BU BME Department

Graduate Handbook
for Masters Students

Fall 2016
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College of Engineering Graduate Students Academic Standards Policy

Academic Standards
The academic progress of every graduate student is reviewed at the end of each semester. Failure to make satisfactory progress and remain in Good Standing can result in Academic Probation, Suspension for a stated time or until stated conditions are met, or Dismissal, as detailed below.

Grades of C– or lower are not acceptable for Masters degrees; Grades of C+ or lower for PhD students are interpreted as failures.

Good Standing
Students maintain good academic standing when they: (1) earn a semester GPA of at least 3.0 (students enrolled only in Pass/Fail courses are exempt from the semester GPA standard); and (2) maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

Academic Probation
A student is put on Academic Probation when s/he earns a semester or cumulative GPA below 3.0. Students on Academic Probation may have their financial aid discontinued. In the event that the semester or cumulative GPA is below a 2.0, a student may be dismissed from the program.

Students are reviewed after one semester on Academic Probation. Those who earn a semester and cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above will return to Good Standing. Those students who do not achieve Good Standing (as defined above) after the probationary semester will be subject to Academic Suspension, Dismissal, or an additional semester of Academic Probation as determined by the College on a case-by-case basis.

Academic Suspension
A student on Academic Probation faces Academic Suspension or Dismissal when s/he has not achieved Good Standing (as defined above) after the most recent semester of Academic Probation. Specifics regarding Dismissal or the duration and terms of the Academic Suspension will be determined by the College on a case-by-case basis. Dismissal results in permanent separation from the University. Appeals of Dismissal or Suspension are directed to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs.

Reinstatement after Academic Suspension
Students who have fulfilled their period of Academic Suspension must meet with their academic advisor and must also reestablish their standing in the College by contacting the College of Engineering Graduate Programs Office.

College of Engineering GPA Requirement for Awarding Graduate Degrees

Master’s students must earn a grade point average of at least 3.0 in the set of courses used to satisfy the program requirements for the degree.

College of Engineering Master of Science and Master of Engineering Degrees “with Engineering Practice”

The College of Engineering offers an Engineering Practice degree option to students in all of its Masters programs. Engineering Practice is a valuable opportunity for a student at the Masters level to complete an approved internship integral to their program of study, thereby allowing them to develop additional technical and professional skills. Students interested in the Engineering Practice degree option must apply and meet the requirements outlined below. Students successfully completing the Engineering Practice degree option of their program will earn the accompanying degree designation (e.g., Master of Science in Electrical Engineering with
Internships used to complete the degree requirements must be relevant to the student's program of study and must go through a program-level approval process. Satisfactory completion of the requirement is determined by the program and then formally recorded by the Graduate Programs Office.

Requirements and Grading

- An internship site and project must be approved by the student’s Advisor.
- A mid-point review between the student and the internship supervisor must be conducted and submitted.
- Before the end of the semester in which the internship takes place, a final report must be submitted and reviewed by the Academic Advisor.
- Students receive a grade of Pass or Fail. The final grade is based on satisfactory completion of all requirements and is determined by the Academic Advisor in consultation with the Internship Supervisor.

For International Students

- International students must have completed two semesters in full-time status to be eligible to begin an internship in the United States, and they must complete additional paperwork with the BU International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) after registration.
- International Students with an off-campus internship must complete the Curricular Practical Training (CPT) form, and bring the approved Engineering Practice Approval form and the CPT form to the ISSO for review and approval for off-campus curricular practical training.

Summary of Course Requirements for BME Graduate Students

Note: The courses listed under the Technology Leadership electives section below, as well as ME 518, do not meet the requirement of a technical elective. Students may also petition for a course offered outside of ENG to count as a technical elective. M.Eng students are permitted to substitute a maximum of one 400-level course for a graduate-level elective.

M.Eng Students:

BE 694 Biomedical and Clinical Needs Finding

Three Graduate-Level BME Electives (BE 695 satisfies one)

Two Graduate-Level Technical Electives (may include additional BME coursework)

Math Requirement selected from approved list (located in the handbook and online)

Two Technology Leadership Electives from the list below (BE 695 satisfies one):

- ENG ME 502 Invention: Technology Creation, Protection, and Commercialization
- ENG ME 517 Product Development
- ENG ME 525 Technology Ventures
- ENG ME 550 Product Supply Chain Design
- ENG ME 583 Product Management
- ENG ME 584 Manufacturing Strategy
- ENG ME 703 Managerial Cost Accounting
- ENG EK 731/QST HM 801 Bench to Bedside – Translating Biomedical Innovation from the Lab to the Marketplace
- QST HM 703 Health Sector Issues and Opportunities
- QST SI 839 Design Thinking and Innovation
- QST SI 852 Starting New Ventures
Students in the M.Eng degree program are required to complete a minimum of **32 credits** of approved coursework. No master’s thesis is required. The practicum requirement is satisfied through BE 695. All students are required to submit a Program Planning Sheet for approval by their advisor and the BME Graduate Committee when applying for graduation, indicating the courses they took to fulfill the curriculum requirements. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained. The department permits only four credit hours of C or C+ to be applied toward the degree. Grades of C- or lower are not acceptable. The structured courses must be at the graduate-level with the exception that (only) one course is permitted at the 400-level with advisor approval. Non-BME technical electives do not have to be from other Engineering departments; hard science courses from other colleges may be approved upon petition to the BME Graduate Committee. Technical Leadership electives outside of the provided list must be approved by Prof. Jonathan Rosen.

**MS with Thesis Students:**

**Math Requirement** selected from approved list (located in the handbook and online)

BE 605 *Molecular Bioengineering* or BE 606 *Quantitative Physiology for Engineers*

BE 790 *Biomedical Engineering Seminar*

**Three Graduate-Level BME Electives**

**Two Graduate-Level Technical Electives** (may include additional BME coursework)

BE 954 *Research* (8 credits)

Students in the MS degree program are required to complete a minimum of 36 credits and successfully propose and defend an original MS thesis. MS students are required to hand in their final program planning sheets at the time of the MS thesis proposal to be approved by the BME Graduate Committee. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained. The department permits only four credit hours of C or C+ to be applied toward the degree. Grades of C- or lower are not acceptable. Non-BME technical electives do not have to be from other Engineering departments; hard science courses from other colleges may be approved upon petition to the BME Graduate Committee.

**MS with Project Students:**

**Math Requirement** selected from approved list (located in the handbook and online)

BE 605 *Molecular Bioengineering* or BE 606 *Quantitative Physiology for Engineers*

BE 790 *Biomedical Engineering Seminar*

**Three Graduate-Level BME Electives**

**Three Graduate-Level Technical Electives** (may include additional BME coursework)

BE 952 *Mentored Project* (4 credits)

Students in the MS degree program are required to complete a minimum of 36 credits and complete the required 4 credit Project. A suitable project must be identified and approved by the BME Graduate Committee. The mentored project must be supervised by a primary BME faculty member or an approved outside advisor. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 must be maintained. The department permits only four credit hours of C or C+ to be applied toward the degree. Grades of C- or lower are not acceptable. Non-BME technical electives do not have to be from other Engineering departments; hard science courses from other colleges may be approved upon petition to the BME Graduate Committee.
Credit for Courses Taken Elsewhere:

Students may “place out” of required courses, if they have taken equivalent courses elsewhere at the graduate level, as long as those courses were not used to meet the requirements of an undergraduate or previous degree. For example, students who have taken a grad-level physiology course may receive permission not to take BE 606. Students with extensive experience in quantitative molecular biology may receive permission not to take BE 605. This permission must be granted by submitting a petition to the BME Graduate Committee BEFORE the end of the Add/Drop period. Though students may place out of specific course requirements, this does not alter the total number of credits a student must earn at Boston University (36 for MS students) to meet the degree requirements, but it does enable the student to take other electives.

Courses that Fulfill the BME Math Requirement:

Students can choose to take one of the following courses and pass with a B+ or higher. It is highly recommended to take the math course in the first year.


CAS MA 565 Mathematical Models in the Life Sciences Pre-reqs: CAS MA 226 OR CAS MA 231. An introduction to mathematical modeling, using applications in the biological sciences. Mathematics includes linear difference and differential equations, and an introduction to nonlinear phenomena and qualitative methods. An elementary knowledge of differential equations and linear algebra is assumed.

CAS MA 579 Numerical Methods for Biological Sciences Introduction to the use of numerical methods for studying mathematical models of biological systems. Emphasis on the development of these methods; understanding their accuracy, performance, and stability; and their application to the study of biological systems.

CAS MA 684 Applied Multiple Regression and Multivariable Methods Application of multivariate data analytic techniques. Multiple regression and correlation, confounding and interaction, variable selection, categorical predictors and outcomes, logistic regression, factor analysis, MANOVA, discriminant analysis, regression with longitudinal data, repeated measures, ANOVA.
CAS PY 501 Mathematical Physics  Introduction to complex variables and residue calculus, asymptotic methods, and conformal mapping; integral transforms; ordinary and partial differential equations; non-linear equations; integral equations.

ENG ME 566 Advanced Engineering Mathematics  Pre-reqs: CAS MA 225 OR CAS MA 226; senior standing, and consent of instructor. Introduces students of engineering to various mathematical techniques that are necessary in order to solve practical problems. Topics covered include a review of calculus methods, elements of probability and statistics, linear algebra, transform methods, difference and differential equations, numerical techniques, and mathematical techniques in optimization theory. Examples and case studies focus on applications to several engineering disciplines. The intended audience for this course is advanced seniors and entering MS engineering students who desire strengthening of their fundamental mathematical skills in preparation for advanced studies and research. (Formerly ENG MN 566)

GRS MA 681 Accelerated Introduction to Statistical Methods for Quantitative Research  Pre-reqs: CAS MA 225 & CAS MA 242 or their equivalents. Introduction to statistical methods relevant to research in the computational sciences. Core topics include probability theory, estimation theory, hypothesis testing, linear models, GLMs, and experimental design. Emphasis on developing a firm conceptual understanding of the statistical paradigm through data analyses.

Students may petition for a different course (500-level or higher) to count towards the Math Requirement, subject to approval by the BME Graduate Committee.

Finding a Research Home

Research Opportunities in the Department – Most students choose to do their research with a faculty member from the BME Department or affiliated research centers Biological Design Center, Biomolecular Engineering Research Center, BUnano, Center for Future Technologies in Cancer Care, Center for Memory and Brain, Center for Research in Sensory Communication and Neural Technology, Hearing Research Center). To find out more about specific research programs, please visit the individual faculty member webpages via the BME website. Faculty, scientists or researchers (holding a PhD or MD) within or outside of Boston University can be approved by the BME Graduate Committee using the BME petition form (available online) to be a student’s principal research advisor if they have an active research collaboration with a primary BME faculty member who will agree to be the student’s research co-advisor.

Research Project – A major requirement for the MS with Thesis is a research-based thesis. Each student is responsible for finding a research project, conducting scientific studies under the guidance of an approved faculty member, presenting the proposal and results to the general scientific community in a public defense and finally turning in a thesis to be bound for the library and the BME Department.

Academic vs. Research Advisors – Each new student is assigned an academic advisor (Associate Chair of Graduate Programs) when entering the program. All M.Eng students will be counseled by Prof. Jonathan Rosen. Incoming MS students will be notified about their advisor prior to registration by Christen Bailey. The student’s academic advisor can provide general information about the University and help the student to complete his/her course registration for the first year.

If a student chooses the MS with Thesis option, his/her research advisor automatically becomes the student’s academic advisor as well. However, if the student’s principal research advisor is not a BME full-time primary or affiliated faculty member (but has an active research collaboration with a primary BME faculty member), then a BME co-advisor is required. A primary BME faculty member with an active research collaboration with the off-campus research advisor will become the student’s academic advisor and research co-advisor. This academic
advisor is expected to be a member of the student’s committee.

**Who Can Be A Research Advisor** – Any full-time member of the BME faculty, or any affiliated or adjunct faculty member who has an appointment with the department, is eligible to serve as a research advisor. Other faculty, scientists or researchers (those holding a PhD or MD) within or outside of Boston University can be approved by the BME Graduate Committee to be a student’s principal research advisor if they have an active research collaboration with a primary BME faculty member who will agree to be the student’s research co-advisor. Students should submit a Supervisor Approval form (available online), to be approved by the BME Graduate Committee. This form should be submitted as soon as the potential advisor is selected.

After approval, and as the thesis project progresses, MS with Thesis students must identify one additional primary faculty member within the BME Department to serve as another member of the MS Thesis Committee.

**Finding a Research Advisor and Project** – Occasionally students enter the program with a specific research advisor in mind and may even plan to work on a specific project. The majority of students, however, will utilize the first two semesters to determine what their specific interests are in the field of biomedical engineering and identify the opportunities for funding in a professor’s lab.

Another valuable way of learning more about specific research opportunities is to speak with other graduate students who are currently working in the BME Department’s various labs. The best measure for learning about working in a specific lab is to make an appointment to speak with the faculty member in charge of a lab you are interested in. Once a student finds a research opportunity and has the consent of a faculty member to be his/her advisor, the process of developing a thesis project begins.

**Off-Campus Thesis** – Thesis research is usually carried out in laboratories and centers of BME faculty located on campus. In cases of non-BU advisors (see discussion above regarding required approval) the research is often performed off-campus, in the lab of the principal research advisor. There may be special problems that arise due to intellectual property and other conflicts of interest, which must be addressed prior to starting the work. Also, in the case of a non-BU advisor, typically, the funding for the Research Assistantship to pay the student’s stipend is transferred to BU through the mechanism of a sub-contract from the advisor’s institution to BU. Contact Matt Barber (meb@bu.edu) to initiate arrangement of the sub-contract.

**Invention and Copyright Agreements** – Students who receive support from sponsored research programs or who make significant use of BU funds and facilities are required to sign the BU Invention and Copyright Agreement. Seek counsel with your faculty advisor about this policy pertaining to intellectual property. A signed form is required before a student can be paid. Christen Bailey will provide you with the necessary form.

**MS Thesis Committee Membership** – After identifying a research advisor and project, each student forms a thesis committee. Any of these three members can be the primary advisor. The MS Thesis Committee must have a minimum of three (3) members:

- Two members must be from the primary BME faculty
- One member must be from outside the department (BME Affiliated faculty, Research faculty and Research Associates with a PhD and sufficient experience may count as the “outside” member)

**MS Thesis Proposal** – A brief written proposal (3-5 pages) of the MS research project must be submitted and defended no later than the semester before the student defends his/her thesis. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule a formal meeting with his/her Thesis Committee members for discussion and approval of the proposal document. The student must present the MS Proposal and Thesis Committee Approval Form to his/her thesis committee during this meeting. If the proposal is approved, the faculty members must sign the form,
thereby indicating their willingness to participate on the thesis committee. The student must submit the signed approval form and the proposal document to Christen Bailey. It is required that the student’s committee meet with the student regularly (at least annually) throughout the remainder of his/her thesis research.

**MS Thesis** – An MS Thesis must be written and defended successfully for completion of the MS degree. In order for a student to make full use of the critiques on the proposal offered by his/her committee, students are not permitted to defend the final thesis the same semester in which the proposal was submitted. A full description of the format requirements for the written thesis is included in “A Guide for the Writers of Dissertations and Theses” (available online). The format described in this guide must be adhered to when writing the thesis. Mugar Library will not accept the thesis if it does not follow the required format!

It is the student’s responsibility to confirm a date and time of the presentation with his/her committee members. The *MS Thesis Defense Approval Form* must be completed and submitted to Christen Bailey two weeks prior to the presentation date. She will process announcement of the MS Thesis Defense to the BME faculty and graduate students via email and add the event to the BME calendar.

The format of the defense is not rigid and is decided on by the Chair of the MS Defense Committee. The student can expect to give a 30-40 minute seminar presenting the results of the completed project. There may be questions during the presentation or after the student has completed the presentation, depending on the decision of the committee.

Following a reasonable question period, the audience is dismissed, so that the committee may ask questions of the student privately; then the student is dismissed and the committee remains to complete its assessment of the thesis defense. The Defense Committee must vote unanimously to pass the student. The results are noted on the *MS Thesis Defense Form* and submitted to Christen Bailey, who will be responsible for obtaining the signature of the BME Graduate Committee.

**Submission of the Final Thesis** – The student will then follow the electronic submission guidelines provided by Mugar Library. Christen Bailey will provide departmental electronic approval for the student upon seeing 1) original signatures page and 2) title page.

Christen Bailey will handle the binding of the additional dissertation copies. The cost for hardbound copies is $10.00 per copy (subsidized by the BME Department). Theses to be hardbound are sent to an external bindery once a year (early fall). Students should be sure to leave a correct forwarding address after graduation so that their hardbound copy of the dissertation can be mailed.

**MS Program Completion Time Schedule** – It is up to the student and their research advisor to complete the project in a reasonable amount of time for a MS thesis. Most students graduate from the MS with Thesis program in 2 to 2.5 years after entering, which usually includes at least one year of full-time work on the research project. It is important to keep track of the numerous deadlines that have been established to ensure that students planning to participate in graduation ceremonies are not disappointed being prevented from participating due to missed deadlines. A list of deadlines for the MS Program is located online. Please contact Christen Bailey if you have any questions about these deadlines.

Each student has a maximum of five (5) years from the time of matriculation to complete the requirements for the MS degree. If a student has still not finished the required courses and research thesis in this time, the student must reapply and be accepted again to the department in order to continue.

**Relation of the MS Program to the PhD Program** – Often students who enter the MS program later decide that they would like to pursue a PhD in Biomedical Engineering. The student must formally apply to the PhD program;
however, the MS program is designed so that a transition into the PhD program is straightforward:

- If admitted to the PhD program, the student who completed the MS degree in BME requires one additional physiology/biology course, BE 792 Literature Review plus the completion of two graduate-level electives (at least one BE), to satisfy the curriculum requirements of the doctoral program.
- MS students wishing to continue on for a PhD with the intent to extend their MS research will be encouraged to modify their MS Thesis as necessary into a PhD Prospectus. If a student wishes to change research topics, then a prospectus appropriate for the new topic will be required. It is important to note that all students must have passed the BME PhD oral qualifier prior to submitting and defending a PhD Prospectus.

Planning for Graduation – An MS student cannot defend his/her thesis and/or graduate the same semester in which the MS proposal was submitted. In order to graduate, students must be registered in the semester in which they complete degree requirements and in the preceding semester.

Financial Information

Students receiving any form of financial support for graduate studies are not permitted additional employment without prior written approval from both the student’s advisor and the BME Graduate Committee. These forms of financial support include Research Assistantships and other external Fellowships (NSF, NIH, foreign government fellowships or other foundations).

Stipend Paychecks – All students are expected to have a bank account in the U.S. Direct Deposit of payments to your bank account is the norm for most students. If you elect not to use direct deposit, paychecks can be picked up at the BU Payroll Office at 25 Buick Street.

Research Assistantships – It is important to first recognize that Research Assistantships are not guaranteed for MS with Thesis students. Research Assistantships are offered by individual faculty members with sponsored research grants. Students interested in off-campus Research Assistantships should speak with the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies for departmental approval (to ensure that the research project is appropriate and that there is direct involvement of a BME faculty member). Off-campus Research Assistants should also see Matt Barber (meb@bu.edu) regarding the details of subcontracting the Research Assistantship through the University in order to receive tuition benefits.

A Research Assistant (RE) is a member of a research group in a laboratory or center. The position offers close association with members of the faculty and is a very effective arrangement for graduate study. The association and the work with the lab or center usually lead to other opportunities. Work on the thesis is normally part of an assistant’s assignments. RA’s are expected to work full-time, with time allowed for courses during the academic year.

Tuition – RE’s supported full-time by a faculty’s sponsored research grant may receive tuition coverage depending upon the funding mechanism. Check with your research advisor and/or financial administrator.

Summer Stipends and Tax Withholding – Students funded on fellowships other than NIH will have FICA taxes withheld from their paychecks during the summer (May, June, July and August).

Logistical Information

Previous MS theses are available for review in ERB 401. Please do NOT remove these from the room!
**Computer Resource and Printing Facility** - The BME Computational Simulation Facility consists of two classrooms containing 56 workstations, as well as a machine room containing a server farm and two 16GB RAM, ccNUMA Linux supercomputers. All machines are running BU's own 64-bit distribution of Linux on the AMD64 Opteron architecture, and are tied together with Sun Grid Engine software for a total of 230 processors available to parallel compute jobs at any time. System enhancements and new GPU-based parallel computing resources are coming on line, for ever-growing capabilities.

**BME Graduate Student Lounge** – The BME Lounge is located on the second floor of 44 Cummington Mall near the elevator. This room contains graduate student mailboxes. The mailing address is: Department of Biomedical Engineering, Boston University, 44 Cummington Mall, Boston, MA 02215.

**Graduate Student Concerns** – Any matters concerning Leaves of Absence, Medical Leaves of Absence or maternity leaves should be discussed with Christen Bailey and/or the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies.

**BME Kitchenette** – There is a small kitchenette (including a refrigerator) that is available for faculty, graduate students and staff in ERB 407. A copy machine is available for students.

**Getting to the BU Medical School Campus** – BME students often take courses or attend lectures at the BU School of Medicine campus, which is located at 80 E. Concord Street in Boston. A number of students also conduct research at the medical center. Traveling between Boston University’s Charles River campus and the Medical Campus is now easy thanks to the enhanced **Boston University Shuttle (The BUS)** service. The Shuttle runs every 10-30 minutes (depending on the day and time) and makes it a snap for the BU community to access the many resources, programs, and activities throughout the University. **IT IS FREE!** Call 877-355-1555 to receive recorded information about The BUS service, including current reports of transportation delays and service interruptions. The closest stop to the BME department is at the corner of Blandford St and Commonwealth Ave. Schedules and real-time bus locations can be found at [http://www.bu.edu/thebus/](http://www.bu.edu/thebus/).
## Staff Directory

### BME Graduate Programs Administration

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### BME Department Administration

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