

# **The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering**

## **Graduate Handbook**

Guidance and Advice to Help Complete your Graduate Degree



**College of Engineering**  
**UtahState**University

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# Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS	1
General Graduate Student Responsibilities	1
Major Professor	1
Supervisory Committee	2
Program of Study	2
REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH OFFERED DEGREE	3
ME and MS Plan C (coursework only)	3
ME/MS Plan C Degree Requirements	3
ME/MS Plan C Degree Completion Checklist	3
MS Plan A and B	4
MS Plan A and MS Plan B Degree Requirements	4
MS Plan A and MS Plan B Checklist	5
Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)	7
Ph.D. Degree Requirements	7
Ph.D. Checklist	8
OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION	9
Department and Program Course Requirements	9
Students Without an Engineering or Science Background	10
Program of Study Limitations	10
Responsible Conduct of Research Training	10
Thesis/Dissertation Preparation and Degree Completion	11
Publishing a Manuscript Prior to Defense	11
Defense Format	12
Thesis/Dissertation Deposition & Degree Closeout	12
Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)	13
Research Involving Human or Animal Subjects	13
Field and Laboratory Safety	13
Research Data Management	14
Evaluation of Student Performance and Grounds for Dismissal	14
STUDENT REGISTRATION STATUS	15
Full-Time Status	15
Utah Residency	15
Continuous Graduate Registration	15
Concurrent Graduate Degrees	16
Concurrent Doctoral-Master's Degree Programs	16

FINANCES	16
Graduate Assistantship	16
Tuition/Fees	16
USU Student Health Insurance	17

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook describes the basic requirements for obtaining your graduate degree in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) at Utah State University (USU). The handbook summarizes the milestones of your program and provides guidance for how to complete CEE graduate degree programs. This handbook does not cover every expectation, procedure, or policy established by USU that pertains to you as a graduate student. The CEE Department adheres to the expectations, procedures, and policies of the USU School of Graduate Studies. Therefore, consult the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.usu.edu>) for information on all of USU's general graduate policies. If you have questions about something that does not appear in this handbook, departmental staff or faculty are delighted to help you with any matter, great or small. Just ask!

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS

### General Graduate Student Responsibilities

It is your responsibility to track your progress towards your degree and the completion of graduate school, department, and program/emphasis requirements. You can stay on top of your program milestones by referring to this handbook and visiting the USU School of Graduate Studies website (<https://gradschool.usu.edu/>) and General Catalog (<https://catalog.usu.edu>), as well as other information. **NOTE:** Given specific requirements of CEE Graduate Programs, the department's timelines may be accelerated compared to those of the graduate school.

- You are responsible for the timely submission of all program forms. Italicized terms throughout this handbook represent the forms you need to complete and submit for approval by the CEE Department and the USU School of Graduate Studies at certain points in your program. All forms can be found on the USU Office of Research and Graduate Studies website (<https://gradschool.usu.edu/resources/forms>). Submission instructions are on the forms. Forms must be submitted and approved at the appropriate time before you schedule your defense or authorization to defend will not be granted. For any questions about forms to be submitted, please contact the CEE Graduate Program Coordinator.
- You are responsible for meeting any additional requirements and deadlines from the USU School of Graduate Studies, especially those pertaining to commencement exercises.
- You are responsible for ensuring that your thesis or dissertation reflects your original work and for meeting USU standards for academic integrity, which can be found in the USU Student Code (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/article6>).

### Major Professor

Your major professor is your principal mentor through your graduate program, and your professional development is their primary role within your graduate degree. Major professors have flexibility in how they design their students' training and, thus, differ in how they interact with their students.

Your major professor, acting as a mentor, will do everything they can to help you in your graduate program. They will recommend courses to include in your program of study, help you define your research project and research questions, give you feedback on written materials, and help you prepare for oral presentations. They will guide you through your comprehensive

exam (Ph.D. students only) along with your research proposal, thesis, or dissertation defenses. They will also help you connect with a professional network and assist in resolving work, research, or other issues that arise.

Note that your major professor is also obligated to evaluate your progress and enforce a timely progression through your graduate program. You should maintain frequent, open communication with your major professor. If conflicts arise between you and your major professor, first try to discuss the issue(s) with your major professor. If talking does not work or is not possible, the Department Head can assist in arbitrating differences.

### **Supervisory Committee**

Your supervisory committee will approve your program of study, direct your comprehensive exams (Ph.D. students only), supervise and provide feedback on your research proposal and research work, and conduct your final thesis or dissertation defense.

You and your major professor should identify prospective committee members for their potential contributions to your academic and research program. You should then approach committee members to discuss your proposed work and their role within your committee. All members must agree to serve on your committee prior to submitting your Supervisory Committee Approval Form. Adjunct faculty (faculty members at other institutions or experts from outside of USU) can serve on your Supervisory Committee with the approval of the Department Head and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Additional requirements on composition of graduate committees are given in separate sections below.

Changes to the composition of your supervisory committee can be made after it is initially formed, but cannot be made during the six weeks prior to your defense.

### **Program of Study**

In consultation with your major professor, you will construct a tentative list of courses you plan to take to fulfill the credit requirements for your degree. See courses for your area/program on the department website. You should also consider the list of graduate emphases on the department website (<https://engineering.usu.edu/cee/students/requirements/>). Graduate students must be affiliated with one of the five CEE Programs. Once admitted to the program, students must select an emphasis, which will determine required courses and provide options for acceptable elective courses to meet degree requirements.

Ph.D. and Plan A/B MS students should communicate with their Supervisory Committee to discuss their research plans, direction, and draft Program of Study. After this discussion and with agreement from your committee, your projected Program of Study should then be entered into DegreeWorks. Consult with the CEE Graduate Program Coordinator who will send you instructions on how to enter your Program of Study into DegreeWorks. After it has been entered into DegreeWorks, the CEE Graduate Program Coordinator will then review it and circulate it electronically to your Supervisory Committee for their approval.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH OFFERED DEGREE

### ME and MS Plan C (coursework only)

- ME degree is 32 credits of coursework including 2 seminar credits.
- MS plan C is 38 credits of coursework including 2 seminar credits.

### ME/MS Plan C Degree Requirements

1. An ME/MS Plan C student must form a Supervisory Committee before the end of the first semester of beginning the CEE graduate program. The Supervisory Committee consists of at least two faculty members (including your major professor). At least one individual must represent the graduate program in which you are enrolled (i.e., Structures, Water, etc.). The Major Professor must be a CEE Faculty member. Once you have selected your Supervisory Committee members, you will need to submit a *Supervisory Committee Approval Form* that can be found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the form).
2. A *Program of Study* must be created by the ME/MS Plan C student and their Major Professor and approved by the Supervisory Committee before the end of the first semester of study.
3. ME/MS Plan C students must maintain and complete, with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, the 32 or 38 required program credits. Only courses completed with a “C” or better grade can be counted towards the semester credit hour requirement on the Program of Study.

### ME/MS Plan C Degree Completion Checklist

This section outlines all ME/MS Plan C program milestones and due dates for quick reference. Italicized terms below represent forms that you need to complete and submit for approval by the CEE Department and the USU School of Graduate Studies. All forms can be found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the forms). \*Note: Your forms are listed as “Master’s Plan C/Professional” on the Graduate Studies website. Semesters listed below refer to the traditional academic year (Fall and Spring semesters) and do not include Summer semester.

#### By the End of Your 1<sup>st</sup> Semester

- Form your Supervisory Committee and submit your *Supervisory Committee Approval Form*.
- Meet with your Major Professor to discuss coursework plans and to create a draft Program of Study.
- Submit your *Program of Study* in DegreeWorks and ensure that it is approved by your Supervisory Committee.

#### Final Semester of Coursework

- Watch for, and respond to, email from the Graduate Program Coordinator with information needed for you to complete formal degree requirements.
- Complete the Graduation Checklist that is emailed to you by the Graduate School after your successful defense and pay graduation fee as instructed by the email you receive.

## MS Plan A and B

- MS Plan A (thesis track) students are required to take 32 credits of coursework including 2 seminar credits, with 6-9 of these credits being CEE 6970 (Thesis Research). A maximum of 6 research credits will be counted for Concurrent BS/MS students.
- MS Plan B (report track) students must complete at least 32 credits of coursework including 2 seminar credits, with 2-3 of these credits being CEE 6970 (Thesis Research).

## MS Plan A and MS Plan B Degree Requirements

1. An MS student must form a *Supervisory Committee* before the end of the first semester of beginning the CEE graduate program. The Supervisory Committee consists of at least three faculty members (including your major professor) all holding an equivalent degree. At least one individual must represent your selected Program (i.e., Structures, Water, etc.) and at least one individual must be from outside your selected Program, either within or outside the CEE department. The Major Professor must be a CEE Faculty member. Once you have selected your Supervisory Committee members, submit a *Supervisory Committee Approval Form*, found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the form). Note that Adjunct faculty in CEE at USU may not qualify as the outside member of a committee if their expertise lies within the program in which the student is enrolled.
2. A *Program of Study* must be drafted by the MS Student and their Major Professor and then approved by the Supervisory Committee before the end of the first semester of study. This may require a meeting of the Supervisory Committee to review and discuss the program of study prior to approval.
3. An MS Student must maintain and complete, with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, the 32 required program credits. Only courses completed with a “C” or better grade can be counted towards the semester credit hour requirement on the program of study.
4. An MS student must prepare and present a thesis proposal to their Supervisory Committee. After successful presentation, students must complete a *Master’s Thesis/Project Approval* form and have it signed by the Supervisory Committee (MS plan A students only). Committee members will approve this form electronically, indicating approval of the thesis/report proposal and that the student has satisfactorily addressed feedback from the committee. Requirements for proposal preparation may be found in the CEE MS and PhD dissertation proposal requirements document (<https://engineering.usu.edu/cee/students/graduate/policies>).
5. The MS student must produce a Thesis/Report of their original, publishable research and pass a Thesis/Report Research Defense where this work is presented to the Supervisory Committee.

## MS Plan A and MS Plan B Checklist

This section outlines all MS Plan A and B degree milestones and due dates for quick reference. Italicized terms below represent forms that you need to complete and submit for approval by the CEE Department and the USU School of Graduate Studies. All forms can be found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the forms). Semesters listed below refer to the traditional academic year (Fall and Spring semesters) and do not include Summer semester.

### By the End of Your 1<sup>st</sup> Semester

- Complete the Responsible Conduct of Research Training (MS plan A students only). Information is provided on the School of Graduate Studies website. RCR training is also required for students who are supported by funding for some federal agencies (NSF, USDA-NIFA).
- Form your Supervisory Committee and submit your *Supervisory Committee Approval Form*.
- Meet with your Major Professor to discuss research plans and to draft a Program of Study.
- Communicate with your Supervisory Committee to confirm your Program of Study.
- Submit your *Program of Study* in DegreeWorks and ensure that it is approved by your Supervisory Committee.

### At Least One Semester Prior to Holding Final Defense

- Prepare your MS thesis/project proposal and present it to your committee.
- Submit your *Master's Thesis/Project Approval* form (MS plan A students only). Committee approval of this form indicates approval of your thesis/project proposal and that you have satisfactorily addressed feedback from the committee.

### 6 Weeks Prior to Your Defense

- Ensure that your Supervisory Committee will not change between now and your defense.
- Revalidate any coursework older than six years. Consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator where this may be the case.

### 2 Weeks Prior to Your Defense

- Submit an electronic copy of your thesis/report to each member of your Supervisory Committee, preferably in Microsoft Word format so that Committee members can provide edits and comments in track changes mode.

### As Soon as Possible Prior to Defense

- Schedule a date, time, and location for your defense with your Supervisory Committee (see requirement for the *Appointment for Examination* form below).

### **At least 10 Working Days (Two Weeks) Prior to Your Defense**

- Submit an *Appointment for Examination* form and ensure that it is approved by your committee members. This form must be submitted at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled time of the defense.

### **Post-Defense**

- Complete your graduation paperwork and all other thesis documents sent to you by the USU School of Graduate Studies.

### **Within the “Grace Semester” Following the Defense (first four bullets for Thesis Plan A only)**

- Submit your *Format and Style*, *Authorship and Copyright*, and *Title Page* forms through ServiceNow for approval.
- Make any corrections requested by your Major Professor and committee to your thesis and save it in PDF format.
- Once the Graduate Studies office has all three signed forms, they will request that you send your thesis to the Graduate Program Coordinator, who will then upload it to Box for their review.
- Make any corrections necessary to the annotated thesis and resubmit the PDF through the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- Plan B students only: After your committee has approved it, upload a PDF copy of your report to Digital Commons. Your advisor will then be prompted by the USU Library to go in and approve it.
- The USU School of Graduate Studies will inform you when everything has been submitted and your degree is ready to be awarded.
- You may purchase physical bound copies of your thesis/report through the USU Library, if desired.

## Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy)

### Ph.D. Degree Requirements

1. A Ph.D. student must form a *Supervisory Committee* before the end of the second semester of beginning the CEE graduate program. The Supervisory Committee consists of at least five faculty members with a doctoral degree (including your major professor). At least three committee members must come from within the CEE Department and at least one committee member must come from outside the CEE Department. The Major Professor must be a CEE Faculty member. Once you have selected your Supervisory Committee members, submit a *Supervisory Committee Approval Form*, found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the form). Note that Adjunct faculty in CEE at USU do not qualify as the outside member of a PhD graduate committee.
2. A Ph.D. Student must complete 42 credits beyond the Master's degree, including between 12 and 24 semester credits of course work (see Table 1). The total number of course work credits is determined by the student and Major Professor and must be approved by the Supervisory Committee.
3. As part of the 42 credits, a Ph.D. student is also required to complete between 18 and 30 Research/Dissertation credits (CEE 7970) (see Table 1). The total number of Research/Dissertation credits will be based on the course work credit requirements established above.

Table 1. PhD Credit Hour Requirements

	PhD Credit Hour Requirement
	PhD beyond MS
Coursework	12 - 24
Seminar	2
Research/Dissertation	18 - 30
Total Credits	42

4. A Program of Study describing how the 42 credits will be achieved is drafted by the Ph.D. student and their Major Professor and must then be approved by the Supervisory Committee before the end of the second semester of study.
5. A Ph.D. student must maintain and complete, with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, 42 semester credits (see Table 1). Only courses completed with a "C" or better grade can be counted towards the semester credit hour requirement on the program of study.
6. A Ph.D. student must demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge in his/her area of specialization by passing a Comprehensive Exam. Refer to the CEE comprehensive exam policy document (<https://engineering.usu.edu/cee/students/graduate/policies>) for details on the comprehensive exam policy, procedures, and deadlines.
7. A Ph.D. student is required to present a research proposal to their supervisory committee after successfully passing the Comprehensive Exam. The presentation shall consist of a written proposal and a presentation to the student's Supervisory Committee of its contents. The proposal presentation can be held any time after passing the Comprehensive Exam, but must be completed before the end of the second year and at least two semesters before the final Dissertation Research Defense. Refer to the CEE Ph.D. dissertation proposal requirements document (<https://engineering.usu.edu/cee/students/graduate/policies>) for details on the content

- and format of the dissertation proposal and proposal defense.
8. A PhD student must complete an *Application for Candidacy* form and submit it online for approval by the Supervisory Committee after successfully completing both the Comprehensive Exam and proposal presentation. This form must be completed at least two semesters before the final Dissertation Research Defense, and it attests that you are ready to conduct independent research by having successfully presented/defended your research proposal, procured the necessary regulatory approvals, and completed your Comprehensive Exam.
  9. The Ph.D. Candidate must pass a Dissertation Research Defense and produce a dissertation of their original dissertation research.

## **Ph.D. Checklist**

This section outlines all Ph.D. degree milestones and due dates for quick reference. Italicized terms below represent forms that you need to complete and submit for approval by the CEE Department and the USU School of Graduate Studies. All forms can be found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the forms). Semesters listed below refer to the traditional academic year (Fall and Spring semesters) and do not include summer semester.

### **By the End of Your 1<sup>st</sup> Semester**

- Complete the Responsible Conduct of Research Training. You can find information on the School of Graduate Studies website.

### **By the End of Your 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester**

- Form your Supervisory Committee and submit your *Supervisory Committee Approval Form*.
- Meet with your Major Professor to discuss research plans and draft a Program of Study.
- Communicate with committee to confirm Program of Study plan.
- Submit your *Program of Study* in DegreeWorks and ensure that it is approved by Supervisory Committee members.

### **By the End of Your 3<sup>rd</sup> Semester**

- Complete your Comprehensive Exam.

### **At Least 2 Semesters Prior to Your Dissertation Research Defense and Before the End of Your 2<sup>nd</sup> Year**

- Schedule and complete your research proposal presentation.
- Submit your *Application for Candidacy* form.

### **6 Weeks Prior to Your Dissertation Defense**

- Ensure that your Supervisory Committee will not change between now and your defense.
- Revalidate any coursework older than eight years. Consult with the Graduate

Program Coordinator where this may be the case.

### **2 Weeks Prior to Your Dissertation Defense**

- Submit a copy of your dissertation to each member of your Supervisory Committee for corrections or approval, preferably in Microsoft Word format so that Committee members can provide edits and comments in track changes mode.

### **As Soon as Possible Prior to Dissertation Defense**

- Schedule a date, time, and location for your defense with your Supervisory Committee.

### **At least 10 Working Days (Two Weeks) Prior to Your Dissertation Defense**

- Submit an *Appointment for Examination* form and ensure that it is approved by your committee members. This form must be submitted at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled time of the defense.

### **Post-Defense**

- Complete your graduation paperwork and all other Dissertation documents sent to you by the USU School of Graduate Studies.

### **Within the “Grace Semester” Following the Dissertation Defense**

- Submit your *Format and Style*, *Authorship and Copyright*, and *Title Page* forms through ServiceNow for electronic approvals.
- Make any corrections to your dissertation requested by your Major Professor and supervisory committee and save it in PDF format.
- Once the Graduate Studies office has all three signed forms they will request that you send your dissertation to the Graduate Program Coordinator, who will then upload it to Box for their review.
- Make any corrections necessary to the annotated dissertation and resubmit the PDF through the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- The USU School of Graduate Studies will inform you when everything has been submitted, approved, and your degree is ready to be awarded.
- You may purchase physical, bound copies of your dissertation through the USU Library, if desired.

## **OTHER GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Department and Program Course Requirements**

In addition to the credit requirements for each degree dictated by the department and graduate school, each graduate emphasis within CEE requires specific core courses. See <https://engineering.usu.edu/cee/students/requirements/> for emphasis-specific requirements.

## Students Without an Engineering or Science Background

In some cases, students without an engineering or science undergraduate degree may wish to pursue a graduate degree in CEE. This is allowable subject to students meeting minimum requirements established by CEE graduate programs. Students graduating from our department receive a degree in “Civil and Environmental Engineering” and are expected to hold up the standards and, where students have a qualifying and accredited degree, be on a path to practice as professional engineers. If they have not already, the CEE Department encourages all students to pass the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam as the first step towards professional licensure. To ensure that students are sufficiently prepared in the fundamentals of engineering, program-specific requirements for incoming students with non-engineering undergraduate degrees have been set and can be found at <https://engineering.usu.edu/cee/students/requirements/non-engineering>.

## Program of Study Limitations

- Transfer Credits
  - Your Supervisory Committee may recommend the transfer of up to 12 graduate credits for PhD and 6 for MS students earned at another accredited institution to your USU Program of Study.
  - Transfer credits are subject to the approval of the Graduate Dean.
  - Transfer credits cannot have been used for another degree.
  - ⚡ Transfer credits do not count toward the required residency credits.
  - Transfer credits are subject to the same time limit as USU course credits.
- If you deviate from your initial Program of Study during your actual coursework, you must work with Graduate Program Coordinator to submit a *Program of Study Revision* Form found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website. You should also ensure that all members of your Supervisory Committee are aware of any changes to your Program of Study.
- Once you complete the coursework credit requirements on your Program of Study, you qualify to be considered a full-time student at three credits. If you have not yet defended your thesis or dissertation after you finish your entire Program of Study credit requirements, you can register for three credits of CEE 6970 (MS Plan A) or 7970 (Ph.D.) (Thesis/Dissertation) if needed until your defense semester. International students with an F-1 or J-1 visa must submit a *Full Time at 3 Credits* form when dropping to 3 credits. This form is found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the form). All other students, if you have student loans, dropping to three credits will trigger repayment issues unless you complete the *Full Time at 3 Credits* form. You should consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure that you maintain full time student status, ensure compliance with requirements of your student visa (where applicable), and avoid registering for unnecessary credits.
- Coursework on your program of study more than six years old for MS and eight years old for PhD must be revalidated by the USU School of Graduate Studies at least six weeks prior to your defense.

## Responsible Conduct of Research Training

All Ph.D. and MS Plan A students must complete the Responsible Conduct of Research training (RCR). All other students may participate in the program if interested or as directed by

their Supervisory Committee. This training introduces key topics in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), including responsibilities related to proper research conduct, and the regulations that ensure that research is done in ways that are scientifically sound, ethical, and safe.

To fulfill the RCR Training requirement, you must complete the “**Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Curriculum**” through the CITI Training online program. You must pass each module with a score of 80% or higher. Completion of another CITI Training Module (such as the Social & Behavioral Research Modules used by the IRB or those used by the IACUC) **DOES NOT** fulfill the RCR training requirement.

You will find information on how to register for the RCR training via the CITI website here: <https://research.usu.edu/compliance/>.

Once RCR Training is completed, the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance will automatically receive an email with your certification of completion for their records. You should also alert your advisor to let them know that you have completed the training.

### **Thesis/Dissertation Preparation and Degree Completion**

It is your responsibility to assure that your thesis/dissertation adheres to the publishing standards of the USU School of Graduate Studies before you submit it for their review and approval. If you submit your thesis/dissertation to the USU School of Graduate Studies with errors, it will be promptly returned to you without further comment.

In an effort to help you know what is expected from your thesis/dissertation before submission, the USU School of Graduate Studies offers workshops throughout the year designed to help you prepare your manuscript in the correct format. The workshops also provide valuable information on copyright laws and the approval process. Register for a workshop early in the year, as they fill up quickly. In addition, before you begin working on your thesis, Plan B report, or dissertation, review the USU Publication Guide found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website <https://gradschool.usu.edu/academics/final-defense> (for formatting style) and the style manual or journal approved by your Supervisory Committee (for citation style). You can also look at the dissertations of recent CEE students which are available on USU’s Digital Commons.

Once you have reviewed the USU Publication Guide and successfully defended, complete and submit the Thesis/Dissertation Format and Style form found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the form). This form notifies the USU School of Graduate Studies whether you will submit your manuscript in a monograph, or multiple-paper format, and the style manual or journal format(s) you will use. You should discuss the format of your thesis/dissertation (monograph versus multiple-paper) with your major professor early in your graduate program.

### **Publishing a Manuscript Prior to Defense**

We encourage graduate students to publish their work as soon as it is complete to enhance its impact and to build your resume. Manuscripts that are part of a student’s thesis or dissertation, and are submitted for publication prior to the student’s defense, must be circulated to the student’s committee prior to submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Committee members should provide feedback at that time to limit any need for changes to an already published chapter in a dissertation/thesis at the time of the defense. If committee members are not able to

provide feedback within a reasonable time (a minimum of 2 weeks), the major professor may authorize a student to proceed with submission, so as to limit publication delays.

### **Defense Format**

Your Thesis/Dissertation Defense will include a public seminar in which you will present your research and conclusions to faculty, graduate students, and other interested people with an opportunity for questions from the public audience. You will then convene with your Supervisory Committee to discuss your research and answer questions from the committee. The Supervisory Committee will then discuss the outcome of your defense, resulting in the decision on the outcome of the defense.

Refer to the “checklist for completing degree” for deadlines during the course of preparing for and executing your thesis/dissertation defense and work closely with department Graduate Program Coordinator. There is much policy and paperwork involved, which they are happy to help you navigate.

### **Thesis/Dissertation Deposition & Degree Closeout**

It is your responsibility to meet guidelines for the deposition of your thesis/dissertation with Utah State University after it is accepted by your Supervisory Committee and the USU School of Graduate Studies.

You will have one “grace” semester after your defense semester to finish and deposit your thesis/dissertation with USU and close out your degree. International students must remain registered in CEE 6970/7970 during their grace semester to maintain their visa status. We suggest discussing your options with Global Engagement at this time, as you may be eligible to drop down to 1 credit during your grace semester. Domestic students do not need to be registered but should still have access to the USU Library, Box, VPN, and USU’s Internet network during the grace semester. You will be charged a late completion fee for every semester required beyond your grace semester to close out your degree. International students will be required to register for 3 credits per semester that goes beyond their grace semester.

The thesis/dissertation deposition and closeout process can take several weeks to complete. Therefore, if you must have your thesis/dissertation finished and your degree closed out by a specific date, begin the process accordingly. Do not think that the review process can be completed in a couple of days!

- Submit your *Thesis/Dissertation Format & Style and Electronic Publishing Approval (F&S) and Authorship & Copyright (A&C)* forms along with the *Title Page* form found on the USU School of Graduate Studies website (submission instructions are on the form). You will also receive a link to these forms via email upon completion of your defense.
- Once those forms are approved and completed, submit your final, committee approved, PDF copy of your thesis/dissertation to the department Graduate Program Coordinator for upload and review by the Graduate Studies reviewer.
- The USU School of Graduate Studies will briefly review your manuscript for basic grammar errors, plagiarism, and citations. Again, they will simply return your manuscript if it does not already meet the criteria outlined in the USU Publication Guide (<https://gradschool.usu.edu/academics/final-defense>) and your selected journals.
- After their initial review, make any corrections necessary to the annotated

thesis/dissertation and resubmit the PDF through the GPC. The USU School of Graduate Studies will inform you when everything has been submitted and your degree is ready to be awarded. Congratulations! You are finished!

- If you want physical copies of your manuscript bound for personal use or to distribute to family, friends, committee members, etc., make the requisite number of copies and take them to the USU Library (Journals & Newspapers Desk) for binding. For the current price for bound thesis copies contact the USU library ([https://library.usu.edu/services/theses\\_dissertations/](https://library.usu.edu/services/theses_dissertations/)).

### **Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is a complex and evolving topic. While it offers many opportunities to improve productivity and quality, it has also been known to produce false and misleading outputs. Certain applications of generative AI are more commonly accepted (e.g., improving grammar, helping coding or scripting), while others are not acceptable (e.g., producing responses to the comprehensive exam). As a graduate student in this department, you are expected to follow the requirements, guidance, and instructions of the university's and department's policies, and your major professor, research advisor, and thesis or dissertation committee regarding acceptable and unacceptable uses of generative AI. As applicable, you must also follow the requirements and instructions of outside organizations with which you work, such as journals, conferences, and funding agencies. Be sure to report and acknowledge any use of generative AI, especially as part of research products (e.g., papers, presentations, reports). Also, you must verify the validity of any outputs that AI tools generate. Ultimately, you are responsible for the quality and accuracy of any and all content you produce as a graduate student.

### **Research Involving Human or Animal Subjects**

You may participate in research involving human subjects. This includes any sort of research involving surveys. Such work is overseen by USU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that human subjects research is conducted in an ethical way. Before you can participate as an investigator on research involving human subjects, you must complete required training and be added to a "protocol" or application for review and approval of the research procedures. Talk to your major professor and/or research supervisor about your responsibilities regarding human subjects research. Current requirements and procedures can be found on the IRB website: <https://research.usu.edu/irb/>. If you have any questions about whether your research qualifies as "human subjects research", you should reach out to the IRB office and initiate a conversation with them.

You may participate in research, teaching, or outreach using animals. Such work is overseen by USU's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Before you can participate in research involving animals, you must complete required training and be added to a "protocol" or application for review and approval of the research procedures. If your research involves animal subjects, talk to your major professor and/or research supervisor about your responsibilities regarding animal care and use. Current requirements and procedures can be found on the IACUC website: <https://research.usu.edu/iacuc/>.

### **Field and Laboratory Safety**

Your safety and that of your colleagues and co-workers is far more important than any experiment you may conduct or data you may collect. Thus, students conducting fieldwork or working in laboratories as part of their research must receive required field and/or laboratory

safety training prior to working in the field or in the lab. Consult with your major professor to ensure that you receive the necessary training and that you have read and understand any safety plans/requirements. There are real risks associated with some types of work, and it is your responsibility to understand and follow safety requirements that apply to your research work.

## **Research Data Management**

Data – broadly defined – are considered primary research products that need to be curated and shared. Availability of data and other research products (e.g., code, models, etc.) is important in establishing transparency, reproducibility, and trust in research work. Additionally, most grant funding agencies now require data management plans and open data sharing in reputable data repositories as do many journal publishers. Data produced by your research work may be subject to a project Data Management Plan with specific requirements for data sharing. You should consult with your major professor early in your program of study to understand data sharing requirements. You should then plan your data management and sharing activities in advance to ensure that you maximize the value of the data you produce and meet funding agency and publisher requirements. USU provides resources and training for research data management through the USU Library, including opportunities for consultation with a Research Data Librarian: <https://libguides.usu.edu/data>.

## **Evaluation of Student Performance and Grounds for Dismissal**

Continuation of your Graduate Research and/or Teaching Assistantship position and your continuing status as a student in good standing within the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department is subject to periodic review by your major professor, supervisory committee, program head, and department head. They will periodically consider whether you are making satisfactory progress toward your degree and research project requirements and that you are meeting university regulations regarding student conduct (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/article5>). Beyond the general academic requirements and deadlines described in this handbook and deadlines specified by the USU graduate school, the University's requirements with regard to student conduct (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/article5>), academic integrity (<https://www.usu.edu/student-conduct/student-code/article6>), and those specified by the CEE Department and the College of Engineering articulated in this and other departmental policy documents (<https://engineering.usu.edu/cee/students/graduate/policies>), your major professor may lay out additional expectations within a written mentoring agreement to ensure that you understand the expectations of your Assistantship position and what "satisfactory performance" means. Failure to meet performance requirements as described within these policies and documents may be grounds for dismissal.

If it is determined that you are not meeting the standards expected for continuation of your Graduate Research and/or Teaching Assistantship or for continuation in your academic program, you will be notified by the College or your major professor. You will then have 10 business days to appeal in writing to the head of your department and the Vice Provost for the College of Graduate Studies. A decision on your appeal will be transmitted to you in writing within 10 business days from your submission of it. That decision shall be final.

## STUDENT REGISTRATION STATUS

### Full-Time Status

**A full-time matriculated graduate student** must be one of the following:

- Registered for 9 or more graduate credits.
- Registered for 6 or more graduate credits if employed as a graduate assistant for 15 hours per week or more.
- Registered for 3 graduate credits with all required coursework completed and only the research component of the degree remaining (the student's Program of Study must have been submitted to the School of Graduate Studies).
- Registered for at least 3 graduate credits during the semester of the final thesis/dissertation defense or, in a non-thesis degree program, the last semester of coursework required on the student's Program of Study.

### Utah Residency

Domestic, non-resident graduate students qualify for Utah Residency after one year. Because the USU School of Graduate Studies will only waive the non-resident tuition portion for two semesters, it is crucial that you gain Utah Residency before your third semester begins (see Tuition/Waiver Awards below). Note that you must have possessed a valid Utah driver's license for at least three months before you can apply for Utah Residency. Therefore, you must have a Utah driver's license by at least June if applying for Utah Residency for Fall semester and by September if applying for Utah Residency for Spring semester. Contact the Utah State University Residency Office, located in the Taggart Student Center, for more information regarding Utah Residency.

### Continuous Graduate Registration

Graduate students using University facilities or faculty time must be registered for a minimum of three graduate credits every semester, except Summer semesters and the student's "grace" semester, until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous registration may be met with courses, independent study, or research credit 6970 or 7970. The continuous registration requirement goes into effect the semester a student matriculates in the School of Graduate Studies.

A graduate student who is not using University facilities or faculty time may meet the continuous registration requirement by paying the Continuous Registration Fee of \$100 per semester (not necessary for summer semester). This alternative requires completion of the Application for Leave of Absence/Continuous Registration form, which includes verification that the student is not using University facilities and/or faculty time. International students usually do not qualify to pay the Continuous Registration Fee because of immigration regulations.

Because of Student Exchange and Visitor (SEVIS) regulations, a student holding an F-1 or J-1 visa is not eligible to pay the \$100 fee to complete the degree, but must be registered as a full-time student through the semester of completion. As noted above, once your program of study credit requirements is complete, you can register for three credits of CEE 6970 (MS Plan A) or 7970 (Ph.D.) (Thesis/Dissertation) until your defense semester. International students with an F-1 or J-1 visa will be required to submit a Full Time at 3 Credits form when dropping to 3 credits.

## **Concurrent Graduate Degrees**

Students may pursue concurrent undergraduate and master's degrees or concurrent master's and doctoral degrees with the approval of the cooperating departments and the Vice Provost of Graduate Studies. An application should first be submitted for the first-degree program. If admission is granted, the student may then apply for a second-degree program by submitting a Concurrent Degrees request to the School of Graduate Studies (<https://gradschool.usu.edu/resources/all-forms/concurrent-degrees>). To be considered as concurrent degrees, admission to the second-degree program must be finalized before the end of the second semester in the first-degree program.

## **Concurrent Doctoral-Master's Degree Programs**

In special cases, a student may complete concurrently all requirements for a doctoral degree and a master's degree with fewer than the total credits required by both programs, provided that the following conditions are met:

- The student must submit a Concurrent Degree request and be accepted into the second program or prior to completing 50% of the credits required for the first program.
- The student's doctoral supervisory committee must consist of four members from the doctoral department and two members from the master's department, if the student is on a thesis plan. The master's committee must consist of two master's departmental members and the chair of the doctoral committee.
- The student's supervisory committee, the two department heads, and the Vice Provost of Graduate Studies must approve each Program of Study.

There can be a maximum of 9 concurrent credits shared between the two degrees. A student could thus complete the requirements for both degrees with up to 9 fewer semester credits than the usual minimum totals for two degrees.

Concurrent credits will not be applied towards both degrees, per university policy. Thus, the first degree will be awarded at the minimum credit requirement. The second degree will reflect the credit overlap and not include the shared coursework on the Program of Study.

# **FINANCES**

## **Graduate Assistantship**

Many graduate students in the CEE Department are funded through Graduate Research Assistantships and Graduate Teaching Assistantships. These assistantships provide a monthly salary and qualify the recipients for additional tuition award/waiver and health insurance benefits. If there are changes in assistantships, the major professor should notify the appropriate administrative office (CEE or UWRL) prior to the 5th day of the month at the end of which the change is to take effect.

## **Tuition/Fees**

All non-resident students (MS Plan A and Ph.D.) who are hired as Graduate Research Assistants qualify for a non-resident tuition waiver (the non-resident portion of your tuition will automatically be removed from your student account). In addition, Ph.D. students who are hired

as Graduate Research Assistants qualify for a resident tuition award (the USU School of Graduate Studies will pay the resident portion of your tuition). MS Plan A students should not expect a resident tuition award. If your major professor has not agreed to pay your resident tuition from a grant account, then you are responsible for paying it. All graduate students are responsible for paying their student fees, unless your major professor has agreed to pay for them from a grant account.

### Tuition Waiver/Award Requirements

In order to be eligible for a resident tuition waiver/award the following criteria must be met:

- Hired as a Graduate Research Assistant working at least 20 hours/week (0.5 FTE) and receiving at least \$833/month during the duration of the waiver/award period.
- Registered as a full-time student at Utah State University (six credit hours if working on program of study; three credit hours if finished with program of study).
- Maintain a 3.0+ GPA for courses covered by the tuition waiver/award.

### Tuition Waiver/Award Limitations

Tuition waivers/awards are subject to the following limitations:

- Credits waived and/or paid for through the tuition waiver/award program must be part of your approved *Program of Study* (see “Program of Study” section for limitations on what courses can be part of your program of study).
- A maximum of two semesters’ worth of non-resident tuition will be waived for U.S. citizens, as students qualify for Utah residency after one year (see “Utah Residency” section for more details).
- A maximum of 9 credits per semester will be waived and/or paid for each semester.

### **USU Student Health Insurance**

All graduate students who receive a fellowship of \$10,000+/year or are employed as a Graduate Instructor, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Research Assistant, or General Graduate Assistant (working 20 hours/week), qualify for a subsidized version of USU’s Student Health Insurance. This subsidy requires the fellowship or grant account to pay 80% of the premiums, with the student responsible for the remaining 20%. Coverage is for an entire year, unless you opt out of the program after Fall semester or begin the program during Spring semester.

If you qualify, you must enroll in USU’s Student Health Insurance or opt-out of it by providing evidence that you already have equivalent insurance.

## **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The following text was copied from the USU Office of Equity Website at:  
<https://www.usu.edu/equity/non-discrimination>.

In its programs and activities, including in admissions and employment, Utah State University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by

University policy, Title IX, or any other federal, state, or local law.

Utah State University is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination including harassment in employment including in hiring, promotion, transfer, or termination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by University policy or any other federal, state, or local law.

Utah State University does not discriminate in its housing offerings and will treat all persons fairly and equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, familial status, disability, national origin, source of income, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Additionally, the University endeavors to provide reasonable accommodations when necessary and to ensure equal access to qualified persons with disabilities.

The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations and/or USU's non-discrimination policies:

**Assistant Director and Title IX Coordinator**

Cody Carmichael, JD  
Cody.carmichael@usu.edu  
Distance Education 404  
435-797-1266

**Matt Pinner, JD**

Executive Director  
Matthew.pinner@usu.edu  
Distance Education 401  
435-797-1266

For further information regarding non-discrimination, please visit <https://equity.usu.edu/>, or contact:

U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
800-421-3481  
[OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)

U.S. Department of Education  
Denver Regional Office  
303-844-5695  
[OCR.Denver@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Denver@ed.gov)

*\*document updated 1/15/2026*