

Current Graduate Student Frequently Asked Questions

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Independent Study

Q: How do I register for Independent Study?

A: Independent Study agreement forms are available in the Graduate Advising office. Each student wishing to complete an independent study course must complete the independent study agreement form and submit it to the graduate advisor during the add period so that you can be registered. Independent Study requests go to the graduate committee first for approval.

Independent study credits are "controlled enrollment" credits so students cannot register themselves. Please do not request an independent study be added in the middle of a semester. The course number for MS candidates is MCEN 5848. Independent study course work cannot exceed 25 percent of the course work required for the master's degree. The independent study course number for Ph.D. candidates is MCEN 6848. Further information about independent study course work is on the second page of the independent study agreement form.

Thesis/Dissertation Hours

Q: How do I register for Thesis/Dissertation credits?

MS Students:

A: Students who wish to write a masters thesis must register for 6 credits of master's thesis credit. Although not a strict requirement, students typically enroll for 3 masters thesis credits each semester over a two-semester period. The course number is MCEN 6959; however, master's thesis credit is controlled enrollment credit so students cannot register themselves. Contact the graduate advisor for registration during the add period.

Note: Masters thesis credits cannot be applied toward the Ph.D. program.

PhD Students:

A: Students should contact the graduate advisor to register for Ph.D. dissertation credits during the add period. The course number is MCEN 8999; however, dissertation credit is controlled enrollment credit so students cannot register themselves. Please make an appointment with the graduate advisor to discuss a timeline for dissertation hours.

Q: How many Ph.D. dissertation credits should I register for?

A: The number of dissertation credits for which a student should enroll largely depends on their progress in the program. Please make an appointment with the graduate advisor to discuss a timeline for dissertation hours. To complete the requirements for the Ph.D. a student must register for a minimum of 30 dissertation credit hours. Distribution of those hours is as follows:

- a student may not register for more than 10 dissertation credit hours in any one semester, including summer.
- not more than 10 credit hours taken in semesters prior to the semester in which the comprehensive examination is passed may be counted in the 30 dissertation hours required for the degree.
- not more than 10 dissertation hours of credit taken the semester in which the comprehensive examination is passed may be included in the 30 credit hours required for the degree.

Continuous registration. A student must register for a minimum of five dissertation hours in the fall and spring semesters of each year, beginning with the semester following the passing of the comprehensive exam and extending through the semester in which the dissertation is successfully defended (final examination).

More information is available in the Graduate School Rules,

http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/_docs/GraduateSchoolRules.pdf, p. 21.

Full-Time Status

Q: I need to be registered as a full-time student. What is considered full-time?

A: There are two sets of rules defining full-time.

1. The first set of rules is imposed by the Graduate School. In order to be considered a full-time student under the Graduate School criteria, you must be enrolled in:

For MS Students:

- 1 hour masters thesis OR
- 5 hours of graduate level coursework OR
- 8 hours of graduate and undergraduate coursework combined OR
- 12 hours of undergraduate coursework OR
- 1-3 hours of Master's Candidate for Degree.

For PhD Students:

- 1 hour dissertation OR
- 5 hours of graduate level coursework OR
- 8 hours of graduate and undergraduate coursework combined OR
- 12 hours of undergraduate coursework OR
- 5 dissertation hours (post-comp PhDs)

2. The second set of rules is imposed by the federal government for federal financial aid purposes.

Full-time: A graduate student who is enrolled in at least nine semesters* in a fall, spring or summer term.

Half-time: A graduate student who is enrolled in at least four semester hours* in a fall, spring or summer term.

*excludes Masters Candidate for Degree courses; they cannot be included in the semester hour calculation for financial aid eligibility and/or loan deferment.

Full-time	Half-time	Less than Half-time
Eligible for Aid	Eligible for Aid	Ineligible for Aid
Eligible for Loan Deferment	Eligible for Loan Deferment	Ineligible for Loan Deferment

Auditing/Dropping/Course Repetition

Q: How do I audit a course?

Degree seeking students cannot audit courses.

Q: How do I drop a course after the drop deadlines?

In order to petition the Dean to drop a class after the final drop deadline has passed, you are required to demonstrate and provide documentation showing that there were extenuating circumstances beyond your control (such as illness, injury, a death in your family, etc.) that occurred after the drop deadline that prevented you from attending/participating the course for which you were registered.

Q: How do I get a grade of "incomplete" in a course?

To receive a grade of "I" Incomplete you must receive the consent of the instructor and be able to demonstrate that for documented reasons beyond your control, you have been unable to complete course requirements in the semester enrolled. See, Graduate Handbook, page 8.

<http://www.colorado.edu/aerospace/GradStudentHandbook.pdf>

Q: How do I repeat a course?

On March 5, 2009, the Boulder Faculty Assembly voted to eliminate the Course Repetition program on the Boulder Campus. Students will be able to repeat courses under the course repetition program only through the summer semester of 2010. Beginning in the fall of 2010, all grades will be included in grade point calculations, including courses which are repeated.

Comprehensive Exam (PhD's only)

Q: I am ready to take my comprehensive exam. What is the process? (PhD students only)

A: Forms. Students who are taking their comprehensive exams should complete the Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree and Doctoral Examination Report forms available on the Graduate School website, <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html>. Copies of these forms are also available in the Graduate Advisor's office. Both forms should be completed at least two weeks in advance of the comprehensive exam so that all signatures can be collected and they can be forwarded to the Graduate School for approval.

Coursework. Students should have completed all 42 of their required coursework hours, or those hours should be pending in the semester in which they take the comprehensive exam. Students cannot not be admitted into candidacy until they have fulfilled the coursework requirements.

Exam Committee. Each comprehensive exam committee is comprised of 5 members. More information about the comprehensive exam committee is available in the Graduate School Rules, http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/_docs/GraduateSchoolRules.pdf, p. 18. Each committee member must have a regular or special faculty appointment.

Faculty Appointments. Each committee member must have a faculty appointment on file with the Graduate School. Contact the Graduate Advisor to verify that the necessary appointments are in place as soon as you form your committee. It takes 2-4 weeks to process a faculty appointment. Committee members who do not have established appointments should submit their most recent curriculum vitae to the Graduate Advisor as soon as possible.

Graduation Process

Q: I am graduating with my master's degree. What is the process?

A: Students who wish to graduate must complete the appropriate paperwork at least one week before the deadlines posted on the Graduate School website. Masters graduation deadlines are available at,

http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/docs/master_candidate_deadlines_09-10.doc

Forms are located on the Graduate School website,

<http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html> and in the Graduate Advisor's Office.

- Masters, Thesis Option. Masters students who are completing a thesis should complete the *Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree*, *Master's Examination Report*, *Diploma Card*, and *Final Grade Card* before the posted deadlines so that departmental signatures can be collected and the masters committee can be approved by the Graduate School. The *Candidacy Application* and *Diploma Card* should be submitted at least two weeks before the posted deadline; the *Master's Exam* form must be submitted to the Graduate Advisor at least two weeks before the thesis exam defense so that the master's thesis committee can be approved by the Graduate School. Each committee member must have a regular or special faculty appointment.
Faculty Appointments. Each committee member must have a faculty appointment on file with the Graduate School. Contact the Graduate Advisor to verify that the necessary appointments are in place as soon as you form your committee. It takes 2-4 weeks to process a faculty appointment. Committee members who do not have established appointments should submit their most recent curriculum vitae to the Graduate Advisor as soon as possible. Additional information about master's thesis committees is available in the Graduate School Rules, <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/docs/GraduateSchoolRules.pdf>, p. 17.

Although the Candidacy Application and Masters Exam forms are available on the Graduate School website, <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html>; the Diploma Card and Final Grade Card are not available electronically. These forms can be picked up in the Graduate Advisor's Office.

Additional information about graduating with a master's thesis is available at,

http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/master_graduation_packet_thesis.html

- Masters, Non Thesis Option. Masters students who are not completing a thesis should complete the Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree, Degree Plan Approval Form, and Diploma Card at least one week before the posted deadline so that departmental signatures can be collected. The Candidacy Application and Degree Plan Approval forms are available on the Graduate School website, <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html>; however, the Diploma Card is not available electronically. This form can be picked up in the Graduate Advisor's Office.
Additional information is available at, http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/master_graduation_packet_non_thesis.html
- BS/MS – Concurrent degree students should complete the forms and processes described above for masters with thesis and masters, non-thesis option. In addition, BS/MS candidates must complete two supplemental forms: Concurrent Bachelor's Master's Degree Program Supplement to the Application for Admission to Candidacy, and Concurrent Bachelor's/Master's Certificate of Completion of the Requirements for the Bachelor's Degree. Both supplemental forms are available on the Graduate School website, <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html> or in the Graduate Advisor's Office.

Q: I am not able to defend my master's thesis by the defense date and I don't want to register for more credits. What can I do?

A: Masters students must be registered on the Boulder campus as a regular degree-seeking student during the semester the examination is passed. Students who are unable to meet the defense deadline may defend at any point up to the day before the next semester courses begin and the defense will be considered as passed during that semester. For example, if a student is unable to meet the spring defense date but passes his/her defense before the start of summer classes, it is considered a spring defense. The student will not graduate in spring and should follow the summer deadlines.

Q: I am a graduating with a Ph.D. What is the process?

A: Students who wish to graduate with their PhD must meet the appropriate deadlines as posted on the Graduate School website. Doctoral graduation deadlines are at, http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/docs/doctoral_candidate_deadlines_09-10.doc

The *Doctoral Examination Report* and *Leaflet* forms must be submitted to the Graduate Advisor at least two weeks before the final dissertation exam so that the dissertation committee can be approved.

Faculty Appointments. Each committee member must have a faculty appointment on file with the Graduate School. Contact the Graduate Advisor to verify that the necessary appointments are in place as soon as you form your committee. It takes 2-4 weeks to process a faculty appointment. Committee members who do not have established appointments should submit their most recent curriculum vitae to the Graduate Advisor as soon as possible. Note: the outside member of a Ph.D. final dissertation committee MUST have a regular or tenured graduate faculty appointment.

Additional information about Ph.D. dissertation committees is available in the Graduate School Rules, <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/docs/GraduateSchoolRules.pdf>, pp. 18-19.

In addition to the *Doctoral Examination Report* and *Leaflet* forms, graduating PhD candidates must complete the *Diploma Card* and *Final Grade Card*, available in the Graduate Advisor's Office.

If for some reason, a student is unable to graduate, a *Diploma Card* must be resubmitted in the following semester by the posted graduation deadline.

Q: I am not able to defend my dissertation by the defense date and I don't want to register for more credits. What can I do?

A: PhD students must be registered as full time, regular degree-seeking students at CU-Boulder, for a minimum of 5 dissertation hours during the semester in which they pass the final exam. Students who are unable to meet the defense deadline may defend at any point up to the day before the next semester courses begin and the defense will be considered as passed during that semester. For example, if a student is unable to meet the spring defense date but passes his/her defense before the start of summer classes, it is considered a spring defense. The student will not graduate in spring and should follow the summer deadlines.

Petitions

Q: I am unable to meet a curriculum requirement or wish to waive a requirement. Is there a petition process?

A: Students who wish to waive a curriculum requirement or substitute a course should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee. This petition form is available on the MCEN grad website, or

from the graduate advisor. Your petition should contain the reason(s) for your request, i.e. what action you are requesting the Graduate Committee to take, and include detailed information about why the request should be approved. Supplementary materials such as course descriptions or syllabi may also be included. All petitions should be routed through the Graduate Advisor. Under no circumstances should a petition be submitted directly to the Graduate Committee.

Transferring Credits

Q: I have taken graduate level courses from another engineering program. Are any of these courses transferable?

A: Generally speaking, graduate level courses that have not been used toward a bachelor's degree, and in which grades of B or better are earned, are eligible for transfer into the MS or PhD programs. A maximum of 9 credits can be transferred to the MS program, and a maximum of 21 credits can be transferred to the PhD program.

Students should complete the *Request for Transfer of Credit* form, <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html>. An official transcript must be included with your request to transfer credit. An official transcript may be in your student file. Check with the Graduate Advisor before requesting another. The *Transfer of Credit* form should be routed through the Graduate Advisor so that departmental signatures can be collected.