

Nuts and Bolts Guide for MSCS Graduate Students 2009

University of Illinois at Chicago
Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science

www.math.uic.edu/gradstudies

2009-2010 Nuts and Bolts Guide
UIC Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science

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WHERE TO BEGIN

All new students are encouraged to see the Director (DGS) or Assistant Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS) who will welcome them to the University and the Chicago metropolitan area.

Obtain a University Identification Card (ID)

All new students will need a University ID card and may obtain one after they register for courses. Once registered, students may go to the Student Services Building with a copy of their course registration and passport or driver's license to obtain their UIC ID card.

Obtain a Social Security Number

International students who do not have a social security number must obtain one within 10 days of their arrival. The Social Security Agency is located at 1233 W. Adams St, just 4 blocks north of the Student Services Building.

Contact the Office of International Services (OIS)

Soon after arrival on campus, international students must report to the Office of International Services (OIS) to register with SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System). Proof of residency is required for SEVIS registration. Students who have accepted RA, TA, or GA must register with SEVIS *before* employment paperwork can

be processed. Before going to OIS, students with RA, TA, or GA appointments must see the MSCS Department's Academic Coordinator to obtain a visa clearance form and to confirm that all necessary documents are in order. Students need to bring their immigration documents, financial support statements, and visa clearance forms with them to OIS.

OIS provides detailed information to international students during their course of study at the University. It is essential that this information is understood and followed. For information on visa status, employment eligibility and the I-20 form, international students should contact OIS or consult their website at www.ois.uic.edu.

MAILBOXES and FACILITIES

Mailboxes

The Department's mailboxes for TAs, RAs, and professors are located in SEO 304. Other graduate students may request a mailbox by contacting the Graduate Secretary. Most mailboxes are shared with another graduate student, so students should take care that the mail they pick up has their name on it. Mailboxes for the Graduate Studies staff are located in the main Department office, 322 SEO.

The mail bins located in the first floor lobby of SEO are convenient for mailing letters and sending campus mail. "Campus mail" is defined as letters and documents sent in special postage-free envelopes to departments and offices located on UIC's campus. Letters with proper postage as well as campus mail can be left in the MSCS Department office (322 SEO) for mailing. These pieces of mail are taken to the first floor bins twice a day.

Food Preparation

A microwave oven, coffee maker, and refrigerator are available in 310 SEO for faculty, student, and staff use. Vending machines are available on the first floor of SEO, west entrance. Other East Campus food options are available nearby in the Student Center East (Student Union), BSB, and UH buildings.

SEO 310 is to be used only for food storage and preparation. Graduate students, staff, and faculty are welcome to have lunch in 300 SEO. Since SEO 300 and 310 are shared spaces, it is important that users clean up after themselves.

Extended Building Access

Students may wish to access the SEO building in the evenings or on weekends. The entrances to SEO are locked from 6pm to 7am, Monday through Friday and on weekends. Students can obtain permission for 24-hour, 7 days per week building access by registering with Campus Security. To request building access, students must provide a copy of their University identification (ID) card to the Graduate Secretary who will submit

the request to Campus Security. Once approved, students can gain access after hours by swiping their University ID card at the east entrance to SEO. The approval process may take 7 to 10 days and may be renewed each year as long as the student remains enrolled.

Libraries

Most of the University's library holdings in mathematics are located in the Daley Library, immediately north of SEO, on the south end of the second floor. Additional journals in mathematics and physics can be found in the Science Library (SES 3500).

FINANCIAL AID

Eligibility and Application for Financial Aid

Only students accepted and enrolled in the Department's graduate degree seeking program are eligible for financial assistance from the Department. The Department offers Teaching Assistantships (TAs), Research Assistantships (RAs), and Tuition and Service Fee Waivers (TFWs) on a limited and competitive basis.

Initially, students apply for financial aid as part of the admission process. Once admitted, continuing students have the opportunity to apply for TA positions or TFWs for subsequent semesters. Financial aid applications and deadlines are posted on the Graduate Studies website (<http://www.math.uic.edu/graduate/current/curfinawards>). Aid applications must be downloaded and submitted to the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies by the stated deadline. Details regarding eligibility for aid are stated in the MSCS Graduate Student Handbook.

Research Assistantships

Faculty often receive grants with funds to support students as RAs. Faculty select their own RAs and report these arrangements to the Director of Research Programs.

Tuition and Service Fee Waivers (TFWs)

The Graduate College awards a limited number of Board of Trustees Tuition and Service Fee Waivers (TFWs) to departments for distribution. The TFWs are similar to scholarships and do not require any type of work. Board of Trustees TFW recipients must enroll in at least 12 credit hours for Fall or Spring awards; enrollment in six credit hours is required for summer awards.

TAs and RAs supported between 25% and 67% time, receive Assistantship Tuition and Fee Waivers. Students holding assistantships for the spring semester automatically receive Assistantship TFWs for the summer semester and must enroll in at least 3 hours if they wish to use the TFW.

It may take 4-6 weeks for the TFW to appear on the student's account. TFWs waive the *tuition* and the *service fee*; all remaining fees are the responsibility of the student. Students should deduct the amounts listed as "Tuition" and "Service Fee" and pay the remaining balance by the deadline indicated. *Students who are on academic probation are not eligible for tuition and service fee waivers.*

COMPUTERS, COPIERS, and PRINTERS

Obtaining Computer Accounts

Graduate students are entitled to university computing privileges. To set up a university account, understand its privileges and limitations, and to obtain basic information on the campus academic computer system, new students should visit the Academic Computing and Communications Center (ACCC) in SEL 2267 or check the website at <http://www.accc.uic.edu>.

MSCS Department Computer Equipment for General Use

The computer lab in SEO 736 is dedicated to MSCS graduate student use. To get an account or to learn more about accounts and services, follow the Computer Support link from the MSCS Department web page at <http://www.math.uic.edu/computing>.

Access to SEO 736 is restricted and requires special permission. To obtain permission, students must submit a copy of their University ID card to the Graduate Studies secretary with a note indicating that this is a request for 7th floor access.

On Campus Printing

The Academic Computing and Communications Center provides computer facilities for student use at various locations on campus. Students are allotted \$15 per semester for printing. To find out more about them, refer to their website at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/accc/pclabs/u-print/index.html> or call the ACCC at 3-0003.

PLANNING for GRADUATION

Students may graduate at the end of any academic term. However, only one commencement ceremony is held each year (during the month of May). Deadlines related to graduation are very critical, and therefore must be planned for in advance. These deadlines are posted on the MSCS Graduate Studies and Graduate College websites.

Graduation and Credentials Check

Students planning to graduate (receive a degree) must file an Intent to Graduate electronically by the stated deadline. Access to the electronic link is available via Web-for-Student (<https://ossswebcs.admin.uillinois.edu/webforstudent/wfs3.asp>).

Students applying for graduation should meet with the Assistant DGS to verify that all requirements have been met, or will be met, in time for graduation. Unless this credentials check is completed satisfactorily and in time, the student will not graduate. The Graduate College has final approval of the student's graduation.

Preliminary Examination and Thesis Defense

The Graduate College must approve all committees for the preliminary examination and thesis defense. The preliminary examination must be taken within one year after completion of 64 semester hours of course work (which includes credit hours for the MS program). At least one year must lapse between completion of the preliminary examination and the thesis defense. Students planning to defend a thesis must submit the committee recommendation form to the Graduate Secretary at least 30 days in advance of the intended date of the examination. A link to this form is accessible from the Graduate Studies website (www.math.uic.edu/gradstudies).

Thesis Preparation

Students can obtain a thesis manual outlining the guidelines for the preparation of a thesis from the Graduate College website. This manual is essential to follow. Questions about style, format and technical presentation should be discussed with the Graduate College well in advance of typing the thesis. The Graduate College has strict deadlines for format approval and final submission of the thesis.

Letters of Recommendation

Graduating students seeking permanent employment can make arrangements for the Department to maintain a file containing letters of recommendations for the student and to send copies of these letters to potential employers upon request. The first 100 letters are mailed free of charge. Students interested in this service can obtain more information from the Graduate Studies website.

Optional Practical Training (OPT)

International students need permission to work outside the University. Optional Practical Training (OPT) allows for this type of work. Students must contact OIS to attend an OPT workshop and to obtain permission to work. Students must *begin* OPT within 60 days of their program completion and *end* OPT within 14 months of program completion. Students must apply well in advance of their anticipated start date for employment. The INS requires at least 90-120 days to process requests for work authorization.

PETITIONS

Occasionally graduate students need to ask for exceptions to a policy concerning their graduate study. Students should first contact the Graduate Studies staff to discuss the

reasons for requesting an exception, to determine how best to present the case, to identify which signatures are required, and to obtain the appropriate form.

Petitions to the Department

For exceptions to the Department's rules concerning graduate study, students direct their written request to the Graduate Studies Committee, except in a few expressly stated cases where petitions are directed to the DGS. The Department's rules and regulations for graduate study are found in the MSCS Graduate Handbook.

Petitions to the Graduate Studies Committee are to be addressed to the chair of the committee. They must be signed by the student and must be accompanied by a written statement from the student's advisor that speaks to the merits of the petition.

Petitions to the Graduate College

For exceptions to Graduate College policies, students must complete the Graduate Student Petition form and obtain an advisor's signature, followed by the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The rules and regulations regarding Graduate College policy are described in great detail in the Graduate College catalog.

GRADUATE PROGRAM RESOURCES

MSCS Graduate Handbook

Every graduate student is expected to have a *current* copy of the MSCS Graduate Handbook. This document is updated each academic year and contains current policies, requirements, and regulations governing all MSCS graduate studies programs. The MSCS Graduate Handbook can be obtained from the MSCS Graduate Studies website or by contacting the Assistant DGS.

TA Handbook

The MSCS TA Handbook is available from the MSCS Graduate Studies website or by contacting the Assistant DGS. This document contains a broad spectrum of guidelines and procedures for Department teaching assistants.

Graduate College Catalog

The Graduate College Catalog together with the MSCS Graduate Handbook comprises the rules and policies students must follow to obtain their degrees. The catalog is viewable on the University website (<http://www.uic.edu/gcat/>) or can be purchased in the University Bookstore.

Sample Comprehensive and Preliminary Examinations

Sample copies of the Master's Comprehensive Exams and Doctoral Preliminary Exams are available from the Graduate Studies website.

SUPPORT SERVICES for GRADUATE STUDENTS

Seeking Advice

Students seeking advice on course selection should contact their assigned Faculty Mentor. The list of assigned Faculty Mentors is available on the Graduate Studies website. Students with questions on University or Department policies and procedures, degree requirements, concerns about their academic program, or challenges in achieving the desired success should contact the Assistant DGS for guidance and referral.

Mathematics Graduate Student Association (MGSA)

All graduate students admitted to the Department are automatically members of the Mathematics Graduate Student Association (MGSA). The purpose of MGSA is to promote the interest of the Department's graduate students. A member of MGSA represents the organization at Graduate Student Council meetings and departmental Graduate Studies Committee meetings to keep graduate students informed of relevant proceedings. For more information and a list of the current officers go to the website at <http://mgsa.math.uic.edu>.

UIC Counseling Services

UIC Counseling Services offers assessment and counseling for students' personal, career, academic, or other concerns. Services are confidential and free of charge to enrolled students. Also available is the *InTouch Crisis Hotline* (312)996-5535 which offers trained staff to provide telephone crisis intervention, support, and referrals daily from 6pm-10:30pm.

GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE HOURS

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

Regular walk-in office hours are posted during the Fall and Spring terms. During the summer, students are encouraged to schedule an appointment by sending an email to dgs@math.uic.edu.

Assistant Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS)

Students may stop by to see the Assistant DGS in SEO 339. Office hours are typically 9:00am to 4:00pm, Monday through Friday. Students are also encouraged to contact the Assistant DGS by e-mail.

Graduate Secretary

The Graduate Secretary is available Monday through Friday. Walk-ins are welcome.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Suggestions and Concerns

Students with comments regarding the Graduate Studies Program or MSCS Department should contact the DGS or Assistant DGS. The Department encourages comments from students who are most directly affected by its graduate program policies and procedures.

Students with questions regarding a course grade should first contact the professor, followed by the Department's Student Grievance Committee, if necessary.

Students with questions concerning the Master's Examination should consult the Graduate Studies website for procedures to follow. Concerns with preliminary examinations should be brought to the attention of the DGS for a decision or referral.

Other UIC Websites and Resources

ACCC - Academic Computing and Communications Center, SEL 2267;
<http://www.accc.uic.edu>

Counseling Services Crisis Hotline – 312/996-5535 (6pm-10:30pm)

Counseling Services – 2010 SSB; 6-0919; www.counseling.uic.edu

Disability Resource Center – 1190 SSB; 3-2183

Graduate College – 612 University Hall; www.uic.edu/depts/grad

Graduate Studies (MSCS) – 337-341 SEO; www.math.uic.edu/gradstudies

MGSA – Math Graduate Student Association; www.mgsa.math.uic.edu

MSLC – Mathematical Science Learning Center (tutoring center), 430 SEO

OIS – Office of International Services located in SSB; www.uic.edu/depts/ois

SCE – Student Center East (Student Union, East Campus), 750 S. Halsted

SINC – Student Information Network Center, 118 SCE

SSB – Student Services Building, 1200 W. Harrison at Racine