

## Reasonable Progress Toward the MS, MSECE, or Ph.D. Degree

Graduate students in the ECE degree programs are expected to make diligent progress toward the MS, MSECE, or Ph.D. degrees. It is in the best interests of both students and faculty for all students to progress through the program expeditiously. Reasonable progress is defined as follows: (Exceptions may be made by the Associate Chair for Graduate Affairs after reviewing the circumstances involved as presented by the student and the research advisor.)

### Master's Students

- (1) A full-time Master's student seeking the non-thesis MSECE is expected to complete all degree requirements in a maximum of three semesters of enrollment, not counting summer terms, or a maximum of four semesters of enrollment if that student participates in the Cooperative Education (Co-op) program. (It is possible to complete the requirements in fewer terms!) Students are permitted to spend one regular (non-summer) semester as an intern in an industrial or government position during their program of study. Students desiring more than one semester of internship or other employment must be participants in the Co-op program or have the expressed permission of the ECE Associate Chair for Graduate Affairs.
- (2) A full-time Master's student seeking the thesis-option MSECE is expected to complete all degree requirements in four semesters of enrollment, not counting summer terms. Students are permitted to spend one regular semester as an intern in an industrial or government position. Non-CO-OP students desiring more than one semester of internship or other employment must have the expressed permission of the ECE Associate Chair for Graduate Affairs. **Requests for Co-Op assignments, internships or other non-resident employment will not be approved for students who are not meeting the degree progress timelines outlined in this document.**

A student supported as a GTA or GRA is considered a "full-time" student. All GTA and GRA support will cease for Master's students beyond the time limits defined above, three terms for non-thesis students and four terms for thesis and Co-op students.

### Ph.D. Students

A "Ph.D. student" is defined as one who has accepted an admission offer that indicated "Ph.D." rather than "Masters" degree. The Institute requires that Ph.D. students (full-time or part-time) complete all degree requirements within 7 years of passing the comprehensive examination. The School of Electrical and Computer Engineering defines the comprehensive examination as a combination of the Ph.D. Preliminary Examination and the oral part of the Ph.D. Proposal Examination, but imposes additional time limits as described below.

The School of Electrical and Computer Engineering imposes the following additional requirements on Ph.D. students:

- (1) Students obtaining an MS or MSECE degree on the way to a Ph.D. degree are expected to complete the Master's degree within the first two years of graduate study.
- (2) Students seeking a Ph.D. degree are expected to take the ECE Preliminary Examination at each available opportunity until they pass the exam.
- (3) Students classified as PhD at the time of admission must pass the PhD Preliminary Examination within their first four semesters (not counting the summer) in the program. All PhD students are permitted three opportunities to take the exam while enrolled in the ECE graduate program at Georgia Tech.
- (4) Students admitted into the graduate program as MS students and wish to be reclassified as PhD students are allowed to take the preliminary examination while in the MS program.
- (5) Students are expected to identify a Ph.D. research advisor as early as possible in the program, and are urged to do so by the end of the term in which they pass the Preliminary Examination. It is expected that, for a variety of reasons, some students will change advisors at some point in the program, and a single change is not viewed as a violation of this requirement. Advisor changes beyond one time do not reflect good progress and should not be undertaken without the guidance of the Associate Chair for Graduate Affairs.
- (6) Ph.D. Students are expected to complete all required coursework, including the Professional Communications course and the minor, by the end of the third year in the program (if entering from a BS degree program) or the end of their second year in the program (if entering with an MS). Ph.D. students are expected to complete the Responsible Conduct in Research requirements in their first year.
- (7) During their Ph.D. program, students are permitted summer terms of non-residence, during which they may be employed as interns at industrial or government employers. Only one non-summer term may be used for internships or other employment without the prior express permission of the ECE Associate Chair for Graduate Affairs. A student's research advisor may advise against a student taking an internship if circumstances so dictate. Students supported as GRAs are expected to coordinate internships with their advisor. **Internships or other non-resident employment participation should be undertaken only to gain knowledge and skills useful to the student's research and must not cause significant delays to degree progress. Requests for internships or other non-resident employment not directly related to the student's research or for students who are not meeting the degree progress timelines outlined in this document will not be approved.**

- (8) All Ph.D. students are expected to apply to take the Proposal Examination within two years of passing the Preliminary Exam, or by the end of their third year of graduate studies. It is expected that the proposal examination be successfully completed at least one year prior to the Final Defense examination, and it must be completed at least 6 months in advance of the Defense Examination. (Students should follow the guidelines provided by the Graduate Affairs Office for the preparation of the proposal document.)

### **Action by Graduate Affairs Office**

When the ECE Graduate Office determines that a Ph.D. student has not met the milestones described above he or she will be classified as “not making reasonable progress” toward the Ph.D. degree and notified of this status immediately. The student must provide a written explanation to the ECE Graduate Office as to why they have not met the indicated milestones, and what action they intend to take to correct the situation. A student who has not submitted a written plan for correcting these deficiencies by the end of the term in question may lose their eligibility for GTA or GRA support. Students with deficiencies that are not corrected in a reasonable time will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

**Suggested Ph.D. Progress - Enter With BS Degree**

<b>Ph.D. Final Defense</b>										
<b>Ph.D. Proposal</b>										
<b>Ph.D. Course Work</b>										
<b>Ph. D. Prelim Exam</b>										
<b>M.S. Course Work</b>										
	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>					

**Suggested Ph.D. Progress - Enter With MS Degree**

<b>Ph.D. Final Defense</b>								
<b>Ph.D. Proposal</b>								
<b>Ph.D. Course Work</b>								
<b>Ph. D. Prelim Exam</b>								
	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>				