Graduate Student Handbook

2018-2019

Computer Science Department
Western Washington University

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Welcome

The faculty and staff of the Computer Science Department welcome you to Graduate School and wish you success in the pursuit of your Master of Science in Computer Science.

Our graduate program requires a student to be independent and responsible to the greatest extent possible. Staying informed and keeping in touch with your supervisor will help you manage that independence and responsibility. A number of sources of information are available to assist you:

1. The academic e-catalog: http://catalog.wwu.edu. It contains the basic Graduate School regulations as well as the academic requirements and course descriptions. You will find important dates in the University Academic Calendar, and writing proficiency requirement.

2. This handbook (which you are reading) provides a general description of the MS Computer Science program, helpful guidelines, forms required, and other useful information.

3. The Graduate School Website: http://www.wwu.edu/depts/gradschool. This Website contains important and useful information to guide you through your course of your study at Western. Pay particular attention to important dates, deadlines, scholarship, financial aids, and requirements.

4. The College of Science and Engineering: https://cse.wwu.edu. The college provides information about academic opportunities, research projects, teaching assistants, and scholarships.

5. The Computer Science Department: https://cse.wwu.edu/computer-science. The departmental Website provides important information about courses offered each academic year, faculty and staff contact information, faculty members’ Websites that contains their research interests, and course information, and job opportunities.

6. The address of the Graduate School: 516 High Street, Old Main 530, Bellingham, WA 98225-9037 360-650-3170; gradschool@wwu.edu

Welcome on board and best wishes from the faculty and staff during your tenure in the graduate program here at Western!
Mission Statement
Graduate Program in Computer Science

The faculty and staff of the Computer Science Department are dedicated to training and preparing students to become computer scientists. We believe that computer science has been and will continue to contribute greatly to all disciplines of study and world economy.

We provide a high quality education to prepare students for productive careers in industry, academia, and government in a nourishing environment for teaching, learning, and research in the theory and applications of computing. This training is offered under the direction of the Graduate School at Western Washington University.

Students in the graduate program in the Computer Science take courses on computer science theory, concepts, and practice and in research projects. Students graduating from our program will have the ability to apply computing knowledge and mathematics to real world problems. They will be able to analyze problems and identify the computing requirements appropriate to its solution. Students will master the design-implementation-evaluation cycle for computer-based systems, processes, components, or programs to meet desired goals. Our program provides students with an understanding of professional, ethical, legal, security and social issues and responsibilities. Our excellent preparation for our students will have a profound impact on the future of humanity.

Goals:

- To graduate students with strong, in-depth background in computer science
- To prepare students for PhD programs and advanced careers in information technology
- To engage students in high quality research-oriented projects

Objectives:

- To educate students in core concepts in computer science
- To provide students with in-depth knowledge, skills, and experiences in computer science
- To focus on the applied aspects of computer science, especially real-world projects that use core concepts and expert knowledge of computer science
- To provide students and faculty opportunities to engage in research in computer science
Computer Science Graduate Program Prerequisites

The Computer Science Department offers a Master of Science Degree in computer science. This graduate program is designed to provide the student with both breadth and depth in the theoretical bases of the disciplines as well as competence in the real world practice.

Students who have completed an undergraduate degree, and who meet the requirements of the Graduate School and who show evidence of strong scholarship are invited to apply for admission to the graduate program in computer science.

Students may be admitted into the computer science master’s degree program in one of three ways: full admit, full admit with prerequisite course work, and provisional admit. Students who have a sufficient background in computer science, i.e. an undergraduate degree in computer science, and who meet the general requirements of the Graduate School can be given a “full admit”.

Due to the nature of this field of study, it is often the case that students with an undergraduate degree in an area other than computer science seek admission to the graduate program in computer science. Such students usually require a number of prerequisite undergraduate courses before they can embark on their graduate studies. If they meet the other requirements of the Graduate School, such students can usually be given a “full admit with prerequisite course work”. The student is admitted into the graduate program but is required to complete a number of undergraduate prerequisite courses.

Other constraints may be placed on such admissions, such as a minimum acceptable grade for the prerequisites and perhaps a time frame for completion of the prerequisites. The exact nature and composition of the prerequisite course work will be determined on a case by case basis. In rare cases, students who do not meet the general requirements of the graduate school, for example do not have the required minimum GPA, can be given a “provisional admit” provided their background is such that it indicates a high probability of success in the program.

In case of provisional admission, the program advisor may interview the candidate individually and consider the following factors:

- Related background knowledge and work experience
- Classes taken since graduation
- Reference letters
- GRE scores
Application Information

Graduate Program Admission Deadlines:

- Fall Quarter, April 15
- Winter Quarter, October 1
- Spring Quarter, January 10

Teaching Assistant Application Deadlines:
It is the same as admission deadlines. Application requirements and forms are available from the Graduate School website: http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool.

GRE Test: GRE General Test score must to submit directly to the Graduate School. The minimum GRE score is the same as the requirement of the Graduate School. Applications cannot be reviewed until test scores are received. The deadline is the same as the application deadline. Three scores are reported on the GRE General Test:

- Verbal Reasoning score reported on a 200 – 800 score scale, in 10-point increments.
- Quantitative Reasoning score reported on a 200 – 800 score scale, in 10-point increments.
- Analytical Writing score reported on a 0 – 6 score scale, in half-point increments.

English Language Proficiency:
All applicants must obtain at least the minimum TOEFL scores (227 computer-based test (CBT), 567 paper-based test, 86 internet-based test) for admission eligibility unless English is your native language; or you have earned, or are in the process of earning, a baccalaureate (or higher) degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution; or you earned your degree at an institution where English was the language of instruction.

Grade Point Average:
In order to be eligible for full admission, applicants must have at least a 3.0 GPA (on 4.0 scale) over the last 60 semester-hours or 90 quarter-hours of study. Post baccalaureate coursework must be “upper-division” at a four-year university to be included in GPA calculation. Applicants with advanced degrees from accredited institutions are considered to have met GPA requirements.

Graduate School Admission Requirements:
http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool/App_Req_043.shtml
Computer Science Graduate Program Policies

**Program Enrollment Limits:** depends on faculty resources

**Core Course Enrollment Limits:** no more than 30 students

**Elective Course Enrollment Limits:** approximately 20 students

**Undergraduates taking Graduate Classes:** Students must meet graduate school criteria of at least 3.0 GPA and senior status, no exceptions. They must also have 3.0 GPA or greater in all computer science courses.

**Honors Program:** Any student in the honors program is automatically eligible to take graduate courses. Only undergraduates in the Honors Program will be allowed to take the 4 core courses, and there are no exceptions. If students wish to take these courses they should apply to the Honors program or get instructor’s permission.

**Counting Undergraduate Courses for Graduate Degree:** The department does not allow counting undergraduate 400-level courses towards the graduate degree.

**Credit Splitting of graduate course credits:** Will not be allowed, no exceptions. If any part of a graduate course is used to fulfill the B.S. degree, no part of that course may be used to fulfill the M.S. degree (except the core courses CSCI 509, 510, 511, and 512 for Honors students).

**Explanation of credit splitting:** Undergraduate students can take computer science graduate electives and count them toward the 12 credits of electives for their B.S. If they are admitted to computer science graduate program, they are not allowed to count any graduate elective used for the B.S. degree towards the M.S. degree. That is, students want to split one graduate elective credit between their B.S and M.S degrees. This is called credit splitting.

**Credit Transfer:** A student may, with the agreement of the graduate advisor, transfer up to 10 credits into the Masters program. This is most often done when an Honors student takes elective graduate classes while still an undergraduate and that class does not meet any of the B.S. requirements. These credits may be transferred from the undergraduate to the graduate program.
Course Requirements

The core curriculum consists of four courses of 4 credits each.

- CSCI 509 – Operating System Internals
- CSCI 510 – Automata and Formal Language Theory
- CSCI 511 – Analysis of Algorithms
- CSCI 512 – Design and Implementation of Computer Programming Languages

All students in the MS in computer science program must take **three of these four courses**. The fourth course may be taken as an elective.

**Elective Courses**

Other CSCI 500 level courses are to be taken as electives. All students must take a minimum of 16 credits of electives. These electives may include the fourth core class. The electives are often in support of the research area of the student.

**Graduate Seminar**

All students are required to take graduate seminar. CSCI 590 must be taken first for a total of 3 credits. Then CSCI 591 must be taken for a total of 6 credits giving a total of 9 credits of seminar.

**Research Experience**

In addition to the core courses, elective courses, and graduate seminars, all students in the MS in computer science program are required to take a minimum of three research experience courses. The research experience courses are tied to one of a number of ongoing projects in the computer science department. Effectively, the student is joining that research team effort by registering for these courses. As such, the student should discuss their intentions with the faculty members involved in that project prior to registering for these courses. The research experience course is CSCI 692, 5 credits, and must be taken 3 or 4 times. To receive credit for the research classes, the student must write a research paper by the final quarter of research that is submitted to a refereed conference or journal with advisor approval and present their research in CSCI 591. The total credits of research and elective credits must be 35 or 36 credits.

**Total Credit Hours Required for the MS Degree in Computer Science**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Courses</td>
<td>3 courses x 4 credits each</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
<td>CSCI590 (3 credits) CSCI591 (6 credits)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective / Research Experience</td>
<td><strong>A</strong> 4 research experience classes (4 x 5 credits) and 4 elective courses (4 x 4 credits)</td>
<td>36 or 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select A or B</td>
<td><strong>B</strong> 3 research experience classes (3 x 5 credits) and 5 elective courses (4 x 5 credits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>56-57</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Five-Year BS and MS Fast Track Program

The Five-Year BS + MS Fast Track program makes it possible for exceptional undergraduate computer science majors to complete both a BS and MS degree in computer science in five years, although five years plus one quarter is more common. Computer science majors who qualify will take four courses from the graduate program when they are seniors, three of the core and one elective. The computer science master’s degree may then be completed in four more quarters of study at the master’s level. It is possible to complete the master's degree in three quarters by taking 2 credits of CSCI 591 during the senior year and then taking a heavy load during the three quarters of master's work.

Computer science majors who have achieved a GPA of 3.0 or above in their first three years as an undergraduate should contact the computer science graduate advisor. Applications are available outside the department office, the undergraduate advisor’s office, and may be downloaded from the computer science Website.

Students should apply for admission into the undergraduate honors program after the completion of their junior year of study. Once admitted to the honors program, students will take three of the four MS core curriculum courses. The course substitutions are: CSCI 509 for CSCI 447, CSCI 510 for CSCI 401, CSCI 511 for CSCI 405, CSCI 512 for CSCI 410. The student takes a fourth course that is either the fourth core class or a graduate elective. Note, a graduate elective counts for elective credit in the undergraduate program. For electives with both an undergraduate and a graduate version, like CSCI 415 and CSCI 515, taking CSCI 515 means you cannot also receive credit for CSCI 415. In the case where the graduate elective does not have an undergraduate version, the graduate class will not replace an undergraduate class.

A Fast Track student may take up to two additional 500 level classes and 2 credits of CSCI 591 for transfer to the Fast Track Master program as an undergraduate. These classes may not be used for any undergraduate requirements to be eligible for transfer to the Master program. To request the transfer, use the Graduate School "Transfer Credit Request" found at http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool/pdfs/Transfer_Credit.pdf.

After students graduate with the BS degree in the computer science honors program, they will then complete all remaining requirements for the MS degree, i.e., electives, research experience and seminar. A fast track student is required only 8 hours of 591. Electives, seminar and research experience credits must total 39 or 40 credits. (8 seminar plus 16 elective and 15 research or 8 seminar plus 12 elective and 20 research) To complete all MS requirements in only one additional year, the student must have 2 credits of CSCI 591 taken during their undergraduate study transferred into the degree, take 3 research experience courses, 5 electives and the remaining 6 hours of CSCI 591 in three quarters.
Master's Students Without a CS Bachelor's Degree

The following is the list of standard prerequisite course work required of a new graduate student who does not hold an undergraduate degree in Computer Science. Previous courses taken or work experience may satisfy some of these requirements.

A graduate student admitted with the requirement of prerequisite course work needs to meet with the graduate advisor before registering for their first quarter of study to determine which of these classes will be required for the student.

Registering as a Post Baccalaureate student will save tuition fees because the fees for Post Baccalaureate status is reduced. Go to this Website for more information: http://www.wwu.edu/sbo/tuition-fee-schedule.shtml

If a student takes financial aid, there is a limit of 55 to 58 credits. If a student separates undergraduate and graduate courses, he or she is not likely to exceed this limit. (Currently our department is not taking Post Baccalaureate students.)

**Standard Prerequisite Courses:**

- CSCI 141 – Computer Programming I
- CSCI 145 – Computer Programming and Linear Data Structures
- CSCI 241 – Data Structures
- CSCI 247 – Computer Systems I
- CSCI 301 – Formal Language and Functional Programming
- CSCI 305 – Algorithm Analysis I
- CSCI 330 – Database System
- CSCI 345 – Object Oriented Design
- CSCI 347 – Computer Systems II
- CSCI 367 – Computer Networks I

- Math 124 – Calculus and Analytic Geometry
- Math 125 – Calculus and Analytic Geometry
- Math 204 – Elementary Linear Algebra
- Math 341 – Probability and Statistics
Graduate Plan of Study

This Plan of Study must be completed within the first quarter of graduate study at WWU. The student and advisor will receive a copy when the Plan is approved. List the courses you wish to count toward your degree. Note: Limit of 4 credits of Independent Study. Attach Prerequisite Courses on separate list. Confer with your program advisor and the Graduate School regarding any subsequent changes to this Plan PRIOR to enrollment in any course not listed and approved on your Plan.

You may complete the form on line or fill it out in the advisor's office. If you fill it out on-line, please print out your plan of study and take it to the CS Graduate Program Advisor during the first quarter of your study. If you have questions, consult CS Graduate Program Advisor before completing this form. For electives, you may enter 5XX on the form since any elective will satisfy the requirement. This also makes it so you don't have to file changes when a class you list does not get taught or there is a new class available after you fill out your plan of study. Also, the CS masters degree at Western Washington University is only available in a non-thesis format.

The completed form will be sent to the Graduate School and you will receive a copy after the Dean of the Graduate School approves it.

E-Sign Forms:

Plan of Study
https://esign.wwu.edu/adms/process/forms/Grad_School/Plan4.aspx

Amendment to Plan of Study
https://esign.wwu.edu/adms/process/forms/Grad_School/Amend2.aspx

Detailed instructions and guidelines are linked from the form to a separate page.
https://esign.wwu.edu/adms/process/forms/Grad_School/Plan_Routing.htm
The Graduate Research Project

Before students can take CSCI 692, they must complete the research proposal form. This form can be found on the CS Graduate Program Website.

Student Name:

Student ID: W

Student E-mail:

Start Quarter:

Supervisor Name:

Project Title:

Project Description:

Plan to Submit Paper to:
(optional)

Time Line of Completion of the Project:

Student Signature  Date  Supervisor Signature  Date
Graduate Study Progress Report

Graduate Students must complete the “Graduate Study Progress Report” every academic year. This form can be found on the CS Graduate Program Website.

Student Name:
Student ID: W
Student E-mail:
Academic Year:
Supervisor Name:

Progress Report:

Student Signature Date
Supervisor Signature Date
Applying for Graduation

The Link to the Requirements and Deadlines from the Graduate School:

http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool/graduation.shtml

Graduate School Requirements for Option II (non-thesis)

1. Degree Recommendation e-sign form
2. All “K” and “X” grades removed for students completing degree
3. Join the Commencement

Note: The deadline for each quarter is different. Please check the most current information from graduate school Website (see above link).

Requirements and Deadlines from CS Graduate Program:

1. Fill out the Graduation Report Form (see next page)
2. A copy of research paper
3. Proof of submission to a conference or journal
4. E-mail your paper to CS Graduate Program Advisor including the software, technical report, and related documents
5. E-mail your supervisor the “Degree Recommendation Form”
6. Your supervisor e-mail the “Degree Recommendation Form” to the CS Graduate Program Advisor his or her recommendation
7. Do all above AT LEAST THREE DAYS BEFORE the Graduate School’s deadline.
8. The Computer Science Department Graduate Committee members will review your research paper and make sure the paper meets the standard of a conference or journal paper.
9. Finally the Computer Science Graduate Program Advisor will e-mail this “Degree Recommendation Form” to the Graduate School after careful examination of your material.
MS Program Graduate Report

Students must fill out the following form and submit it to the CS Graduate Program Advisor THREE DAYS BEFORE the deadline of the Graduate School along with required documentations (see previous page). This form can be found on the CS Graduate Program Website.

Student Name:  
Student ID: W  
Student E-mail:  
Finish Quarter:  
Supervisor Name:  

Paper Title:  
Abstract:  

Paper has been submitted to:  

| Student Signature | Date | Supervisor Signature | Date |
Graduate Faculty

The Graduate Faculty members are dedicated to graduate program and good at working with students on their own research interests. We extend our research interests to supervise students. All graduate faculty members are very responsible, helpful, knowledgeable, and have strong interests in research with students. Here is the list of graduate faculty members with some of their research interests.

2. **Wesley, Deneke**, PhD, Computer Graphics, Pervasive Computing, and Artificial Intelligence
3. **Fizzano, Perry**, PhD, Algorithms, optimization, bioinformatics.
4. **Hao, Qiang**, PhD, Computer Education.
5. **Hearne, James W.**, PhD, Artificial intelligence, computational science.
6. **Hutchinson, Brian**, PhD, Speech and language processing, machine learning and optimization.
8. **Jagodzinski, Filip**, PhD, Computational structural biology, big data, integrated information systems.
9. **Liu, Yudong**, PhD, Eye tracking device uses, Cuneiform text processing and social network analysis.
10. **Matthews, Geoffrey B.**, PhD, artificial intelligence, data mining, scientific visualization.
11. **Meehan, Michael J.**, PhD, parallel and distributed computing, programming languages, networks.
12. **Nelson, Philip A.**, PhD, parallel and distributed computing, compilers, operating systems.
13. **Sharmin, Moushumi**, PhD, Human-computer interaction, information visualization, mobile health, privacy.
16. **Zhang, Jianna**, PhD, artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, natural language processing.
Welcome to another term of being a TA

Some very simple guidelines:

Remember what it is to be a student. Students are not sure what a TA is. So, the first time you come to the lab, introduce yourself, write your e-mail address on the board, and tell students where the grades will be posted (give your URL if you post on the web).

Always remember to come prepared to the lab. If you are not sure about the assignment, ask your instructor ahead of time. You should be able to anticipate most of the questions. If you do not know the answer, do not get stuck on it. Encourage discussions among students or ask help from your professor.

What to do when having problems?

In case of real emergency (fire or somebody getting hurt) you can call 911. If you have a "smaller emergency" on campus emergency team can be reached at 3911. University Police is at 3555.

If you have equipment problems, you will need to reach the CS support team. If a student does not have an account, or has difficulties login into the network, let our support team know. They can be reached at CS.Support@wwu.edu or by phone at (360) 650-2250

How do I get paid?

In order to get paid, you will need to have processed the necessary paperwork with Mary Tully, the CS department office manager. Every two weeks, you will need to fill up your time sheet, and have it signed by the instructor you are working for. You will not get paid if the form is not filled, or if the form is not signed.

The time-sheets have due dates (and you will be reminded of such deadlines).
Application and Information

Needed for Graduate a Teaching Assistant

Fill out and email to the Graduate Program Advisor as a word attachment. Use your name as the filename.

Name: ___________________________ Student Number: ____________________

E-mail: __________________________ Phone: _____________________________

Graduate Teaching Assistants manage labs for introductory CS level courses, grade programs and homework and occasionally proctor exams as required. A Teaching Assistantship is considered to be a “half time” teaching position, and therefore, TAs are expected to work 20 hours every week for the CS department. Depending on the courses and instructors, the load can be three or four labs with associated duties. TA work extends from the first week of the term, to final week. In most cases, however, labs do not meet during the first and last week of the term.

In order to find the best match between your school schedule and your TA assignments, you need to indicate in the table below the times during which you have class meetings and the class you are scheduled to attend (list the course number).

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Safety Information

Here is some information on methods to protect you from being the victim of a campus crime:

1. Do not prop open locked lab doors. You should never lend your proximity card to anyone.

2. Avoid working alone whenever possible. If you have to, lock yourself in the lab or office. Do not leave the door open.

3. Do not walk alone in a dark parking lot. Call campus police (650-3555) if you got lost in the campus.

4. If you find yourself in a bad situation, scream, draw attention to yourself, yell “No”, “Stop”, or “Fire”. Run away quickly to a busy area and call 650-3555.

5. Report suspicious persons to campus police at 650-3555 immediately.

6. Here is a public safety Website: http://www.wwu.edu/ps/
Useful Links and Forms

1. Grad School: [http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool](http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool)
3. Catalog Home: [http://catalog.wwu.edu](http://catalog.wwu.edu)
5. Policies including Returning Student Application: [http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool/policies.shtml](http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool/policies.shtml)
7. Degree Completion, Deadlines, Commencement: [http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool/graduation.shtml](http://www.wwu.edu/gradschool/graduation.shtml)