



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Graduate Program Handbook - 2023/24

MS Computer Science

Reference this handbook to learn about the unique policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for graduate students in the *Computer Science MS Program*.

[Sumanta N Pattanaik • 6/4/2023 • Department of Computer Science]



Letter of Welcome from Dr. Damla Turgut, Chair of the Department of Computer Science

Welcome, on behalf of Dr. Mark Heinrich, our associate chair, Dr. Wei Zhang, our graduate coordinator, and our faculty, to the department of Computer Science at UCF.

Computer Science is the engine that drives many of the achievements of our current world. It gave us the internet, smartphones, efficient manufacturing, and creative finance. It allows us to approach and sometimes exceed the capabilities of the human vision system, drive AR/VR experiences, answer queries in natural language, and generate workmanlike artwork. Soon, it will help drive cars and assist the disabled and the elderly. Some researchers argue that the whole universe is computational!

Computer Science presents new challenges for humanity, both when it falls short of its promises and when its unchecked powers can lead to unintended consequences. There are legitimate concerns that computational devices might replace jobs faster than new jobs are created for humans. Another danger is the inadvertent extension of our biases and prejudices into the computational world, whether through design mistakes, biased training data, or AI objectives that are not aligned with societal interests. Additionally, the cyber world created by computational agents is vulnerable to the activities of cybercriminals and serves as a battleground for competition between powers, state actors, and economic interests.

The Computer Science department at UCF is at the forefront of many current challenges. Our department offers undergraduate degrees in Computer Science and Information Technology, providing our students with an excellent education that enables them to compete with the top universities in the nation. For instance, our programming team had advanced to the World Finals of the International Collegiate Programming Contest almost every year since its first start in 1982. Notably, we have achieved as high as second place at the international level and compete well each year against the best teams worldwide. Another remarkable accomplishment is our Collegiate Cyber Defense Championship team, which has secured first and second place in the competition nearly every year since 2014, while also achieving success in various other cyber competitions.

Our department offers master's degrees in Computer Science and, for students who aim to specialize their graduate education to a specific area and career path, we are also offering master's degrees in Computer Vision, Cyber Security and Privacy, and Digital

Forensics. Our department is also involved in interdisciplinary master's programs in Data Analytics and FinTech.

Finally, the faculty and students of our department perform research in many areas of computer science, ranging from theoretical advances to translational research. Our Ph.D. program is the oldest Computer Science Ph.D. program in Florida, as well as the first Ph.D. program at UCF. Our faculty comprises members of the National Academy of Sciences, as well as Fellows of IEEE and ACM. Our students consistently publish their work in the top venues of their respective fields, and they are sought after by research institutes, universities, and industry research labs.

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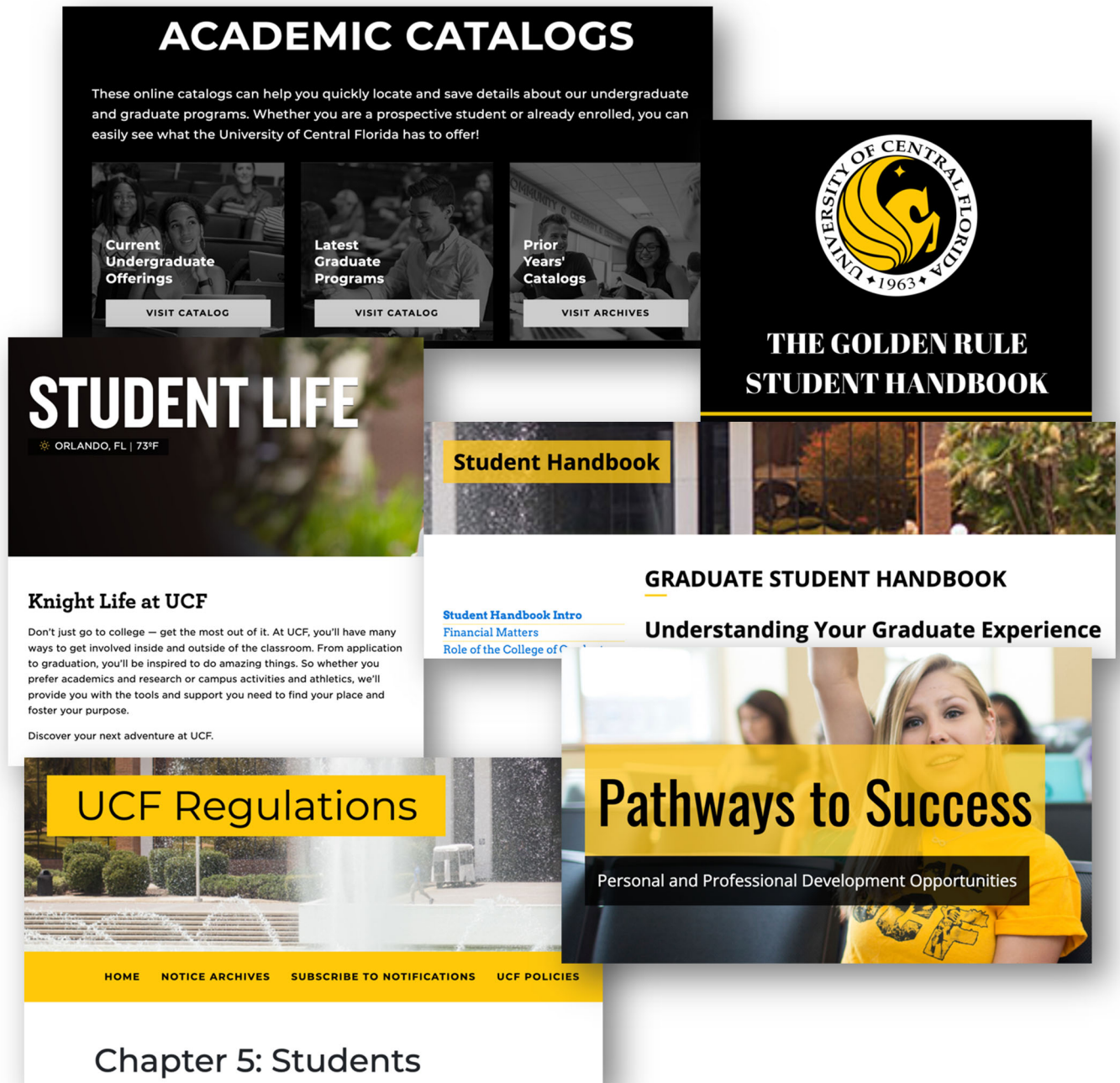
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Navigating Policy and Resources at the University of Central Florida

This handbook is one of many sources to consult as you become familiar with the policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms of graduate education at the University of Central Florida.



How to Use This Handbook

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

Who to Contact for Questions

Many of your questions about how to meet expectations and thrive as a graduate student will be answered by the various sources of policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms listed in this document. Several key positions in this department and on campus are ready to answer your remaining questions:

Graduate Program Staff

Each graduate program will have at least one department staff person typically called a Graduate Program Coordinator who serves as a point person for program policy and procedures. Graduate Program Coordinators are well versed in most elements of graduate education that extend beyond academic instruction in your program and will likely be your first stop for questions related to anything in this handbook.

Director of Graduate Studies

Each graduate program has one faculty member designated to direct its educational vision and structure.

Names and contact information of your Graduate Program Coordinator and Director of Graduate Studies can be found on your program's page in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Simply navigate to the Programs tab in the catalog and then navigate to the program name.

Graduate School Services

For general graduate inquiries and graduate student services from the Graduate School, please review the [College of Graduate Studies](#) website as an additional resource.

Onboarding

CS-MS program does not have any specific onboarding requirements.

UCF graduate program conduct new student orientations every year before Fall semester starts. Visit <https://graduate.ucf.edu/orientation/> for the details. College of Engineering and Computer Science conducts online new student orientation. See <https://grad.cecs.ucf.edu/prospective-students/new-student-orientation/> for the orientation schedule. All new students are encouraged to attend these orientations. All international students are required to complete an online international student orientation prior to their arrival to the USA. Visit <https://global.ucf.edu/international-students-scholars-and-professionals/prospective/> for the details.

Introduction/Overview Section

Complete Name of Degree

CS-MS

College

College of Engineering and Computer Science

Department

Computer Science

Program Type

Masters

Program Website

<https://www.cs.ucf.edu/>

Year of Program Inception

1973

Program Overview Narrative

The Master of Science in Computer Science program provides students with an in-depth education geared toward meeting the needs of business and industry in Florida and throughout the United States, as well as preparing students for higher level graduate studies and research. The program's goal is to produce graduates with a high level of competency in understanding, applying, and enunciating the modern concepts, principles, methods, and theories necessary for the design and implementation of computing systems.

Students in the program receive a broad background in the areas of programming systems and languages, computer architecture, and computer science theory while specializing in a research area in either applied or theoretical computer science. Students successfully completing this program will have exhibited breadth as well as

depth of capability involving both theoretical aspects of computer science and practical considerations of computing.

Program Mission

The mission of the Computer Science program is to educate majors in the principles and practices of computer science, preparing them for higher level graduate school, for careers in software development and computing systems technology, and a lifetime of learning.

The mission of the Computer Science Masters Program is to provide students, who have a BS in Computer Science or in related discipline, with an in-depth education in the current computing needs of business and industry in the State of Florida as well as nationwide, and also to prepare interested students for research (for example, continued study to achieve a Ph.D.).

The objectives of the CS Program at UCF are that:

1. CS graduates participate as effective and productive team members or leaders in the development of computer and software systems covering a broad range of fields including engineering, scientific, and enterprise applications.
2. CS graduates demonstrate the knowledge and skills to do advanced studies and research in computer science and related engineering and scientific disciplines.

Program Accreditation/Certification

[Here the program will provide relevant details associated with any accreditations/certifications the program holds. Leave this section as is if none.]

Student Learning Outcomes/Competencies

1. To produce M.S. students with a high level of both theoretical and practical competency in analyzing and designing algorithms, software systems, and hardware systems.
2. To teach M.S. students fundamental skills that will enable them to solve challenging real-world problems in their future careers.
3. To produce Thesis M.S. students who have acquired skills and knowledge to conduct high-quality research in their area of specialization.
4. To produce M.S. students who have acquired broad skills and knowledge in several areas of computer science with in-depth skills and knowledge in one or two areas of their interest, and are, thus, highly employable.

All graduating CS graduate shall:

1. analyze a complex computing problem and to apply principles of computing and other relevant disciplines to identify solutions
2. design and implement a computing-based solution to meet a given set of computing requirements in the context of the program's discipline
3. evaluate a computing-based solution to meet a given set of computing requirements in the context of the program's discipline
4. communicate effectively in a variety of professional contexts
5. recognize professional responsibilities and make informed judgments in computing practice based on legal and ethical principles
6. function effectively as a member or leader of a team engaged in activities appropriate to the program's discipline
7. apply computer science theory to produce computing-based solutions
8. apply software development fundamentals to produce computing-based solutions

Student Expectations

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Professional Development

A graduate student's professional development goes beyond completing course work, passing exams, conducting research for a thesis, and meeting degree requirements. Professional development also involves developing the academic and nonacademic skills needed to become successful in the field of choice.

- UCF has an active professional development program for graduate students, including the Professoriate Program, sponsored by Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL), the Pathways to Success Workshops, the Graduate Research forum, sponsored by the College of Graduate Studies, and special award recognitions such as the Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis, and the Award for the Innovative Thesis (see below for additional information).
- The university has active student chapters of the Association of Computing Machinery and the IEEE. The cost for student membership in the national

organizations is subsidized by professional memberships. This is a “bargain” that no student should pass up.

- Computer Science sponsors regular colloquia talks by leading researchers in the discipline. All students are strongly encouraged to attend as many as feasible within the constraints of their courses and other academic obligations.
- Various research groups hold their own seminars in which students present their research in front of other members of their research group.
- Students are expected to publish the results of their research.
- Graduate students in CS are encouraged to present papers at conferences. Often their faculty mentor will be able to fund one or more such opportunities. The College of ECS, the College of Graduate Studies and the Student Government Association are other sources of such support.
- Graduate students in CS are also encouraged to participate in summer research internships when this is compatible with their research agendas – see your research adviser for more information and guidelines.

Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit <https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/>.

Graduate Research Forum

The Research Forum will feature poster displays representing UCF’s diverse colleges and disciplines.

The [Graduate Research Forum](#) is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

The College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Association invite all UCF students, community, and employers to attend the Graduate Research Forum. For more information, contact researchweek@ucf.edu.

Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

Award for the Outstanding Master's Thesis – It recognizes graduate students for excellence in the master's thesis. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field. The university award will be forwarded to a national-level competition sponsored by the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) when the thesis discipline corresponds to the annual submission request. For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see the College of Graduate Studies website <https://graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/>.

Other

For information about the Council of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) thesis and dissertation awards, see their website: <http://www.csgs.org/awards/>.

For grant-proposal writing resources: <https://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/>.

Advising/Mentoring

Advising and mentoring are two very important elements in a graduate student's career. Advising relationships are a central part of academia, important to both the experience and development of students and faculty members alike.

Your advisor has two main roles: 1) To assist you in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field, and 2) to chair the committee that will determine whether you have performed at an acceptable level in each of your degree milestones. Other roles of your advisor may include tracking your progress in completing your degree, assisting with course selection and planning your academic path, and helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and research opportunities.

Both the student and advisor are responsible for making their expectations clear to each other. Be sure to discuss this with your advisor.

Finding & Selecting an Advisor

Upon acceptance into the CS program, MS students are assigned an **academic advisor**. This person, mostly the Graduate Coordinator, advises the student on course selections during the early stages of the student's graduate career. For thesis option MS students, the academic advisor needs to be rapidly replaced by a **research advisor** who serves as course advisor and research mentor. The research advisor may or may not be the person initially assigned as academic adviser, depending primarily on the research path the student chooses. Your research advisor should be a faculty member in the program whose expertise and project/research interests match closely with those that you intend to acquire. To learn more about the faculty in your program, consider consulting the following sources:

- Courses and seminars you attend
- Our program website (<https://www.cs.ucf.edu/people/all-faculty/>)
- Faculty publications
- Students currently in a prospective advisor's group/lab

Additionally, you may wish to have a discussion with a prospective advisor. Below are some questions to consider asking in this discussion, though it is not a complete list. You should spend some time identifying what is most important to you in your graduate training and ask questions accordingly.

Questions to Ask of Prospective Research Advisors

- What thesis projects would be available to me if I were to join your group?
- Would these projects expose me to a variety of different approaches?
- In general, how available will you be to answer questions I might have?
- What is your philosophy regarding the amount of guidance the advisor should provide to a student during preparation of the thesis proposal, literature seminars, thesis writing, etc.?
- What are your expectations for the amount of time I should spend each day/week in your group/lab?
- What regularly scheduled activities (e.g., group meetings, joint group meetings, research clubs) does your group participate in that provide an opportunity to get outside input on my research project and to hear about the work of other students and postdocs?
- Do you encourage your students to attend seminars and journal clubs, including those that may be outside of their narrow field of interest/research?
- Do students in your group/lab have the opportunity to attend professional meetings where they can interact with colleagues/researchers from other institutions?

- Do you include your graduate students in professional activities that will familiarize them with their field of interest/research, such as reviewing manuscripts and meeting with visiting speakers?
- How long do you think it should take me to get my degree?
- What are your former graduate students (if any) doing now?
- What is your general philosophy of graduate training and what goals do you have for your graduate students?

No faculty member is obligated to accept a student's request to serve as advisor, though invitations are often accepted unless the faculty member judges that a different advisor would serve your needs better.

Changing Your Research Advisor

The student/research advisor relationship is not irrevocable for either the student or the faculty member. The most common reason for change is incompatibility of research agendas between the advisor and the student. As the advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement, it may be terminated by either party. If you decide that you would prefer working with a different advisor, discuss this with your prospective advisor to seek the change. You should not only talk to potential advisors, but also to students already in the advisor's research group to learn first-hand the dynamics of the group and the expectations of students in the group.

While changes are natural and acceptable, we highly discourage students to jump from one adviser to another, especially when there is financial support involved. Moreover, when a student starts a research project with an adviser, that student has a professional obligation to complete the agreed-upon research tasks to the best of his or her capabilities, leaving everything in a state that makes it easy for another student to continue the work. Additionally, the student has a moral obligation to not use the unpublished research results of one adviser's group when moving to another group, unless that is agreed upon by the first adviser. Of course, this does not preclude use of published results or of general knowledge gained in the research area and its accepted practices, results and tools.

Roles and Responsibilities

Faculty Adviser

- The adviser helps the student select which courses to take.
- The adviser (in consultation with the student) develops the student's plan of study.

- For MS thesis option
 - The adviser directs the student's research.
 - the adviser reviews and approves the student's thesis.
 - The adviser may provide financial support for the student (based on a research grant).

Student

- The student takes coursework as required, maintaining a minimum 3.0 GPA.
- The student maintains a full course load and works diligently to complete all requirements in a timely manner.
- The student (in consultation with the faculty adviser) develops a plan of study prior to completing the first 9 hours of coursework.
- The student is responsible for knowing and meeting all university deadlines, rules, and regulations – see the section titled Student Responsibilities in the Graduate Catalog
- For MS thesis option
 - The student identifies (in consultation with the faculty adviser) a suitable research topic.
 - The student works in the lab or field or other venue as needed to complete his or her research.
 - If a student wants to change faculty advisers, the student should discuss the situation with his or her current faculty adviser first, and then request the change through the graduate coordinator. The change must be approved by the current faculty adviser, the new faculty adviser, and the graduate coordinator.

Giving & Receiving Feedback

The students are encouraged to get in touch with the graduate advising office any time they consider it necessary. They should expect prompt responses for their electronic communications. Appointments for face-to-face meetings may be necessary.

Program Costs and Fees

[Programs describe here all relevant costs associated with being in the program. This can include discussion around professional membership fees, lab coats, relevant equipment fees, and other associated costs for that program. If there are not additional fees/costs, leave this section as is.]

Students in the Computer Science MS program pay a \$34 equipment fee each semester that they are enrolled. Part-time students pay \$17 per semester.

Organizational Chart

[If desired, programs can provide students with an organizational chart of the program, department, and/or college. If not, leave this section as is.]

Program Assessment

[The program may be involved in regular/annual assessment practices. It could be for such things as annual reports, reporting to certification or accrediting bodies regarding compliance, or for continuous improvement. Some of these assessment efforts may require involvement or data from students in the program. These details would be provided in this section. If not relevant, please leave this section as is.]

How to Get Involved

As a graduate student at UCF, you have a multitude of opportunities to become involved on campus and in your academic discipline. This involvement often enhances your academic, professional, and personal growth through developing advanced leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. It also provides opportunity for professional networking. Visit [Office of Student Involvement](#) for related information.

Curriculum Section

Admission Requirements

For admission to CS MS program an undergraduate degree in Computer Science is desirable but not required. Applicants without a strong undergraduate background in Computer Science must demonstrate an understanding of the material covered in upper-division undergraduate courses listed under the Articulation Section of the Curriculum Information. Applicants may choose to demonstrate their knowledge of these courses by taking these courses as non-degree seeking and scoring “B” or better in all of them.

- CDA 3103C: Computer Logic and Organization
- COP 3502C: Computer Science I
- COP 3503C: Computer Science II

In addition to the general [UCF graduate application requirements](#), applicants to CS MS program must provide:

- One official transcript (in a sealed envelope) from each college/university attended.
- Official, competitive GRE score taken within the last five years.
- Résumé.
- 2 Letters of recommendation

Degree Requirements

Master's students may choose one of two options – the thesis option or the non-thesis option. Both are 30-semester-hour programs. The latter requires slightly more coursework and, of course, does not require that a thesis be written. MS non-thesis option students must complete a culminating experience in the form of a portfolio as specified by the program's graduate committee. Students must receive a 3.0 GPA or higher in all courses.

The Course Completion requirements are as follows:

- a) CDA 5106 and COT 5405, both with a grade of B (3.0) or better. (6 credit hours)
- b) A pair of courses (at least one 6xxx Course) in a single area of discourse, both with a grade of B (3.0) or better. (6 credit hours)
- c) At most 6 credit hours of non-CS coursework (approval must be received from the graduate coordinator prior to registration).

- d) Thesis option – 6 credit hours of Thesis (CXX 6971) and at least 24 credit hours of coursework (at most 3 of these can be Independent Study credit).
- e) Non-Thesis option – A portfolio submission and at least 30 credit hours of coursework (at most 6 hours of these can be Independent Study credit).
- f) A total of at least 30 semester hours of credit at the 5-6000 level of Computer Science (Prefixes CAP, CDA, CEN, CIS, CNT, COP, and COT). At least half of these credits (15) must be at the 6000 level, and under no circumstances can they contain CXX 7919 (Doctoral Research) credit, undergraduate credit, or 5000 level CGS courses.

Independent Study

Independent Study is designed to provide an opportunity for the student to complete academic work independently under the general guidance and direction of a faculty member. Such a course allows students to create their own study on a topic of choice. Student can use up to 6 credit hours of independent study (up to 3 credit hours for Thesis option) towards their degree requirements.

Portfolio

For non-Thesis option, the portfolio submission is a degree completion requirement. The student will create and submit a portfolio document (in pdf) that includes the following:

- *Resume*: Student's updated resume including education, skills, projects completed, work experience if any, publications if any.
- *Copy of the Final Program of Study*: Signatures are not required
- *Degree audit (GPS)*: Retrieved from my.ucf.edu - Student Self Service - GPS (Graduate Plan of Study). Also see <https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-plan-of-study/>.
- *Summary*: In the student's own words of each major accomplishment in his/her graduate work including any individual or group projects, including student's contribution in each case, and what is learnt from each project, i.e. how it contributed to student's specialization skills and knowledge (not to exceed, 1-2 pages). This of course includes student's research publications or presentation. Wherever appropriate the student should include how the projects area related to one another and how they will help in his/her future endeavors.
- *Projects*: For two or three (2 or 3) courses listed in the final Plan of Study which had projects provider either
 - the project assignment description OR a cover sheet about the project that identifies its objectives and deliverables,

- a copy of the project report (if one was required) OR else the project results/code if no formal report was required.

Transfer of Credit

MS students, with the approval of their adviser and the graduate coordinator, can transfer up to 9 credit hours of B grade (3.0) or better, in graduate coursework (no Independent Study/Thesis credit) from another program at UCF or from a regionally accredited institution. This must appear on the initial POS submitted by the student within their first 9 credit hours in the CS graduate program.

In no case can courses with a grade below a B (3.0) be transferred, nor can any undergraduate credit.

MS by Thesis Requirements

The following information is intended for those choosing to complete a thesis.

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by thesis/dissertation students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at editor@ucf.edu.

Thesis Enrollment

Six credits of thesis are required and up to 3 credit hours of independent study (XXX 6908) are allowed with the professor who directs the student's thesis. The thesis experience is expected to span two semesters. Thesis students who are full-time must continue to enroll in 3 credit hours of thesis course work until the thesis requirement is satisfied, even if it goes beyond the minimum of 6 credit hours of thesis.

Thesis Advisory Committee Membership

A student writing a thesis must have a Thesis Advisory Committee consisting of at least three members who are approved members of the Graduate Faculty or Graduate Faculty Scholars (<https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-guide/graduate-faculty-and-graduate-faculty-scholars>). To learn more about committee membership eligibility and responsibilities, please contact your program advisor or visit the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Other Program Requirements

[There are programs that may have Degree requirements that are outside the spectrum of the sections provided on this program handbook template. This field is for a description of those requirements. If not, this section can be left as is.]

Plan of Study (POS)

The Plan of Study (POS), sometimes referred to as the Plan of Study, is an agreement between the student and the program, listing requirements for completing the degree. All CS graduate students must have an approved Plan of Study (POS) developed by the student and his/her adviser that lists the specific courses to be taken as part of the degree. The student must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 in his or her POS, as well as in all coursework taken since entering the program.

No coursework can appear on a POS that is more than 7 years old at the time of graduation.

The POS must be filed prior to the completion of 9 credit hours after admission to the program. This is mandatory. The College of Graduate Studies automatically places a "hold" on future registration for noncompliance. The POS can, and usually will, be revised later to reflect changes in the actual courses taken, but it is crucial that a POS be on file, signed by the student (and the research adviser for Thesis option), and approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator. Any variation from the current POS must be approved by research adviser and Graduate Program Coordinator and then immediately reflected in an updated POS.

The POS for students is flexible and unique to each student. However, it must meet university, college, and department rules for minimum number of hours, etc. (see Program Requirements, above).

A student should periodically review his/her GPS report (Degree Audit) to track the 'official' progress towards his/her degree. Visit my.ucf.edu, and from your home page choose the Graduate Plan of Study under the "Degree Audit" section on the lower right-hand corner of the page.

Sample Plan of Study/Course Sequence/Completion Timeline

Students must follow a prescribed, yet flexible path, achieving milestones along the way. Although there is no guarantee that each student will be able to complete all the requirements, if a student is hard working and diligent, and is a full-time graduate student, he or she should be able to complete a master's program within 1 to 2 years. For non-thesis master's students who are working full-time and going to school part-time, it may take 3 to 5 years to earn the degree.

A typical MS Degree Program (non-thesis)

1st Year of Graduate Training Fall	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDA 5106: Advanced Computer Architecture (3) • COT 5405: Design and Analysis of Algorithms (3) • CAP 5636: Advanced Artificial Intelligence (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAP 5610: Machine Learning (3) • CAP 6640: Computer Understanding Natural Language (3) • COP 5021: Program Analysis (3)
Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 9 credit hours

2nd Year of Graduate Training Fall	Spring
COP 6621: Compiler Construction (3) CAP 6908: Independent Study (3) CAP 6671: Intelligent Systems (3)	CAP 6908: Independent Study (3) (For international student reduced course load approval from UCF Global required)
Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 3 credit hours

Statement of Graduate Research

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. Students are responsible for being informed

of rules, regulations and policies pertaining to research. Below are some general policies and resources.

Research Policies and Ethics Information: UCF's Office of Research and Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For policies including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g., surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see their website: <https://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/>.

UCF's Patent and Invention Policy: In most cases, UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student as inventor will according to this policy share in the proceeds of the invention. Please see the current [UCF Graduate Catalog](#) for details.

Department Research

Research interests of the computer science faculty include bioinformatics, computational biology, computer and network security, computer architecture, computer forensics, computer graphics, computer networks, image and video processing/analysis, computer vision, cryptography, data compression, database management systems, data mining, data analytics, design and analysis of algorithms, evolutionary computation, genetic algorithms, graph theory, hardware/software co-design, machine learning, mixed and virtual reality, mobile computing, modeling and simulation, multimedia systems, artificial intelligence, natural language processing, neural networks, parallel and distributed processing, performance evaluation, programming languages, quantum computing, semantic web, software agents, robotics, software engineering, and VLSI systems. Visit the "Research" and the "Industry" sections, as well as individual faculty member's web sites under "People" in the [Computer Science Department](#)'s website for additional information.

Examination Section

Exam Introduction

[Briefly describe the purpose and reasons that there are exams and key milestones in your program. Part of this description can include the following elements:

- Eligibility requirements
- Conditions for taking or re-taking exams
- Limits to the number of attempts to pass
- Frequency/availability of offered exams
- Closed-book versus use of notes
- Exam conditions
- Research requirements (e.g., IRB)
- Timeline for notification of the outcome]

Scheduling of Exams

[Programs provide details regarding the protocols for scheduling the various examinations that students are required to complete as part of your degree. It also addresses the timing for when exams take place and to make sure students know how much in advance the exams need to be scheduled.]

Capstone Narrative

[If your program has a capstone project, you will provide all relevant details associated with requirements associated with a capstone experience in this section. If you don't have a capstone, then leave this section as is.]

Thesis and Dissertation Section

Master's Thesis - Overview

Master's thesis students must be enrolled continuously (including summers). Exceptions to the continuous enrollment policy may be appealed to Graduate Studies. Graduate policy states students have seven years from beginning the program to complete the degree.

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for thesis formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Consult with graduate director or advisor for potential earlier deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by thesis students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final thesis document by final submission deadline

Students must format their thesis according to the standards outlined in Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation Workshops each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at editor@ucf.edu.

Enrolling in Thesis Hours

Before enrolling in thesis hours the student will need to form a thesis committee and submit the completed Thesis Advisory Committee Form. Once you begin thesis hours, you must be continuously enrolled every term, including Summer, until you complete the thesis requirement.

Master's Thesis – Committees

A student writing a thesis must have a Thesis Advisory Committee consisting of at least three members who are approved members of the Graduate Faculty or Graduate Faculty Scholars (see <https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-guide/graduate-faculty-and-graduate-faculty-scholars>) . To learn more about committee membership eligibility and responsibilities, please contact your program advisor or visit [the Graduate Guide](#).

Meeting University Thesis Requirements and Deadlines

As you work on your thesis, you will need to meet the UCF Graduate Studies requirements and deadlines for submitting your thesis format review, scheduling and announcing your defense, and submitting the final thesis. The Graduate Studies [Electronic Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\) Gateway website](#) details specific university processes, requirements, and deadlines, including the [step-by-step guide Completing Your Thesis or Dissertation](#).

As the Completing Your Thesis guide explains, the following requirements must be met by graduating students in their final term. Note: Deadlines for thesis format review, thesis defense, and thesis final submission are listed on each term's [Academic Calendar](#).

1. Submit a fully formatted, bookmarked PDF thesis file for format review by the format review deadline listed in the Academic Calendar; follow the standards outlined on the [Formatting the ETD](#) page of the [ETD Gateway website](#)
2. If approval not granted upon initial review, promptly resubmit your corrected thesis file for format approval
3. Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form several weeks before the defense
4. Schedule and create the announcement for your thesis defense, and send the announcement to the program assistant at least two weeks before the defense date
5. Send the full thesis (preferably already revised based on chair and committee feedback) to the committee at least two weeks, and ideally four weeks, before the thesis defense
6. Submit your full thesis to iThenticate through your chair before the thesis defense
7. Prepare the Thesis Approval Form before the thesis; you can access the form through the Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation Services website](#)
8. Defend your thesis by the thesis defense deadline listed in the Academic Calendar
9. If necessary (and it usually is), make any revisions to the thesis as directed by the committee, and send the revised thesis to the chair and committee for approval
10. After all members of the advisory committee have signed the Thesis Approval Form, submit form to the program assistant, who will get the signatures from the program director and dean and then submit the completed form to Graduate

Studies; Graduate Studies must receive the completed form by the final submission deadline listed in the Academic Calendar

11. Submit your final thesis on the Final Submission page of the [Thesis and Dissertation Services website](#) by the thesis final submission deadline listed in the Academic Calendar

The College of Graduate Studies offers several [thesis and dissertation workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the process to fully understand the above policies and procedures. If you have any questions that are not answered by the resources above, you can reach the Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office at editor@ucf.edu.

Master's Thesis – Defense

See <https://grad.cecs.ucf.edu/college-of-engineering-and-computer-science-policy-on-dissertation-thesis-defenses/> for scheduling the defense and the defense requirements.

Program and Institutional Policies

Absences

Programs can provide information here related to how they view and handle absences for students in their program.

Policy catalog Language related to Absences that can be included in this section:

Students who anticipate that they may not be able to enroll continuously due to external circumstances should apply for [Special Leave of Absence](#). Specifically, students who are taking courses should apply for a Special Leave of Absence when they cannot enroll in more than two consecutive semesters. Students who are in thesis/dissertation hours should apply for a Special Leave of Absence when they cannot enroll in every semester (including summer).

To qualify for a Special Leave of Absence, the student must demonstrate good cause (e.g., illness, family issues, financial difficulties, personal circumstances, recent maternity/paternity, employment issues). The specific reason for the Leave of Absence request must be indicated by the student on the [Leave of Absence Form](#). Due to current U.S. government regulations, international students must be enrolled every fall and spring semester. For students in this category, a Special Leave of Absence is only available for documented medical reasons.

Academic Standards/Conduct/Integrity

See [Golden Rule](#) for academic standards/conduct/integrity.

Accommodations

See <https://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/accommodations/> for various accommodations considered by UCF on a case-by-case basis.

Appeals/Grievances

There will be instances where students will not agree with an assessment related to their development or progress in a program. The student has options to appeal against the assessments. For appeals related to graduate requirement procedures see the [Academic Grievance](#) section under General Graduate Policies for handling student appeals and grievances. For general complaints and appeals visit the [Student Complains and Appeals](#) page of UCF Student Development and Enrollment Services.

Communication

Students are also encouraged to seek advisement from their academic advisor regularly. Unless advised otherwise, electronic communications are preferable.

Student Responsibility for University Communication

UCF uses email as the official means of notifying students of important university business and academic information concerning registration, deadlines, financial assistance, scholarships, student accounts (including tuition and fees), academic progress and problems, and many other critical items for satisfactory completion of a UCF degree program. The university sends all business-related and academic messages to a student's Knights Email address to ensure that there is one repository for that information. Every student must register for, and maintain a Knights Email account at <https://extranet.cst.ucf.edu/kmailselfsvc> and check it regularly to avoid missing important and critical information from the university. Any difficulty with establishing an account or with accessing an established account must be resolved through the [UCF Computer Services Service Desk](#) so that a student receives all important messages. Additionally, each student must have an up-to-date emergency e-mail address and cell phone number by which to be reached in case of a crisis on campus. This emergency contact information will be used only for emergency purposes. Also, both permanent and local mailing addresses must be on the record, so that any physical documents that must be mailed can be delivered.

It is critical that students maintain and regularly check their Knights Email account for official announcements and notifications. Communications sent to the Knights Email address on record will be deemed adequate notice for all university communication, include issues related to academics, finances, registration, parking, and all other matters. The University does not accept responsibility if official communication fails to reach a student who has not registered for, or maintained and checked on a regular basis, their Knights Email account. Please ensure that this information is current and that any changes in contact information are made online through the myUCF portal at <https://my.ucf.edu/>.

Continuous Enrollment

All graduate students are required to enroll in at least one class over the span of the Academic year. Failure to enroll in 3 consecutive terms results in dismissal from the program. For the institutional policy see [Continuous Enrollment](#) and [Continuous Enrollment and Active Students](#).

Disability Statement

ACCESS matters.

Purpose: We envision UCF to be a fully accessible campus and inclusive environment for people with disabilities. We do this by:

- **Acknowledging** disability as an aspect of human diversity;
- **Cultivating** awareness of the environment's disabling barriers;
- **Collaborating** on and proactively facilitating accessible environments and experiences;
- **Educating** faculty and staff to create and maintain access in their spheres of influence;
- **Shifting** to an inclusive-minded attitude;
- **Supplementing** with reasonable accommodations as a last resort measure to ensure access.

Dismissal/Discipline

[It is a reality that some students will not be able to remain in good academic standing or will not be able to meet the standards of internships, clinical, or practicum experiences. Some students may also not be able to meet program level professional/behavior standards. This could result in the necessary avenue to either formally discipline students or dismiss students from the program. Explaining these details is essential for students in graduate programs at UCF. This section provides the opportunity for each program to explain this process to their students.]

Diversity Statement

One way to promote a safe and caring classroom community is to encourage each student's unique voice, perspective, and presence. The following diversity statement gives professors language for explaining how students' contributions will be valued:

The University of Central Florida considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. UCF expects every member of the university community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture for all in its classrooms, work environments, and at campus events. Dimensions of diversity can include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith and non-faith perspectives, socio-economic class, political ideology, education, primary language, family status, military experience, cognitive style, and communication style. The individual intersection of these experiences and characteristics must be valued in our community.

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at <https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu> and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and/or contact [Student Accessibility Services](#).

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE <http://oie.ucf.edu/> & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> & sas@ucf.edu
- Diversity and Inclusion Training and Events – www.diversity.ucf.edu
- Student Bias Grievances – Just Knights response team – <http://jkrt.sdes.ucf.edu/>
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – <http://compliance.ucf.edu/> & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- Ombuds Office – <http://www.ombuds.ucf.edu>

Golden Rule

The Golden Rule is the university's policy regarding non-academic discipline of students and limited academic grievance procedures for graduate (grade appeals in individual courses, not including thesis and dissertation courses) and undergraduate students. Information concerning The Golden Rule can be found at www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/. Section 11, Student Academic Behavior, addresses appeals of graduate program actions or decisions.

Grading and Grading Procedures

For grading and grading policies refer to the [Grade System](#) section within General Graduate Policies of the grad catalog. For incomplete grades refer to Incomplete Grades Section within Academic Progress and Performance Policy under General Graduate Policies.

Harassment

The University of Central Florida values diversity in the campus community. Accordingly, discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, parental status, veterans status, sexual orientation, or genetic information is prohibited.

Sexual harassment, a form of sex discrimination, is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature including any of these three situations.

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or enrollment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or enrollment decisions affecting such individual.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or enrollment, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited. Occurrences will be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines above and university rules. Employees, students, or applicants for employment or admission may obtain further information on this policy, including grievance procedures, from the OIE Coordinator. The Director of the Office of Institutional Equity Programs is the campus Equity Coordinator responsible for concerns in all areas of discrimination. The office is located on the main campus, in Barbara Ying CMMS Building 81, Suite 101. The phone number is (407) 823-1336. Policies and guidelines are available online at <http://www.eeo.ucf.edu>.

Plagiarism

Student is directed to the College of Graduate Studies website on this topic:

<https://graduate.ucf.edu/plagiarism/>.

College of Graduate Studies offers webcourse: "[Pressures to Plagiarize](#)" through the Pathways to Success program.

Probation

To earn a MS degree, students must make a satisfactory progress (see the paragraph below). Any student not achieving this mark is placed on Academic Probationary Status. Refer to the details from [UCF General Graduate Policies](#).

Satisfactory Progress

Satisfactory performance involves maintaining the standards of academic progress and professional integrity expected in the MS Program. Failure to maintain these standards may result in termination of the student from the program.

The university requires that students must maintain a graduate status GPA of at least 3.0 or higher to maintain graduate student status, and qualify for graduation. The

graduate status GPA is the cumulative GPA of graduate courses taken since admission into the degree program.

Time Limits to Degree Completion

The student has seven years from the date of admission to the master's program to complete the degree. Students may transfer in coursework according to the course transfer policy, however, courses older than seven years at the time of admission will not be transferred into the student's Program of Study. Students who anticipate being out for an extended period of three consecutive semesters or longer should apply for a Special Leave of Absence no later than the end of the add/drop period of the third semester of absence. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment without a Special Leave of Absence (see Continuous Attendance and Special Leave of Absence in the General Graduate Policies) must file for readmission to the university, although seven years is measured from when the student was first admitted to the program.

Transfer Credit

MS students, with the approval of their adviser and the graduate coordinator, can transfer up to 9 credit hours, of B grade (3.0) or better, in graduate coursework (no Independent Study/Thesis credit) from a regionally/internationally accredited graduate institution. This must appear on the initial POS submitted by the student within their first 9 credit hours in the CS graduate program.

In no case can courses with a grade below a B (3.0) be transferred, nor can undergraduate credit. (See [UCF Graduate policy page](#) for further details).

Internal transfer (within UCF) of up to 15 credit hours may be allowed.

Additional Program Details

Financial Aid Funding

[This section is used to provide a list of sources of funding that are available to students in your program. Although the [College of Graduate Studies Funding Website](#) provides this information in a larger and more broad sense, you may want to draw attention to specific funding, awards, and fellowships that are both internal and external that would be of interest to students in your program.]

Graduate Assistantship Details

CS-MS program does not provide any assistantship to its MS students. It does hire some of its existing students as hourly grader to assist in its teaching requirements.

Professional Membership

[Some programs either recommend or require their students to be members of professional associations related to their field of study. This section should describe what those associations are and what involvement is expected of students in the program.]

Graduation Requirements

Students are referred to visit [Graduation Self-check](#) at least a semester before they are ready to graduate. Steps to Graduation for Master's students listed on the [Commencement](#) page outlines the graduation requirements for MS students.

In addition, the CS-MS program requires that every student must complete and submit a portfolio as the required independent learning experience before graduating. The content and the organization are as follows.

- Table of Contents
- Resume:
 - Student's updated resume including education, skills, projects completed, work experience if any, publications if any.
- A Copy of the Final Program of Study: Signatures are not required.
- Degree audit (GPS): Available from my.ucf.edu under Student Self Service, Graduate Plan of Study.
- Summary:
 - Not to exceed, 1-2 pages summary in student's own words of each major

- accomplishment in his/her graduate work including any individual or group projects, his/her contribution in each case, and what s/he earned from each project, i.e. how it contributed to his/her specialization skills and knowledge. This of course includes any papers s/he may have written and/or presented.
 - Description how projects area related to one another and how s/he think they will help in his/her future endeavors.
- Projects: For two or three (2 or 3) courses listed in the final Plan of Study which had projects.
 - either the project assignment description OR a cover sheet about the project that identifies its objectives and deliverables,
 - a copy of the project report (if one was required) OR else the project results/code if no formal report was required.

Job Search and Career Pathways

The Computer Science department maintains a [website link](#) designed to help students who have graduated from the Department of CS to find jobs and help employers recruit students. Please visit the site to view current listings.

For additional employment resources, please see this [job resource center](#).

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at <https://career.ucf.edu/students/search-for-jobs/>.

Student Associations

Student Organizations

- [UCF ACM Chapter](#): The oldest and largest educational and scientific computing society is the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM).
- [UCF IEEE Chapter](#).
- [UPE Honor Society for Computer Science and Information Technology students](#)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA)

GSA is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/>.

The office of [Student Involvement](#) may have additional information.

Graduate Student Center

UCF is fortunate to have its own Graduate Student Center. It is a great place to relax, practice a presentation in one of our conference rooms, have your lunch, and to meet other graduate students. For graduate center hours, facilities and events visit [Graduate Student Center](#).

Student Research Week/ Student Scholar Symposium

[Many of the graduate students who come to UCF will be involved in research. The College of Graduate Studies hosts an annual Student Scholar Symposium to provide a conference setting for our own students to showcase their work either with poster presentations or a face-to-face presentation. This section can be used to describe this to students in your program. The following link can be provided: provided [Student Research Week](#)]

3 Minute Thesis (3MT)

[The College of Graduate Studies also hosts a 3MT competition for graduate students in both the Fall and Spring Semesters. A brief description of what this is and how to be involved can be described in this field. The following link can also be provided: [3MT](#)]

Forms

There are many different forms associated with being in the CS program and a graduate student at UCF.

[College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#): A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.

[CECS Forms and Resources](#): The forms specific to the College of Engineering and Computer Science may be found here. For convenience of the students the [commonly used forms](#) are organized in a separate page.

Useful Links/Resources

The following is a list of useful links:

- Academic Calendar: <https://calendar.ucf.edu/>
- Bookstore: <https://www.ucf.edu/services/s/ucf-bookstore/>
- Campus Map: <https://map.ucf.edu/>

- College of Engineering and Computer Science: <https://www.cecs.ucf.edu/>
- College of Graduate Studies: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/>
- Computer Science MS: <https://www.cs.ucf.edu/graduate/computer-science-masters/>
- Counseling Center: <https://caps.sdes.ucf.edu/>
- Department of Computer Science: <https://www.cs.ucf.edu>
- Golden Rule Student: <https://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>
- Graduate Catalog: <https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/graduate/>
- Graduate Student Association: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/>
- Graduate Student Center: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-student-center/>
- Housing and Residence Life: <https://www.housing.ucf.edu/>
- Housing, off campus: <https://ucf.offcampuspartners.com/>
- Knights Email: <https://knightsemail.ucf.edu/>
- Library: <https://library.ucf.edu/>
- NID Help: <https://www.ucf.edu/online/student-resources/ucf-it-support/>
- Parking Services: <https://parking.ucf.edu/>
- Pathways to Success: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/>
- Recreation and Wellness Center: <https://rwc.sdes.ucf.edu/>
- Shuttles: <https://parking.ucf.edu/shuttles/>
- Student Health Services: <https://studenthealth.ucf.edu/>
- Thesis and Dissertation (ETD): <https://graduate.ucf.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/>
- UCF Global: <https://global.ucf.edu/>
- University Writing Center: <https://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/>

Graduate Faculty

The current list of the graduate research faculty is available in <https://www.cs.ucf.edu/people/faculty-by-research-area/>.

Description of Core Courses

[As relevant, programs can use this section to provide a listing and/or a brief description of the core courses that are available to students in your program.]

Appendices

[Some programs will have contracts that students are to sign, or additional documentation regarding accreditations. Some programs might have specific documentation related to safety in labs. These details or forms can be provided in this section.]

