

**California State University, Chico**

**Department of  
Electrical and Computer Engineering**

**Graduate Student  
Handbook**

January 2011

## Foreword

The Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) at California State University, Chico (CSUC) offers a graduate program leading to the **Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering (MSECE)**, with focus on Electronics or Computer Engineering in the following technical areas:

High Frequency Design, Software Engineering, Computer Networking, Digital Signal Processing, Electromagnetics, Embedded and Real-Time Systems, Controls

This handbook describes the MS program in the Department, outlines a number of procedures for graduate students and states various departmental regulations.

Information provided in this handbook is intended as a supplement to, and not a substitute for, the Guide to Graduate Studies of CSUC. The Guide to Graduate Studies contains general rules and regulations governing the University's graduate programs.

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	4
1. ADMISSIONS .....	4
2. ADMISSION STATUS .....	5
3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE .....	7
3.1 TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP (TA) .....	7
3.2 RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP (RA) .....	7
3.4 FINANCIAL AID .....	7
3.4 TUITION WAIVER (TW) .....	7
4. ADVISING .....	8
4.1 INITIAL ADVISING .....	8
4.2 FACULTY ADVISOR .....	8
4.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRADUATE STUDENT .....	8
5. REGISTRATION .....	8
5.1 FULL-TIME STATUS .....	9
5.2 PART-TIME STATUS .....	9
5.4. RESEARCH COURSES .....	9
6. GENERAL INFORMATION .....	9
6.1 COMPLETION OF STUDENT RESEARCH .....	9
6.2 GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION .....	9
6.3 CONTINUATION AND DISMISSAL .....	10
6.4 FACILITIES .....	10
7. MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS .....	10
7.1 PBASIC REQUIREMENTS .....	10
7.2 PLAN OF STUDY .....	12
7.3 TIME LIMIT .....	12
7.4 FORMATION OF THESIS/PROJECT COMMITTEE .....	13
7.5 THESIS PROPOSAL .....	13
7.6 THESIS SUBMISSION, DEFENSE, AND ACCEPTANCE .....	13
7.7 THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION .....	14
7.8 GRADUATION .....	14
7.9 PART-TIME GRADUATE STUDIES .....	14

## INTRODUCTION

**Welcome!** If you are already a graduate student, beginning your program of study, or a prospective graduate student, this handbook is a valuable resource for you. It is intended to provide a single source for most of the administrative policies and details that you'll need to know during the course of your Master's study in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at CSU Chico. You also need to know what resources exist (other than this document) to help you through the process. Here's a summary:

**Graduate Coordinator:** The Graduate Coordinator is your primary contact for administrative and advising issues. The Graduate Coordinator is Dr. Larry Wear:

Office: OCNL 313  
Phone: 530-898-5343  
Email: [lwear@csuchico.edu](mailto:lwear@csuchico.edu)

**Guide to Graduate Studies:** This is a very helpful document, provided by the School of Graduate Studies, that describes the general university policies relating to graduate programs at CSU Chico. It also contains outlines and formatting instructions for Thesis/Project documents. It is available from the School of Graduate Studies at:

[A GUIDE TO GRADUATE STUDIES](#)

**Department Office:** Located in OCNL 313, and department website <http://www.csuchico.edu/eece/>, where you can get the department level forms, and get most of your general questions answered.

**Student file:** In the department office, a file is maintained for every active graduate student, that contains all of the relevant paperwork documenting that student's career at CSU Chico, from admission to graduation. The Graduate Coordinator can retrieve your file for you, and review it with you, to ensure that it is complete and accurate.

**Admission letter:** The admission letter that was sent to you announcing your acceptance into the master's program, may contain significant information about things like prerequisite courses you may be required to complete, fee waivers you may have been awarded, etc. If you need a copy of the letter that was sent to you, see the Graduate Coordinator.

If you have questions or problems, these resources are intended to help you resolve them. Use them to ensure that you are on track and satisfying all of the degree program requirements.

## 1. ADMISSIONS

The graduate program in the ECE Department is open to all qualified individuals with B.S. degrees in Electrical Engineering or Computer Engineering. Applicants must have a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale in previous undergraduate work.

Applicants with a bachelor's or master's degree in another field may also be eligible to pursue graduate study in the ECE Department after completing all required remedial preparation at the undergraduate level. The set of remedial courses required will be based on each applicant's previous academic work, and will be specified by the Graduate Coordinator.

International students who have completed a Bachelor's Degree program that does not include the necessary background course material may also be required to complete some remedial course work after admission to the program. This list of remedial courses will be identified in each applicant's admission letter.

An applicant for admission must complete the following steps:

- Submit a completed Application for Admission to the School of Graduate Studies of CSUC [https://secure.csumentor.edu/admissionapp/grad\\_apply.asp](https://secure.csumentor.edu/admissionapp/grad_apply.asp) .
- Pay the university application fee.
- Submit official transcripts of all previous college level work.
- Submit Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores (not required for CSUC graduates).

International applicants are also required to:

- Submit two letters of recommendation assessing the applicant's academic potential.
- Submit a Statement of Purpose.
- Submit Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores.

The above documents should be sent directly to the School of Graduate Studies, CSUC.

## 2. ADMISSION STATUS

Provisional admission may be granted to applicants who lack undergraduate or graduate work considered essential for graduate study in the ECE Department. Additional course work, without graduate credit, will be required to make up such deficiencies before promotion to classified status can be granted. Remedial course work required will be determined by the Graduate Program Coordinator and approved by the Department Chair.

Each graduate student receives an acceptance letter which states the level at which the department recommends admission and stipulates any specific conditions of the admission. A graduate student's status falls into one of four categories:

1. Unclassified. An unclassified student is not admitted to a master's degree program but is enrolled for a variety of objectives. These may include completing remedial course work to qualify for a master's degree program, earning a second baccalaureate or second major, or taking class work for professional development.

2. Conditionally classified. A conditionally classified student has been admitted to the desired master’s degree program, but has not been formally approved for master’s degree study and is taking steps to meet specific requirements outlined by the university and the department to qualify for “classified” status.

3. Classified. A classified master’s degree student has been formally approved by the department and the Office of Graduate Programs to pursue master’s degree study.

4. Candidate. A student is advanced to candidate status (candidacy) only after demonstrating a significant ability and aptitude for the discipline.

**Prerequisites for Admission to Conditionally Classified Status:**

1. Satisfactory grade point average as specified in [Graduate and Postbaccalaureate Admission Requirements](#) in the *University Catalog*.
2. Approval by the department and the Office of Graduate Studies.
3. A baccalaureate in electrical or computer engineering, or an equivalent approved by the Office of Graduate Studies.
4. Successful completion of the Graduate Record Examination if required by the Graduate Coordinator.

**Prerequisites for Admission to Classified Status:** In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. Successful completion of the Graduate Writing Examination.
2. Completion of background preparation equivalent to the following undergraduate courses:

Option in Computer Engineering		Option in Electronic Engineering	
Subject Area	CSU #	Subject Area	CSU #
Computer Architectures	EECE 320	Electronics	EECE 315
Electronics	EECE 315	Computer Interface Circuits	EECE 343
Digital Systems Design	EECE 344	Digital Systems Design	EECE 344
Signals, Systems and Transforms	EECE 365	Signals, Systems and Transforms	EECE 365
Data structures	CSCI 311	C /Assembly Language Programming	EECE 237
Operating System Principles	EECE 437	Control Systems	EECE 482
Microprocessor System Design	EECE 444		
Networking	CSCI 446		

All required undergraduate electrical and computer engineering (EECE) courses must be taken for a letter grade, and a grade of C or better must be earned in each course. Students are required to complete the background courses immediately as a matter of reasonable progress toward the master's degree.

**Advancement to Candidacy:** In addition to any requirements listed above:

1. Development of an approved program, including a thesis or project proposal if the thesis or project plan is chosen, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator.
2. Classified graduate standing and completion at the University of at least 9 units of the proposed program with a minimum 3.00 grade point average.

### **3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Full-time graduate students in the ECE Department may apply for the following forms of financial assistance.

- Teaching Assistantship (TA)
- Research Assistantship (RA)
- Financial Aid
- Tuition Waiver (TW)

For all the above types of financial assistance, additional tuition and fees as required by the university are the responsibility of the student.

#### **3.1 TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP (TA)**

Teaching assistantships may be available to a selected number of qualified full-time graduate students of the ECE Department, upon completion of at least one semester of study in the program. Graduate students with a GPA over 3.0/4.0 may be considered for a teaching or research assistantship. The teaching assistants are required to devote up to 20 hours per week of effort in teaching, research, or appropriate service. These assistantships are usually for one semester period, and most commonly involve grading or lab course work in support of lower division undergraduate courses. Appointments are made by recommendations of the Graduate Coordinator and approval of the Department Chair on the basis of department needs.

TA positions are awarded for a fixed, stated period of time and continuation of the position beyond that time is not implied.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP (RA)**

Research assistantships may be available as a result of grants and contracts of the faculty doing sponsored research. These assistantships are normally made available for a 9-month period with the possibility of additional compensation during the summer. RA awards are made directly by the faculty in charge of the sponsored research. The research assistant is required to devote up to 20 hours per week on an assigned research project. Continuation or termination of the appointment is decided by the faculty advisor (principal investigator) on the basis of the availability of funds and the student's progress in research and academic standing.

#### **3.4 FINANCIAL AID**

Financial Aid is applied for and awarded by the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office, and is independent of ECE department assistance. Information about their programs can be found at <http://www.csuchico.edu/fa/>

#### **3.4 TUITION WAIVER (TW)**

A TW provides full-time or partial tuition waiver for the recipient. TW awards are available to qualified full-time graduate students on a competitive basis. A TW recipient may be required to perform departmental services as assigned by the ECE Department Chair.

## 4. ADVISING

### 4.1 INITIAL ADVISING

The Graduate Program Coordinator will serve as temporary faculty advisor for all students until an advisor is selected.

### 4.2 FACULTY ADVISOR

During the first semester, all full-time students should meet with ECE faculty members to discuss potential focus area for their MS program. Such meetings give both the faculty member and the student an opportunity to evaluate their respective abilities to collaborate and work with one another.

By the end of the tenth week of the first semester of enrollment, all new full-time graduate students should submit the name(s) of ECE faculty whom they would like to have as their permanent advisor. The Graduate Program Coordinator will help to match students and faculty advisors based upon first choices wherever feasible. Students should meet with the faculty advisor assigned to initiate planning of the research topic as soon as possible after receipt of notification. The faculty member becomes the student's permanent faculty advisor.

Primary responsibilities of the faculty advisor are as follows:

- Approve the student's plan of study. Such a program of study must also be approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- Monitor the student's progress.
- Approve any revision(s) to the plan of study.
- Assist and guide the student in his/her program.
- Transmit results to the Graduate Program Coordinator using appropriate forms.
- Oversee the student's thesis or project defense (Thesis/Project option).

A student may change faculty advisors by completing the appropriate forms through the department office.

### 4.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRADUATE STUDENT

- Maintain 3.0 GPA, and *no more than two courses with C grade.*
- Comply with University, College, and Department regulations.
- Complete and submit appropriate forms.
- Keep the ECE department office updated regarding current address, email address and phone number.

## 5. REGISTRATION

The registration procedure begins in the ECE Department. The Graduate Program Coordinator will serve as the student's temporary faculty advisor until a permanent advisor is chosen. A Plan of Study should be prepared and submitted as soon as possible after selection of the permanent advisor.



Changes in the student's program of study may be requested by submitting a Plan of Study Course Substitution Form. It is the responsibility of the student to insure that required courses in the program are taken.

### **5.1 FULL-TIME STATUS**

Full-time graduate students supported by the Department must register for a minimum of 8 graduate units each semester including projects, independent study, research and thesis. Courses taken on an audit basis are excluded from this number.

### **5.2 PART-TIME STATUS**

To maintain an active degree program status, a student must be continuously enrolled at CSU Chico. This can be done by registering for at least one credit each term, or by maintaining adjunct enrollment status through the Center for Regional and Continuing Education. Adjunct enrollment maintains a student's active status when no current course work is being done, for a nominal administrative fee. However, it is expected that every part-time student will take at least one course per term or register for thesis work so as to complete the degree program within a reasonable time. Exceptions may be granted for such reasons as illness, maternity leave or travel requirements imposed by employers.

## **5. RESEARCH COURSES**

- EECE 699T – Thesis

When pursuing the graduation with Thesis option, a student must enroll in this course during their final year of study. This course is counted as 6 semester units towards satisfying the overall 30 unit graduation requirement.

- EECE 697 Independent Study

Independent study is defined as individualized study under the direction of an ECE faculty member, and is distinct from thesis research. A maximum of 9 credits of independent study may be counted toward the M.S. degree course work requirements (includes Thesis/Project units). This course number is not to be used for thesis.

- EECE 699P – Project

When pursuing the graduation with Project option, a student must enroll in this course during their final year of study. This course is counted as 3 semester units towards satisfying the overall 30 unit graduation requirement.

## **6. GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **6.1 COMPLETION OF STUDENT RESEARCH**

The student and the advisor must agree on a time table to complete the degree.

### **6.2 GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION**

In order to be awarded the Masters Degree, the student must have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00/4.00 (B average) for all credits (course work and thesis research) in his or her program of study. Grades earned in courses which are repeated are included in the computation of the GPA. In addition *no more than two courses with C grade* are allowed.

If a grade of incomplete (I) or in progress (IP) is received, the student must remove the I or the IP grade from the record as soon as possible. After one academic year, the I grade automatically changes to an F (failure). No student may graduate with an I or PR grades on the record.

### 6.3 CONTINUATION AND DISMISSAL

A student may continue in the ECE Department as long as reasonable progress is being made toward the degree. From an academic viewpoint, this means that the student's record in graduate course work, exclusive of thesis research, continues to exhibit an average of B or better with an appropriate distribution of A, B, and C grades, and that I and PR grades appear only infrequently and for a good cause.

### 6.4 FACILITIES

The department has an excellent set of laboratory facilities, and after hours access is granted to graduate students pursuing research activities (Thesis, Project or Independent Study) on a case by case basis. Approval by the Graduate Coordinator and Department Chair is required.

## 7. MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### 7.1 PBASIC REQUIREMENTS

Completion of all requirements as established by the department graduate committee, the graduate advisory committee, and the Office of Graduate Studies, to include:

1. Completion of an approved program consisting of 30 units of 400/500/600-level courses as follows:

- (a) Completion of the 8-unit core:

			F
EECE 615	High-Frequency Design Techniques	4.0	A

*Prerequisites: EECE 315, PHYS 204C.*

			SP
EECE 643	Computer-Aided Circuit Engineering	4.0	SP

*Prerequisites: EECE 615.*

- (b) At least 18 units, including a thesis or project if chosen, must be in electrical and computer engineering (EECE); remaining units may be selected from electrical or computer engineering or in related areas with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator.

- (c) At least 18 of the units required for the degree must be 600-level courses.

- (d) Not more than 9 semester units of transfer and/or extension credit (correspondence courses and U.C. extension course work are not acceptable); Open University course work is included in this 9 unit total. 2.

2. Completion and final approval of one of the following three plans as specified by the graduate advisory committee:

- (a) Thesis Plan. This plan includes 24 units of course work and 6 units of thesis research (EECE 699T). Research may be theoretical or applied, but must reflect an individual in-depth study into

an approved topic. This plan requires a formal research thesis which must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval and accession to the library.

(b) Project Plan. Requirements for this plan consist of 27 units of course work and 3 units of project preparation (EECE 699P). The project must show how analysis and design have been applied to a particular area of electronic or computer engineering. A written project description must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for approval and accession to the library.

(c) Examination Plan. Requirements for this plan consist of 30 units of course work and a comprehensive oral examination prepared by the faculty. The two-hour examination will cover areas covered in four courses from the candidate's course of study.

3. Approval by the Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate Coordinators Committee on behalf of the faculty of the University.

**Option in Computer Engineering: 22 units**

**4 unit core course:**

EECE 655      Topics in Computer Networking

*Prerequisites: EECE 344, EECE 555.*

**18 units selected from:**

Any approved senior or graduate-level courses not otherwise required for the degree.

**Option in Electronic Engineering: 22 units**

**4 unit core course:**

EECE 682      Computer Control of Dynamic Systems                      4.0      SP

*Prerequisites: EECE 482 or MECA 482.*

**18 units selected from:**

Any approved senior or graduate-level courses not otherwise required for the degree.

**Graduate Requirement in Writing Proficiency:**

Writing proficiency is a graduation requirement.

Electrical Engineering students will demonstrate their writing competence through successfully completing either a departmentally administered examination or an approved writing course. Consult the Graduate Coordinator for specific information.

**Graduate Grading Requirements:**

All courses in the major must be taken for a letter grade, except those courses specified by the department as Credit/No Credit grading only. A maximum of 10 units combined of Credit/No

Credit grades may be used on the approved program (including 697, 699P, 699T and courses outside the major). While grading standards are determined by individual programs and instructors, it is also the policy of the University that unsatisfactory grades may be given when work fails to reflect achievement of the high standards, including high writing standards, expected of students pursuing graduate study.

Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average in each of the following three categories: all course work taken at any accredited institution subsequent to admission to the master's program; all course work taken at CSU, Chico subsequent to admission to the program; and all courses on the approved master's degree program.

In addition, students may not count more than two courses in which they received a grade of C toward the approved program.

With all options above, the students must complete the following additional requirements:

- An approved Plan of Study.
- Students may not count more than two courses in which they received a grade of C toward the approved program.
- Courses taken on an audit basis do not count toward the degree.
- Courses outside the EECE Department require prior approval.

Satisfactory academic performance (minimum 3.00 GPA)

At least a B average (GPA of 3.0/4.0) for all graduate course credits in his or her program of study as well as for his/her entire Chico State graduate transcript.

## **7.2 PLAN OF STUDY**

The student must, in conjunction with his/her faculty advisor, prepare a coherent Plan of Study related to courses in at least one of the departmental focus areas. The Plan of Study must be approved by the faculty advisor and the ECE Graduate Program Coordinator. Courses will be selected by the student in consultation with the faculty advisor. Any changes in the student's Plan of Study must be approved in writing by the faculty advisor, the ECE Graduate Program Coordinator, and the School of Graduate Studies. (Plan of Study form can be found at the back of this document)

## **7.3 TIME LIMIT**

The M.S. degree may be pursued on a full or part-time basis. However, each student must complete all requirements for the M.S. degree within 5 years from the date of the end of the semester of enrollment in the oldest course applied toward the degree, unless a petition for extension has been approved by the faculty advisor, ECE Graduate Coordinator, and the School of Graduate Studies.

#### **7.4 FORMATION OF THESIS/PROJECT COMMITTEE**

Once a student has chosen to pursue the thesis or project option, a thesis or project committee is formed and approved by the ECE Graduate Program Coordinator in consultation with the thesis/project advisor and the student. The M.S. thesis/project committee shall be composed of a *minimum of two* members of ECE faculty. The thesis/project chairperson and/or the thesis/project advisor must be a full time member of the CSUC Graduate Faculty.

#### **7.5 THESIS PROPOSAL**

The student must prepare a thesis proposal prior to the formation of his or her thesis/project committee, which is then reviewed and eventually approved by the committee members. It is the responsibility of the student to circulate or give copies of the proposal to the committee members. Then, using a form available from the ECE Graduate Coordinator, the thesis advisor notifies the Graduate Coordinator of the final approval of the thesis/project proposal. This must be done before registering for EECE 699.

#### **7.6 THESIS SUBMISSION, DEFENSE, AND ACCEPTANCE**

A final draft of the M.S. thesis is prepared by the student when the research is completed to the satisfaction of the faculty advisor. The student should obtain directions regarding thesis preparation from the Guide to Graduate Studies, available from the School of Graduate Studies, and should follow the department acceptable FORMAT. It is highly recommended that students use a professional typist for the final document preparation (see the Graduate Coordinator for recommendations). The draft thesis should be submitted to the advisor for critical review and evaluation. This should be done in a timely manner, giving the advisor sufficient time to review the final draft. After the thesis advisor has reviewed the thesis draft, recommended changes, and approved the final text and form of the document, the student should submit copies to the thesis committee for evaluation. The thesis committee members should have at least one week for review of the document before the defense. All members of the thesis committee are expected to be present at the thesis defense.

The student, in consultation with the thesis advisor and committee, schedules the thesis defense. The thesis advisor will counsel the student regarding specific topics to be addressed at the defense. The defense is presented in an open, announced meeting presided over by the thesis advisor. The student is allowed about 35 minutes for a formal oral presentation. Following the oral presentation, the thesis committee, other faculty, students, and guests are allowed to ask questions concerning the student's thesis work. After the question and discussion period is concluded, all those present, other than the faculty members constituting the committee, will be excused.

The thesis committee holds a private discussion of the student's thesis and makes a final decision by a majority vote whether the student's defense has been successful. If the student does not pass the thesis defense, then the thesis committee, in consultation with the Graduate Program Coordinator, will decide a course of action to correct deficiencies, weaknesses, or other problems.

Even if the student passes the thesis defense, there are usually changes or additions/deletions required as a result of the defense. These are made by the student in consultation with the faculty

advisor and any concerned committee members. The student should also be aware that the School of Graduate Studies requires final corrected copies to be submitted by a specified date (usually the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> week of the semester), if a student is to graduate that semester.

At least two permanently bound copies of the thesis must be prepared in accordance with the University regulations. One copy is to be provided to the faculty advisor and the other will be retained in the files of the ECE Department. Additional copies (as specified in the Guide to graduate Studies) are submitted to the School of Graduate Studies for archival storage in the University library. It is the student's responsibility to pay costs associated with copying and binding of the thesis.

### **7.7 THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

The comprehensive exam is currently being revised. Check with the Graduate Advisor to see what is now required.

### **7.8 GRADUATION**

Students must apply for graduation on the Application for Degree form which is filed with the School of Graduate Studies before a specified date in the semester during which degree requirements are expected to be completed. This date usually falls during the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week of the semester. Specific dates for the current academic year can be found at:

<http://www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies/dates-deadlines.shtml>

### **7.9 PART-TIME GRADUATE STUDIES**

Admission to the program and requirements for the M.S. degree on a part time basis are identical to that for admission to the regular full-time program.

**California State University, Chico**

**Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering**

**MSECE Plan of Study**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Options:       Electronics                       Computer Engineering  
                  Project                               Thesis                       courses/Exam

Focus Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis/Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Courses:**

Course Number	Description	Units	When Taken
Undergraduate Courses Applied to Master's Program:			
Total			

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Graduate Program 2-Year Plan Timeline**

### 1<sup>st</sup> Semester:

- Attend Orientation Meeting
- Get to Know Faculty
- Use Graduate Coordinator for Advice
- Choose Faculty Advisor (week 10)
- Complete and File the Master's Degree Plan of Study (week 11)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester:

- Apply for TA/RA Positions (prior to start of semester)
- Begin Thesis/Project Background Research

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Semester:

- File for Graduation
- Submit Thesis/Project Proposal
- Form Thesis/Project Committee
- Start Actively Working on Thesis/Project

### 4<sup>th</sup> Semester:

- Complete Thesis/Project Work
- Submit Project/Thesis to Graduate School