

Graduate Student Departmental Handbook

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Florida International University
10555 West Flagler Street, EC 3600
Miami, FL 33199
Phone: 305-348-2824
Email: amehrabi@fiu.edu

<https://cee.fiu.edu/academics/degrees/graduate>

<https://cee.fiu.edu/resources/students/advising/graduate-advisors>

Update August 17, 2021

DISCLAIMER

This document is provided for your convenience. Information presented in this document is subject to change without notice. Your degree program requirements are defined in the following documents:

- Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Graduate catalog (<http://catalog.fiu.edu>)
- UGS *Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual* (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#gradpolicies>)

Please check with the Graduate Program Director when you have any questions regarding any information presented in this document. Should there be any inconsistencies between the information included in this document and that in the catalog or UGS *Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual*, the catalog and the UGS *Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual* should be followed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. ADMISSION STATUS AND ENROLLMENT.....	1
2.1 Domestic Students.....	1
2.2 International Students	1
2.3 Conditional Admission.....	1
2.4 Before Enrollment in the First Semester.....	2
2.4.1 All Students	2
2.4.2 International Students	2
3. ADVISING	2
3.1 Preparing for Initial Advising.....	2
3.2 Subsequent Advising.....	3
3.3 Choosing an Academic Advisor	4
4. Course Requirements.....	4
4.1 General Requirements	4
4.2 Core Courses Requirements.....	5
5. DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM OF STUDY	5
6. CLASS REGISTRATION	6
6.1 Deadline and Late Registration Fee.....	6
6.2 Registering for Classes.....	7
6.3 Adding and Dropping Classes.....	7
6.4 Late Add/Drop.....	8
7. M.S. THESIS AND PROJECT	8
8. PH.D. PROGRAM	9
8.1 Ph.D. Dissertation Committee	9
8.2 Research Training Requirement for Thesis/Dissertation	10
8.3 Dissertation Year Fellowship.....	10
9. MINIMUM GRADE REQUIREMENTS	11
9.1 Grades.....	11
9.2 Incomplete Grades	11
10. MAINTAINING YOUR STUDENT STATUS	11
11. GRADUATION	13
11.1 Time Limit of Program.....	13
11.2 Graduation	13
12. EXCEPTIONS	14
13. EMPLOYMENT IN DEPARTMENT AND ON CAMPUS	14
14. GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS	15
15. STUDENT RESOURCES.....	15
APPENDIX A. RESOURCES FOR WRITING A DISSERTATION/THESIS/REPORT	16
APPENDIX B. DISSERTATION/THESIS/MS PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA	17

1. INTRODUCTION

To help you to understand your degree program, this short document provides an explanation of some of the procedures you need to follow and steps to take to ensure you have a basic understanding about the program and department and university requirements. For more information on graduate program requirements, University Graduate School (UGS) policies and procedures, etc., please check the graduate catalog, UGS website, Registrar's Office website, and the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) website.

2. ADMISSION STATUS AND ENROLLMENT

2.1 Domestic Students

Your admission status is valid for one year after the time of initial admittance. If you are unable to register for classes on the term of admittance, please contact the GPD to request a deferral of your enrollment and approval. You can request deferral up to one year of your initial admittance, and if you do not enroll within one year after the initial admittance, you will need to apply again to the program. All applicable admission requirements at the time of your new application must be met.

2.2 International Students

Your admission status is valid only for the semester of initial admittance. If you have to delay beginning your program, you must contact the GPD to request a deferral of your enrollment and approval; limited to up to one year of your initial admittance. A new I-20 will be processed and may be required to resubmit any financial documents upon request. If you have not received your new I-20 form within a month, please contact the Graduate Admission Office for more information.

2.3 Conditional Admission

- 1) Students admitted conditionally are required to achieve a GPA of 3.00 or higher for the first 9 graduate level credits and complete these 9 credits within the first three consecutive semesters, beginning with the term of admission. International students are not eligible for conditional admission due to SEVP guidelines. Information can be found in the graduate catalog:
- 2) A student who is accepted into the combined BS/MS program will have an admission hold that will be removed when the BS degree from FIU is posted in PantherSoft system. With this hold, a student in the BS/MS program will need to make a special request to have this hold lifted every semester in order to register for classes, until the BS degree is earned and the student is fully admitted into the MS program.

Once your admission conditions are met, you will be fully admitted into your program. Failure to meet the admission conditions will result in dismissal from the program at the end of the grace period. If circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the

admission conditions, you may petition to University Graduate School (UGS) for an extension of the deadline to meet the conditions. Such a petition is, however, not guaranteed of approval.

2.4 Before Enrollment in the First Semester

2.4.1 All Students

All students must provide proof of immunization to the Student Health Services (<https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/health-and-fitness/student-health/>, Phone: 305-348-2401; Fax: 305-348-3336). You may not be allowed to take classes unless you have all immunization requirements met. Information on required immunization can be found at <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/health-and-fitness/student-health/registration-holds/faq/index.php>. You may fax your immunization records to the Student Health Services and then request your immunization hold to be removed. Health insurance plan information can be found at <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/health-and-fitness/student-health/insurance/index.php>.

Check the university Academic Calendar for deadlines to register and pay tuition and fees and graduate catalog for tuition and fees information [https://catalog.fiu.edu/2021-2022/graduate/Admission and Registration Information/G D Tuition and Fees.pdf](https://catalog.fiu.edu/2021-2022/graduate/Admission%20and%20Registration%20Information/GD%20Tuition%20and%20Fees.pdf). If you will have a full time graduate assistantship (20-hour-per-week), most of your tuition will be covered by a tuition waiver, and seventy-five percent of your health insurance will be paid by the University Graduate School. You will be responsible for a portion of the tuition, all the fees, and portion of the health insurance. Note that you will need adequate funds on hand for personal expenses prior to initial receipt of your stipend; costs can include housing deposits and rent, transportation, etc.

2.4.2 International Students

Visit the Office of International Student and Scholar Services in Student Academic Success Center (SASC) Room 230 (<http://iss.fiu.edu/>, 305-348-2421), immediately upon arriving at FIU. Please seek advice and approval of the ISSS office on any immigration and visa related matters. Research students funded by federal and state research grants may require additional requirements. Make sure you obtain all the information necessary for you to maintain your legal status in the U.S. and as an FIU student. Please also obtain information of practical training so you will be able to properly plan for your graduation and employment.

3. ADVISING

3.1 Preparing for Initial Advising

You should visit the department Graduate Program Director (GPD) to discuss your program and get initial advising. Please contact Dr. Armin Mehrabi at amehrabi@fiu.edu or Carlton

Ng at cng001@fiu.edu for any questions. Before visiting the GPD, you need to do the following:

- 1) Visit the department website and familiarize yourself with the department, the graduate programs, faculty, and research. In particular, you should review the following information:
 - a. Graduate programs and degree requirements. Information can be found online at <https://cee.fiu.edu/resources/students/advising/graduate-advisors>.
 - b. The graduate catalog. The graduate catalog details the degree requirements and lists all courses available. You should study the course descriptions to identify those that interest you. The graduate catalog can be found online at catalog.fiu.edu.
 - c. The core course requirements. You are required to specialize in a civil engineering sub-area if you are admitted into a civil engineering program. Depending on the specialization area you have chosen, different core courses are required for your degree. Information can be found online at <https://cee.fiu.edu/resources/students/advising/graduate-advisors>. Refer to the graduate catalog for details.
 - d. Research opportunities. Learn about the specialty areas and teaching and research interests of faculty members. You can find information on faculty online at the department website <http://www.cee.fiu.edu/> and <http://www.cee.fiu.edu/faculty-staff/faculty/>. You are encouraged to talk with the CEE faculty for additional information
 - e. Class schedules. Class schedules can be found online at <https://cee.fiu.edu/resources/students/class-schedules>

- 2) Carefully review the forms on the website linked below and read the instructions. These fillable forms can be downloaded from the department website at <https://cee.fiu.edu/resources/students/department-forms>.

The initial advising can also be accomplished during graduate student orientation; this event is typically held each fall semester. During the orientation, the GPD will discuss the programs and degree requirements, as well as providing updates on the programs and department events and activities. If you have deficiencies or transfer credits, you need to discuss with the GPD in a separate meeting.

3.2 Subsequent Advising

Before you have chosen an academic advisor, please see the GPD for advising in the first semester. You have two months to choose an academic advisor before registration for classes begins for the second semester.

Once you choose an academic advisor, your academic advisor will be providing guidance to you on matters related to curriculum, registration, research, internship, job search,

advancement into a Ph.D. program, etc. Please consult with your academic advisor about all issues related to your program first. For class registration in your second semester, you need to get approval from your academic advisor, not the GPD, except in the case when your academic advisor is unavailable and unreachable. Your academic advisor may also refer you to the GPD for a particular issue.

There will be various forms that you might need signatures. Please make sure you obtain all the necessary signatures before sending the forms to the appropriate units. Always keep a copy for yourself.

3.3 Choosing an Academic Advisor

You must choose an academic advisor within the period specified by the GPD on your Initial Advising Form. Your academic advisor (also referred to as the Major Advisor) will help you determine the appropriate selection of courses, help you choose a topic for your MS project/thesis or Ph.D. dissertation, supervise you for its completion, and provide general advice related to your graduate program. Your academic advisor's approval of your courses and project/thesis/dissertation are also required for your graduation.

If you will be working as a research assistant (RA), the professor who supports you on a grant or contract will also be your academic advisor. For other students, you should choose an academic advisor mainly based on the following considerations:

- 1) The expertise of a professor,
- 2) Current research areas/topics that a professor is engaged in, and
- 3) The availability of a professor, i.e. the professor is willing to serve as your advisor.

The *First Semester Advising* form is designed just for this purpose. You are required to choose an area of specialization and to meet each professor in your specialty area. There are four general specialty areas: Structures/Geotechnical/Construction, Transportation, Water Resources, and Environmental Engineering. You need to visit each professor and discuss with him or her about:

1. Your career plan,
2. Your research interest,
3. Courses that are you interested in,
4. Courses that the professor offers and the anticipated semester/year that these courses will be offered.

At the end of your meeting with each professor, ask him/her to sign the form. After you have talked to all of the professors in your specialty area, return the form to the GPD before you register for class for the second semester.

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

4.1 General Requirements

The requirements for the Master of Science Degree and Doctor of Philosophy can be found in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering catalog: <https://catalog.fiu.edu/> Removed and refer to catalog

All civil and environmental engineering students, including both Ph.D. and M.S. students, are also required to register for the 0-credit Graduate Seminar (CGN 6939) at least once and are encouraged to take it each Fall and Spring semesters. This course has three sections: one for structures/geotech/construction, one for Transportation, and one for environmental/water resources engineering. Please register for the section for your specialty area.

Of all the graduate courses, at least six (or 18 credits) must be taken within the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Exceptions must be approved by the GPD. Taking courses outside the department and outside the college are allowed. However, these courses must be at the graduate level and must be approved by the major advisor to be considered to be part of your program. Some popular courses outside the department have, in the past, included offerings from the Industrial Engineering, Computer Science, Construction Management, Statistics, Earth Science, Environmental Studies, Chemistry, Biology, etc.

5.2) Core Course Requirements

4.2 Core Courses Requirements

Information about the core course requirements may be found in the catalog (<http://catalog.fiu.edu>). You must meet the core course requirement. Please make sure that when you develop the Program of Study (see the next section), your selection of courses include all the required courses and core courses. Courses from other department cannot substitute the core courses.

Because an individual course may be offered on an annual or even biannual basis, it will be available only in spring or fall semester. Therefore, take the core courses as soon as they are offered.

If you need a core course to graduate but it is not offered, you need to discuss it with the GPD to determine what needs to be done. If you did not take the core course when it was offered, you will have to wait until it is offered again before graduating from the program.

No individuals can waive or substitute the core course requirements without the approval of the academic advisor, GPD, and department chair. When appropriate, the Graduate Advisory Committee (GPAC) needs to make a determination.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM OF STUDY

The purpose of Program of Study is to help you understand the degree requirements and design a plan to complete your degree program in the shortest possible time.

Once you have chosen an academic advisor and have talked to all the professors in your specialty area, you should now know what courses you want to or will be able to take, as well as what type of research you might want to undertake. This plan is documented as a Program of Study (PS). There is one PS form for MS and one for Ph.D. students. Some of the information that must be included in the form includes:

1. Your advisor, who will approve the form by signing his or her name.
2. List of courses you plan to take based on the information you have collected from the professors, the class schedule(s), and catalog. As a MS student, you need to list 10 courses if you choose the all-course option, at least eight (8) courses if you will be completing a thesis, or nine (9) courses if you will do a project. Make sure you satisfy the core course requirement. As there are always going to be uncertainties in terms of course offering and your schedule, please also identify an additional five courses as alternatives.
3. List of courses that your advisor and the GPD agree for transferring from another graduate program to FIU.
4. List of courses that are identified as prerequisites (deficiency courses) to the graduate program.

This form, signed by both you and your advisor, must be submitted to the GPD within your first semester. It will be reviewed by the GPD for any possible revisions. Once approved by the GPD and the department chair, it serves as a road map for your graduate career at FIU. You will keep a copy of the PS for record and reference, while the original will be kept in your file.

You need to update your copy of the program of study each semester by indicating the grades earned for courses listed in the program. Provide a copy or the list of courses you have completed with the grades to your advisor when asking for permission to register for classes. If the advising is done by email or by phone, the same information should be conveyed to your advisor in writing or verbally.

6. CLASS REGISTRATION

6.1 Deadline and Late Registration Fee

Registration period and deadline for each semester are published in the university academic calendar. If you miss the deadline for registration, you will be assessed a \$100 late registration fee. To avoid this fee, please register as soon as official registration opens for degree-seeking students. The department will not be able to assist in the waiver of this fee.

International students should arrive on campus three to four weeks before a semester begins to allow ample time to set up a bank account, complete all the university paperwork and immigration requirements, and obtain a work permit if you are to work as a Graduate Assistant (GA). All these will take time and may affect your ability register for classes.

Another fact that should motivate you to register early is that some graduate classes are cross-listed with an undergraduate class. This means both undergraduate and graduate

students will attend the same course but under different course numbers. Because each course has a capacity cap, if you do not register early, your space may be taken by undergraduate students, who tend to register as soon as registration begins.

6.2 Registering for Classes

All graduate students will have an advising hold every semester before registration period begins. To remove the advising hold so you can register for classes, you need to contact and, if necessary, meet with your academic advisor to have your course selection approved. Failure to obtain proper advising may result in the rejection of course credits that you earn. When selecting courses, please follow your Program of Study. In case a planned course is not offered, you may choose a course from your list of alternative courses. If you wish to take a course that is not listed in your program of study, you need to obtain approvals from both your academic advisor and the GPD.

Please follow the following procedure when registering for classes:

- 1) Review your Program of Study to update course and grade information.
- 2) Review your progress toward completion of the program and re-estimate your graduation time.
- 3) Review class schedule and choose desired courses. Make sure you always try to satisfy the core course requirements or any special requirements. As an example, students specializing in environmental and water resources engineering must take at least one credit of Environmental Graduate Seminar course.
- 4) Schedule a meeting with your advisor and bring your program of study and a copy of your unofficial transcript with you to the meeting. You may also choose to complete the advising by email or telephone. In that case, please email your Program of Study and transcript to your advisor in advance.
- 5) Once your advisor approves your course selection, he or she will send a request to the GPD (amehrabi@fiu.edu) to have your advising hold removed.

If you have an admission hold that prevents you from registering for classes, please contact Ms. Sara-Michelle Lemus, the college Graduate Admissions Coordinator – Graduate Education & Admissions, for assistance (305-348-1890, slemus@fiu.edu).

6.3 Adding and Dropping Classes

You can add/drop classes before the add/drop deadline published in the academic calendar. Before you drop a course, especially if it is a core course, please consult with your advisor to make sure that by dropping this course you will still be able to meet all the degree requirements and graduate as planned. Keep in mind that some courses are not offered every semester. Therefore, if you drop a course, you may have to wait at least one year to be able to take it again.

To add or drop a course, you need approval from your major advisor. If you do not yet have a major advisor, the GPD's approval will be required.

6.4 Late Add/Drop

Late add/drop after the official registration period and before the add/drop deadline will result in the late registration fee charge. If a course is dropped after the add/drop deadline, you may lose part or whole tuition/fees that you have paid for the course. Please carefully check the academic calendar regarding specific penalties for late drop.

According to the University Graduate School Policies and Procedures, no courses can be added three weeks after a semester begins. If you need to make adjustments to your courses due to, e.g., registering for wrong classes, please inform your advisor and the GPD as soon as possible. If it is determined that such an adjustment is warranted, a memo from the GPD must be sent to the registrar's Office, with endorsements by the department chair and the college dean.

International students must register for a minimum of nine credits each fall and spring semester therefore cannot drop a course if this will result in registering for less than nine credits. For PhD and MS Thesis track students, full time requirement will be based on continuous enrollment requirements, and an Advance to Thesis/Dissertation form needs to be submitted to ISSS for approval.

You also have the option to withdraw from the university before the withdraw deadline (see academic calendar). However, this means you will no longer be a student at FIU.

Please remember that not attending a class or stop attending a class does not result in an automatic drop from the class. You will receive an F grade if this happens.

7. M.S. THESIS AND PROJECT

Instead of taking the course-only option, you may choose to do a M.S. thesis or project. The benefits of a thesis or project are (1) it provides a significant opportunity for you to apply your learned knowledge and seek solutions to a problem that interests you; (2) it will train you in research and communication skills, as a research method course, technical writing, and presentation will be a part of the effort; (3) it strengthens your resume because you will be able to show that not only you can perform in classrooms, but you also possess problem solving skills; (4) it gives your major advisor an opportunity to know you and be able to be more helpful when it comes to writing a recommendation letter for a job, admission into another graduate program, or a scholarship.

The decision to pursue a M.S. thesis or a project is a joint one made by you and your major advisor. Please discuss it with your major advisor if you are interested.

If you will be completing a M.S. thesis, please refer to the catalog and UGS *Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual* for detailed information. Please check the University academic calendar for deadlines to submit the necessary forms (M-1, M2, M-3 and ETD) involved in

the completion of a MS thesis. You must be registered for at least one MS thesis credit when you submit your M forms, which indicates the formation of your thesis committee.

If you will be doing a MS project or Thesis, in addition to your major advisor, you need to also choose two more professors to serve on your project committee. These two professors need to have the right kind of expertise to help you with your project, as well as the expertise to judge your work. One of the project committee members (besides your academic advisor) must be a faculty member in the CEE department as identified on the First Semester Advising form. The other committee member may be from the CEE department or another FIU unit. Your academic advisor will be the chair of your committee.

The roles that a project committee plays include helping you with your project and approve your project at the end of your program (see more information in the section on Graduate Projects). The committee members will also evaluate your thesis work based on a set of criteria at your final defense. Please see Appendix A for the evaluation criteria. This form is available from the department.

8. PH.D. PROGRAM

Please refer to the department catalog and UGS *Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual* for detailed information. If you are in the Ph.D. program, you are expected to take a qualifying examination as soon as the semester you will have completed the required courses as defined by the core course requirement and by your advisor and committee. Only after you pass the qualifying examination and have approved D2 form, you become a Ph.D. candidate and will be allowed to take dissertation credits and must follow FIU continuous enrollment guidelines as a PhD Candidate.

According to the UGS, you need to defend your dissertation proposal one year (three semesters) before you graduate from the program. There are also deadlines to submit dissertation forms (D-1 through D-5, and ETD). Please check the University academic calendar for deadline to submit the necessary forms involved in the completion of a Ph.D. dissertation on time.

8.1 Ph.D. Dissertation Committee

The supervisory committee for every PhD student consists of a Major Professor (your academic advisor) and at least three other members. The majority of the committee members (at least three) must be tenure-track or full-time professors or instructors in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. The Major Professor must have DAS that is approved by the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Faculty per established policies and procedures (see the University Graduate School website for faculty with DAS status: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-14>). You may also have a Co-Major Professor at the invitation of your Major Professor, who will play a significant role of providing guidance to you on your dissertation research. The Co-Major Professor must also have DAS. The Major or Co-Major Professor will be a faculty member with relevant credentials and expertise in the area of the student's specialization and dissertation.

A Ph.D. dissertation committee also requires an external member. This external member must be a faculty at FIU who has a doctoral degree in a related field. This person needs to be a graduate faculty to serve in the committee. You may also invite a doctoral degree holder with the appropriate expertise from outside the university to serve on your committee. However, this person is optional and cannot be considered as an external member.

In addition to providing guidance to you, the committee will also evaluate your dissertation work during your final defense based on a set of criteria. Please see Appendix A for the evaluation criteria. This form is available from the department.

8.2 Research Training Requirement for Thesis/Dissertation

Starting July 15, 2008, FIU graduate students who file thesis or dissertation proposals with the University Graduate School (UGS) must provide with the appropriate forms (i.e., the M-2 or D-3 form) a training certificate documenting completion of an appropriate, discipline-specific Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training course and exam. FIU now provides both faculty and students access to the CITI Course in RCR designed to be used by research institutions or organizations. The on-line, self-paced modules provide a comprehensive basic course in RCR. This course was partially funded by DHHS's Office of Research Integrity. Instructions regarding how to access the training course can found on the FIU Office of Research Integrity (ORI) webpage at: <http://research.fiu.edu/ored/ori/>

This change in UGS policy is designed to expand significantly the RCR program initiated several years ago by former Associate Vice President for Research, Dr. Kelsey Downum, from approximately 100 graduate students per year, to nearly all graduate students conducting research at our University. This change will be implemented with minimal costs to University staff, faculty or students. Florida International University promotes values associated with responsible conduct of research, including high standards of research ethics and investigator accountability in research planning, implementation, student training and information dissemination. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to provide safe research environments, which foster the values of a collegial and responsible intellectual and scientific community.

In addition to the UGS requirement, all Ph.D. students must complete CGN 6930 Research Method for Civil Engineers, which is offered once a year. The Graduate Seminar Course (CGN 6939) is currently being considered as alternative course to meet the Research Methods course requirement until further notice.

8.3 Dissertation Year Fellowship

The UGS offers a Dissertation Year Fellowship (DYF) program. You must have successfully defended your dissertation proposal and will complete your dissertation within one year to qualify. High GPA and publications, especially journal papers, will enhance your chance of success in being awarded this fellowship. For detailed information and other scholarship and fellowship opportunities, please visit the UGS website.

9. MINIMUM GRADE REQUIREMENTS

9.1 Grades

You are required to maintain a certain minimum grade average throughout your program. Only graduate level courses (5000, 6000, and 7000 levels) are counted toward your degree requirements, provided they are in your Program of Study. Credits earned on graduate courses with a grade below C will not be accepted. If you do not have an admission condition or a condition connected with your scholarship on GPA, you must maintain a minimum B average grade. If your semester GPA drops below 3.0 for three consecutive semesters, you will be dismissed from the program. After dismissal, you will not be allowed to register for any classes at FIU for one year. After one year, if you wish to resume the program, you must apply to the program again and meet all the admission requirements that are applicable at the time of your application. Please consult the *UGS Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual* (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#gradpolicies>).

9.2 Incomplete Grades

No incomplete grade is given to students for the sole purpose of helping a student to maintain a satisfactory GPA.

For reasons beyond your control, such as illness, family emergencies, etc., you may be unable to complete a class on time. If such events beyond your control occur, please discuss the circumstances with the instructor of the class that you may have difficulty to complete. The instructor may decide to grant you extra time to complete the coursework. An arrangement for course completion must be made before the semester ends. An Incomplete Grade must be updated on PantherSoft at the end of the semester. You will have up to two semesters to complete the course. After two semesters, the Incomplete grade will automatically default to F.

10. MAINTAINING YOUR STUDENT STATUS

Please consult the *Graduate Status* section in the *UGS Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual* (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-4>) regarding maintaining your active or full-time student status. To keep the privilege to use the university facilities, a M.S. student must register at least one credit and a Ph.D. student three credits every semester. Lapses in enrollment for three consecutive semesters require that the student apply for readmission, subject to the admission procedures, criteria and policies in effect at the time the reapplication is made (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-4>).

You may take a leave of absence if you are unable to register for classes. To request for a leave of absence, please speak with your GPD and submit a memo to initiate a Petition for Exception form. Please provide an explanation as why you need to take a leave of absence. Not registering for any credits for three consecutive semesters will result in being

discontinued from the program. To continue with the degree program, you will have to reapply to the program. All admission requirements at the time of your application for readmission will apply.

If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 for the first time, you will receive a warning, which will be shown on your transcript. After warning, if your semester GPA is less than 3.0, you will be placed on probation. Failure to maintain a 3.0 semester GPA for three consecutive semesters (including summer) will result in dismissal. Once dismissed from a program, you are not allowed to reapply for admission at FIU within one year and will not be allowed to reapply for admission into the same program. Please carefully read the UGS Policies and Procedures related to dismissal, as well as information on the forgiveness policy, which allows you to repeat a course and replace an old grade with a better, new one.

It is important for you to carefully evaluate all your obligations to ensure that you will have adequate time to invest in your school work to succeed. Overloading yourself may, at the end, prolong your program and delay your graduation, with financial implications. If you find yourself in a difficult situation due to work, school, or family reasons, please immediately see your advisor and GPD for a consultation.

11. GRADUATION

11.1 Time Limit of Program

A MS student must complete the degree program within six (6) years.

If you have been admitted into the BS/MS program, you must complete the MS program within one (1) year after the BS degree is awarded. Any courses that are taken more than five years before graduation may have to be repeated or replaced with a new course.

The maximum length of study for Ph.D. students is seven (7) years for those admitted with a B.S. degree or six (6) years for students with an acceptable M.S. degree. For those students who have not completed their studies within these limits, the length of study may be extended on a yearly basis after petition by the student and approval by the student's supervisory committee. Any extension beyond nine years must be approved by the UGS. Any courses that are taken more than nine years before graduation may have to be repeated or replaced with a new course.

11.2 Graduation

You may apply for graduation in the last semester in which you anticipate the completion of all your degree requirements. **You must register for the minimum amount of credits based on your program the semester you apply for graduation.** The deadline for graduation application is usually within two weeks after the semester begins. Please check the university academic calendar for the exact date (<https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/>).

When you apply for graduation, make sure you will have met all the graduation requirements by the end of the semester. These include:

- Have adequate graduate course credit hours,
- Satisfy the core course requirements,
- Have taken at least one credit of graduate seminar,
- If you are a Ph.D. student, have taken at least one approved 3-credit graduate level mathematics course and have taken the Research Method for Civil Engineers course (The Graduate Seminar Course (CGN 6939) is currently being considered as alternative course to meet the Research Methods course requirement until further notice.)
- Register for at least one credit if you are a MS student and 3 credits if you are a Ph.D. student.
- Defend thesis/dissertation or present the final project if you are a MS student and have chosen to complete a thesis or a project.
- Submit the MS Project Completion Memorandum signed by your committee members to GPD after your presentation if you are a MS student and have chosen to complete a project. Submit All Course Option Completion Memorandum if you are an MS student and chosen all course option.

- Submit ETD and final dissertation to the UGS if you are Ph.D. student.

It helps you be aware of all the requirements for graduation and prevent any delay in the issuing of your diploma. Failure to meet any graduation requirements will result in not being allowed to graduate. No exception to degree requirements will be made.

If you have applied for graduation but do not graduate in the same semester due to failure to meet any degree requirements or any university requirements, you will find that you are not allowed to register for classes the following semester. You will also find out that you cannot apply for graduation again. Please contact the Graduation Department in the Registrar's Office to have these holds removed from the PantherSoft system.

If you have not previously joined the Order of Engineering, you are encouraged to participate in the Order of Engineering ceremony, during which you will take an oath to practice engineering with ethics, professionalism, and competency. The ceremony is held in the afternoon of the day when commencement happens. Application forms will be available in the department. You may also contact the dean's office for detailed information. Deadline for application is usually one month before the commencement.

12. EXCEPTIONS

Any exceptions to the University Graduate School policies and procedures, department policies and procedures, and degree program requirements must be approved by the UGS or the department. Please contact the major advisor and GPD when an exception occurs.

13. EMPLOYMENT IN DEPARTMENT AND ON CAMPUS

If you are interested in being employed by the department as a Research Assistant, please contact individual professors in your specialty area for opportunities to work on a research project. Other employment opportunities are also available on campus.

You must maintain a minimum GPA that has been stipulated as your employment condition.

If you are employed 20 hours per week by the university, you are not allowed to seek outside employment unless you have written approval from appropriate authorities (e.g., department, college, and/or ISSS). Violation of this rule may also be a violation of federal laws. If you are found to break any department and university rules or any laws, your assistantship will be canceled.

If you are an international student and have been employed 20 hours per week by the department as a TA or RA, you are not allowed to take curriculum practical training (CPT) during your program.

A RA or TA is a form of employment. As such, it requires professionalism just as a regular job in the public or private sector does. Please be responsible, responsive to your director

supervisor, punctual, and complete your assignments on time and with high quality. Poor performance will lead to termination of employment with the department.

14. GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are several student organizations within the department, college, and university. In the department, there are the following student organizations or local chapters of national organizations:

- American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists
 - <https://cee.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/FIU-AAEES-Student-Chapter.pdf>
- American Concrete Institute (ACI)
 - <https://cee.fiu.edu/resources/students/professional-societies/aci-student-chapter>
- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
 - <https://asce.fiu.edu/>
- Chi Epsilon National Civil Engineering Honor Society
 - <https://xe.fiu.edu>
- Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
 - <https://ite.fiu.edu>
- Structural Engineering Institute SEI Graduate Student Chapter
 - <https://cee.fiu.edu/resources/students/professional-societies/structural-engineering-institute>
- Student Association for Wind Engineering (SAWE)
 - <https://fiu.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/student-association-for-wind-engineering>
- Water Environment Federation (WEF)
- Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS)
 - <https://www.wts.fiu.edu/>

These organizations regularly sponsor activities such as seminars, workshops, field trips, social events, etc. Becoming a member will give you the opportunity to connect with your fellow students, expand your knowledge, build your leadership skills, and serve your communities.

15. STUDENT RESOURCES

Besides your academic program, FIU offers a wide range of opportunities and service outside the classrooms. The following is a list of the services available in the university. Please visit the FIU Student Life and Service website for detailed information on these services (<https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/index.php>).

APPENDIX A. RESOURCES FOR WRITING A DISSERTATION/THESIS/REPORT

Sample MS Project Report

Project Report Word File Template

Scientific Approaches to Transportation Research

<http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/nchrp/cd-22/start.htm>

The Chicago Manual of Style Online

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

Handbook of Technical Writing

http://books.google.com/books?id=AJDI7v4LQ8YC&printsec=frontcover&dq=technical+writing&source=bll&ots=s6NpV0jmie&sig=-jl1ceJMKlPaqKqSw - IFZCiZ7c&hl=en&ei=KJ9rS5XOBdCztgeTILGYBg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=13&ved=0CEkQ6AEwDA#v=onepage&q=&f=false

The Elements of Style

<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

Plagiarism

What Is It?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>

Examples of Plagiarism

<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/08/plagiarism/>

<http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53501.html>

APPENDIX B. DISSERTATION/THESIS/MS PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA

**Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal Defense or Final Defense
MS Thesis/MS Project/MS All-course Report Presentation
Evaluation Form**

Name: _____ PID: _____

Date of Presentation: _____ Degree (circle one): PhD-Proposal MSCE PhD-Defense MSEnvE

Please rank from 4 to 1 (4 – Excellent, 3 – Good, 2 – Fair, 1 – Poor)

Technical	E*	G*	F*	P*
Objectives appropriate and clearly stated	4	3	2	1
Objectives are achieved by the presented study	4	3	2	1
Technical knowledge adequate	4	3	2	1
Demonstrated validity of data	4	3	2	1
Methodology technically sound	4	3	2	1
Analytical or experimental skills utilized	4	3	2	1
Conclusions/results valid and properly supported	4	3	2	1

Written Document (Dissertation, Thesis, or Report)

Abstract/Introduction conveys meaning	4	3	2	1
Literature adequately described and referenced	4	3	2	1
Communication of ideas effective	4	3	2	1
Study effort adequately described	4	3	2	1
Document well organized, well written & easily understood	4	3	2	1
Free of serious grammatical and spelling errors	4	3	2	1
Free of sensitive statements advocating special interests	4	3	2	1
Free of plagiarism and copyright infringement (copyright issues cleared)	4	3	2	1

Oral Presentation

Presentation well organized	4	3	2	1
Presentation slides well designed	4	3	2	1
Communication of ideas effective and clear	4	3	2	1
Able to answer questions adequately	4	3	2	1

Evaluated by (Committee Member)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*Please see Evaluation Rubrics