Frequently Asked Questions

Useful Links

- UH Graduate School
- Graduate Catalog
- Dean of Students & Student Handbook

Questions About the Admission Process

1. What are the application deadlines?
   Application deadlines are listed in Admission Procedures. Please note that they are often different from those listed at the University and College sites.

2. Can the application fee be waived?
   No, the application fee cannot be waived.

3. Where should application documents be sent?
   We do not require you to send any hard copy documents for the admission process. All documents should be uploaded to the application, except for test scores, which must be sent by the testing agency.
   If you are admitted, you will be required to submit official hard copies of your transcripts and degree certificates to the UH Graduate School before you can enroll in classes. You can choose to do this early to avoid later delays.

4. Is there an additional application for applying scholarship or assistantship?
   No additional application is needed. The department will contact you if and when a scholarship or assistantship is awarded.

5. What is the institution code for UH so that ETS will report GRE and TOEFL scores? Is the department code needed? How long until the department receives my scores?
The code for the University of Houston is **6870**; no department code is needed. ETS will send your scores to the university anywhere from five to 14 days after your test. Once your scores have been processed, you will be able to see them on your application Checklist.

6. **What kind of GRE is needed for your program?**
   Applicants must take the General GRE Exam. No subject tests are required.

7. **Can GRE or TOEFL exam be waived?**
   No. The GRE must be taken by all applicants. For international or permanent resident students, the TOEFL exam is required unless you have an undergraduate degree from a U.S. institution. More information can be found at [English Proficiency Requirements](#).

8. **What are the minimum GRE and TOEFL scores?**
   There are no official minimum scores, but the Admission Guidelines section shows scores that accepted applicants typically have. Since the admission process is competitive, it is less likely that applicants with score below those shown will be accepted.

9. **What should I do if I do not meet the minimum GRE or TOEFL scores required by the dept?**
   You will have to retake your exams and reapply for admission. Notify the department that you will submit updated scores when completed.

10. **How do I find out about tuition and fee costs for your program?**
    You can estimate your costs using the [Tuition & Fees calculator](#).

11. **How do I check on my application status?**
    The application status can only be checked through your ApplyWeb application checklist.

12. **When will I be notified of the admission decision?**
    Decisions for Fall admission are usually made in late March or April.
    Decisions for Spring admission are usually made from late October through November.

13. **Can I apply to the Ph.D. program with only a bachelor?s degree?**
    Yes. Please see the Ph.D. Degree Requirements.

14. **Can I apply to your graduate program with an undergraduate degree that is not in engineering?**
    We do accept applicants with undergraduate degrees closely related to electrical and computer engineering (e.g., physics). However, you should contact the department via email prior to submitting an application to see if your degree is suitable. Leveling courses may be required, which could extend the duration of your studies.

15. **May I submit my credentials for an evaluation prior to actually applying?**
    The department will only consider complete applications. We will not review scores and transcripts before you apply.

16. **How do I contact the person in charge of the graduate admissions process?**
    Please send email to the Graduate Admissions Advisor at ece_grad_admit [at] uh [dot] edu.

17. **Will I need to submit a new application and pay the application fee again after one semester has passed?**
    Yes. If you wish to reapply, you must submit a complete, up-to-date application and pay an application fee.

18. **The Ph.D. degree objectives require an advisor in order to be considered for admission. May I contact the faculty member prior to applying?**
    Certainly. Check our website to find out which faculty share your research interests prior to making contact. Even if you have not yet found a faculty advisor, however, you must follow the department?s guidelines for application.

19. **May I enroll as a Non Degree Objective (NDO) student?**
    International students on F1 visa may not enroll as an NDO. Others may apply. NDO admission requirements and deadlines are the same as for degree-seeking students.

20. **What kind of financial support is available?**
    The Department offers Teaching Assistantships (TAs) and Research Assistantships (RAs). TAs assist in undergraduate laboratories, grade homework, and may assist with teaching classes. RAs assist an individual faculty member with their research projects. Obtaining financial support is very competitive, and is exclusively reserved for students seeking a research-oriented degree, with preference for Ph.D. candidates (both B.S. to
Ph.D. and M.S. to Ph.D. applicants). Masters applicants will be considered for the department scholarship.

21. **How long does it typically take to complete a master's degree? What about the Ph.D?**
Ideally, both the thesis and non-thesis masters programs M.S. will be completed in two years. This requires students to enroll in nine credit hours (three courses) each fall and spring semester. Full time Ph.D. students are also required to take nine credit hours per semester. It typically takes students three to five years to complete a Ph.D., provided they make significant progress on the dissertation research topic while taking classes.

22. **What are my chances for admission when my grades and/or scores are below the minimum guidelines?**
The department evaluates applications on a case-by-case basis, and so we cannot provide an answer to this question. Please keep in mind that the scores shown in the admission guidelines section are an excellent guide and that scores below these should be balanced with higher marks in other areas.

**Questions About Procedures for Current Students**

1. **Which research course should I choose?**
M.S. students should register for ECE6x98, Ph.D. students should register for ECE8x98. Research hours are hidden on the course schedule; you will need to get the 5 digit class number from your advisor in order to enroll.

2. **Do I have to enroll in courses during the summer semester?**
Most graduate students are not required to enroll in the summer.

3. **How many courses/credit hours may I request for transfer from another institution once I have been approved for graduate admission?**
Students may request up to two courses/six credit hours be transferred from another institution. Courses used to obtain a previous degree cannot be transferred unless students participated in the UH fast-track program.

4. **Once admitted, do I need to attend orientation?**
Orientation is mandatory for all graduate students.

5. **What is GTF?**
A Graduate Tuition Fellowship provides a reimbursement of most tuition charges and is for Ph.D. students. Requirements for this fellowship can be found at the College Website.

6. **What is a Graduate Student Petition?**
Graduate Student Petition is a form that is used to process any modifications to your file.

7. **What is an academic stop/hold?**
An academic stop (hold) is placed on a student's record when he/she does not follow the guidelines given by the department over time or when the cumulative grade point average (GPA) is below the minimum requirement of 3.00. Stops can also be placed on your account for non-payment of tuition or fees.

8. **Where can I find the number of enrollment hours needed for my degree objective (plan) each semester?**
Enrollment hours are provided in the Degree Requirements section. The information can also be found on the Degree Plans.

9. **There are several different sets of deadlines. Which deadlines should I follow?**
The department deadlines should be followed. Doing so will ensure that you meet the college and university guidelines.

10. **Which guidelines should I follow when my advisor holds appointments in more than one college or department?**
A student should first abide by the guidelines and instructions set forth by the enrolling department (i.e., the department where you plan to earn your graduate degree).

© University of Houston Cullen College of Engineering, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering