MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
PhD Student Guide

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Northwestern | McCORMICK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

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Introduction and Purpose

Welcome to the Mechanical Engineering PhD program. Northwestern University's Department of Mechanical Engineering (ME) is a leader in fundamental research in several cutting-edge technologies that are relevant to today's society. Our programs provide a solid foundation for careers in academia, industry and research labs. Northwestern's tradition of interdisciplinary research provides students with exciting new opportunities in the core disciplines of:

- Design & Manufacturing
- Robotics & Biosystems
- Mechanics & Materials

with cross-cutting research areas in:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- AI and Design
- Biosystems and Health
- Computational Engineering
- Energy and Sustainability
- Micro/Nanoengineering
- Robotics and Autonomy

You will find updated information about the current research activities of the department on our website: http://www.mccormick.northwestern.edu/mechanical/.

Program Contacts

This section provides a general description of who has responsibility for curricular, admission, financial, and other matters in the program. The most up-to-date list of personnel can be found on the Mechanical Engineering website.

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Oluwaseyi Balogun (o-balogun@northwestern.edu). The DGS oversees the graduate program, advising students on academic matters and assisting with advisor selection and changes. The DGS also monitors academic progress and participates in decisions concerning academic probation and exclusion.

Department Chair: Sinan Keten (s-keten@northwestern.edu). The Department Chair is responsible for providing academic leadership, managing faculty affairs, overseeing curriculum and instruction,

supporting student success along with the DGS, handling budgeting and resource allocation, coordinating departmental operations, and representing the department externally.

Graduate Program Assistant: Pat Dyess (j-dyess@northwestern.edu). This staff member aids with administrative aspects of the program, including procedures, paperwork for milestones, registration issues, and other day-to-day operations.

Financial Coordinator: Joey Riley-Sabaj (ME-Payroll@northwestern.edu). This staff member handles financial aspects such as stipends and tuition payments.

Learning Outcomes

Graduate Program Goals/Mission Statement:

The graduate program in mechanical engineering aims to discover new knowledge and technologies, and train mechanical engineers that will shape our future. We strive to transform students into outstanding scholars, teachers and engineering professionals who will become the future leaders in science and engineering. Our graduate curriculum aims to enable students to learn the fundamentals of mechanical engineering by focusing on core disciplines in mechanics, manufacturing, and systems, together with essential areas of mathematics and physical sciences. Teaching and research experiences promote personal and professional growth while developing technical aptitude, while gaining creative thinking and communication skills that are necessary for crafting a better future.

The learning objectives and assessment strategies followed by our department for our PhD program are listed below:

Learning objective(s) *Students should be able to…*	Milestone/ Requirement/ Capacity	Assessment Strategies and Criteria* *How do we know this objective has been achieved? What criteria do we have to measure success?*
Make original research contributions to science, engineering and technology management fields.	Thesis Proposal Defense/ Dissertation/ Publications/ Patents	Assessment Strategy: Committee evaluates thesis defense, provides feedback for improvement. Criteria: Formulate a research plan with proper methodology, write an original thesis, publish research progress in journals or file patents/IP.
Demonstrate command over basic knowledge in the field and effective scholarly communication skills.	Research Qualification Exam	Assessment Strategy: Committee review of student's basic knowledge in the field, research skills, presentation skills. Criteria: A research presentation summarizing key accomplishments from the first year and a half.
Design a classroom activity and gain teaching experience	TA fulfilled / other teaching experience	Assessment Strategy: Course instructor evaluates outcomes, students provide formative assessment (e.g. CTECs, surveys). Designed classwork or homework serves as a summative assessment that measures students' success in acquiring the new skills and knowledge.
Establish a career plan	Annual Meeting	Student shares plan annually with advisor at annual progress review and individual meetings; student and advisor craft a plan for appropriate training and identify necessary resources for post-graduate success.
Enact ethical research methodologies and practices.	RCR Training/ Research	Criteria: Fosters ethical problem-solving skills; increase the ability to recognize ethical issues in design and conduct of research; identify and understand clinical ethics regulations, policies, and resources.

Program-Specific Academic Requirements & Policies

Coursework Requirements

The Graduate School requires PhD students to successfully complete at least nine quality letter-graded course units (ABC, not P/NP or S/U) authorized for graduate credit. Students must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA. You can view the full policy here:

Students entering the PhD program without an MS: A total of **15 course units** (excluding research units) are required:

- **Nine (9) course units** must satisfy the same requirements as the MS degree:
- ***Breadth requirement***: Students must take at least one course each from four of the eight subareas: (1) Solids, (2) Fluids/Thermodynamics/Energy, (3) Robotics/Dynamics/Controls, (4) Design/Manufacturing/Tribology, (5) MEMS/Nanotechnology, (6) Biomedical/Biology, (7) Mathematics/Science/Data Science, and (8) Engineering Management. Suggested courses that may fulfill each subarea are listed here.
    - ***Level*:** At least 5 of these 9 courses (excluding research units) must be 400-level or above.
- ***ME courses**:* At least 5 of these 9 courses must be MECH_ENG courses or qualifying courses marked as "may be considered a MECH_ENG course" here.
- **An additional 6 courses** must be taken to total 15
    - ***Level*:** At least half of these additional courses must be 400-level or above.

Students who have previously obtained an MS at Northwestern: An additional **6 course units** must be taken beyond the MS.

- **Six (6) course units**
    - Level: At least 3 of these additional 6 courses must be 400-level or above.

Students entering with an MS from another school: Students may petition for a waiver of up to 6 course units, leaving **9 course units** for the PhD degree. An MS course waiver form (using the Petition section of the PhD Requirements Form) must be completed by the student and the advisor and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies (see the Graduate Program Assistant for details).

- **Nine (9) course units**
  - ***Level:*** At least half (5) of these 9 course units must be 400-level or above
  - ***Breadth requirement:*** The breadth requirement may be waived, subject to approval from the Director of Graduate Studies

All courses must be approved for TGS credit and offered through McCormick unless prior written permission is obtained from the Director of Graduate Studies.

Course requirements are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of course requirements

	Courses	Breadth Requirement	Minimum 400-Level Courses	Minimum ME Dept. Courses
PhD without MS [1]	15 (plus 3 ME 590)	Y	8	5
PhD after MS at Northwestern [2]	6 (plus 3 ME 590)	N	3	0
PhD after outside MS [3]	9 (plus 3 ME 590)	May be waived	5	0

Notes:
[1] For PhD without MS, a subset of 9 courses must fulfill the requirements of the MS-with-thesis degree; an additional 6 courses are required, at least 3 of which must be 400-level
[2] The "PhD after MS at Northwestern" requirements assume a student has already completed 9 courses as part of the MS degree
[3] Students entering the PhD program with an MS from another school should submit a petition for a waiver of up to 6 course units (leaving 9 remaining)

Research Credits

PhD students must register for at least **three quarters of MECH_ENG 590 Research** credits with their advisor before taking the required Research Qualification Exam. PhD students should not take MECH_ENG 499 Project credits; these will not count toward the PhD course requirements. However, independent-study MECH_ENG 499 courses that take the place of an in-class course may be used toward the course requirements, with the approval of a student's advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Core/Required Courses

Other than the requirements given above, there are no specific required courses among the course units counted toward the PhD degree. Students may arrange a curriculum that accommodates individual needs, talents, and interests.

Timeline

Course requirements for the PhD program shall be fulfilled within the first 12 and 8 quarters of full-time registration for students matriculating with BS and MS degrees, respectively.

Minimum Grade & GPA Requirements

For all graded courses, students must obtain at least a C for the course to count towards the curriculum requirements. No P/N registration courses will be accepted.

GPA is determined by all post-BS courses taken at Northwestern towards satisfying the course requirements above, excluding research and seminar units. At most one MECH_ENG 499 credit (either research or independent study) can be used in the overall GPA calculation, even if more than one MECH_ENG 499 (independent study) credit is counted toward the degree requirements. (MECH_ENG 499 research cannot be used toward required PhD course units.)

Students must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 to be in good academic standing as stipulated by TGS.

Teaching Requirement

All PhD students in Mechanical Engineering must gain teaching experience through one or more quarter-long teaching positions that **total at least 15 hours per week of service**, possibly over multiple positions and quarters. These positions can include full-time TA (20 hours per week), half-time TA (10 hours), quarter TA (5 hours) or grader positions (5 hours). At the beginning of the quarter, the student must register for GEN_ENG 546-0 “Teaching Experience” (0 units) for full-time TA positions, or GEN_ENG 545-0 “Teaching Experience” (0 units) for part-time TA or grader positions. Consult your advisor for help in obtaining a teaching assistant position.

TA Assignment Process

In the Department of Mechanical Engineering, TA positions are solicited and faculty provide their nominations and input. Any faculty member may nominate a student. Considerations in the nomination review include students’ expertise and fit with TA opportunities and funding needs. The Department also considers students’ need to fulfill their TGS teaching requirement.

The final number of Teaching Assistants per course and the names of those Teaching Assistants are determined by the Chair and Associate Chair with input from faculty and students that are nominated.

Fulfilling TA Requirement Outside Program

The TA requirement may be fulfilled through TA positions in McCormick programs outside the ME department. Students should register for GEN_ENG 546 or GEN_ENG 545 and notify the DGS and Program Administrator.

Other Coursework and Activities

In addition to formal coursework, participation in other activities is an important part of graduate education.

Required Events/Activities

MECH_ENG 512 (Mechanical Engineering Seminar Series): Registration and regular attendance at the non-credit MECH_ENG 512 Seminar are required for all quarters. If students have a conflict due to course schedule or unavoidable research commitments, they can register for non-synchronous attendance (recorded seminars) by filling out a conflict form. See the MECH_ENG 512 Course Description page for details.

Professional Skills Development

MECH_ENG 513 (Professional Essentials): Registration for the non-credit MECH_ENG 513 Seminar is required for one quarter within the first two years. PhD students are strongly encouraged to take this course during their first year, as many of the topics discussed will support and enhance research.

External Fellowship Application or Proposal Writing Experience: All PhD students who do not already have a major external fellowship* are required to apply for at least one such fellowship sometime during the first two years of their PhD study. If a major fellowship opportunity cannot be identified for which the student is eligible, the student may instead apply for another research award or fellowship or contribute to a research proposal, as approved by their advisor. (* A major external fellowship is defined as one that provides tuition and a stipend for two or more years, such as the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, NDSEG fellowship, DOE fellowships, Ford Foundation, NASA Research Fellowship, Hertz Foundation Fellowship, Microsoft PhD Fellowship, Microsoft Ada Lovelace Fellowship, etc.)

Typical Mechanical Engineering PhD Timeline

- Year 1:

    - Coursework
    - Advisor selection by end of Quarter 1
        - Students are strongly encouraged to find an advisor during Quarter 1. Students who do not match with an advisor by the end of Quarter 3 will be placed on probation and given a deadline to match by the end of Quarter 4; failure to match before the end of Quarter 4 will result in exclusion from the PhD program.
    - Complete Responsible Conduct of Research training
    - Complete Professional Essentials course (MECH_ENG 513)
- Year 2:
    - Coursework (requirements complete by Quarter 7 if entering with MS)
    - Qualification Exam (Fall Quarter if entering with MS degree, Spring Quarter if entering with BS only)
    - External fellowship application (Note that NSF GRFP must be applied for in Year 1)
    - Prospectus (Dissertation Proposal) Exam (by Quarter 8 if entering with MS)
- Year 3:
    - Coursework (requirements complete by Quarter 11 if entering with BS)
    - Prospectus (Dissertation Proposal) Exam (by Quarter 12 if entering with BS)
- Year 4:
    - Research
- Year 5 (and beyond):
    - Complete teaching requirement by Spring Quarter
    - Final Dissertation and Defense

You achieve PhD candidacy upon passing the Qualification Exam, upon approval of TGS.

With the consensus of the advisor, a PhD student who enters with a BS degree may obtain an MS degree along the way to a PhD by submitting a written MS thesis and passing an oral examination by a committee. The MS thesis exam may be used as a substitute for the Qualification Exam if taken before the Qualification Exam deadline (see details below). The MS exam committee must satisfy the TGS requirements specified for MS students.

You can find the Master's in Primary PhD form within GSP under the TGS Forms tab. This form is specifically used to request a master's degree along the way to the PhD in the same program. Completing this form is a necessary step before submitting other required forms for degree conferral, such as the Application for Degree and Master's Degree Completion forms, also submitted via GSP.

PhD students are strongly discouraged from terminating PhD study with an MS degree. When such a situation happens and with the approval of the faculty advisor, the student must take the thesis option for the MS degree, including writing and defending an MS thesis document.

Program-Specific Milestone Policies

Advisor

Students are recommended to seek out a research advisor or co-advisors to work with on the student's graduate research within the first quarter of beginning graduate study. The advisor(s) are on the student's examination committee and the primary advisor is usually the chair of the committee for the Dissertation Proposal Exam and Dissertation Defense. Co-advising may be considered for students who work on interdisciplinary topics that will benefit from faculty members with different expertise. While the primary advisor needs to be a faculty who has full, partial or courtesy appointment with ME, the other co-advisor can be a faculty affiliated with other departments at Northwestern. Upon matching with an advisor or co-advisors, the student must notify the department by entering their advisor(s) in GSP, and send an invitation to selected faculty member(s) through GSP to confirm their acceptance of the role. Co-advised students should select one "Principal Research Advisor" and one "Principal Research Co-Advisor" in GSP.

PhD students who are unable to find an advisor by the end of their third quarter will be placed on academic probation as stipulated in the McCormick Graduate Handbook. The Director of Graduate Studies will contact students with impending probation status at the beginning of their second quarter to facilitate advisor matching. Failure to secure an advisor by the end of the fourth quarter will lead to dismissal from the program.

In the situation of co-advising, a primary advisor needs to be identified by the above deadline, while a co-advisor may be added at a later time.

Committee

Students have one committee for their Qualification Exam and a different, though possibly overlapping, committee for their PhD Thesis Proposal/Prospectus and Final Defense Exams. The two committees may be the same if they meet the requirements for both.

The **Qualification Exam committee** consists of at least three faculty members who are members of the graduate faculty. A student's faculty advisor will serve on the committee but will not be its chair. At least one member of the committee (and not the student's primary advisor) should either have a primary appointment outside the ME department, or be from a Core Discipline outside the student's area of specialization. The student is responsible for personally contacting members of the committee to invite them to serve. The composition of the examination committee is subject to the final approval by Graduate Studies Committee.

The **Proposal/Prospectus Exam committee** is the advisory committee of a student until completion of the PhD degree, and also conducts the final examination for the PhD at a later date. The committee should satisfy the TGS requirements. In addition to the TGS requirements, the ME program requires that one committee member (who must be other than the student's advisor) must have a primary appointment — at least 50% part-time appointment — outside of the department. The chairperson of the committee must be a graduate faculty member and is generally the student's advisor. If the chairperson is not an ME faculty member, an ME faculty member must be identified to serve as the co-chair of the committee. Any faculty member may request the privilege of serving on the committee for a particular student, by contacting the student and advisor. The student is responsible for personally contacting members of the committee to invite them to serve. Formation of an examination committee is subject to the approval of both the ME department and The Graduate School.

For either committee, students may have committees larger than the 3 minimum members, or may include researchers outside Northwestern, as long as other requirements are met. Note that the Qualification Exam committee requires at least 3 members of the Northwestern graduate faculty.

Committee members may participate in exams remotely if needed.

Qualifying Exam / Candidacy

All PhD students shall pass an oral research qualification exam that tests their research ability. Students who enter with an MS degree or BS degree shall take the exam before the end of the 5th or 7th quarter of full-time graduate study, respectively. Taking the exam sooner is encouraged. With the consensus of the advisor, a PhD student who enters with a BS degree may first obtain an MS degree (with thesis) and use the MS thesis exam as a substitute for the PhD research qualification exam. In this case the members of the exam committee must still meet all requirements given above for the qualification exam committee, and the student must prepare a written MS Thesis. Any requests for changes to the regular deadline require prior approval of the Graduate Studies Committee. Students should register for at least three units of ME 590 before the exam.

The exam consists of a 30-minute presentation by the student and 30 minutes of questions by the Qualification Exam committee. The purpose of the exam is to demonstrate the ability to define a research problem, explain its relevance in scientific terms, and articulate current research challenges and a methodology to address such challenges, as well as for the student to demonstrate an understanding of the underlying fundamental concepts related to the research topic. A two-page abstract (single column, single-spaced, standard margins, legible font size) should be provided to the committee a week before the exam. A rubric that can be used for preparing for and evaluating the Qualification Exam is provided in Figure 1. A student who does not pass the exam on the first attempt may (1) continue with the same advisor and retake the exam the next quarter, if agreed to by the advisor; (2) switch advisors if needed, and retake the exam after two more quarters; or (3) leave the program. No more than two attempts of taking the exam may be made unless approved by a vote of

the entire tenure-track ME faculty, who will grant exceptions only for special circumstances and whose decision will be final.

Mechanical Engineering Research Qualification Exam Rubric

Student:_____ Committee Member: _____

0 = Does not meet expectations 1 = Meets expectations 2 = Exceeds expectations

Topic	Criteria	Score 0-2
Problem Definition	• Student clearly defines a research problem to be solved. Need for the research is convincingly conveyed, and potential impacts of a successful solution are described. • Scientific questions to be answered or technical advances to be achieved are made clear. • Student demonstrates a depth of knowledge of the problem and the field appropriate to their stage in the program.	
State of the Art	• Brief literature review is presented describing past work on the problem. • Proposed solution methodology is differentiated from previous approaches.	
Approach	• Proposed approach is clearly and convincingly described. • Proposed approach has an expectation of success, within a timeframe of 6-12 months. • Resources needed for the work, including personnel, experimental equipment, and computational hardware and software, are clearly identified. • Risks or potential obstacles are understood, with a plan for mitigation.	
Preliminary Results	• Student has made an effort to perform preliminary work on the problem appropriate to their stage in the program. • Initial results, if available, support the viability of the proposed method and give confidence of future success.	
Future Work	• Vision is articulated on how the described work might fit into a longer-term research plan, including a PhD thesis.	
Q&A	• Student clearly and concisely answers questions from the committee members. • During Q&A, the student demonstrates both breadth of knowledge in mechanical engineering topics (appropriate to their stage in the program), and depth of knowledge in their chosen discipline and research area. • Student accepts constructive criticism and, if appropriate, is willing to consider advice and alternative approaches.	
Communication	• Two-page abstract is clearly written and describes the problem, state of the art, and proposed approach. • Presentation is well organized and delivered, with appropriate pacing. • Presentation figures are clear and readable. Slides are orderly, with legible font sizes. • Presentation stays within the 30-minute time limit.	

Figure 1: Research Qualification Exam Rubric, provided as a guide to students and exam committees. To pass the exam students should meet expectations in each category. Students will not necessarily receive detailed scores from committee members, and committee members are not required to use or submit this rubric. However, the rubric provides a framework for discussion among the committee in reaching a decision, and can help guide feedback from the advisor and committee.

Prospectus (Dissertation Proposal)

Students are required to pass the Dissertation Proposal Exam (or Prospectus) no later than the end of the 2nd year of full-time study if entering with an MS degree, or the end of the 3rd year of full-time study if entering with a BS degree. Students are eligible to take the dissertational proposal exam when no

more than 3 of the courses required for the PhD remain to be taken. The oral dissertation proposal examination will be based on, but not restricted to, a written research proposal (recommended to be less than 30 pages in total length, double spaced) prepared by the student, a proposal presentation

(seminar length, and under an hour) made by the student, and an oral examination administered by the examination committee.

The dissertation proposal should be provided to the committee at least a week before the final exam.

Students should complete and submit the PhD Requirements Form to the ME Program Assistant before the Proposal Exam. Additionally, they should work with the ME Program Assistant for more details about scheduling the exam and other necessary TGS forms submission.

Students who fail the examination may, upon the recommendation of their committee, retake it within one quarter. Students who do not pass the re-examination shall not continue in the PhD program.

Dissertation/Thesis/Defense

A written dissertation on the research project that is satisfactory to the student's faculty advisor and the advisory (examination) committee, and meets the University's requirements, is required. The dissertation should be prepared according to the Graduate School format for PhD dissertations. The written dissertation must be given to the members of the student's examination committee at least one week before the date of the scheduled examination.

Students should contact the Graduate Program Assistant for details about scheduling the Final Defense exam and submitting other necessary TGS forms.

The dissertation defense is a standard-length seminar (under an hour) followed by an oral examination by the examination committee of faculty, including the student's advisor, addressing the research.

A summary of PhD milestones is given in Table 2.

Table 2: PhD student milestone summary

Milestone/ Requirement	ME Deadline	TGS Deadline	Notes
Choose advisor	Y1Q1		• Advisor must have appointment or courtesy appointment in ME department
Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training (CITI & GEN_ENG 519)	Y1Q4 (McCormick deadline)		• Sections fill quickly; recommend taking early
Qualification exam	Y2Q1 (entering w/ MS) Y2Q3 (entering w/o MS)	Y3Q4	• Oral exam: 30-minute presentation, 30-minutes Q&A • 2-page abstract, 1 week in advance • 3-person committee (at least 1 from outside subdiscipline) • Committee chair cannot be advisor • 3 units of ME 590 before exam
External fellowship application	Y2Q4		• See p. 9 of this document for details
Complete course requirements	Y2Q4 (entering w/ MS) Y3Q4 (entering w/o MS)		• Must maintain 3.0 cumulative GPA (TGS requirement)
Dissertation proposal exam	Y2Q4 (entering w/ MS) Y3Q4 (entering w/o MS)	Y4Q4	• Written proposal and oral exam • Submit PhD Requirements Form • Proposal submitted to committee 1 week in advance • 3+ person committee • 2+ members of NU graduate faculty • 1+ member with primary appointment outside ME

Teaching requirement	Y5Q4	Y5Q4 (for TA)	• One or more positions totaling at least 15 hours per week of service, including:
			  ◦ Full-time TA (20 hrs/week)
			  ◦ Half-time TA (10 hrs)
			  ◦ Quarter-time TA or grader (5 hrs)
			• Register for GEN_ENG 546 (full TA or instructor) or GEN_ENG 545 (part-time TA/grader)

Dissertation and defense	Y7Q4	Y9Q4	• Same committee requirements as proposal exam • Dissertation submitted to committee 1 week in advance

Program Resources/Support

Funding and Registration

Funding

Students are funded by a combination of fellowships and assistantships (research and teaching) during their graduate careers.

Fellowships generally provide a monthly stipend and tuition for full-time study and research. Examples of external fellowships that are suitable to ME PhD students include the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, the National Defense Science & Engineering Graduate Fellowship, and the HHMI International Student Research Fellowship.

The Department offers two internal fellowships available exclusively to Mechanical Engineering graduate students:

- The **Martin Outstanding Doctoral Fellowship** is available to mid-career PhD students and provides full stipend and tuition support.

- The **Leon M. Keer and Family Fellowship** provides financial assistance of up to $2,500 to PhD students, especially students with financial need due to family care. Calls for applications for the Keer Fellowship will be sent to all students twice a year.

Registration

Students must follow The Graduate School and McCormick's registration requirements, as outlined in the McCormick handbook.

PhD students who are receiving funding must maintain a full-time registration of courses and MECH_ENG 590 Research. A registration permission number for 590 must be obtained from the Graduate Program Assistant after advisor approval. Students who need to continue their research but have completed their course requirements (including at least 3 credits of MECH_ENG 590) may register for TGS-500 Advanced Doctoral Study, as described below. Courses related to the student's area of study may be taken in addition to TGS 500, up to a maximum of 4 course units per quarter.

PhD research/project registration is summarized below:

MECH_ENG 590 Research: PhD students register for MECH_ENG 590 to pursue PhD research for their PhD prior to completion of course requirements. Students may register for 1 to 3 units per

quarter in addition to other coursework to achieve a total of 3-4 units each quarter for full-time registration. At least 3 units of MECH_ENG 590 must be taken before taking the research qualification exam

TGS 500 Advanced Doctoral Study: Funded PhD students register for TGS 500 after completing all course requirements to maintain full-time registration.

PhD research registration summary:

	Credit	Course Requirements	Use
MECH_ENG 590	Yes	Pre	In first few (1-3) years while satisfying course requirements. Minimum three units required before taking the research qualification exam.
TGS 500	No	Post	After course requirements are fulfilled to maintain full-time student status until dissertation is submitted

Student Wellness, Conflict Resolution and Changing an Advisor

Students are encouraged to consult the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) at any point regarding their academic progress, potential conflicts with their advisor or others in the program, or other concerns that relate to their well-being. In rare instances, a change of advisor may be necessary due to loss of funding, mismatch of research interests, or other reasons. If the student and/or primary research advisor believe at any point that the student would be better served by a different advisor, the student must immediately contact the DGS. Under these circumstances, the DGS will work with the faculty and student to determine a deadline by which the student must identify a new advisor to avoid exclusion from the program due to unsatisfactory academic progress. PhD students are encouraged to contact the DGS regarding concerns related to changing advisors, while MS students are encouraged to contact the Director of MS Program. If the DGS or Director of the MS Program are themselves the student's advisor, then the student is encouraged to contact the Department Chair.

Mechanical Engineering Staff Contacts

Cone, Jimmy	Administrative Assistant	Tech M211	jcone@northwestern.edu
Dyess, Pat	Graduate Program Assistant	Tech M211	j-dyess@northwestern.edu
Jo, Eunae	Business Administrator	Tech M211	eunae.jo@northwestern.edu
Kim, Sujin	Financial Assistant	Tech M211	sujin.kim@northwestern.edu
Kulanda, Sinta	Business Coordinator	Tech M213	s-kulanda@northwestern.edu
Martin, Mady	Program Coordinator	Tech M211	madison.martin1@northwestern.edu

Riley-Sabaj, Joey	Financial Coordinator	Tech M211	joey.riley-sabaj@northwestern.edu
Roberts, Victoria	Research Administrator	1007 Church St.	victoria.roberts@northwestern.edu

Graduate Program Administrative Faculty

Keten, Sinan	Department Chair	s-keten@northwestern.edu
Balogun, Oluwaseyi	Director of Graduate Studies	o-balogun@northwestern.edu
Guo, Ping	Associate Director of Graduate Studies	ping.guo@northwestern.edu

Printer/Photocopier/Scanner

In room B207 there is a printer/photocopier/scanner that PhD students may use. Contact the department Administrative Assistant (including your name, position, netID, and email address in the request) to obtain free printing privileges.

Mailboxes

Graduate student and faculty mailboxes are located in Tech B214. *The departmental mailboxes should not be used for receiving personal mail*. The proper mailing address to receive mail is:

Your Name
Department of Mechanical Engineering
2145 Sheridan Road
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL 60208-3111

Purchasing

To purchase non-iBuyNU items, fill out the Purchasing Request Form located on the Mechanical Engineering Department's Resources webpage.

Fill out the form with all of the required information, including a chart string provided by your advisor. Once you select your advisor's name from the list, the form will send an approval request to your advisor directly via email. For additional assistance, please reach out to the department Financial Assistant. When your requested items arrive, you will receive an email to pick up the package from the ME Department Mail Room, Tech B214. The packing slip should be provided to the department Financial Assistant to confirm that the items were received and so that payment can be processed.

Travel Reimbursement

Before planning your business travel, review the university's travel reimbursement policy at http://www.northwestern.edu/uservices/ and see department Financial Assistant, to review the key points of the policy. Be sure to keep all your itemized and credit card receipts to prevent your reimbursement from being delayed. Travel reimbursement forms should be filled out online and approved by your advisor within 30 days of return; see the department Financial Assistant for details.

Mechanical Engineering Department Facilities

The facilities of the mechanical engineering laboratories provide many opportunities for graduate students to conduct their research. A list of facilities is available at:

https://www.mccormick.northwestern.edu/mechanical/research/facilities.html

Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Society (MEGSS)

The Mechanical Engineering Graduate Student Society (MEGSS) provides a student voice on departmental issues like faculty selection and curriculum matters. In this way, the concerns of the graduate students help shape the way the ME graduate program is run. To facilitate this, members of MEGSS attend select faculty meetings and sit on the Graduate Studies Committee and the Faculty Search Committees. More information about MEGSS can be found online:

https://www.mccormick.northwestern.edu/mechanical/academics/graduate/megss.html

MEGSS maintains an "ME Department Survival Guide" with useful information for new and current students:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ofmkzuXq8c8H2S7jPhU0iig_QytZBGRFEGAHvtEPfIs/edit