# Advancement to Candidacy for Master's Degree

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
MERCED | SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

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# M.S. General Requirements

To obtain a MS degree from UC Merced, you must meet the following requirements:

- ✓ Completed required semester units specific to your graduate program and Master's Degree track (minimum 24 units)

- ✓ Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in all coursework (upper division and graduate level)

- ✓ Minimum of two (2) semesters of Academic Residency
    - ✓ Academic Residency is 12 units per semester for MS students

- ✓ Any additional requirements required by your graduate program

- ✓ Approved MS Thesis (Plan I); Approved Capstone Project (Plan II); or Passing of Comprehensive Exam (Plan II)

*MBSE, BIOE and ME doctoral students who plan to earn the masters along the way toward the doctorate must advance separately for the masters and Ph.D. in order to earn both degrees.

Each graduate program is different, and you should visit your program's website for specific degree requirements.

Visit your Graduate Program website here.

# Pre-Candidacy Requirements

**Student Responsibility:**

✓ Meet with faculty advisor regarding course selection and MS option
  - ✓ MS Plan I-Thesis
  - ✓ MS Plan II-Capstone/Comprehensive Examination
  - ✓ Notify soe-grstaff@ucmerced.edu of your MS Plan option

✓ Review your degree audit (MyDegree) at my.ucmerced.edu to review your academic plan

✓ Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0

✓ Complete any additional requirements as determined by your graduate program (Core Knowledge Examination-MBSE)

✓ **Contact SoE Graduate Staff at least 2 months prior to the semester you plan to graduate to discuss:**
  - ✓ Outstanding/Remaining coursework and graduation requirements
  - ✓ Any discrepancies on degree audit
  - ✓ Any additional requirements established by your graduate program

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Each graduate program is different, and you should visit your program's website for specific degree requirements.

Visit your Graduate Program website here.

# M.S. Advancement to Candidacy

**What does it mean to be Advanced to Candidacy?**

**Each graduate program is different, and you should visit your program's website for specific degree requirements.**
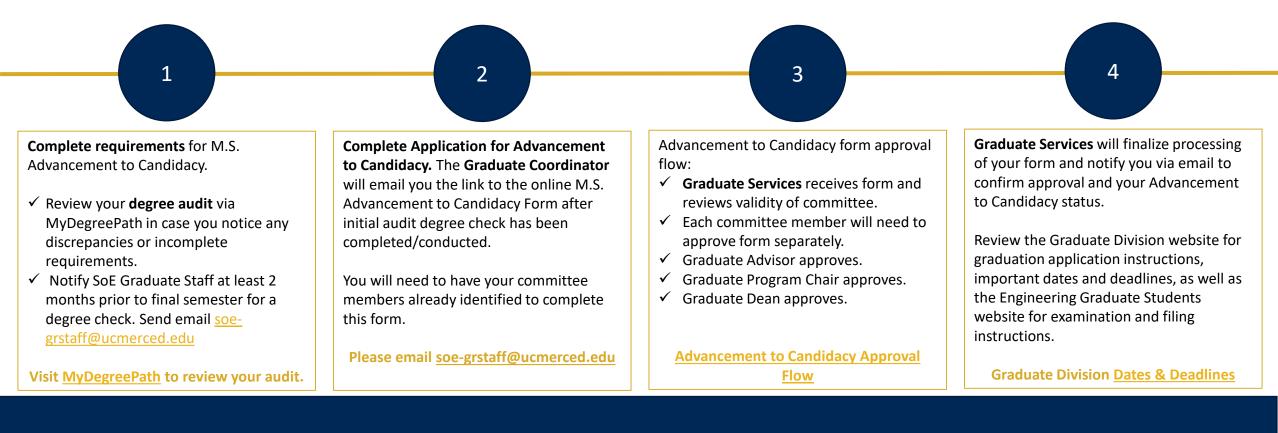
**Visit your Graduate Program website here.**

**Advancement to Candidacy** signifies:

✓ You have completed most your coursework
   ✓ only one semester remaining of coursework

✓ You have completed other requirements determined by your program
   ✓ Example Core Knowledge Exam-MBSE

✓ You are ready to move forward to the final thesis/comprehensive exam phase

✓ You have a final semester remaining before graduating

✓ Approved MS Advancement to Candidacy form

# Advancement to Candidacy Workflow Process

Graduate students must be advanced to candidacy for their degree prior to the beginning of the final semester of enrollment (preferably 30 days before). An Application for Advancement to Candidacy initiated by the student and approved by the Graduate Group should be submitted to the Graduate Dean.

**1**

**Complete requirements** for M.S. Advancement to Candidacy.

- ✓ Review your **degree audit** via MyDegreePath in case you notice any discrepancies or incomplete requirements.
- ✓ Notify SoE Graduate Staff at least 2 months prior to final semester for a degree check. Send email soe-grstaff@ucmerced.edu

**Visit MyDegreePath to review your audit.**

**2**

**Complete Application for Advancement to Candidacy.** The **Graduate Coordinator** will email you the link to the online M.S. Advancement to Candidacy Form after initial audit degree check has been completed/conducted.

You will need to have your committee members already identified to complete this form.

**Please email soe-grstaff@ucmerced.edu**

**3**

Advancement to Candidacy form approval flow:

- ✓ **Graduate Services** receives form and reviews validity of committee.
- ✓ Each committee member will need to approve form separately.
- ✓ Graduate Advisor approves.
- ✓ Graduate Program Chair approves.
- ✓ Graduate Dean approves.

**Advancement to Candidacy Approval Flow**

**4**

**Graduate Services** will finalize processing of your form and notify you via email to confirm approval and your Advancement to Candidacy status.

Review the Graduate Division website for graduation application instructions, important dates and deadlines, as well as the Engineering Graduate Students website for examination and filing instructions.

**Graduate Division Dates & Deadlines**

# Projected Deadlines for filing Advancement to Candidacy for the Fall/Spring with Graduate Division:

| Date | Term |
|---|---|
| Please contact **SoE Graduate Staff** if you are planning to graduate Fall 2021 and have not completed the application for Advancement to Candidacy. | |
| Friday, July 16, 2021 | Fall 2021 |
| Wednesday, December 15, 2021 | Spring 2022 |

Visit Graduate Division website for additional dates and deadlines: https://graduatedivision.ucmerced.edu/current-students/calendar-and-deadlines

# Committee Composition

Committee Membership nominations are made in consultation with your Graduate Advisor, Graduate Program Chair, and approved by the Graduate Dean.

**Committee Chair Nomination**
Please note, some programs do not allow the Faculty/Research Advisor to serve as your examination chair. Review your Graduate Group's specific requirements for Committee Membership.

**Advancement to Candidacy General Committee** is comprised of at least three voting members of the University of California Academic Senate. A majority of the committee must hold Core or Affiliate appointments in the your Graduate Group:

- **Committee Chair**: a member of the student's Graduate Group.
- **General Membership (2 or more) -** A majority of voting members hold appointments in the student's Graduate Group.
- **Oversight Member (if applicable)** - Appointed in addition to the three general members.

# External Committee Members

Under some circumstances one of the committee members can be a UC Merced faculty member from outside the group or a regular or adjunct faculty member from any UC campus or an individual from outside the University of California who has special expertise and qualifications. External committee members must be approved by the Graduate Dean.

The following is required for review and approval of a External Committee Member:

✓ A justification letter from the graduate advisor indicating the appointee's affiliation and title and how the prospective appointee has special expertise or qualifications that are not represented on the campus.

✓ A curriculum vita from the proposed appointee.

✓ A letter from the proposed appointee indicating a willingness to serve on committee.

***Please submit all documents to [soe-grstaff@ucmerced.edu](mailto:soe-grstaff@ucmerced.edu) for review and routing purpose.***

# Requesting Reconstitution of Committee

When Committee membership changes must be made, the graduate advisor in consultation with the student should recommend a new committee member, giving the reason for the change. The change must be reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Graduate Group and the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education.

The student may request that the committee be reconstituted:

- If a committee member's absence from campus for an extended period of time makes scheduling of examinations unreasonably difficult.
- If there is a substantial change in the thesis topic.
- If there is a departure of a committee member from the university.

Complete the *Request for Reconstitution of Committee Membership* form in advance (at least 2 weeks prior to your scheduled examination date) to allow for review and processing time.

***Please submit all documents to soe-grstaff@ucmerced.edu for review and routing purpose.***

# Graduate Student Graduation Application

Graduate Services will finalize processing your Advancement to Candidacy form and notify you via email to confirm your Advancement to Candidacy status.

Complete the Graduate Student Graduation Application for the term you plan to graduate. If participating in Commencement, you must confirm your participation when submitting the Graduation Application.

Helpful Resources:
- Graduate Division Dates and Deadlines
- Graduate Student Graduation Application
- Degree Application Forms and Guidelines
- Master's Checklist for Degree Completion
- Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines
- Grad Fair website for academic regalia information

# Additional Resources

The Engineering Graduate Students website
https://engineeringgrads.ucmerced.edu was designed with students in mind.

- M.S. Thesis Defense, Exam and Filing Procedure (Plan I)
- M.S. Comprehensive Exam/Capstone Filing Instructions (Plan II)

This very helpful resource includes general information about guidelines, policies, procedures, and resources that will aid in your successful completion of graduate studies at UC Merced. Program specific degree requirements are listed on each graduate program's website.



**Questions?  Please contact SoE Graduate Staff at soe-grstaff@ucmerced.edu**

# Questions?