

**Graduate Student Survival Guide**  
**Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering**  
 (September 1, 2016)

This document lists the steps that graduate students need to follow in order to complete the MS or PhD graduate programs in Electrical Engineering.

<https://www.eng.fsu.edu/ece/grad/pdf/gssg.pdf>

		MS	PhD
<b>First week</b>	1 Fill in <b>GPG1-Graduate Student Profile Form</b> (see Mrs. Melissa Jackson)	x	x
	2 Find an adviser as soon as you arrived. If you did not find an adviser before the first day of classes, the Graduate Director is the adviser by default for course planning, transfer of courses and degree track approval for the students in the main campus. Dr. Geoffrey Brooks is the default adviser for the students in the Panama City campus.	x	x
	3 Fill in <b>GPG3-Adviser Form</b>	x	x
<b>First Semester</b>	4 If you are requesting transfer of credits from another institution, complete form <b>GPG5-Request for Transfer of Credits</b>	x	x
	5 Fill in <b>GPP5-PhD Track Approval Form</b> *See lines 7-11		x
		x	x
<b>2nd Sem</b>	6 Fill in <b>GPG4-Supervisory Committee Form</b>	x	x
<b>Each Semester</b>	7 Fill in <b>GPM1-MS Plan of Study Form</b>	x	
	8 Fill in <b>GPP1-PhD Plan of Study Form</b>		x
	9 Register for Graduate Seminar (EEL 6932)	x	x
	10 (1) TAs, (2) Graders, (3) MS students who have received an RA position, and (4) PhD students who have not passed the Prelim Exam but who have received an RA position need to complete <b>GPG06-Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation Form</b>	x	x
	11 PhD students who have passed the Preliminary Exam need to complete the <b>Annual Student Doctoral Evaluation Form</b> each year. This form is usually completed in February of each year		x
<b>Final Semester</b>	12 Fill in <b>GPM3-MS Defense Application/Approval Form</b>	x	
	13 Make an oral presentation in the Graduate Seminar (EEL 6932). Optionally, this presentation can be made in a previous semester but it should be made at least once before graduation.		x
	14 MS Thesis students: enroll in MS Thesis Defense ( <b>EEL 8976</b> )	x	
	15 MS Non-Thesis students: enroll in MS Comprehensive Exam ( <b>EEL 8966</b> )	x	
	16 PhD students: enroll in PhD Defense ( <b>EEL 8964</b> )		x
	17 Fill in <b>GPM2-MS-Degree Graduation Checklist Form</b>	x	
	18 Fill in <b>GPP2-PhD Degree Graduation Checklist Form</b>		x

Figure 1. Summary of important forms and steps that graduate students need to complete in order to finish their degree in the ECE Department.

### First Week

1. As soon as a graduate student is accepted the student needs to find an adviser among the faculty in the ECE Department. A complete list of ECE faculty can be found at <http://www.eng.fsu.edu/ece/people/>. The student should find an adviser and discuss his or her plan of study before the first day of classes. If the student did not find an adviser before the first day of classes, the Graduate Director is the adviser by default for course planning, transfer of courses and degree track approval for all the students in the main campus. Dr. Geoffrey Brooks is the default adviser for the students in the Panama City campus.
2. All students need to complete the **GPG1-Graduate Student Profile Form** by the end of the first week of classes.
3. All students need to complete the **GPG3-Adviser Form** by end of the first week of classes. If the student changes the adviser he or she will need to submit the **GPG8-Change of Adviser Form**.

### First Semester

1. If a student is requesting transfer of credits from another institution, he or she needs to complete form **GPG5-Request for Transfer of Credits** by the end of the first semester.
2. need to be updated regularly and signed by the student's adviser.
3. PhD students need to complete the **GPP5-PhD Track Approval Form** by the end of the first semester.

### Second Semester

1. All students need to complete **GPG4-Supervisory Committee Form** by the end of the second semester.

### Each Semester

1. MS students need to complete the **GPM1-MS Plan of Study Form** and PhD students need to complete **GPP1-PhD Plan of Study Form** each semester. If the student and adviser agree on a plan of study for more than one semester, these forms can be completed once for multiple semesters. However, for any change in the plan of study, these forms need to be filled in again.
2. All the graduate students need to register for **Graduate Seminar** (EEL 6932) each semester.
3. (1) Teaching Assistants, (2) Graders, (3) MS students who have received a Research Assistant position, and (4) PhD students who have not passed the Preliminary Exam but who have received a Research Assistant position need to complete **GPG06-Graduate Assistant Performance Evaluation Form** each semester.
4. PhD students who have passed the Preliminary Exam need to complete the **Annual Student Doctoral Evaluation Form** each year. This form is usually completed in February of each year.

## Exams and Defense

1. MS students who plan to take the **MS Comprehensive Exam** should register for EEL 8966 during the semester they plan to pass the exam.
2. MS-Thesis students need to complete **GPM3-MS Defense Application/Approval Form** during the semester they plan to defend their thesis.
3. PhD students who plan to take the **PhD Preliminary Exam** need to register for EEL 8964 during the semester they plan to take the exam. The PhD Preliminary Exam should be passed by the end of the 4th semester for students in the BS-to-PhD track and by the end of the 3rd semester for students in the MS-to-PhD track.
4. PhD students need to pass the **Prospectus Exam** usually at the end of the 3rd year but no later than the end of the 4th year.
5. PhD students who plan to defend their dissertation need to enroll in EEL 8985 during the semester they will defend. This is normally done during the 4th or 5th year and at least 8 months after the Prospectus Exam.

## Final Semester

1. MS students need to complete **GPM2-MS-Degree Graduation Checklist Form** during the last semester.
2. PhD students need to complete **GPP2-PhD Degree Graduation Checklist Form** during the last semester.

## Recommended timeline for the MS and PhD Programs

Graduate students should discuss with their advisors the plan of study and fill in the Plan of Study Form every semester. In general, unless approved by their advisers, students have to enroll in 9 credits every semester and finish the 27 credits hours within the first three semesters. This section describes the department's recommended timeline. Failure for students to comply with this timeline might result in loss of the teaching assistantship and, sometimes, research assistantship.

The MS thesis and non-thesis programs are design to be finished within 2 years. During the last semester, MS thesis students should take thesis hours or finish the 6 thesis hours that they are required to take; MS non-thesis students should take the remaining 6 credit hours for the program and enroll in the MS Comprehensive Exam. The table blow summarizes the course work for MS thesis and non-thesis students.

### MS Program (2 years)

	MS Thesis	MS Non-Thesis
<b>Core courses</b>	6	6
<b>Electives</b>	15	24
<b>Math course</b>	3	3
<b>Graduate seminar (EEL 6932)</b>	<i>Every semester</i>	
<b>Thesis hours (EEL 6971)</b>	6	0
Final oral presentation	EEL 8976	EEL 8966
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>

Depending on the track of the student the PhD program is designed to be finished within 3 year (for students that already have an MS degree) to 5 years (for students that have a BS degree). Doctoral students are recommended pass the Preliminary Examination during the first 2 years, the Prospectus during the first 4 years, and defend their dissertation within 5 years of their program. The recommended semesters when the doctoral students are recommended to pass these exams are shown in the table below.

### PhD Program (3-5 years)

	If student already has:	BS	MS/EE	MS/NonEE	MS/Thesis (from FAMU-FSU ECE)	MS/NonThesis
	<b>Core courses</b>	6	6	6	0	0
	<b>Electives</b>	21	6	12*	3	0
	<b>Supervised research</b>		3	3	3	3
	<b>Graduate seminar (EEL 6932)</b>	<i>Every semester</i>				
	<b>Dissertation hours (EEL 6980)</b>	24	24	24	24	24
Recommended semester	Pass PrelimExam (EEL 8964)	3rd/4th	1st/2nd	2nd/3rd	1st/2nd	1st/2nd
	Pass Prospectus Exam	6th/7th	4th/5th	5th/6th	4th/5th	4th/5th
	Final defense	8th/9th	6th/7th	7th/8th	6th	6th
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>

\*Up to 6 credit hours can be from 4000 level courses

### Additional Requirements

The University and the Department have additional requirements regarding scholarly engagement, journal publications, and forms that need to be submitted for graduation. Please discuss these requirements with the Graduate Coordinator or check the our website at <https://www.eng.fsu.edu/ece/grad/>.