THESIS REQUIREMENT FOR M.S. STUDENTS

The Master of Science (M.S.) degree may be earned either with a thesis (Plan I) or with a comprehensive examination (Plan II). This document outlines the procedure for M.S. students who elect Plan I (thesis).

The final requirements for Plan I are the submission of a thesis and the thesis defense. The thesis defense is an oral examination in which you present and defend your thesis to a committee of three tenured or tenure-track faculty members and you are examined orally for proficiency in your area of specialization.

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

**Course Requirements**

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

**Comprehensive Requirements**

- You must take 12 units of Research. This is not limited to research within ECE only. Students can take research in any Jacobs School of Engineering (JSOE) Department and use it towards the degree requirements. If a student would like to conduct research outside of JSOE and use it towards the degree, please contact your primary ECE MS advisor for assistance with a petition.
- You must defend and submit your thesis by the end of your second year of study.
- The ECE Department recommends that students who are pursuing the thesis route register and pass the ECE MS Comprehensive Exam as a back-up option in the event that the thesis progress is not met in time.

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THESIS DEFENSE PROCEDURES

Initial Preparation : Steps before your defending quarter

1. By the first quarter of your second year, meet with your research advisor to discuss your plan to prepare and submit a thesis. This includes detailing your research project and writing, timeline and deadlines.

2. By the first quarter of your second year, review the degree planner for your major depth (e.g., NDS, ISRC, SIP, etc.) and make sure you incorporate time in your schedule for 12 units of 299 with the Chair of your committee as your instructor.

3. Discuss the selection of your committee with your research advisor as they will be chairing your committee and most informed about faculty members who would greatly contribute to your research. Your committee consists of 3 tenured or tenure-track faculty members, two of which must be from ECE. Tenure or tenured-track faculty means they hold the title Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Full Professor. If you have any doubts, you can always verify with your research advisor.
   ● If you decide to elect a non-ECE faculty member as your Chair, you must elect one tenured or tenure-track ECE faculty as a Co-Chair. The one remaining committee member must be an ECE tenured or tenure-track faculty member.

Preparing For Your Graduating and Defending Quarter

1. Advancement to M.S. Candidacy: Students will receive an email from the ECE Grad Office email account with instructions on how to submit ECE MS graduation paperwork. You will need to submit it by the deadline listed on the website.
   ○ Your primary MS Advisor will file the Application to Candidacy - Master's form on your behalf. This will be at the beginning of the quarter in which M.S. course requirements are to be completed.
   ○ Please make sure that your Degree Audit Report (DARs) reflects the correct capstone requirement (Plan 1).
   ○ If the incorrect capstone plan is being reflected onto the audit, please contact your primary MS Advisor so that your DARs can be modified accordingly.

2. By Friday of Week 2, the latest. Email your 1) thesis committee members, 2) date of defense, and 3) title of defense to your primary MS Advisor so that they can input it onto the Thesis Committee form.

3. At this point, you should have already started drafting your thesis. Schedule your preliminary thesis appointment with the Graduate Division via Zoom (appointment should be 2 weeks before defense). Make sure you have emailed your primary MS Advisor about your defense date and committee. Your primary MS Advisor will file this and get it approved before the Graduate Division (GD) will see you for a preliminary appointment.

4. You must make an appointment with GD for a preliminary check of your thesis via the GD Online Calendar. This is done before your thesis defense but well in advance of the last two weeks of the quarter. Appointments may be made at least one full day in advance, but not more than 60 days in advance.
   ○ Before the appointment, upload a completed draft (a draft that is 95% or more complete) of your thesis to the Graduate Division website (they will explain where to upload it). All the preliminary pages, the margins, spacing, headers, figures T.O.C. Lists and references should be included. Quotations, font style and pagination will be reviewed. The content will not be reviewed, so if you are missing a chapter, you can still bring the draft for review. Instructions on the final preparation and submission of the thesis are given by the Graduate Division.
5. Once you are ready to defend your thesis, you must liaise with the members of your thesis committee to decide upon a date and time for your examination. Try to set a date and time for your defense three weeks in advance. Faculty members are very busy and are frequently out of town, especially during summer months. Keep this in mind when planning to schedule your defense.
   ○ You would normally defend your thesis during a regular quarter. You may, however, defend your thesis during the summer or between quarters to accommodate the availability of faculty. In this instance, you may be required to file a general petition to pay the filing fee in lieu of registration.

6. You should consult an ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor at least two weeks prior to your thesis defense. You will be required to provide the following information relating to your exam:
   ○ Confirmed date and time of defense
   ○ Confirmed title of your thesis

7. Once you have provided this information to an ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor, make the following arrangements prior to your defense:
   ○ You are responsible for setting up the Zoom meeting; please make sure you know how to use Zoom 1 week before your defense so you can troubleshoot as needed. Test with a friend or colleague. Please visit this page and our MS or PhD Defense Zoom Tips to ensure a successful remote thesis defense.
   ○ Room booking—You may contact your MS Advisor if you would like to schedule a room in the Jacobs Hall for your thesis defense. A calendar invite will be sent to you and your committee members. If you book a room with us, you will be emailed about how to access the room two days before your defense.

8. Once you have set the defense date, you may schedule your final submission appointment via the GD Online Calendar. This must take place after your defense. Give yourself at least one week after your thesis defense date to allow sufficient time for finalizing your final paperwork and obtaining relevant signatures.
   ○ You may not schedule your final appointment on the last Friday of the quarter unless your defense is on the Wednesday or Thursday immediately preceding that Friday. Appointments may be made at least one full day in advance, but not more than 60 days in advance.

9. You must submit the completed thesis to the thesis committee for review prior to your defense. Information covering thesis preparation is contained in the publication, Preparation and Submission Manual for Doctoral Dissertations and Master's Theses, which can be found on the GD website.

### Thesis Defense Format

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

### Results of the Defense

1. You will be informed of the outcome following the end of the defense.
2. Once you pass, your Chair will be asked for the result of your defense, prompting the MS Advisor to take care of the remaining paperwork.
3. Your Final Report Form will be submitted online by your primary MS Advisor. You will be charged for the
$25 thesis fee by the Cashier’s Office on your TritonLink account. Please monitor your billing account to pay the fee by the deadline. If you do not pay the fee by the deadline, you will be charged a late fee.

4. If you have not already, please schedule your final document review appointment with the Graduate Division for the submission of your final paperwork and thesis at least a week after your thesis defense date to allow sufficient time for finalizing your final paperwork and obtaining relevant signatures. You may schedule your final submission appointment via the GD Online Calendar.
   ○ You may not schedule your final appointment on the last Friday of the quarter unless your defense is on the Wednesday or Thursday immediately preceding that Friday. Appointments may be made at least one full day in advance, but not more than 60 days in advance.
   ○ Prior to the final document review, which follows the successful defense of the master’s thesis, students submit their thesis electronically. Please see the "Preparation and Submission Manual for Doctoral Dissertations and Master's Theses" for detailed instructions. The master’s thesis will be sent to the Graduate Division for final approval. Upon review of the electronic master’s thesis, a Graduate Division Academic Affairs Adviser will send an email to students with any problems or questions prior to the final document review.

5. If all forms are complete, no further formatting changes are necessary and the work is approved by the Graduate Division, the Graduate Division will submit the electronic dissertation or master’s thesis to ProQuest and the University library on the student’s behalf. Once the PDF is accepted by the Graduate Division no further changes can be made.

Completion of the MS degree

1. The M.S. degree will be awarded in the same quarter that you pass your thesis defense and file your thesis (except for thesis defense between quarters, for which the degree will be awarded at the end of the following quarter), as long as you advance to M.S. candidacy no later than the second week of the same quarter.

2. Your Final Report Form (FRF) will be submitted online by your Primary MS Advisor prior to your thesis defense date.

3. Submit the following online forms to the ECE Graduate Student Affairs office:
   - Program Exit Questionnaire
   - Alumni Contact Information Form

4. Your diploma will be mailed 3-6 months after the end of the quarter. The diplomas are mailed directly to your permanent mailing address. Therefore, you must check your address for accuracy on TritonLink to avoid delays in delivery. For additional graduation information, please visit this page.

5. Please follow these steps beforehand to preserve your valued computer files and to minimize the risk of missing emails sent to you.
   - You can continue using your existing student email address after you have graduated by connecting it to a non-UC San Diego email address. Sign up for Alumni Email for Life to link your address to a non-UC San Diego email address. You will start to receive mail to that address and will have the ability to send mail as your @ucsd.edu address through the non-UC San Diego mailbox. Please refer to your email service provider's for instructions to send mail as.

6. If you have a student locker or mailbox, please collect all your items, and notify everyone who sends you mail at ECE of your current mailing address. Your locker/mailbox will be cleared at the end of the quarter of your graduation, and all remaining mail will be returned to the sender.

7. UCSD conducts one commencement ceremony each year at the end of Spring quarter. In order to participate in commencement, you must have completed all degree requirements, including filing of the thesis. NOTE: Late filing of master's advancement to candidacy forms may jeopardize your commencement participation; for this
reason, it is especially important to file master's advancement to candidacy forms no later than the second week of the quarter.

**Degree Completion Notes**

- **Filing Deadlines**: The deadlines for filing thesis are on the Friday before the final day of Fall and Winter quarters, and one week earlier for Spring quarter. If you are seeking to meet this deadline, you must have a preliminary appointment for a formatting check prior to your final appointment and submission of your thesis with the Graduate Division. Schedule your thesis appointment with one of the Master's advisors in the Graduate Division [here](#).

- **Filing between Quarters**: Registration will be waived if you are filing thesis between quarters, as long as you were registered in the previous quarter. The M.S. degree will be conferred at the end of the following quarter.

- **Filing Fee**: If you are on an approved leave of absence and have completed all requirements except the defense of the thesis, you may petition to pay a filing fee (The filing fee is $188 and it will be charged to the student’s Tritonlink account) in lieu of full registration fees. Cashier validated General Petition must be submitted with your Final Report form.

- **Summer Degrees**: If you are completing your degree requirements during the Summer and you were enrolled in the previous Spring quarter, you do not pay any additional fees. If you are completing your degree requirements during the Summer and you were on leave of absence in the previous Spring quarter, you will pay the filing fee for completion. The deadline to file for summer graduation follows the Registrar's dates for Summer Session II (in early September).

- **Registration in the Final Quarter for the Award of the Degree**: Students that are finished with all of their MS coursework but need to fulfill their capstone requirement (defend thesis) have the option of going on filing fee status during their final quarter. Students that would like to be on this status need to submit their Degree Audit in PDF format to Advance to Master's Candidacy during the quarter that they were last enrolled in courses. For example, if a student would like to do a filing fee in the Spring Quarter, they would need to advance in Winter Quarter. Students who are on approved filing fee status will pay a filing fee (The filing fee is $188 and it will be charged to the student’s Tritonlink account) in lieu of registration in the final quarter. For more Final Quarter Filing Fee information, please visit this [page](#).