
ECE THESIS REQUIREMENT FOR M.S. STUDENTS

The Master of Science (M.S.) degree may be earned either with a thesis (Plan I) or with a comprehensive examination (Plan II). This document outlines the procedure for M.S. students who elect Plan I (thesis). The final requirements for Plan I are the submission of a thesis and the thesis defense. The thesis defense is an oral examination in which you present and defend your thesis to a committee of three tenured or tenure-track faculty members and you are examined orally for proficiency in your area of specialization.

****You must defend your thesis by the end of your second year of study****

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- A total of 52 units, of which 36 units must be in graduate courses. (Note: this is greater than the minimum requirements of the university, which is a total of 36 units.) Refer to the [degree planner](#) form for your discipline area for a list of courses from which the 36 graduate course units must be selected.
 - 12 of these units must be research units. Only 8 units of research can be used towards the technical electives section.
 - The 52 units of required coursework must be taken for a letter grade (A-F), except for graduate research (e.g., ECE 299, CSE 298) for which only S/U grades are allowed.
 - Courses for which a “D”, “F”, “W” or “U” is received will not be counted.
 - You must maintain a GPA of 3.0 overall or above in upper division graduate course work undertaken, with a total of no more than 8 units of “F” and/or “U” grades.
 - The course requirements must be completed within two years of full-time study (6 quarters). Your faculty/research advisor will help you select courses and approve your overall academic curriculum.
 - Meet the UCSD Academic Senate [Residency Requirement](#).
 - For more details on the M.S. Program requirements, please visit the ECE [website](#).
-

COMPREHENSIVE REQUIREMENTS

- You must take 12 units of Research. This is not limited to research within ECE only. Students can take research in any Jacobs School of Engineering (JSOE) Department and use it towards the degree requirements.
 - Conducting UCSD research outside of JSOE, such as SIO, PHYS, BIO, etc., is allowed with approval. Graduate research courses outside of JSOE require a 1-paragraph summary of the research you will/have conducted and how it relates to your major. Please submit this in the body of an email to [ECE M.S. Advising](#). This will be passed on to the ECE Chairs for review. [ECE M.S. Advising](#) will notify you of the result of your request and edit your degree audit accordingly.
- You must defend and submit your thesis by the end of your second year of study.

- The ECE Department recommends that students who are pursuing the thesis route register and pass the ECE M.S. Comprehensive Exam as a back-up option in the event that the thesis progress is not met in time.

THESIS DEFENSE PROCEDURE

Initial Preparation: Steps before your defending quarter

1. By the first quarter of your second year, meet with your research advisor to discuss your plan to prepare and submit a thesis. This includes detailing your research project and writing, timeline and deadlines.
2. By the first quarter of your second year, review the degree planner for your major depth (e.g., NDS, ISRC, SIP, etc.) and make sure you incorporate time in your schedule for 12 units of 299 with the Chair of your committee as your instructor.
3. Discuss the selection of your committee with your research advisor as they will be chairing your committee and most informed about faculty members who would greatly contribute to your research. Your committee consists of 3 tenured or tenure-track faculty members, ***two of which must be from ECE***. Tenure or tenured-track faculty means they hold the title Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Full Professor. If you have any doubts, you can always verify with your research advisor.
 - If you decide to elect a non-ECE faculty member as your Chair, you must elect one tenured or tenure-track ECE faculty as a Co-Chair. The one remaining committee member must be an ECE tenured or tenure-track faculty member.
 - For example, CSE Chair, ECE Co-Chair, ECE Member
 - Take a look at the [Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs \(GEPA\) Committee Membership Table](#) to ensure that you are abiding by the membership rules.

Preparing For Your Graduating and Defending Quarter

1. Advancement to M.S. Candidacy: Students will receive an email from the ECE Grad Office email account with instructions on how to submit [ECE M.S. graduation paperwork](#). You will need to submit it by the deadline listed on the website.
 - Your M.S. Advisor will file the Application to Candidacy - Master's form on your behalf. This will be at the beginning of the quarter in which M.S. course requirements are to be met.
 - Please make sure that your [Degree Audit Report \(DARs\)](#) reflects the correct capstone requirement (Plan 1).
 - If the incorrect capstone plan is being reflected onto the audit, please contact [ECE M.S. Advising](#) for assistance so that your DARs can be modified accordingly.
 - Please include the following items on the [ECE M.S. graduation paperwork](#) so that [ECE M.S. Advising](#) can input the information onto the Thesis Committee form:
 - 1) thesis committee members
 - 2) date of defense
 - 3) title of defense
 - 4) defense format (remote, in-person, hybrid)

2. At this point, you should have already started drafting your thesis. Students who plan to graduate in the current quarter must fill out the online form in Quali, “File for Doctoral/Master’s (Thesis) Degree Form.” by following the steps on GEPA’s [website](#) (Step 1 & 2). The deadline for students to submit Step 1 is **Friday of Week 5**. For summer, the Step 1 deadline is the last Friday of Summer Session I.
3. Once you are ready to defend your thesis, you must liaise with the members of your thesis committee to decide upon a date and time for your examination. Try to set a date and time for your defense *three weeks in advance*. Faculty members are very busy and are frequently out of town, especially during summer months. Keep this in mind when planning to schedule your defense.
 - You would normally defend your thesis during a regular quarter. You may, however, defend your thesis during the summer or between quarters to accommodate the availability of faculty. In this instance, you may be required to pay the filing fee in lieu of registration.
4. You should contact [ECE M.S. Advising](#) at least two weeks prior to your thesis defense. You will be required to provide the following information relating to your exam:
 - Confirmed date and time of defense
 - Confirmed title of your thesis
5. Once you have provided this information to [ECE M.S. Advising](#), make the following arrangements prior to your defense:
 - If you are using Zoom, you are responsible for setting up the Zoom meeting; please make sure you know how to use Zoom 1 week before your defense so you can troubleshoot as needed. Test with a friend or colleague. Please visit this [page](#) and our [M.S. or Ph.D. Defense Zoom Tips](#) to ensure a successful remote thesis defense.
 - Room booking—You may contact your [ECE M.S. Advising](#) if you would like to schedule a room in the Jacobs Hall for your thesis defense. If you book a room with us, you will be emailed about how to access the room two days before your defense.
 - Students are responsible for sending the calendar invite and providing the meeting location details to their faculty thesis committee.

Thesis Defense Format

1. All committee members must be present during the defense, and the defense is closed to the public.
2. The defense is about 2 hours in duration.
3. You should be prepared to present and defend your thesis before your thesis committee.
4. Plan to give a practice talk to your advisor and/or fellow students at least one week before your exam. This allows you plenty of time to make revisions and helps to strengthen your advisor’s confidence in you.

Results of the Defense

1. You will be informed of the outcome following the end of the defense.
2. Once you pass, your Chair will be asked for the result of your defense, prompting the M.S. Advisor to take care of the remaining paperwork.
3. Your Final Report Form will be submitted online by [ECE M.S. Advising](#).
4. After the defense, complete the [Final Degree Checklist](#) to GEPA by the **11th Friday of the quarter** or early September for summer graduation. If the deadline is missed the degree will be awarded in the next quarter.
 - See [general deadlines](#) and the [Registrar's Enrollment and Registration Calendar](#) for more information on deadlines and specific dates.
 - The degree conferral date is always the last day of the given quarter (see the Registrar's [Enrollment and Registration Calendar](#) for specific dates).
5. Once submitted, your GEPA Academic Affairs Advisor will be notified and will review your final forms and your dissertation/thesis within 1-2 weeks (for submissions received by the filing deadline to earn a degree for the current term).
6. You will be alerted by email of any missing items or required corrections.

Completion of the M.S. degree

1. The M.S. degree will be awarded in the same quarter that you pass your thesis defense and file your thesis (except for thesis defense between quarters, for which the degree will be awarded at the end of the following quarter), as long as you advance to M.S. candidacy no later than the second week of the same quarter.
2. Your Final Report Form (FRF) will be submitted online by your M.S. Advisor prior to your thesis defense date.
3. Submit the following online forms to the ECE Graduate Student Affairs office:
 - [Alumni Contact Information Form](#)
 - [Exit Questionnaire](#)
4. Your [diploma](#) will be mailed 3-6 months after the end of the quarter. The diplomas are mailed directly to your permanent mailing address. Therefore, you must check your address for accuracy on [TritonLink](#) to avoid delays in delivery. Information about accessing your digital diploma can be found [here](#). For additional graduation information, please visit this [page](#).
5. [Alumni Email Service](#): The UC San Diego Alumni Email Service provides a free email account that is tied to your university affiliation. Contact the [Alumni office](#) for additional

information..

6. If you have a student locker or mailbox, please collect all your items, and notify everyone who sends you mail at ECE of your current mailing address. Your locker/mailbox will be cleared at the end of the quarter of your graduation, and all remaining mail will be returned to the sender.
7. UCSD conducts one [commencement ceremony](#) each year at the end of Spring quarter. In order to participate in commencement, you must have completed all degree requirements, including filing of the thesis. NOTE: Late filing of master's advancement to candidacy forms may jeopardize your commencement participation; for this reason, it is especially important to submit your [ECE M.S. graduation paperwork](#) by the deadline during your graduating quarter.

Degree Completion Notes

- **Summer Degrees:** If you are completing your degree requirements during the Summer and you were enrolled in the previous Spring quarter, you do not pay any additional fees. If you are completing your degree requirements during the Summer and you were on leave of absence in the previous Spring quarter, you will pay the filing fee for completion. The deadline to file for summer graduation follows the Registrar's dates for Summer Session II (in early September).
- **Filing Fee:** Students that are finished with all of their M.S. coursework but need to fulfill their capstone requirement (defend thesis) have the option of going on filing fee status during their final quarter. Students that would like to be on this status need to submit their Degree Audit in PDF format to Advance to Master's Candidacy during the quarter that they were last enrolled in courses. For example, if a student would like to do a filing fee in the Spring Quarter, they would need to advance in the Winter Quarter. Students who are on approved filing fee status will pay a filing fee (The filing fee is \$215 and it will be charged to the student's Tritonlink account) in lieu of registration in the final quarter. For more Final Quarter Filing Fee information, please visit this [page](#).