

GRADUATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO 2023

Important contact information

Department of Computer Science (M/C 152)
University of Illinois Chicago
Student Affairs Office, SEO 905
851 South Morgan Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7053

Student Affairs Office	312-996-5940
Main Office	312-996-3422

Graduate E-mail:	cs-grad@uic.edu
Department Web site:	www.cs.uic.edu/

Graduate Student Affairs Staff	
Prof. Barbara Di Eugenio	Director of Graduate Studies cs-dgs@uic.edu
Roksana Sady	Assistant Director, Student Affairs

Student Affairs Staff	
Santhi Nannapaneni	Director, Student Affairs
Christina Martinez	Program Assistant
Adrien Cook	Program Student Advisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Academic Integrity.....	3
Student Code of Conduct	5
Master of Science Degree Requirements... ..	7
Master of Science: Thesis Option... ..	9
Master of Science: Project Option... ..	11
Doctor of Philosophy Degree Requirements... ..	13
Doctor of Philosophy Qualifying Exam Information.....	17
Doctor of Philosophy: Preliminary Examination... ..	21
Doctor of Philosophy: Final Dissertation Defense... ..	23
General Graduation Guidelines... ..	25
CS Graduate Student Processes... ..	27
Financial Aid Information.....	30
Departmental Information for TAs	33
Petitions.....	36
General Information... ..	37

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As stated by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), “our goal at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) is to provide the broadest access to the highest levels of intellectual excellence. Such intellectual excellence is only within our reach when individual students commit to pursuing their education with the utmost honesty.” The faculty of the department of Computer Science expect all students to perform their academic work with the high ethical standards of the engineering profession. **Any student in violation of the Academic Integrity policy will NOT be funded by the department, especially as a Teaching Assistant.**

The Office of the Dean of Students outlines the guidance for conduct, academic integrity and disciplinary policy. Details of reporting misconducts, standards of conduct and resolution methods are outlined in the [student disciplinary handbook](#). Any instance or variation of violations will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Other violations may be added if deemed appropriate.

The standards of conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

Cheating

Either intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, people, or study aids in any academic exercise; providing to, or receiving from another person, any kind of unauthorized assistance on any examination or assignment.

You cannot reuse any work done outside a certain class to satisfy that class’ requirements, unless you are given explicit permission by the instructor of that class. If in doubt, ask.

Fabricating Academic Materials

Unauthorized reproduction, falsification, lack of attribution, or invention of any information or citations in an academic exercise.

Facilitating academic dishonesty/plagiarism

Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.

Bribes, favors, threats

Bribing, attempting to bribe, promising favors to, or making threats against any person with the intention of affecting a record of a grade or evaluation of academic performance; any conspiracy with another person who then takes, or attempts to take action on behalf of, or at the direction of the student.

Examination by proxy

Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else other than the student is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy or substitute.

Grade tampering

Any unauthorized change, attempt to change, or alteration of grades

Non-original work

Any unauthorized submission or attempt to submit any written work, written in whole or in part, by someone other than the student. All the work you submit must be your own; you should not use paraphrasing software (like QuillBot) or AI software for writing (like ChatGPT) or any AI tools for content generation (spell-checkers are allowed), unless explicitly allowed to do so. If in doubt about the specific tool, ask.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

In addition to the University policies, the Computer Science department at UIC believes our community should be open for everyone. As such, we are committed to providing a safe, welcoming environment for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race/ethnicity, religion or otherwise included in the [University Nondiscrimination Statement](#). As is the case for all of UIC, neither difference nor disadvantage should stand in the way of intellectual and professional achievement.

As in all communities, members must assume the responsibility and obligation to uphold community integrity, standards, and drive toward success. There is an expectation that members' behaviors and actions, including language, do not violate the rights and privileges of other community members. There is room for everyone's success. Someone else's achievements do not diminish your own.

These expectations along with all UIC general community standards should be followed whenever you are acting as a member of the community (i.e., during in person or virtual classes, using course approved chat systems, using the CS lounge, attending UIC and department events, etc.)

Expected behavior of *all* community members:

- Be respectful, professional, collaborative and considerate of others.
- Do not use discriminatory, demeaning or harassing behavior or language.
- Sexual harassment in any form is not tolerated. See [Office for Access and Equity](#) for policies.
- Be advocates for your peers. Alert someone (i.e., a faculty member, TA, your academic advisor and/or the Office of the Dean of Students) if you are concerned about another student.
- Respect the boundaries of others, including when speaking or writing. Not sure? *Ask*.
- Participate in creating an inclusive environment that promotes:
 - Professional, intellectual and academic achievements
 - Mutual respect, care and collaboration

Positive examples:

- By default, addressing faculty by their title of Professor or Dr.
- By default, addressing peers by their correct name and preferred gender pronoun
- Offer words of encouragement before and after a difficult exam or project
- Having patience with others who are doing their best, and helping them – “we win when we all win”
- Saying nothing when you have nothing constructive or positive to add

Negative examples:

- The use of slang or profanity that is hurtful, demeaning, or destructive
- The use of abbreviations and acronyms that are hurtful, demeaning, or destructive
- Referring to others in non-professional ways such as “dear”, “girl”, “boy”, “bro”, “dude”
- Posting inappropriate remarks or humor (remember that humor often offends in subtle ways)
- Diminishing the work of others (e.g., “if you were smart like me you would have finished in an hour”)

COMPLIANCE

You are expected to comply immediately when asked to stop unacceptable behavior. Non-compliance will be reported to the Director of Graduate Studies, and possibly the Dean of Students and the Office for Access and Equity

REPORTING

If you experience or witness a breach of our Code of Conduct, report to a TA, faculty or staff member. We commit to addressing behaviors that do not follow our Code of Conduct. As mandatory reporters, faculty/staff will report allegations of sexual misconduct, unlawful discrimination, or harassment to our Title IX Coordinator.

MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Semester Hours Required: 36

Coursework:

Requirements depend on the specific **option** selected:

- Thesis: At least 28 hours, 12 hours of which must be CS courses at the 500 level (excluding CS 590, CS 597, CS 598, CS 599)
- Project: At least 32 hours, 12 hours of which must be CS courses at the 500 level (excluding CS 590, CS 597, CS 598, CS 599)
- Coursework Only: 36 hours, 16 hours of which must be CS courses at the 500 level (excluding CS 590, CS 597, CS 598, CS 599)

*The following constraints apply to all options:

- Only one CS 594 special topics course may be counted toward the 500-level requirement.
- A maximum of 8 hours of UIC non-CS graduate courses may be counted toward the overall coursework requirement. However, prior formal approval via petition is required. Consult CS Student Affairs office for details on submitting a petition.
- Courses taken as an undergraduate that are nearly equivalent to CS graduate courses offered at UIC should not be repeated. Specifically, courses taken as undergraduates at UIC will not earn graduate credit, if repeated at graduate level.

Comprehensive Examination: None

Research Credits:

Requirements depend on the specific **option** selected:

- Thesis*: At least 8 hours of CS 598. Although students may register for more than 8 hours with advisor permission, only 8 hours of CS 598 may be used toward the MS CS degree.
- Project*: At least 4 hours of CS 597. Although students may register for more than 4 hours with advisor permission, only 4 hours of CS 597 may be used toward the MS CS degree.
- Coursework Only: No research hours required. Students must earn all 36 hours from coursework as described in “Coursework Only” above.

* For details on fulfilling the thesis and project requirements, refer to the ‘Master of Science: Thesis Option’ and ‘Master of Science: Project Option’ portion of this manual.

Additional Regulations

Advisor. Project and thesis option students should select a research advisor as they progress in their program and identify a research area. Students should contact the faculty in their area of interest directly to request permission to complete a MS Thesis or Project with them. Coursework only students, and project and thesis students prior to selecting their research

advisor, can refer to academic advisors (the staff in the student affairs' office), or the major advisor, i.e. the Director of Graduate Studies.

Limited Standing. Students admitted with limited standing status must complete the conditions as specified in the admission letter. Failure to satisfy the conditions will result in dismissal from the program. Consult with Student Affairs staff for questions related to limited standing.

Time Limitation. All degree requirements must be completed within five years of initial registration in the degree program. Different time allowances apply to students on time-limited visas. Students who fail to graduate within five years will be dismissed from the Graduate College for failure to progress. <http://grad.uic.edu/masters-degrees>.

Registration. Refer to [Graduate College policy](#) on course load needed for Upass, financial aid, assistantships, and visa status maintenance requirements. CS graduate students must be in compliance with the [CS registration policy](#) at all times. Students on a time-limited visa must consult Office of International Service (OIS) on registration requirements. Registration is required if a student plans to use any university facilities. MS students choosing the project/thesis option are not required to register to graduate once they have completed all course credit requirements and registered for the necessary research hours. If needed, students can petition to register for zero hours - consult the UIC graduate catalog <https://grad.uic.edu/zero-hour-registration/> for details.

Graduation Guidelines. Refer to the 'General Graduation Guidelines' of this manual for details on the process. <https://cs.uic.edu/graduation-guidelines-ms-phd/>.

Transfer Credit. After admission to the MS program, students may petition to transfer coursework completed prior to the start of the graduate program in CS @ UIC and not used for previous degree. A maximum of 9 semester hours earned outside the University are eligible for transfer if they are equivalent to UIC CS graduate courses; credits from non US institutions are generally not allowed. A transcript showing the courses with grades and course syllabi, along with the syllabus of the UIC course for which equivalence is requested, must be submitted with the Transfer Credit petition. If the course(s) were taken as part of a previous earned degree and were not used to satisfy requirements for that degree, the student must also provide an official letter from the university stating the course(s) were not used to satisfy any prior degree requirements.

Students changing from "non-degree" to "degree" status at UIC may petition up to 12 semester hours of credit earned. Only graduate level courses in which a grade of A or B was earned will be eligible for transfer. Courses completed outside UIC after a student starts their graduate studies in the Computer Science program at UIC are not transferable.

Petition Process. Refer to 'Petition' section of the manual or the Student Affairs office for details on the petition process. It is critical for you to provide sufficient justification as to why your petition should be considered. Attach any supplementary documents that provide additional information.

Make sure you follow the process described in submitting the petition electronically. Once a decision is made, it will be communicated to you via your UIC email. Consult CS Student Affairs office (cs-grad@uic.edu) for any further questions and to obtain appropriate petition form.

MASTER OF SCIENCE: THESIS OPTION

The MS Thesis option is designed for graduate students with an interest in computer science research. Students selecting this option conduct original research under the supervision of a faculty member, culminating in the writing of a Master of Science thesis. At the completion of the thesis, the student presents a thesis defense to a Thesis Committee consisting of at least three faculty members, who are responsible for reviewing and evaluating the research work. The MS Thesis option is strongly advised for students who may be interested in pursuing a PhD in the future.

Thesis students are strongly encouraged to publish their original research in professional journals and conferences.

MS Thesis Guidelines

- Selecting a Thesis advisor must be a mutual agreement between student and faculty. Once advisor is confirmed, discuss research areas and expectations. **All CS assistant, associate, full professors and adjunct* faculty** are eligible to serve as a primary thesis advisor. The majority of the thesis committee should hold at least a 50%* appointment in the CS department, and at least one member of the committee must be a tenured faculty member. *Note: Adjunct faculty appointment is considered to be a 0% appointment, even if they can serve as primary thesis advisors.
- The student must receive approval from advisor, register for CS 598 under the advisor's CRN (course registration number) and conduct the agreed upon thesis research. Default hours for CS 598 is zero so make sure to adjust to however many you and your advisor have agreed upon. Students who are required to maintain a specific number of registration hours may register for more than the 8 hours required hours of CS 598 with advisor permission, but no more than 8 hours will be used towards the requirements for the degree.
- After the research has concluded and is ready for presentation, student and advisor select a thesis committee, and obtain their agreement to serve on the committee. The student must arrange a mutually acceptable date for the thesis defense.
- The student must submit a thesis document to their committee members **at least one week** prior to the defense. At the same time, they must send an advertisement to Student Affairs Office for announcement to faculty and students.
- It is highly recommended that the defense be scheduled at least ***10 business days prior*** to the official thesis submission deadline as outlined by Graduate College – note that typically the official submission deadline is several weeks before the end of the semester. Time must be allowed for any potential changes required by the committee and the university.
- All defenses must be in person. Committee members are expected to attend in person – if there is an outside committee member who is further than 50 miles away from UIC they will be allowed to attend remotely.
- The student must submit the Committee Recommendation Form, along with the CVs of any outside committee members and abstract to the Student Affairs Office at least ***six weeks prior*** to the scheduled examination date. If you use any data (public datasets, or data that you have obtained from other institutions, or data you have collected), you need to clearly state so in your abstract. If human subjects are involved, Institutional Review Board approval is required. The committee recommendation form is available through the Graduate College website at <https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/student-resources/graduate-student-forms/>.

- An examination report will be generated by the Graduate College and sent electronically to the committee chair via email. The committee chair should obtain the signatures of all committee members and submit the signed exam report to cs-grad@uic.edu.
- Ensure that all changes for incomplete or deferred grades are submitted. The instructor who originally assigned the IN, DFR or NR must submit grade change.
- Refer to 'General Graduation Guidelines' section of the manual for details on the process of graduation <https://cs.uic.edu/graduation-guidelines-ms-phd/>.

Format Guidelines

Thesis and dissertation format guidelines are described in detail in a Thesis Manual published and available on the Graduate College website <http://grad.uic.edu/thesis>. A pdf copy of the thesis must be submitted to the CS Student Affairs office via email for a format check **one week prior** to the deadline set by the Graduate College.

MASTER OF SCIENCE: PROJECT OPTION

The MS Project Option is designed for graduate students who are interested in demonstrating their training in the form of a substantive, capstone project. The student undertakes the project under faculty supervision, culminating in the development of both the project and a written description of the project in the form of a MS Project report. Both the project work itself and the project report must demonstrate a high level of professional skill. MS projects and project reports are reviewed by a committee of two faculty members (the student's advisor serves as the primary committee member), but do not require a formal presentation or defense of their work.

MS Project Guidelines

- Selecting a Project advisor must be a mutual agreement between student and faculty. Once the advisor is confirmed, discuss project proposals and expectations. **All CS lecturers, clinical faculty, assistant, associate, full professors and adjunct* faculty are eligible to serve as a primary advisor and secondary committee member.** The secondary committee member can also be a full-time faculty member at UIC (non-CS faculty or adjunct faculty); however they have to be pre-approved by the primary advisor and DGS. One of the committee members should hold at least a 50%* appointment in the CS department. *Note: Adjunct faculty appointment is considered to be a 0% appointment, even if they can serve as primary advisors.
- In the semester the student intends to conduct their project research, the student must register for 4 hours of CS 597 under the advisor's CRN (course registration number). Default hours for CS 597 is zero so make sure to adjust to however many you and your advisor have agreed upon. Students who are required to maintain a specific number of registration hours may register for more than the 4 hours required hours of CS 597 with advisor permission, but no more than 4 hours will be used towards the requirements for the degree.
- Once the project is complete and the report has been written, submit the final project report and the "Certificate of Approval" form to your advisor **at least one week** prior to the published deadline. Form available at <https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/student-resources/graduate-student-forms/>. Provide your secondary committee member with a duplicate copy of the report after your advisor has reviewed it.
- Your advisor and committee member must sign the Certificate of Approval form. The signed form and the final project report should then be submitted to the Student Affairs Office(cs-grad@uic.edu).
- Your project report should be a technically-focused and carefully written document. Consult your advisor as they may have guidelines for formatting or other requirements for the project report. While there are no official format guidelines for project reports, at minimum it should be a complete narrative that contains the following:
 - Cover page (including title, name, advisor & secondary committee member information and semester of graduation & UIN)
 - Abstract
 - Table of Contents
 - Introduction, chapters, conclusion and cited literature
 - Begin each chapter on a new page

- There are no specific length requirements, however the report should describe your project in detail
- Ensure that all changes for incomplete or deferred grades are submitted. The instructor who originally assigned the IN, DFR or NR must submit a grade change.
- Refer to ‘General Graduation Guidelines’ section of the manual for details on the process of graduation <https://cs.uic.edu/graduation-guidelines-ms-phd/>.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Semester Hours Required: 108 hours beyond the baccalaureate degree

Coursework requirements*

Student admitted with prior master's degree in CS or a related field: At least 24 hours, 16 hours of which must be CS courses at the 500 level (excluding CS 590, CS 597, CS 598, CS 599). Graduate College may grant 32 hours of credit from previously earned MS degree; students must submit request to Student Affairs upon enrollment at UIC.

Student admitted directly after bachelor's degree in CS or a related field: At least 32 hours, 16 hours of which must be CS courses at the 500 level (excluding CS 590, CS 597, CS 598, CS 599).

*Additional constraints to the coursework requirements:

1. A maximum of two special topics courses (CS 594) may be counted toward the 500-level and coursework requirement. Additional special topics (CS 594) courses must be petitioned to be used towards coursework requirements.
2. A maximum of 8 hours of UIC non-CS graduate courses may be counted toward the overall coursework requirement. However, prior formal approval via petition is required. Consult CS Student Affairs office for details on submitting a petition.
3. Courses taken as an undergraduate that are nearly equivalent to CS graduate courses offered at UIC should not be repeated. Generally, repeat courses will not earn PhD credit. Specifically, courses taken as undergraduates at UIC will not earn graduate credit, if repeated at graduate level.

Research Methods: Required. Candidates must earn 4 hours in CS 590 within the first two years of enrollment.

Colloquium: 10 required. Students are required to attend ten colloquia within the first two years of enrollment. Dissertation defenses are acceptable colloquia. Once requirement is met, advisor should send an email to cs-grad@uic.edu confirming.

Research Credits (CS 599):

Student admitted with prior master's degree in CS or a related field must earn at least 48 hours.

Student admitted directly after bachelor's degree in CS or a related field must earn at least 72 hours.

Only 48 or 72 hours can be used towards the PhD CS degree, however students may register for additional hours with advisor permission if needed.

Qualifier Examination

Pass the "PhD Qualifier Examination" before the end of their 4th semester of enrollment (actual completion date is approximately half way through the 4th semester). The Qualifier Examination consists of 3 parts: (i) Course breadth requirement which is designed to evaluate the student's basic proficiency in core areas of computer science (completed by the end of 3rd semester); (ii) Written Critique and Presentation (WCP) testing the student's analytical and presentational abilities in a particular area of computer science (completed in their 3rd or 4th semester); and

(iii) Final Evaluation by CS faculty based on: the student's performance in the first two parts, the student's progress in research and any other information related to their performance as a student, conducted in the middle of the 4th semester. All decisions are final. Refer to the PhD Qualifying Exam Information section of the manual for detailed information.

Preliminary Examination

Pass a written and oral preliminary examination on the proposed dissertation topic. This examination is administered by a Graduate College approved faculty committee and chaired by the student's advisor. Students must pass the preliminary examination at least one-year prior to their final defense. If a final defense is held within a year of the preliminary exam, a petition has to be submitted – the closer the final defense is to the one-year period, the more likely it is that the petition will be approved. Refer to the preliminary exam section of the manual for further details.

Final Dissertation

Upon completion of all degree requirements and dissertation, the candidate must orally defend the work before the committee. Refer to the Doctor of Philosophy: Final Dissertation Defense section for further details.

Additional Regulations

Advisor

All incoming PhD students are assigned an initial advisor upon admission, who has explicitly chosen the student as their recruit, based on their expressed area of research interest. Students are encouraged to transition to a permanent advisor by their second semester and are required to formalize this by submitting a Permanent Advisor selection form to the CS Student Affairs' office by the end of their third semester. In most cases, the initial advisor will become the permanent advisor, although choosing a different permanent advisor is allowed. Permanent advisors must be formalized by mutual agreement, since they are a critical component of a PhD student's evaluation and progress.

If due to factors beyond their control, PhD students do not find a permanent advisor by the time faculty evaluates them in their 4th semester, the students can anticipate at most receiving a 'conditional pass' requiring a permanent advisor by the end of their 5th semester, excluding summer. If at any point PhD students part with their permanent advisor, they must notify the CS Student Affairs office immediately. PhD students will be required to find a new permanent advisor within a semester, excluding summer, of parting with their old permanent advisor.

PhD Assessment and Review

All PhD students are required to complete the College of Engineering's annual online self-assessment. Students are notified when the online self-assessment is open. The self-assessment survey requires students to submit basic information, self-evaluation, publications, presentations and plans for the upcoming year (research, publication and deadlines for milestones in the completion of the degree). Once the student completes and submits the survey, the advisor receives notification that allows them to verify and provide feedback on the student's progress. All PhD students' progress is monitored and reviewed regularly. Reminders and/or warnings are sent when students are behind schedule on meeting PhD degree milestones.

Registration

Refer to Graduate College policy on course load needed for Upass, financial aid, assistantships, and visa status maintenance requirements. (<https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/graduate-college-policies/>) CS graduate students must be in compliance with the [CS registration policy](#) at all times. <https://cs.uic.edu/registration-restrictions-grad-students/>

Doctoral students upon passing the preliminary exam are required to register for at least zero credit hours each semester (excluding summer) until the final defense is completed and the dissertation is submitted in compliance with department and Graduate College rules. If the PhD candidate decides to defend during the summer, registration is required for summer term. PhD candidates are not required to register after they successfully defend their dissertation unless registration is required to maintain a specific status (i.e., assistantship, visa, or continued use of university facilities). See <http://grad.uic.edu/zero-hour-registration> for further details

If a PhD candidate successfully defends the dissertation and submits the final dissertation to the Graduate College after the semester deadline but prior to the add/drop deadline of the following semester, the degree is conferred in the subsequent semester. Registration for that semester is not required.

Time Restrictions

Students admitted to the Graduate College with a master's degree or who continue in the Graduate College after completing the master's degree at UIC must complete the degree requirements within seven consecutive calendar years after initial registration as a doctoral student. Students admitted to the Graduate College without a master's degree who proceed directly to the doctorate must complete degree requirements within nine consecutive calendar years of initial registration as a doctoral student. Students who do not graduate by these deadlines will be dismissed from the Graduate College for failure to progress. Time spent on a leave of absence approved by the program and the Graduate College is not counted toward the degree time limit.

Transfer Credit

After admission to the PhD program, students may petition to transfer coursework completed prior to the start of the graduate program in CS @ UIC and not used for a previous degree. A maximum of 9 semester hours earned outside the University are eligible for transfer if they are equivalent to UIC CS graduate courses; credits from non US institutions are generally not allowed. A transcript showing the courses with grades and course syllabi, along with the syllabus of the UIC course for which equivalence is requested, must be submitted with the Transfer Credit petition. If the course(s) were taken as part of a previous earned degree and were not used to satisfy requirements for that degree, the student must also provide an official letter from the university stating the course(s) were not used to satisfy any prior degree requirements.

Students changing from "non-degree" to "degree" status at UIC may petition up to 12 semester hours of credit earned. Only graduate level courses in which a grade of A or B was earned will be eligible for transfer. Courses completed outside UIC after a student starts their graduate studies in the Computer Science program at UIC are not transferable.

Changing to the MS Program is NOT Permitted

The UIC College of Engineering Strategic Plan, adopted in January 2005 and revised from time to time, states that students in a PhD program who have received any financial support from UIC (such as TA, RA, or Tuition and Fee Waiver) cannot transfer into any MS program in the College of Engineering (which includes computer science) “unless the student explicitly petitions to transfer to the MS program and that petition is approved”.

Earning MS after Passing Preliminary Exam

Direct PhD students, as well as a student whose master’s degree is in a discipline other than computer science and a student whose master’s degree in computer science is from a non-US institutions, may apply to receive the MS in Computer Science after passing the preliminary examination. The request must be approved by the preliminary exam committee and director of graduate studies, and students must meet all requirements for the MS degree. The MS in Computer Science will be granted in the semester they meet the university graduation deadlines. Please note that you cannot earn both MS and PhD degrees in the same semester.

Who qualifies?

- Students who are direct PhDs (admitted directly after BS), PhDs whose MS degree is in a discipline other than CS or PhDs whose MS degree is in CS from a non-US institution; AND
- who have completed or plan to complete* the preliminary exam by October 15 (Fall semester), April 15 (Spring semester), July 15 (Summer semester)

What are requirements to earn the MS?

- Completed preliminary exam as mentioned in the qualifications
- Meet the minimum requirements for MS CS degree (refer to page 7)

How do I apply?

- Submit request to cs-grad@uic.edu to earn MS degree by the second Monday of the semester

*If you do not complete the preliminary exam by the deadline, your request is void.

Prior Publication of Research Findings

Students engaged in research may choose to publish certain findings that are later incorporated into the final dissertation. In such cases, appropriate acknowledgment of the earlier publication should be included in the final dissertation. The Graduate College encourages such publication, but the dissertation may not be published in its entirety before all degree requirements, including the defense of the dissertation, have been completed.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY: QUALIFIER EXAMINATION INFORMATION

The first major "rite of passage" in the PhD program is passing the PhD Qualifier Examination. **All PhD students must pass the Qualifier Examination before the end of their 4th semester of enrollment to continue in the PhD program.**

The Qualifier Examination consists of 3 parts:

- **Course Breadth Requirement** which is designed to evaluate the student's basic proficiency in core areas of computer science (completed by the end of 3rd semester).
- **Written Critique and Presentation (WCP)** testing the student's analytical and presentational abilities in a particular area of computer science (completed in their 3rd or 4th semester).
- **Final Evaluation by CS faculty** based on: the student's performance in the first two parts, the student's progress in research and any other information related to their performance as a student, conducted in the middle of the 4th semester. All decisions are final – a decision made by the faculty that a student may stay or must leave the program cannot be petitioned.

Course Breadth Requirement

- Complete 4 courses by the end of third semester
 - CS 401; or petition to substitute with an advanced 5xx algorithm course
 - At least one course from each of the 3 areas: Theory; AI/ML/DS/HCC; and SW/Systems
 - CS 494 and CS 594 (special topics) courses are not eligible
 - Minimum two 'As' and nothing less than a B in the four required courses
- Refer to <https://go.uic.edu/CS-Qualifier-Courses> for the 3 areas and applicable courses
- If the chosen course from the list has an in-class comprehensive final exam, the student can satisfy the qualifier course requirement by taking the final exam without enrolling in the course, subject to the course instructor's approval
 - If taking the final exam to meet qualifier course requirement, the instructor of the course should be notified at the beginning of the semester of the student's intent and, provided the instructor gives their approval, the final should be taken at the regularly schedule time for that semester
- If the student received a BS from UIC, they may petition to use CS 401 ONLY to satisfy the PhD qualifier course requirement. The course must have been taken within the last 5 years and completed with an 'A'. They may not use any other coursework completed while an undergraduate to satisfy the remaining PhD qualifier course requirements.
- If the student received a MS from the CS department at UIC, they may petition to use courses from the list to satisfy the PhD qualifier course requirement. Eligible courses must have been taken within the last 5 years.

Written Critique and Presentation: Framework and Guidelines

The purpose of the Written Critique and Presentation (WCP) is to demonstrate the student's ability to analyze, evaluate and present an existing body of research (normally but not necessarily) in the area in which they intend to carry out their dissertation work. The WCP should be completed in the student's second year in the program (completion date is approximately halfway through the 4th semester).

The WCP Committee form is available on our website under '[Graduate Student Resources](#)'.

Deliverables of the exam are:

- **Critical review** - a significant (15-25 pages, excluding references; ~10000 words=20 pages single-spaced) piece of scholarly expository writing based on a coherent selection of at least 3 papers from the research literature in the chosen area.
- **Presentation** - a 45 minute oral presentation, followed by questions from the committee.

Logistical Organization:

1. The WCP committee consists of three members: WCP Chair (cannot be the student's advisor) and two other CS faculty members. Of the two remaining members, one, a non-specialist in the chosen topic, will be appointed by the DGS. The other can be the student's advisor; however, the student's advisor is not required to be a member of the WCP Committee. All members of the committee (including the chair) should be from CS. Student may submit 2-3 names for the third committee member they prefer, however the DGS may/may not choose the third member from this group.
2. The student identifies a topic and selects a WCP chair (not advisor), who agrees to administer the exam.
3. The student picks at least 3 peer-reviewed technical papers to be critiqued, which the chair must approve (see below). In general, neither survey papers, nor short papers (as defined by the conference) are appropriate as one of the main 3-4 papers the WCP focuses on. If any such paper is included in the final selection, a justification vetted by the chair must be provided. Any relevant paper including surveys and short papers / abstracts can be included in the general discussion of the area the WCP focuses on.
4. The student is in charge of the paper selection process, but the chair has a part in it as well besides approving the final selection. The student initiates the process, by presenting to the chair an initial selection of at least 5 papers (the chair may request a large number of papers for the initial selection); the chair gives general feedback on the potential choices and can provide suggestions on alternative potential venues or research groups; this process is repeated until the chair is satisfied with the main 3-4 paper choices, that the chair then approves. The advisor can be involved in the initial selection of papers, but not in the subsequent negotiation process between the student and chair.
5. A short written proposal naming the committee, describing the area and providing full bibliographic reference (including page count) for the technical papers is submitted to the CS DGS (via cs-grad@uic.edu) for immediate consideration and approval (1 week maximum delay). The WCP form is available online at https://www.cs.uic.edu/~grad/WCP_Committee_Form.pdf. We recommend that you submit the form by the first week of August at the latest for WCP in Fall semester. If WCP is in the Spring semester, the form must be submitted by the Friday of Fall final exam week at the latest.

6. The DGS selects the third member and approves the committee. From the date of this approval, the student can have a maximum of 60 days to prepare a critical review of the selected papers in the chosen area. To maximize the time for your written critical review preparation, be aware of the final oral presentation deadline of March 31 for the spring semester and October 31 for fall semester. These are the very latest deadlines and you should be ready to defend your WCP well in advance. By submitting our WCP form on time (see #5 above) you will have ample time to prepare.
7. The faculty including the WCP committee members may answer specific questions about the selected work but should not assist in analyzing the content, the significance, or the accuracy of the selected work. All the work submitted must be the student's own; students should not use paraphrasing software (like QuillBot) or AI software for writing (like ChatGPT) or any AI tools for content generation (spell-checkers are allowed). If in doubt about the specific tool, ask.
8. Copies of the finished critique should be delivered to each of the WCP committee members and the Student Affairs office (cs-grad@uic.edu) on or before the end of the 60 day period.
9. A date should be set for the formal Oral Presentation to be held within three weeks (but not less than one week) after the critique is to be handed in. Consideration to coordinating three committee members schedule should be given when deciding on a date of the presentation; it is highly recommended negotiations for the date of the presentation should begin at least three weeks before the written critique is handed in. Scheduling the oral exam is the student's responsibility.
10. At the Oral Presentation, the candidate is expected to present the content of the critique as though presenting a technical paper at a conference. Thus, visual aids etc. are expected to be used and the performance evaluation is to be based on technical sharpness, presentation style, command of the area and effectiveness of visual aids. The presentation should be roughly 45 minutes in length. Note that while fluency in English is desirable, the most important criteria will relate to the candidate's ability to 'get the material across' to their audience.
11. The presentation is open to the general public and is followed by a question and answer period (covering both the critique and the general area). The WCP committee may elect to continue with a closed-door question and answer period followed by a discussion.
12. As with all talks and oral examinations in the CS Department, WCP Presentation announcement - with abstract, committee members, room, time, etc. should be sent to the CS Student Affairs Office (cs-grad@uic.edu) for advertisement to the graduate and faculty email lists at least a week before the event.
13. The WCP is graded with a numerical score 1-5 with 1 being best performance, and a short evaluation of the student's performance. Feedback from the WCP committee along with the numerical scores (of both written and oral parts) will be provided to the student within 4 weeks of the oral presentation.
14. This exam cannot be repeated.

In cases where the WCP topic falls in the student's main research area, there may be substantial overlap between the written critique and the Related Work section of the thesis proposal and/or thesis. This is acceptable.

A conference paper, master's thesis, etc. cannot simply be submitted verbatim as a substitute for the WCP. However, parts of prior written work on which the student is the sole author may be re-used as the basis for part or all of a WCP paper. Details should be negotiated between the student, their WCP committee chair and the DGS.

Final Evaluation by CS Faculty

Tenure track faculty come together and discuss PhD students to evaluate performance, potential to succeed, and advisor's recommendation. Faculty vote anonymously on whether student passes or fails the qualifier. If a student fails, they are dismissed from the program. All decisions are final - a decision made by the faculty that a student may stay or must leave the program cannot be petitioned.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY: PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

The purpose of the Preliminary Examination is to determine the candidate's readiness to undertake dissertation research, and passing it constitutes formal Admission to Candidacy. The examination serves as the next major step toward the PhD degree. The examination provides the student with timely feedback of the faculty's views of his/her potential for completing the PhD Program.

The preliminary examination is generally administered once the student has completed most, though not necessarily all, of the coursework, and has performed at least some preliminary work towards their dissertation. The timing of the preliminary examination is mutually agreed between the student and their advisor. A minimum of one year has to elapse before the final defense of the dissertation after passing the preliminary examination. Only students in good academic standing are permitted to take the examination.

Preliminary Examination Committee

The committee for the preliminary examination is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate College upon the recommendation of the department or program. The advisor is the chair of the Committee and must be a full member of the [UIC Graduate Faculty](#). All CS assistant, associate, full professors and adjunct faculty are eligible to serve as an advisor. The composition of the five-member committee should be as follows:

- Consists of at least five (5) members
- At least three (3) are UIC Graduate Faculty with full membership
- Two (2) must be tenured faculty, not just tenure-track
- Majority of the committee should hold at least a 50% appointment in the CS department.
- *Note: Adjunct faculty appointment is considered to be a 0% appointment and are not considered as outside members.

Graduate programs strive for diversity in the composition of the preliminary examination committee. The appointment of one or two members from outside the degree-granting program or university is encouraged (and is required for the final defense). If the outside member is not a UIC graduate faculty member, his/her curriculum vitae must accompany the Committee Recommendation Form to demonstrate equivalent academic standards.

Email CS Student Affairs (cs-grad@uic.edu) if you have questions regarding your committee members' Graduate College faculty membership.

Preliminary Examination Process and Requirements

- A Committee Recommendation form (<https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/student-resources/graduate-student-forms/>), listing the committee members and their affiliations, and abstract must be submitted at least six weeks prior to the exam date to the CS Student Affairs for department approval. If you use any data (public datasets, or data that you have obtained from other institutions, or data you have collected), you need to clearly state so in your abstract. If human subjects are involved, Institutional Review Board approval is required. You may need to obtain IRB approval prior to your committee recommendation form approval. If animals are involved, Animal Care Panel

approval is required (please see more details on human subjects and animal care on p. 19).

- Upon department approval, the form will be forwarded to the Graduate College for final approval.
- All preliminary exam must be in person. Committee members are expected to attend in person – if there is an outside committee member who is further than 50 miles away from UIC they will be allowed to attend remotely.
- An examination report will be generated by the Graduate College and sent electronically to the committee chair via email. After assigning a grade of “pass” or “fail”, the committee chair should obtain the signatures of all committee members and submit the signed exam report to cs-grad@uic.edu.
- PhD student must submit a thesis proposal document to their committee members one week prior to the preliminary exam presentation. At the same time, they must send an advertisement to CS student affairs for announcement to faculty and students.
- A candidate cannot be passed with more than one “fail” vote.
- The committee may require that specified conditions be met before the passing recommendation becomes effective. On the recommendation of the committee, the Dean may permit a second examination. A third examination is not permitted. Failure to complete the degree requirements within five years (departments may specify shorter periods) of passing the preliminary examination requires a new examination.

Federal regulations require that any research which involves the use of either human subjects or animals be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Animal Care Committee (ACC). If the work is completed without IRB or ACC approval, it cannot be published, even as a thesis. Copies of the IRB or ACC approval must be included in the appendix of the final draft of the thesis submitted for review by the Graduate College. It is University policy that theses which are not in compliance with the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) will not be accepted for fulfillment of graduation requirements. For further information, see <https://research.uic.edu/compliance/human-subjects-irbs/getting-started-preparation-for-submission/> or contact OPRS.

Timeline and Progress Expectations

The Graduate College requires the preliminary examination be completed after at least one calendar year of residence and one year prior to the final dissertation defense. As part of your PhD assessment, we expect you to make your preliminary exam attempt at the latest by your 6th semester, if you earned a previous MS degree, or 8th semester if you are a direct PhD student. If a preliminary exam attempt is not met by these semesters, you will receive an email warning. If an attempt is still not made, the department will issue a warning letter with a deadline for completing prelim – failure to make satisfactory progress towards the degree will result in loss of financial aid as TA/TFW and potential dismissal.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY: FINAL DOCTORAL DEFENSE

Upon completion of all degree requirements and dissertation, the candidate must orally defend the work before the committee. Only students in good academic standing are permitted to defend their dissertation.

The dissertation committee is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate College on the recommendation of the student's department. The Committee Recommendation form is available online through the Graduate College website (<https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/student-resources/graduate-student-forms/>), which must be filled and submitted to the CS Student Affairs office at least six weeks prior to the exam date. The committee composition requirements of the final defense committee are the same as the preliminary committee, except the appointment of one member from outside the degree-granting program is mandatory. The committee composition of the committee is as follows:

- Consists of at least five (5) members
- At least three (3) are UIC Graduate Faculty with full membership
- Two (2) must be tenured faculty, not just tenure-track
- majority of the committee should hold at least a 50%* appointment in the CS department.
- One member must come from outside* the degree-granting program or university. If the outside member is not a UIC graduate faculty member, his/her curriculum vitae must accompany the Committee Recommendation Form.
- *Note: Adjunct faculty appointment is considered to be a 0% appointment and are not considered as outside members.

Email CS Student Affairs (cs-grad@uic.edu) if you have questions regarding your committee members' Graduate College faculty membership.

As mentioned previously, there should be a minimum gap of at least 1 year between preliminary exam and final dissertation defense. Any gap less than 1 year must be petitioned and approved by the DGS and GC; the further the gap from the one year mark, the stronger the justification must be for it to be approved. Students must defend within 5 years of completing their preliminary exam; if a defense is not completed, you must retake the prelim or petition for an extension.

Federal regulations require that any research which involves the use of either human subjects or animals be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Animal Care Committee (ACC). If the work is completed without IRB or ACC approval, it cannot be published, even as a thesis. Copies of the IRB or ACC approval must be included in the appendix of the final draft of the thesis submitted for review by the Graduate College. It is University policy that theses which are not in compliance with the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) will not be accepted for fulfillment of graduation requirements. For further information, see <https://research.uic.edu/compliance/human-subjects-irbs/getting-started-preparation-for-submission/> or contact OPRS.

Format Guidelines

Thesis and dissertation format guidelines are described in detail in a Thesis Manual published

and available on the Graduate College website <http://grad.uic.edu/thesis>. A pdf copy of the thesis must be submitted to the CS Student Affairs office via email for a format check one week prior to the deadline set by the Graduate College.

GENERAL GRADUATION GUIDELINES

Recommended step by step process

- Send email request for “*Graduation Check*” to cs-grad@uic.edu, at least one month prior to the term you intend to graduate. Include your name, UIN, program (if MS identify thesis, project or coursework only option) and expected graduation term. Student Affairs staff will respond with requirements you completed and/or are missing. The early check allows you ample time to modify your registration, if necessary, for your final semester.
- Be aware of graduation guidelines. CS Student Affairs Office will email a reminder at the beginning of the semester. **Deadlines** are also available on the [graduate academic calendar](#) and are **non-negotiable**.
- ‘Apply to Graduate’ via my.uic.edu portal in the “Academics” tab of the student part of the portal (you may also have staff and faculty sections if you work on campus and/or are a teaching assistant) go to the “Records” sub-tab and then choose “Declare your Intent to Graduate”.

Inform your advisor of your intent to graduate (does not apply to MS students w/ coursework only option)

If you are graduating with a Thesis/Dissertation, you must:

1. Submit a “Committee Recommendation Form” **six** weeks prior to your defense date. The form must be filled out online, signed by your advisor and submitted to the CS Student Affairs Office (cs-grad@uic.edu). Hand written forms are not accepted.
<https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/student-resources/graduate-student-forms/>
 - a. If any committee member is not part of the UIC Graduate College faculty (most lecturers and clinical faculty; post doc or visiting faculty); or if they are non-UIC faculty – they will be considered external members and a CV must be submitted with the committee recommendation form. They must also have a PhD.
 - b. All PhD students must attach an abstract to the committee recommendation form for both their preliminary exam and final dissertation defense. If you use any data (public datasets, or data that you have obtained from other institutions, or data you have collected), you need to clearly state so in your abstract. If human subjects are involved, Institutional Review Board approval is required.
 - c. All students must send an email announcement for advertisement at least a week prior their defense to cs-grad@uic.edu. Defense details are advertised to all faculty and graduate students.
 - d. Graduate College will return an ‘Exam Report’ after they approve the Committee Recommendation Form. Exam report will be emailed to your chair, directly.
2. Consult the ‘*Graduate Thesis Manual*’ for information on all required forms and format of the thesis.
3. Schedule your defense date at least **two weeks** (for PhD) and **10 days** (for MS thesis) prior to the thesis submission deadline.
4. Just prior to or immediately following your defense, email a PDF copy of your thesis to cs-grad@uic.edu for a format check.

5. Electronic signatures should be collected from committee members. Signed exam report should be sent to cs-grad@uic.edu.
6. All theses are submitted electronically. Information on electronic submission is available on Graduate College website: <https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/thesis/>.
7. All required forms must be completed and signed before submitting them to Graduate College. A detailed checklist of the required forms is available in the thesis manual.

If you are graduating with the MS Project option:

1. Make sure your advisor and the second committee member have ample time (at least one week) to read and approve your project. Please note: the second member will presumably read it after your advisor has approved it, so the total time you should allot is two weeks.
 - All CS lecturers, assistant, associate, full professors and adjunct faculty are eligible to serve as a primary advisor and secondary committee member. Secondary committee member can also be a full-time faculty member at UIC (non-CS faculty or adjunct faculty); however they have to be pre-approved by the primary advisor and DGS. One of the committee members should hold at least a 50% appointment in the CS department
2. Your advisor and second committee member must sign 'Certificate of Approval' form.
3. Submit a PDF copy of the project report and the 'Certificate of Approval' form to the cs-grad@uic.edu by the department project deadline.
4. Minimum format guidelines for the project report:
 - Cover page – should include title, name, UIN, committee names and semester of graduation
 - Table of Contents
 - Abstract
 - Introduction, chapters, conclusion and cited literature
 - Begin each chapter and section on a new page
 - There are no specific length requirements, however the report should describe your project in detail.

Final Steps

- Have your advisor submit grade changes for all your DFR, I or M grades of your research hours (597, 598 & 599).
- Return all borrowed equipment and keys to SEO 1120.

Please note that if you do not graduate in the semester you submitted your 'Intent to Graduate', you have to submit the request again during the term you intend to graduate. The previous request will NOT be carried over to the next semester.

CS GRADUATE STUDENT PROCESSES

Course Selection

MS students are expected to choose their classes in their area of interest; as needed, they should consult academic advisors (the staff in the student affairs' office) or the major advisor, i.e. the Director of Graduate Studies. PhD students should consult their faculty advisor for course recommendations. A maximum of 8 hours of non- CS graduate courses may be counted toward the overall course work requirement. All non-CS courses require prior approval via petition, which should be submitted at least a week prior to the start of the semester along with a syllabus. New students should note that courses taken and grades obtained in their first semester of enrollment largely determine financial aid awards for the following academic year.

Unless specifically advised otherwise, new graduate students should **not** enroll in the following courses for their first semester: non-CS courses, CS 597 Project Research; CS 598 MS Thesis Research; or CS 599 PhD Thesis Research. Students should take regularly scheduled CS courses during their first semester.

Registration Restrictions* - CS graduate students may not register for more than 3 CS didactic classes (i.e., CS 400-491 and CS 500-594 classes) - (9 or 12 credit hours). Anyone in violation of the registration policy can be removed from courses by the department until their credit hours of didactic classes no longer exceeds the limit for that semester. In addition, students violating this policy may also be restricted from future registration until they have met with the DGS.

How is it implemented?

- The department does routine checks on graduate student registration.
- Graduate students registered for over 3 graduate CS didactic classes (at any time in the registration cycle) will be emailed with a warning that they are exceeding the limit and given ample time to correct their registration; or receive permission to stay in class by discussing this matter with the DGS or Director of CS Student Affairs.
- Once the deadline is passed, if a student has not corrected their registration or received permission to stay - a hold will be placed on their account which prevents further registration of any kind (both add /drop).
- The department will then decide which classes to drop and ask UIC registrar's office to drop the class(es) from the student's schedule.

Any exemption must be approved by the DGS or the CS Student Affairs Office (cs-grad@uic.edu). We expect this policy to benefit all students of 400 and 500 level courses by helping us to plan better and provide course offerings and seats that better meet all student needs.

***The department may implement new temporary restrictions as needed.**

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisites are listed for all classes and should be used as guidelines to determine your success in that class, even if they are not enforced for graduate students. It is your responsibility to check to see if you have the necessary background of the prerequisite class. Refer to the prerequisite classes to determine whether you are qualified to take the course. You will not be allowed to withdraw from a course after the drop deadline because you have not met the prerequisites. The drop deadline is 10th day of classes for Fall & Spring and 5th day for summer terms. This drop deadline is strictly enforced for all courses.

Adding/Dropping/Withdrawing from Courses

Students must finalize their class schedule by the end of the add/drop period (10th day for Fall & Spring, 5th day for Summer terms); it is highly recommended you finalize your schedule by the end of the first week of the semester. Once the add/drop period has ended, students are not allowed to add/drop classes.

Any requests to add/withdraw from a class after the add/drop period must be petitioned, with support from instructor (not advisor) of the class. Submit the petition to along with all supporting documentation to 'CS_Grad.k21uy01z8simxr7c@u.box.com' to deposit your petition. Petition will be reviewed for completion and processed accordingly.

As a general policy, there is a high threshold for approval of a late withdraw after the add/drop deadline. If permission (from the Director of Graduate Studies) is granted for such a "late drop", it will be reported as a withdrawal (W) on the transcript. A "W" cannot be stricken from your permanent record and cannot be replaced by a new grade should you retake the course and obtain a letter grade.

The following are examples of unacceptable reasons for dropping a course after the deadline: "I have had this material before", "This course will not be useful to me", "I am taking too many courses", "I do not have the prerequisites", "I forgot to drop the course before the drop deadline", "A bad grade will affect my GPA negatively" or "I have not attended classes for the past few weeks". It is **your responsibility** to make sure that you enroll in classes that are appropriate for your academic course load, schedule and that **you have met all prerequisites**.

Students holding fellowships, assistantships, tuition and fee waivers, and student visas must maintain the required number of credit hours or risk loss of their aid for the term. Students whose waivers are revoked due to insufficient credit hours will be billed the full cost of tuition, fees and any late charges that may apply.

Students are allowed to register for a maximum total of 20 hours per semester. Note: students must remain compliance with the CS department's registration policy for graduate students. In order to register for more than 20 hours, the student must have approval from his/her advisor and submit that information to cs-grad@uic.edu for override permission.

Academic Performance

All graduate students are required by the Graduate College to remain in good standing per the conditions outlined by the [Graduate College policies](#). In addition to meeting the Graduate College academic performance requirements, students should not be in violation of any of the Office of Dean of Students student conduct policies, see page 3 for details. Failure to meet the conditions and policies will result in possible dismissal. <https://grad.uic.edu/probation-and-academic-dismissal>.

Grades

Coursework earn grades of A, B, C, D or F; research hours a 'S' or 'U'. GPA is calculated based on the grades and credits hours. For details see: <http://grad.uic.edu/grades>.

Probation and Academic Dismissal

All graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 (B) grade point average (GPA). The GPA calculation does not research courses (CS 590, CS 597-599).

Graduate course work must be satisfied by a C grade or higher. If a student's graduate GPA falls below 3.0 (B), the Graduate College will issue a letter of warning and impose academic probation for a specified period of time. Failure to comply with the terms will likely result in dismissal from the CS program and Graduate College. Details of this available at: <https://grad.uic.edu/academic-support/graduate-college-policies/academic-standing-continuation-%20and-probation-rules/>

A student on probation is ineligible for department awarded financial aid or graduation.

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

Financial aid is available in the form of fellowships, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, tuition fee waivers and graduate assistantships. Students on good standing as defined by the department standards can be nominated and/or awarded any type of aid.

Fellowships and Awards

Various fellowships and awards are available through the Graduate College and outside foundations. Students and faculty are notified periodically of these fellowships and deadlines. Most fellowships available through outside foundations require students to be Permanent Residents or citizens of the US. Consult the 'Funding and Awards' section of the Graduate College website (<https://grad.uic.edu/funding-awards/>) for awards available through the Graduate College and general information on the fellowships and funding.

Fellowships are awarded in recognition of scholarly achievement and promise. They enable students to pursue graduate studies and research without a service requirement. The stipends vary by fellowships. Some fellowships allow recipients to accept additional funding, recipients should consult the terms of the award for details.

Application Procedures: Deadlines for UIC fellowships and other awards administered through the Graduate College are established jointly by the Awards Committee of the Graduate College and the Graduate College. Since departments need to submit nominations to the Graduate College (wherever it states "department nominations due"), complete application is due to the CS Student Affairs office prior to the Graduate College deadline; students are notified of the department deadlines via email. Recommendation letters should be in electronic format and submitted directly by the recommender to the CS Student Affairs office (cs-grad@uic.edu).

Non UIC fellowships have their own submission rules. Students should contact the CS Student Affairs office for any questions upon announcement of the fellowships.

Upon announcement of the deadlines for the fellowships offered by the Graduate College, students interested in applying should consult with their advisor first and then submit a **complete application** to the Student Affairs Office by the department deadline. The Director of Graduate Studies will review the applications, write recommendations if needed and select nominees (if number of nominees are limited).

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching Assistantships (TAs) are available to all CS graduate students, but priority is given to PhD students. TAs assist in the teaching and grading of CS course work under the direction of the course instructor. The assistantship includes a monthly stipend and waiver of certain tuition and fees. Overview of assistantships is available at <http://grad.uic.edu/assistantships>.

Guidelines for applying, eligibility and hiring consideration can be found at <https://cs.uic.edu/graduate/graduate-student-resources/ta-info/>.

English Proficiency: According to both Illinois state law (110 ILCS 305/7c) and UIC policy, all non-native English-speaking Teaching Assistants must be certified as proficient in spoken English before being given instructional responsibilities. This offer of appointment is conditional on your completion of UIC's oral English proficiency certification process. For information on the procedure, see the International Teaching Assistant Program's website: <https://ita.grad.uic.edu/oral-english-proficiency-testing>.

Research Assistantships

RAs are allocated by individual faculty so students should contact faculty members with shared research interests directly. The faculty member, depending on the availability of grant money determines the term and eligibility requirements of the appointment. General overview of an assistantship can be found at <http://grad.uic.edu/assistantships>.

Tuition and Fee Waiver

A limited number of tuition and fee waivers are available to the department through Graduate College. These awards provide an exemption from tuition fee, service fee, health service fee, AFMFA, LITA and partial cost of Campus Care health insurance (Fall & Spring only).

Application Procedure: Students must complete and submit the online application when it becomes available and are notified by the CS Student Affairs office. Students are contacted via UIC email when the application is open.

Graduate Assistantship

GAs carry similar benefits to TAs and RAs and are described in <https://grad.uic.edu/assistantships/>. The Computer Science department does not hire any GAs, however other units on the campus hire graduate students as TAs, RAs and GAs. The Human Resources Job Board has listings for assistantships that are open to the general graduate student population (see listings towards bottom of the above link). We expect CS students to be professional in their search. You should not solicit random staff and faculty for openings. You should only apply to those officially advertised and follow directions on how to apply.

Graduate Hourly

Graduate hourly are hired by each unit on campus based on need, students are usually paid by the hour for the number of hours worked for each pay period. This usually does not carry any benefits of a fee waiver.

DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION FOR TAs

Teaching Assistantships (TAs) are highly coveted positions of authority awarded to CS graduate students based on academic performance and potential. The renewal of TAs takes multiple factors into consideration, as outlined in the '[Guidelines for appointment, assignment, and reappointment](#)'; however, the primary requirement for renewal is satisfactory TA reviews from both the instructor(s) you are assigned to and the students you are working with. For PhD students: although there is guarantee of funding (if making satisfactory progress) for the duration of studies (most complete within 5 years), a teaching assistantship will not be renewed in cases of misconduct or poor reviews.

CS graduate students apply when the electronic TA application becomes available. The majority of TAs are hired well in advance of the start of the semester. TAs are assigned to a class prior to the start of the semester; the department does its best to accommodate preferences, but the department's priority is finding an appropriate TA for each class. All CS graduate TAs are expected to be able to TA any 100 and 200 level CS classes.

Logistics and do's & don't after you accept a TAship

- Typical contract dates for Fall are August 16th – December 31st and for Spring are January 1st – May 15th. Start and end date may vary based on time of hire and/or graduation of students on visa
 - TAs are expected to be ready and available to perform TA duties (helping prep for the class) on the start date of the TA contract
 - TAs are expected to be available through final grading submission deadline (Wednesday after finals of that semester)
- Mandatory orientations, trainings, check-ins. TAs are required to:
 - Attend university-wide orientations/trainings
 - Attend Department TA training
 - Check-in in-person with CS student affairs **on Monday of the first week of classes by Noon**
 - New international student TAs must pass the Oral Certification by the end of their 1st semester. Information is available on the ITA website at <https://ita.grad.uic.edu/>.
- Once a TA accepts and signs the offer letter, requests to change the appointment after the start date or after the start of the semester (whichever is the earlier date) are not acceptable
- Resigning the assistantship at the last minute or after the semester begins reflects poorly on a student's level of commitment and will be taken into consideration for future renewal
- You will be notified as soon as you are assigned to a class. At that point you are required to contact the instructor immediately to introduce yourself and set up a meeting to understand their expectations of you and your responsibilities as TA in the class

General information about being a TA

- Meet the instructor before classes start to have a clear understanding of their expectations and your responsibilities
 - Get a course syllabus, text book if available, solution manual if available
 - Do they expect you to attend the lectures?

- If you are TAing for a lab/discussion class, ask if there will be other graduate and/or undergraduate TAs and which duties each of you will have
 - Grading - expectations about what to grade, how to grade and timeline
 - Does the class use digital platforms (e.g. Blackboard, Piazza etc.) – how do you access it and what are your responsibilities in monitoring them
 - Proctoring exams – what are the expectations?
 - Office hours – how many, when, where?
 - Graduate TAs are assigned a TA office space
 - When problems/issues arise – what is the best way to reach instructor, preferred method of communication and time restrictions
- **Expected behavior from you**

As a TA you are in a position of power with respect to the students in the class: with power come responsibilities!

 - Be on time for everything
 - Be professional, polite, considerate and fair to all students
 - Be fair and consistent when grading, and in any interaction with the students
 - If you will be late and cannot contact the appropriate parties, contact the CS student affairs office
 - Access or keys to any assigned TA office space should NOT be loaned to anyone. You are responsible for the cost involved for replacing lost keys
 - Make safety a priority on and off campus. If you need to use an office or lab while a building is closed, notify someone of your whereabouts
 - Be careful and responsible for equipment in offices and labs. Avoid theft, do not leave offices or labs open
 - Monitor students while they are taking exams or quizzes. If you feel a student may be cheating, report it to the instructor immediately
 - **Harassment in any form is not tolerated**
 - Academic Misconduct
 - If any TA, RA, TFW holder or grader is caught in an act of cheating, plagiarism, making threats against any person with the intention of affecting academic performance, examination by proxy, grade tampering, or other acts of academic dishonesty, the consequences will be serious
 - Student will forfeit all financial aid from the department in that semester and any future consideration for financial aid from the department
 - If the financial aid is from another unit at UIC, your UIC employer will be informed in writing of any misconduct
 - Student may be dismissed from the university. Misconduct will result in disciplinary action
 - Your responsibility as TA
 - You should follow the instructions and the lead of the instructor. But your ultimate responsibility is to the students. If you have concerns regarding the class and/or instructor you should bring your concerns to the Director of Student Affairs or Director of Graduate Studies. Concerns will be kept confidential

Offices

We do our best to provide a TA office to all TAs. This is usually a shared space designed to help you fulfill your TA duties. The CS student affair's office will contact you towards the end of the 1st week or early 2nd week with your assignment.

Be courteous to your fellow roommates and keep it clean, you should not bring any personal items, food, refrigerator, toasters, coffee machines etc. to the TA offices. It is your responsibility to ensure your students respect the office space.

PETITIONS

A student who is requesting an exception to a policy, requirement or deadline must submit a petition. Examples of petitions are: non-CS courses, transfer credit, missed a deadline, etc. The petition will in most cases require advisor endorsement and signature (specifically PhD students) which will then be considered by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and a final decision made. If the petition requires Graduate College approval, they are the final authority on the decision. Questions regarding petitions should be directed to (in order of) (a) Staff in SEO 905 (cs-grad@uic.edu), (b) the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or (c) the Graduate College.

The following procedures should be followed:

1. Obtain the petition (or other form) from the CS Student Affairs Office (SEO 905) or the Graduate College.
2. Complete the petition and secure the necessary supporting documents. You should begin this process early; in some cases, petitions require students to consult old timetables or require obtaining letters or transcripts from other institutions.
3. Present the petition to your advisor for his/her signature and comments.
4. After your advisor has signed the petition, deposit it to 'CS_Grad.k21uy01z8simxr7c@u.box.com'. Petition will be reviewed for completion and processed accordingly. Do not rely on your advisor to do this for you. It is your responsibility.
5. The DGS will review the petition, indicate approval or disapproval, provide written comments, sign it and return it to the CS Student Affairs Office (cs-grad@uic.edu). This process will take no more than five business days during regularly scheduled class and examination periods of the academic year.
6. If the petition needs to be routed to the Graduate College, staff in the CS Student Affairs Office will submit the petition to them; in some cases you might be asked to submit the forms to the Graduate College.
7. If the petition is internal, the CS Student Affairs office will notify you via email. If the petition needs Graduate College final approval, they will notify you of the decision. If you have questions concerning the petition at this point, please consult the staff in the CS Student Affairs office (cs-grad@uic.edu). The staff will try to answer your questions and/or consult the Graduate College in trying to resolve your issues.

OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

Curricular Practical Training is permission to work off-campus at an internship while you are enrolled at the University. This applies only for international students since your student visa authorizes you to only work on campus while you are a student. CPT is administered by the department and requires Office of International Services (OIS) approval. Work authorization is only approved for the dates of each semester (Fall/Spring). For Summer, Summer I and Summer II are included.

Refer to the email sent to you at the beginning of each semester regarding the process.

What are the requirements?

- Internship must be in Computer Science and fall only within the semester dates
- Employer at the end of internship must submit acknowledgement of your completion of internship so that you can be graded appropriately
- You will be required to submit a one-page, high level report on what you did (without breaching any confidentiality or proprietary information), within a week of internship completion. Report must include student name, company where interned, dates of internship, and a high-level description of tasks and responsibilities
- Satisfactory completion required for future approvals

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is one type of work permission available to eligible F-1 students. All OPT and pre-OPT requests have to be submitted for review and approval to the CS Student Affairs. Faculty advisors are NOT authorized to approve any OPT. The Computer Science department reviews all optional practical training (OPT) and pre-OPT requests. Students must be in good (GPA 3.0 or above) and full standing (if you were admitted on limited standing then all requirements must have been met prior to the request). You must start this process very early; contact the Office of International Services (OIS) <https://ois.uic.edu/> for the guidelines on the process. The OPT authorization/advisor approval required by OIS can be provided only by the staff in the CS Student Affairs Office. Approval from faculty advisors is not acceptable.

Medical Insurance

All new students who enroll at UIC are automatically enrolled in an insurance plan and the UIC student health care program consisting of two components –CampusCare (<http://campuscare.uic.edu/>), a comprehensive student health insurance program to cover you for loss due to a covered injury or illness, and the UIC Department of Family Medicine, which provides you, via your health service fee, with coverage for routine care including physical examinations. For registered students, coverage is continuous, beginning with the first day of the term until the first day of the next term. We encourage international students to become familiar with medical insurance. Students have the option to waive the insurance coverage by

completing a waiver form and presenting evidence of other comparable insurance coverage (copy of your insurance card). The waiver forms and deadlines are available on the CampusCare website. Students who had previously waived the plan will remain waived, but may apply for the CampusCare insurance plan, subject to a determination of eligibility if they desire to be reinstated. Dependents (spouse and children) may be added to the coverage after filling out a Dependent Application, for an additional fee.

Change of Address/Telephone Number/Name

Any changes to your name, address, telephone number or current address have to be reported to the UIC Records Office in SSB, the CS Student Affairs Office of Computer Science, Office of International Services (if you are on any kind of visa) and Human Resources (HR) (if you are working as TA/RA/GA at UIC). <https://registrar.uic.edu/student-records/changing-your-personal-information/> To report changes to the CS department you can e-mail 'cs-grad@uic.edu'. HR go to <https://www.hr.uillinois.edu/> to change your address so that the W2 for that year is mailed to the correct address.

Letters

All requests for letters should be submitted via e-mail to the CS graduate email 'cs-grad@uic.edu' for the CS Student Affairs Office. The request should include your name, UIN, degree and details of the information needed in the letter.

Letters are usually processed and ready for pick up within 5 business days, an e-mail will be sent when the letter is ready. Walk-in requests are not accommodated. Below are the most common letters requested:

- Good standing letter - Verifying you are a student in the department in good standing
- Graduation Letter – Verifying your graduation or prospective graduation
- Other miscellaneous letters as needed

Conduct

You represent the department as you interact with the UIC community. We expect all our students to conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful and professional manner.

If you have a grievance related to a particular course please discuss it with the instructor first and see if the issue can be resolved. If the grievance is not resolved, you may appeal to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Please consult with the CS Student Office on the steps to take to appeal to the DGS.

University Computer Policy

For the acceptable use of computational resources refer to <https://policies.uic.edu/uic-policy-library/information-technology/acceptable-use-of-computational-resources>