Graduate Application Frequently Asked Questions

This document contains the answers to many of the commonly asked questions that develop during the application process. If your questions are still not answered below, please refer to the contact information at the end of this document.

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Graduates School’s Frequently Asked Questions

** If you are applying to the distance/online degree in M.E. in Environmental Engineering, please inquire for more information here: http://environment.engr.wisc.edu/
I. Before You Apply:

Graduate Degrees within the CEE Department

• What graduate degrees are offered by the CEE department?
  Please reference the CEE Graduate Student Handbook for in depth program descriptions.

  M.E. in Environmental Engineering (online/distance degree only).
  • Please see application instructions and requirements here:
    http://environment.engr.wisc.edu/

  M.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering (handbook section 4.7)
  • Option A- Thesis Option
  • Option B- Advanced Independent Study Option
  • Option C – Master’s Option for Students without Engineering Bachelor’s

Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering (handbook section 4.8)

• About how long will it take me to earn an M.S. degree from the CEE department?
  Approximately two years

• About how long will it take me to obtain a Ph.D. degree from the CEE department?
  Approximately three to five years

• Can I apply to the Ph.D. program directly or do I need to earn an M.S. degree first?
  Applicants with a bachelor’s degree may apply directly to the Ph.D. program if interested. If an applicant applies for the Ph.D. program, they will also be considered for the M.S program.

CEE Department Faculty

• How should I go about speaking with a faculty member about my research interests?
  Prospective graduate students are individually responsible for investigating the research interests of CEE faculty members and contacting them for additional information. Faculty contact information can be found [here](http://www.engr.wisc.edu/cmsimages/cee-graduate-faq.pdf)
Graduate School Application

• **How do I get an application?**
  You may apply [online here](http://www.engr.wisc.edu/cmsimages/cee-graduate-faq.pdf).

• **How may I obtain a paper application?**
  We no longer send paper application packets to applicants.

### Deadlines

• **When does my application need to be complete?**
  All application materials and test scores **MUST** be received no later than the following dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment Term</th>
<th>Financial Support Deadline</th>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>FALL</td>
<td>DECEMBER 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUMMER</td>
<td>DECEMBER 15</td>
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### Funding/Financial Aid

• **What kind of funding is available through the department?**
  Please visit the Graduate School’s [Office of Fellowship & Funding Resources](http://www.engr.wisc.edu/cmsimages/cee-graduate-faq.pdf) for additional information. At UW-Madison there are four types of financial support, which include: (a) fellowship, (b) project/program assistant, (c) research assistant, and (d) teaching assistant.

  a. **Fellowship**: A fellowship is an award that enables a graduate student to pursue a degree full-time. Fellowship recipients are chosen through a competitive process in the national, university, school/college, or department/program level. Applicants are nominated by faculty; Applicants do not fill out an application.

  b. **Project / Program Assistantship (PA)**: These titles designate graduate students employed to assist with research, training or other academic programs or projects. Project/Program Assistants are included in the labor agreement between the state of Wisconsin and the Teaching Assistants Association.

  c. **Research Assistant**: A Research Assistant must be a graduate student working toward a master’s or Ph.D. degree. The work performed is primarily to further the education and training of the student.

  d. **Teaching Assistant (TA)**: This title is appropriate for graduate students who have been assigned teaching responsibilities in an instructional department under the supervision of a faculty member. Teaching Assistants are included in a labor agreement between the state of Wisconsin and the Teaching Assistants Association. International applicants who are offered a TA position are required to take the S.P.E.A.K. test [http://www.english.wisc.edu/esl/itatraining-speak.htm](http://www.english.wisc.edu/esl/itatraining-speak.htm)
Project, Research and Teaching assistant offers come directly from faculty members. You do not need to submit any additional materials to be considered for a TA or PA position or for a UW-Madison fellowship. You are welcome to contact individual faculty members directly about RA positions.

- **What types of funding are most common?**
  The most common types of financial support offered to CEE graduate students are research assistantships, teaching assistantships, and fellowships (in that order).

- **What are my chances of receiving funding?**
  Funding is awarded based on the qualifications of the student, the number of applicants, the amount of available funding, and the number of continuing students receiving support. As these vary from term to term, we cannot answer this question directly. Generally, most funding is awarded for fall, then spring, then summer.

- **How do I apply for department funding?**
  You can indicate that you are interested in funding (RA, PA, TA positions or fellowships) when you fill out the Graduate School’s online admission application and/or by contacting individual faculty members directly. You do not need to submit any additional materials to be considered for these positions. The admissions office does not know if a particular professor has funds for assistantships. Those inquiries, and all other inquiries regarding funding opportunities, should be directed to the faculty members you are interested in working with.

### Admission Requirements

- **What are the admission requirements?**
  Both the Graduate School and the CEE department have admission requirements that you must meet in order to be considered for admission. The Graduate School’s admission requirements are available here while the CEE department’s admission requirements are available here.

- **What are my chances of being admitted?**
  We cannot answer any questions about your admissibility until we review your complete application.

### Required Application Materials

- **What application materials do I need to submit online? What application materials do I need to send to the department?**
  Information on required materials are available here

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[Link to PDF](http://www.engr.wisc.edu/cmsimages/cee-graduate-faq.pdf)
• What can I do to speed up the review of my application?
Send your transcripts to us AFTER successful completion of the online application. Do NOT send anything other than transcripts and/or IELTS scores in the mail. Please do not mail other application material; you will upload other material to your online Graduate School application. All other documents will be destroyed.

Letters of Recommendation
• Will you accept hard copies of my letters of recommendation?
NO. All letters of recommendation must come through the online Graduate School application.

Statement of Purpose
• What should my statement of purpose (reasons for graduate study) include?
Technical areas of interest, coursework emphasis, research experience, professional goals, faculty members you are interested in working with and any other items relevant to your qualifications for graduate school. Please keep essay to about 1000 words. For more information please click here.

GRE General Test Scores
• What are the average GRE scores for the incoming CEE graduate students? (These averages are based on all admitted Civil and Environmental students)
  • GRE Verbal: old test About 500; revised test about 153
  • GRE Quantitative: About 770; revised test about 161
  • GRE Analytical Writing: old and revised test about 4

English Proficiency Requirements
• What are the minimum English Proficiency scores for the incoming CEE graduate students?
  • Paper-based TOEFL average: 580
  • Internet-based TOEFL average: 92
  • Computer-based average: About 250
  • IELTS average: 7

***Any applicant whose TOEFL (internet based iBT) test score below is 92 but above 81; (paper-based) test score is below 580; IELTS score below 7 and at least 6.5; or MELAB below 82 must take an English assessment test upon arrival. Depending on your score you may need to register for any recommended English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in the first semester you are enrolled.
II. Processing Your Application:

Checking Your Application Status

• Have you received all of my application materials? Is my application complete?

Due to the high volume of applications that we receive, it is impossible for us to acknowledge receipt of application materials via e-mail. We recommend that you use express mail and track your package, or if using regular postal services, request a return receipt. It is safe to assume that if our building mail clerk has signed for your package, it will be delivered to our graduate admissions office. You should visit the "Grad Application Status" window within your MyUW portal to check your on-line application status. If you are new to the UW-Madison, you will first need to activate your NetID by visiting the NetID Account Activation site. You will need your 10-digit UW-Madison campus ID number and your date of birth to complete the NetID activation process. During the months of November through February it can often take our admissions staff 8 weeks to update the status of your application once we've received your application materials.

• How do I check the status of my online application?

You must visit the “Grad Application Status” window within your MyUW portal to check your on-line application status. If you are new to the UW-Madison, you will first need to activate your NetID by visiting the NetID Account Activation site. You will need your 10-digit UW-Madison campus ID number and your date of birth to complete the NetID activation process.

• I've already filled out the online application, paid my fees, and sent in all my application materials. What else should I do?

If the “Grad Application Status” window within your MyUW portal reports that your application is complete, your file has been sent to the admissions committee. Once a decision has been made, you will be notified by email.

Admission Decision

• When will I be notified of an admission decision?

On average, we anticipate most decisions will be made by mid-November for Spring term applications or by mid-April for Fall term applications. You will be initially notified by email with the department’s admission recommendation. If the department’s admission recommendation is favorable, you will receive an official letter of admission from the Graduate School if/when you have been officially admitted. Official letters of admission will only be mailed out if you complete all the tasks required by the Graduate School. Messages will be communicated to you through your MyUW portal.
Funding/Financial Aid/Adequate Financial Resources

• I am an International Student, when do I submit proof of adequate financial resources?
  International applicants should not send financial documents until requested by the Graduate School. This information will be requested via a message through your MyUW portal upon a positive admission recommendation from the department.

• As an International Student, do I still need to show adequate financial resources for the duration of my program even if I am applying for financial aid?
  Yes. International applicants are required to have sufficient funds to cover their expenses completely while attending UW-Madison. If you are not offered financial support, you will have to show proof of sufficient funds before you can be officially admitted by the Graduate School. More information is available here.

• What funding opportunities are available for international students?
  Scholarship, fellowship and grant information is available here.

• How will I be notified, and when will I be notified, of a funding offer?
  You will only be notified by email and/or letter of a funding offer if, and only if, you have been selected to receive one. Most financial support offers are made to students applying for fall semester enrollment rather than spring semester or summer term enrollment. Most applicants selected to receive funding will be notified by April 15 if they are applying for fall semester enrollment. The department continues to consider applicants for financial support as any additional funding becomes available; therefore, some applicants may be notified later than April 15.

• Are there additional resources for International Students?
  Yes, more information can be found through the International Student Services (ISS) website located here.
III. After You Are Admitted:

Accepting or Declining Your Admission Offer

• How do I accept or decline my admission offer?
  Please email the CEE Graduate Admissions Team at cee.gradadmissions@engr.wisc.edu, AFTER you receive and official admit letter from the Graduate School, with your enrollment intentions. You must include the following in your enrollment intention email: (a) your full name, (b) your 10-digit UW-Madison campus ID number, and (c) the term you applied for. If you would like to withdraw your application from consideration please also email cee.gradadmissions@engr.wisc.edu

Faculty Advisors

• How do I find a faculty advisor?
  Every Graduate Student MUST have a faculty advisor. Please review the list of faculty here. Contact a faculty member in the area of study in which you are interested to inquire if they will serve as your advisor.

• How do I notify the department that I have found an advisor?
  Contact the CEE/ECE/GLE Student Services Office (2258 Engineering Hall) if you would like to add or change your advisor after you arrive in Madison.

Financial Support

• How can I find a job on campus?
  Admitted students are able to search for current jobs through the Student Jobcenter Website.

***If you are still unable to find the answer to your question, please visit the Graduate School’s Frequently Asked Questions Site, the current CEE Graduate Student Handbook http://www.engr.wisc.edu/cmsdocuments/cee-graduate-student-handbook.pdf or contact the CEE Graduate Admissions Office at cee.gradadmissions@engr.wisc.edu