.D. program.
- You need to formally apply to Ph.D. program and receive admission.
- A curriculum change from M.S. to Ph.D. is not allowed.
Qualifying exam consists of a **written part** and an **oral part**, preferably within the **first two years** of matriculation.

Your major professor, in coordination with the student’s dissertation committee, will administer the written qualifying exam. Subsequently, the major professor will also coordinate an oral exam (or proposal).

The syllabus/topics for the written exam will be made available to the student in advance; contact the major professor.

Written exam results will be intimated to the student in writing.

A few weeks prior to the oral exam, fill-out ‘**General Oral Examination Application Form**’ at the graduate school website.
Ph.D. Qualifying Exam: Written Part
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- **As a minimum**, the student is required to pass (i) two MECH subject area exams, OR (ii) one exam in MECH and one exam in the MINOR area.

- Written exams will generally focus on undergraduate/technical elective course content.

- Written exams are developed and administered by the major professor and members of the committee.

- Written exam format: In-class, 3 hours per subject area, 70% passing grade or other minimum passing score decided by the Committee

- The student gets two attempts to pass.

- Written exam should be taken in the first two years of the program.
Plan-of-Study
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- Identify the major professor.
- Discuss with your major professor the required course work and research topic.
- Submit a plan-of-study after 2-3 semesters by completing MECH specific forms available at: https://www.eng.auburn.edu/mech/academics/graduate/plan-of-study.html.
- Plan-of-study can be revised but needs approval when it is revised.
Credit Transfers
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- Total number of credit hours that may be transferred from another institution towards a master’s or doctoral degree may be no more than 50% of the total course credit hours for the program.
- Can only transfer courses with a ‘B’ or better grade.
- Cannot transfer credits to improve GPA at Auburn (e.g., to resolve academic probation).
- Transfer credits must fall within the time limits of the degree.
- Transfer credits must be approved by the advisory committee and the graduate school.
Second Master’s Degree

Graduate School Policy:

- To receive a second master’s degree, the student fulfills all requirements applicable to any other master’s degree, including the thesis, if appropriate. The student may, on recommendation of the advisory committee, transfer a limited number of credit hours from the previous master’s degree. At least 24 semester hours, or 50% of the total hours required for the degree (whichever is greater) must be unique to each degree and be taken at Auburn University.
Reduced Course Load (RCL) form (International Students)

– The ‘gold form’ previously used by all international graduate students to take a reduced course load (below the full-time load of 9 credits per semester) after completing the departmental course requirement is no longer needed.

– All international students are required to register for 9 credits every semester until the completion of the degree with a few exceptions.

– Visit the Office of International Programs website for information on taking a reduced course load and file a RCL form if required:
  http://www.auburn.edu/academic/international/isss/forms.php

Probation

– If a student’s GPA falls below 3.0, the graduate school will place him/her on ‘probation.’ Students who are on probation are not eligible for GTA support from the department.
Curricular Practical Training (CPT): International Students

- Curricular practical training is currently not an integral part of the Mechanical Engineering Department’s graduate curriculum.
- It is optional and generally limited to a student who is enrolled in MS (Non-Thesis) program and not receiving financial support from the department.
- Students are not eligible for CPT until they have completed one year at Auburn University.
- Graduate students receiving financial support as a GRA need to consult their major professor for securing necessary approvals for CPT.
Research Publications
Department of Mechanical Engineering

- Students pursuing MS and PhD degrees are expected to publish their research in peer-reviewed technical conference proceedings and archival quality journals.

- A minimum of one peer-reviewed technical conference publication and/or one archival quality journal publication is suggested for MS students.

- A minimum of two peer reviewed technical conference publications and/or two archival quality journal publications is suggested for PhD students.

- Consult your major professor for additional details.
In addition to the soft copy of thesis/dissertation required by the Graduate School,

- Students are required to submit 3 paper copies of approved/signed thesis/dissertation to Mechanical Engineering Department
- The paper copies should be printed on white bond watermarked paper of at least 16 pound weight and at least 25 percent cotton content
- The Mechanical Engineering Department will bind the copies and distribute one copy to the major professor, one copy to the departmental library and one to the student
- Cost of binding additional copies will be the responsibility of the student
Graduation
Department of Mechanical Engineering

You need to:

– **Be a registered student** during the semester you graduate

– **Complete graduation check** with the graduate school

– Return all keys to Access Control at AU Facilities Division

– Return books, desk keys, and other items to Mechanical Engineering Office

– Turn-in original data-log books, lab records, electronic records of research to your major professor

– Provide Mechanical Engineering Office your future contact information (complete graduate student exit questionnaire at https://www.eng.auburn.edu/mech/academics/graduate/survey.html)

– As an alumnus of Mechanical Engineering, we want you to keep in touch with us; please update your contact information as you progress in your career