



Rensselaer

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Graduate Students 2020 Orientation

Alhussein Abouzeid, Professor of ECSE | 08/28/2020

Agenda

- ECSE Grad Program Office
- ECSE Research Areas
- Registration Requirements
- PoS and Program Forms
- TA/RA Expectations
- MS, MEng and PhD Program Requirements
- ECSE Handbook and Graduate Policies
- Advice for First-Year Graduate Students
- Graduate Student Council

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ECSE Graduate Program Services Office

- Professor Hussein Abouzeid, Graduate Program Director, abouzeid@ecse.rpi.edu
- Professor Partha Dutta, Masters Program Director, duttap@rpi.edu
- Ms. Kelley Kritzk, Graduate Program Administrator, kritzk@rpi.edu
- Ms. Priscilla Magilligan, Administrative Secretary (returning 10/1/2020), pris@ecse.rpi.edu

Central location to submit forms, make inquiries, and seek help with any graduate program related matters.

e.g. submit/update:

PoS (MS or PhD)
Advisor Form (MS or PhD)
DSYR (PhD)

Usually via e-mail to kritzk@rpi.edu

ECSE Student Services Office

What we provide

- Central Location
 - Forms, student mailboxes (pre-Covid), information, and questions
- Source of support
 - Point of contact for all matters throughout entire academic career.
 - Foster a supportive, stable, inclusive environment.
- Communication hub
 - Institute and Department policies.

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ECSE at-a-Glance

ECSE Family

Tenure Track/Tenured Faculty Members: 30

Professor of Practice & Lecturers: 11

Undergraduate students: 700

Masters students: 20 -30

Doctoral students: 75-100

Staff Members: 10

Web: ecse.rpi.edu

Twitter: ECSERPI

Honors: National Medals of Technology Awards for ECSE Alumni, National Academy of Engineering (NAE) Member, IEEE Fellows, NSF Career Awards, Fellows of Multiple Societies, Jefferson Science Fellows, Naval Young Investigator Award, Army Young Investigator Award, Fulbright Fellows, Entrepreneurship Awards

Degree Programs: B.S., M.S., M.Eng., Ph.D. in CE or EE

Research: 119 Journal Articles publications (2017); Research Funding: \$12 M

ECSE Research Areas

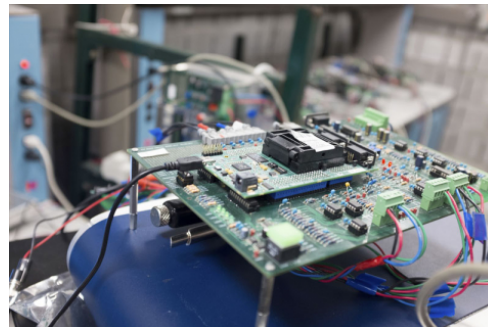
<https://www.ecse.rpi.edu/research>



AI and Machine Learning Systems



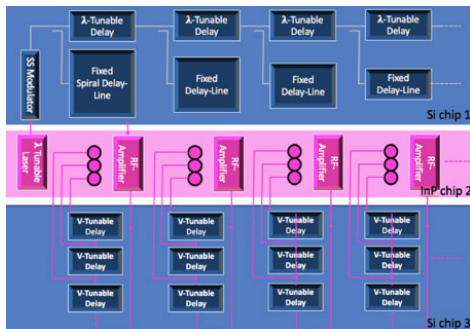
Communications & Computer Networking



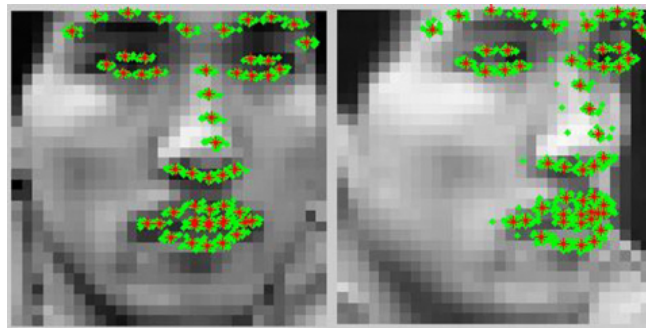
Computer Hardware Design



Controls, Robotics, and Automation



Electronics & Photonics



Imaging Science & Computer Vision



Power Electronics & Power Systems

ECSE Degree Programs

Computer & Systems Engineering: B.S., M.S., M.Eng., Ph.D.

Electrical Engineering: B.S., M.S., M.Eng., Ph.D.

Electric Power: M.S., M.Eng., Ph.D.

M.S., M.Eng.: 30 Credit Hours Beyond B.S. Degree (24 course credit-hours)

Ph.D.: 72 Credit Hours Beyond B.S. Degree (36 course credit-hours)

Ph.D.: 48 Credit Hours Beyond M.S. Degree (12 course credit-hours)

Typical: 12-15 Credits per semester (6-9 course credit-hours)

Typical time to graduate (after B.S.):

M.S./M.Eng: 1-2 years (2-4 semesters)

Ph.D. : 3-5 years (6-10 semesters)

Note:

- Doctoral students may add a Master's degree while completing their PhD requirements
- Master's students may apply to the doctoral program

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Are You Properly Registered?

(Essential if you want to **remain a student** and get paid)

If you are international students and you are not properly registered, you will jeopardize your visa status if you don't register properly. So please pay attention!!

Registration Requirements

MS/MEng (excluding Co-Term) and PhD:

- Full-time status **16 Credit maximum**
- Full-time status minimum:
 - **9 credits** for TA
 - **12 credits** for RA and Self-Pay

Co-Terminal:

- Full-time status minimum is **12 credits**.
- **Maximum 21** credits if course load is predominately UG courses.
- Co-term students should *aim for 15 credits* per semester, especially if taking graduate level courses.
- You must follow OGE requirements once the bachelor degree is completed.

Why is this important?

- Financial aid cannot be entered into the system until you are registered. You can not be paid until it is entered.
- Registration deadlines:
 - TAs – check with Kelley.
 - RA and Self Pay – check with Kelley (1st day of classes).
- If you are a Teaching Assistant:
 - You already filled in the TA information (including your class schedules) to Kelley (if not, do so ASAP)
 - Prof. James Lu uses this information to ensure your TA assignment does not conflict with your course schedule.
 - **TA assignments has been sent via email last week.**

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Graduate Plan of Study (PoS)

- A Plan of Study (PoS) must be on file with (ECSE→OGE) for all graduate students
- Deadline to submit PoS to our office: 9/30/2020.
- Plans of Study are brought/mailed to Kelley for initial review and forwarding for final signatures
- Plans of Study can be revised as needed, and may be returned for revision before approval
- Plans of Study must be followed.
 - If you decide to change courses, you can submit a PoS anytime.
 - However, if you don't update PoS, you risk having issues at graduation time, and may delay your graduation

Other Common Required “Paper”-work

- **Orientation Packet paperwork & deadlines**
 - TA Information Forms (every semester for TAs)
 - Intellectual Property Agreement
 - Communications in ECSE
 - Program/Research Advisor
- **Master’s Program Paperwork**
 - Nomination of Master’s Thesis Committee*
 - Record of Master’s Thesis & Oral Presentation*
- **Doctoral Program Paperwork**
 - RQE Application (First week of each semester, 9/7/2020)
 - Major/Minor Form (once, with first PoS, 9/30/2020)
 - Doctoral Committee Nomination
 - Record of Candidacy Examination
 - Record of Dissertation Exam*

**Institute deadlines for each semester are posted on the Academic Calendar at rpinfo.rpi.edu*

Reminders will be sent on a semester basis but don’t wait to be reminded!

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TA/RA Expectations

- **You are considered an employee of the Institute:**
 - Show up on time.
 - Do the work thoroughly and completely.
 - Communicate with your advisor and/or Student Services.

- **TAs:**
 - Continuation of TA assignment is subject to satisfactory performance
 - TA evaluation form submitted by instructors at end of semester
 - TA assignment could be terminated in extreme cases of under-performance
 - Time-budget and discuss the TA assignment and expectations with your instructors

- **Time Off**
 - RAs: Discuss with your advisor well in advance.
 - TAs: You must be available throughout the semester. You cannot leave for the break without checking when the final grading will be done.

- **ECSE TA Best Practices**
 - A workshop will be announced. Attendance is required.

ADD/DROP Deadlines

- Add Deadline: September 11, 2020
- Drop Deadline: October 23, 2020
- Late Adds are not permitted. OGE will NOT approve (except in *extreme situations*)
 - *My grade was not going to be good is not a valid excuse*
- You should not drop a course if it lowers your load below the minimum full-time requirements, esp. if the add deadline has passed.
- The critical period where students make mistakes is [9/11, 10/23]

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Mercer Distinguished Lectures

Darrin Communications Center (DCC) 324

(now Online during Covid19 protocols)

Refreshments: 3:30 p.m., Lecture: 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Attendance is mandatory

Schedule available at:

- <https://www.ecse.rpi.edu/lectures>

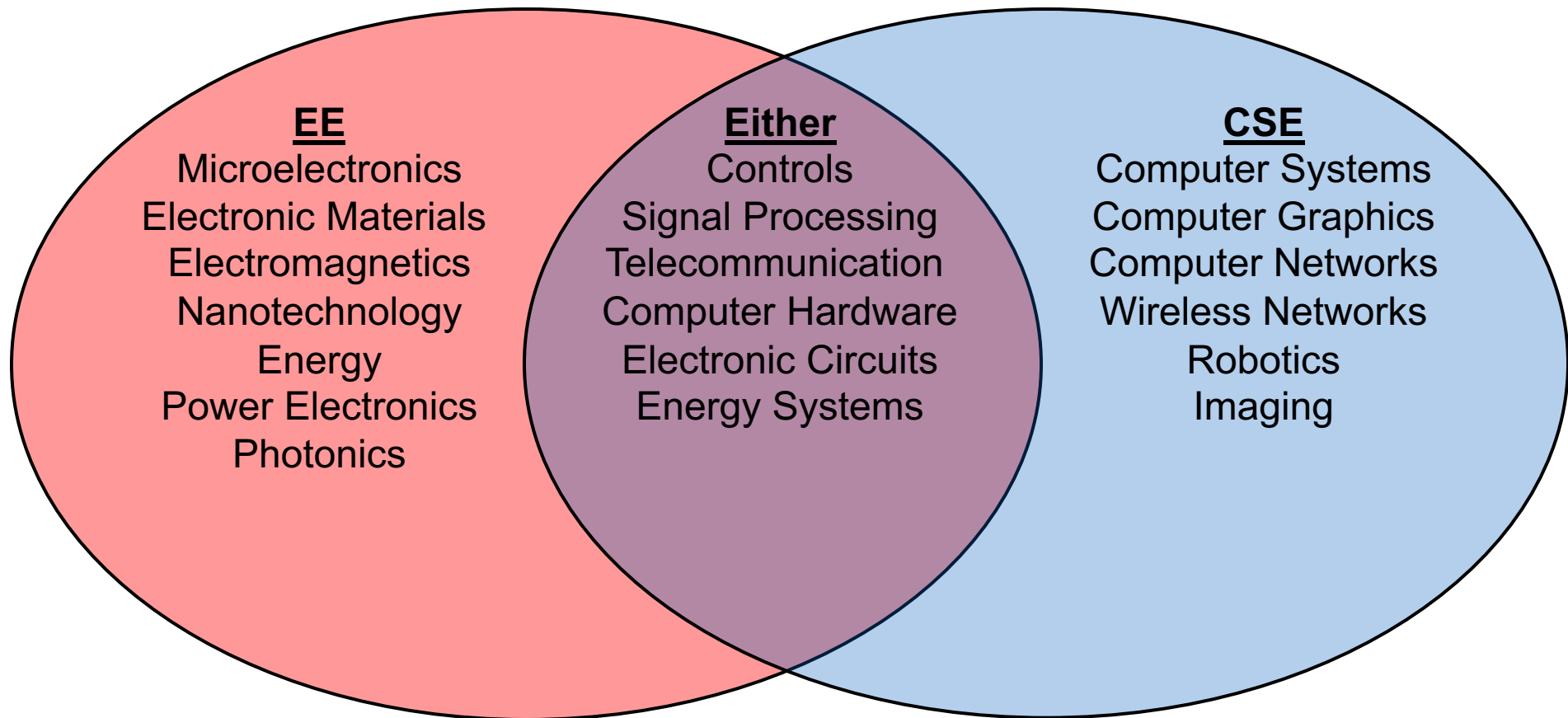
ECSE Master's Programs

ECSE Master's Degrees

- Master of Science (MS) **with** or **without Thesis**
 - MS in Electrical Engineering
 - MS in Computer and Systems Engineering
- Master of Engineering (MEng)
 - MEng in Electrical Engineering
 - MEng in Computer and Systems Engineering
- *ME, MS w/ or w/o Thesis can be used for Co-Terminal, but MS w/o Thesis degree is most typical*

Differences Among Degrees

- w/ vs. w/o thesis matters a lot in PoS requirements.
- EE vs. CSE doesn't matter in PoS Requirements, just area of concentration/research:



Master of Engineering (M.Eng.)

- Preparation for Professional Practice
- Semesters to complete: 2 possible w/ heavy load; 3 semesters more typical.
- 3-Course Technical Concentration.
- 2-Course Non-Technical Sequence.
 - MGMT/ECON/ courses encouraged.
- Max time period 2-1/2 yrs (Grad School Policy).
- Professional Master's Project an option but not typical (need a willing Advisor for this).
- Academic Advisor = an ECSE Faculty or GPD.

Master of Science with Thesis

- Preparation for Research Career and/or a PhD
- Emphasis on depth in research area.
- 3 semesters to complete (recommended).
- Max time period 2.5 yrs (Grad School Policy).
- Master's Thesis required: Need 6 (or 9) credits of ECSE-6990 *MS Thesis* in your PoS.
- Must **publicly present** master's thesis research, with **Committee** (3 ECSE faculty) sign off (even if also pursuing a PhD).
- Academic Advisor = Research Advisor.

Master of Science w/o Thesis

- Typically does not focus on research
- Semesters to complete: 2 possible w/ heavy load; 3 semesters more typical
- Max time period 2.5 yrs (Grad School Policy)
- Professional / Master's Project an option but not typical (need a voluntary Advisor for this)
- Academic Advisor = an ECSE Faculty or GPD

Co-Terminal MEng

Identical to MEng, except:

- PoS must reflect completion by end of Year 5 (that is, 1 AY after your normal 4-Year BS).
- ECSE strongly recommends at least 6 Master's PoS credits by end of Year 4!
- Co-terminal students must complete all BS requirements and graduate within 8 semesters, at which point their status will change to graduate.
- Academic Advisor = Undergraduate Advisor.

Co-Terminal MS w/o Thesis

Identical to MS w/o Thesis, except:

- PoS must reflect completion by end of Year 5 (that is, 1 AY after your normal 4-Year BS).
- ECSE strongly recommends at least 6 Master's PoS credits by end of Year 4
- Co-terminal students must complete all BS requirements and graduate within 8 semesters, at which point their status will change to graduate.
- Academic Advisor = Undergraduate Advisor.

Co-Terminal MS with thesis

Identical to MS, except:

- Need an existing Research Advisor, who fully endorses PoS Completion by end of Year 5 (1 AY after your normal 4-Year BS).
- ECSE strongly recommends at least 6 Non-Thesis Master's PoS credits by end of Year 4
- Co-terminal students must complete all BS requirements and graduate within 8 semesters, at which point their status will change to graduate.
- Academic Advisor = Research Advisor.

Masters Program Meeting

- Today, August 28th 2020, 5:00-6:00 pm on WebEX with Prof. Partha Dutta.
- You will review the MS/MEng/CT rules and go into detail on completing your Plan of Study, so that you can register correctly this week.

ECSE Doctoral Program

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

- Preparation for a Research Career (in Academia, Government, or Industry).
 - Emphasis on depth in research area.
1. Find a Research Advisor.
 2. Declare and plan your Major/Minor Course Concentration Areas by **9/30/2020**
 3. Take RQE **in** 2nd semester if admitted with Masters, in 3rd semester if admitted with only BS.
 4. Form Doctoral Committee.
 5. Pass DCE **in approx** 4th semester of doctoral study (must satisfy your Major/Minor course requirements by then).
 6. Complete Thesis and pass Defense, with appropriate Committee sign off.

DQE

The purpose of the DQE is to determine the potential that you will be able to complete the Doctoral requirements, including original and independent research of high quality.

- The DQE consists of 2 Parts:
 - Part 1: RQE:
 - RQE Committee Exam: 3 examiners, 1 written report, 45 minute presentation + up to 1 hour oral questions by RQE committee.
 - Research Advisor's Recommendation: Evaluation of your research-to-date.
 - Part 2: Major/Minor Courses: Your Major/Minor courses, with minimum B+.
- Must be taken on 2nd (if you have MS) or 3rd (if you have only BS) semester
- 2 tries max to pass RQE
- Both parts of DQE must be satisfied before taking the DCE

2020 Research Areas

- 3 Research Areas, 10 Concentration DQE Areas

1. Control and Autonomy

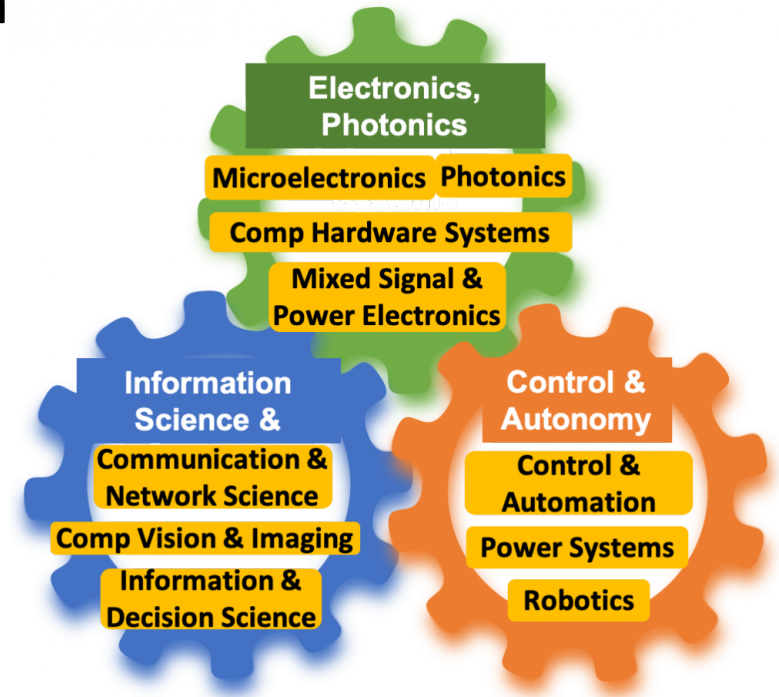
1. Control and Automation
2. Robotics

2. Information Sciences & Networks

3. Information and Decision Sciences
4. Computer Vision and Imaging
5. Communication and Network Science

3. Electronics and Photonics

6. Power Systems
7. Computer System Design
8. Microelectronics
9. Photonics
10. Power Electronics



PhD Meeting

- More detail on DQE at Doctoral Program meeting next week (to be announced)
- The DQE is relevant today because you must register next week (by 9/7/2020) if you plan to take it this Fall 2020.
- You must balance taking courses for Major/Minor vs. doing research without overloading yourself.
- 3 courses should be the max this semester if you have a TA or RA (the rest is thesis credits).

PhD time to degree (TTD)

- PhD should take about 3 years beyond a Masters or 4–5 years beyond a BS to complete.
- Maximum time period is
 - 5 yrs after MS/MEng,
 - Or 7 yrs after BS if no Masters,
 - This is RPI Policy (not ECSE).
 - Extensions can be granted, but discuss with us as early as possible.
- Academic Advisor = Research Advisor.

Doctoral Requirements

72 Credit-Hour PhD Plan of Study (PoS)

- 48 credits beyond the Master's Degree
- A relevant Master's should be reflected in the 72-credit Doctoral PoS on one line worth 24 credits.
- It is counted as a 24-credit block at 6000-level in a 72-credit Doctoral PoS regardless of the actual number of credits earned in the Master's.
- Doctoral Dissertation Credits account for time spent on research: 12 credit minimum / 36 credit maximum.
- You will have more than 72 credits at the end, but will use only 72.

Doctoral Requirements continued

72 Credit-Hour PhD Plan of Study (PoS) continued

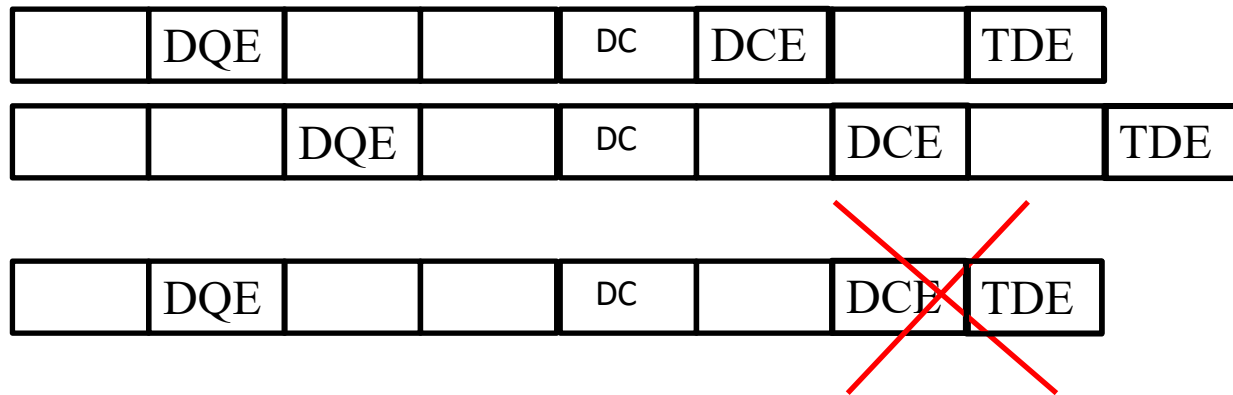
- Ratio of 6000-level to 4000-level Credits on 72-credit PoS must be **2:1 or greater**.
- Maximum of 15 credits at 4000-level.
- Plan of Study (PoS) must be approved by your advisor, ECSE GPD, & Grad School.
 - After getting your advisor's signature, email to Kelley.
- Minimum 3.0 GPA on all PoS courses to graduate.
- You must also take at least one Math course.

Doctoral Requirements continued

- Written Thesis & Defense, w/Committee Sign-Off
 - The heart of the PhD: Must contain a “substantial original contribution to knowledge.”
 - This is typically evidenced by publications in peer-reviewed conferences and journals, or equivalent.
 - Proposal of research at Candidacy Exam (DCE) in front committee of 4 or more faculty.
 - Defense: Public presentation in front of committee. Must be open to anyone.

PhD Timeline Examples

- P1 and P2 are valid plans.
- P1 jointed after MS, while P2 joined after BS.
- P3 is not allowed because DCE and TDE are not separated by at least one year:
 - Plan1
 - Plan2
 - Plan3
 - P3 should have taken the DCE earlier
 - P3 will have to graduate one semester later



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ECSE 2020 Handbook

- <https://www.ecse.rpi.edu/sites/default/files/ECSE-Graduate-Program-Handbook-2020.pdf>
- MS/MEng PoS Examples
- MS and PhD Program Requirements
- ECSE PhD Forms
 - Application for ECSE Research Qualifying Examination
 - RQE Assignment to Doctoral Student
 - RQE Student Evaluation by RQE Faculty
 - RQE Student Evaluation by Faculty Advisor
 - Doctoral Student Major/Minor Concentrations

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Important Links!

- www.rpi.edu
 - RPI Web Page
- www.ecse.rpi.edu
 - ECSE Web Page
 - Master PoS Files, a copy of these slides! (“academics” link)
 - Research Areas, Advisor Interests, etc.
- rpinfo.rpi.edu
 - Course Catalog
 - Institute Directory, Academic Calendar (Add/Drop Deadlines!), Final Exam Schedule, etc.
- sis.rpi.edu
 - Class-Hour Schedule
 - Special-Topics Courses and New-Course Descriptions, etc.

Advice for Graduate Studies

- **Finding an advisor:** Learn about research projects (e.g., by reading papers, by visiting laboratories, talking to people), culture of research group, opportunities to break into new areas, and match between your talents and interests and demands of the projects. Research culture at Rensselaer is collaborative and multidisciplinary. Jointly advised projects (with two research advisors) are common. Research funding is an important consideration. Institute funding (e.g., TA) is maximum 2 years. Presidential Graduate Fellowship (1st and 2nd years only, interdisciplinary)
- **Research topic:** Develop your own interest and perspective, with guidance from advisor. Attend conference and ask questions. <https://www.mendeley.com>

Heilmeier Criteria: <http://www.nordp.org/assets/RDConf2012/presentations/nordp-2012-hillesheim.pdf>

1. What are you trying to do? Articulate your objectives using absolutely no jargon.
2. How is it done today, and what are the limits of current practice?
3. What is new in your approach and why do you think it will be successful?
4. Who cares?
5. If you're successful, what difference will it make? What applications are enabled as a result?
6. What are the risks?
7. How much will it cost? How long will it take?
8. What are the midterm and final "exams" to check for success?

Personal Well Being

- Sleep and vitamins
- Work/life balance <http://studenthealth.rpi.edu/counseling.php>
- Social life <http://www.visittroyny.com/aboutTroy/history/history.aspx>
- Conflict resolution <http://gradoffice.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=5>
- Sexual misconduct investigative process
<http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=740>
http://www.rpi.edu/dept/hr/policy/17_Sexual_Harassmen_Policy.pdf
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cx3s20iujyutfwx/studentsexualmisconductinvestigativeprocess.pdf?dl=0>

Cyber Presence

- Personal webpage (e.g., homepages.rpi.edu/~xxxx, WordPress <https://jenpazour.wordpress.com>)
- Resume
- Publication: <http://arxiv.org>, <http://www.researchgate.net>
- Code: GitHub
- Google Scholar
- LinkedIn
- Blog
- Youtube (e.g., lecture, teaching, research results)
- Twitter, Facebook, etc.

Key Attributes of Successful Students

- Knowledge and Creativity

- Has a broad perspective on the field
- Is among the brightest persons I know
- Produces novel ideas
- Is intensely curious about the field

- Communication Skills

- Speaks in a clear, organized and logical manner
- Writes with precision and style
- Speaks in a way that is interesting
- Organizes writing well

- Teamwork

- Supports the efforts of others
- Behaves in an open and friendly manner
- Works well in group settings
- Gives criticism/feedback to others in a helpful way

- Resilience

- Accepts feedback without getting defensive
- Works well under stress
- Can overcome challenges and setbacks
- Works extremely hard

- Planning and Organization

- Sets realistic goals
- Organizes work and time effectively
- Meets deadlines
- Makes plans and sticks to them

- Ethics and Integrity

- Is among the most honest persons I know
- Maintains high ethical standards
- Is worthy of trust from others
- Demonstrates sincerity

Fellowship/Awards/Internship

- NSF Fellowship
- DOE Fellowship
- SMART Fellowship
- Company internships (CCPD <https://www.rpi.edu/dept/cdc/>)
- Departmental and school awards (Founder's Award)

Additional RPI Resources

- Rensselaer Student Handbook
<http://www.rpi.edu/dept/doso/resources/judicial/docs/2014-2016RPIHandbookofStudentRightsandResponsibilitiesAUGUST2014.pdf>
- Graduate student handbook supplement
<http://rpi.edu/dept/grad/docs/The%20Graduate%20Student%20Supplement%20.pdf>
- Graduate student forum (Wednesdays)
- TA training course (other graduate students can sign on too)
- Faculty, Counseling Center, Graduate Class Dean

Additional Resources

- CITI training (required for RAs) <http://research.rpi.edu/compliance/citi>
- Collaborative tools: <http://overleaf.com> <http://sharelatex.com> Google Doc
- Academic integrity: courses, research, thesis, papers

<http://doso.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=676>

Plagiarism: Representing the work or words of another as one's own through the omission of acknowledgment or reference. For example, using sentences verbatim from a published source in a term paper without appropriate referencing, or presenting as one's own the detailed argument of a published source, or presenting as one's own electronically or digitally enhanced graphic representations from any form of media.

- Writing: writing center <http://www.ccp.rpi.edu>

William Zinsser's On Writing Well:

<https://ia600308.us.archive.org/31/items/OnWritingWell/on-writing-well.pdf>

- Presentation:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/uif4ojh7uczu5yf/AdviceToBeginningPhysicsSpeakers.pdf?dl=0>

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Graduate Student Council

- Consider participating in your ECSE GSC activities
- Founded in Spring 2019
- Acts as a voice representing the graduate student body to relay any concerns or issues to the department
- Involved in many policy decisions as an advisory body
- Meets with GPD and Dept Head monthly
- Organizes social events
- Matches first-year students with senior PhD student mentors
- Will organize a meeting with you in two weeks, stay tuned!
- Visit <https://www.ecse.rpi.edu/people/graduate-student-council>



Rensselaer

why not change the world?®

Additional Information

(for MS students who are considering applying for PhD)

Application Process (for those considering applying to PhD)

Average GPA: 3.63

Average GRE scores: 153 verbal, 165 quantitative and 3.5 analytical

Average TOEFL score: 110

Total Number of Applicants: 375 (for fall 2018)

Enrolled: 10% of applicants (Ph.D: 22, MS/Meng: 15)

Financial aid: Primarily for Ph.D. students

Statement of Purpose/Objectives: Very important

<https://www.ecse.rpi.edu/academics/graduate-programs/graduate-admissions>

Statement of Background and Goals

Identifying professors and research areas that match your research interests

Resources: ECSE Website (<https://www.ecse.rpi.edu/people>) & [Google Scholar](#)

Describe about what research you found most interesting after reading published journal papers by respective groups. What is your professional interest? Why RPI ECSE Department? Why choose the specific research group?

Indicate any specific information that you want graduate selection committee to know:

- Any specific accomplishments, skills, experience, interests (particularly related to research)
- Any deficiencies you might have and how we should evaluate it? For example, a single bad score in a course or a semester
- Any research interests changes? For example, if you are a student with BS in physics and want to study EE, explain the motivation behind this

Highlight the following in your resumes:

- Publications, using proper citation formatting including list of all authors, title of paper, venue (conference/journal), date, volume number, etc.
- Any public speaking experiences; location/venue, etc. and in what language?

For Further information

- To explore and learn more about the exciting opportunities in ECSE @ RPI, visit <https://www.ecse.rpi.edu/>
- More information regarding graduate programs at RPI can be found here: <https://admissions.rpi.edu/graduate/programs>
- For any questions related to graduate application process, contact RPI Admissions Office: gradadmissions@rpi.edu
- For any questions related to ECSE graduate program, contact by e-mail: gradinfo@ecse.rpi.edu