Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Admission Applications

Graduate Programs Committee
Department of Computer Science & Software Engineering
Auburn University

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1. What’s the GRE requirement?

Answer: We require prospective students to have a combined GRE score (V+Q) > 300, with a verbal score of at least 150, a quantitative score of at least 150, and a written score of at least 3. We don't automatically discard applications that fail to meet the GRE requirement. We take a "whole person" approach to evaluating applications to our
graduate program. Instead of just looking at a single test score (or grade point average), we take into account all the information that you provide us: GRE scores, transcripts, recommendations, etc. If one measure is below our minimum, we expect other items to be commensurately high enough to balance it.

2. What’s the TOEFL requirement?

Answer: Minimal TOEFL score is 79. If your TOEFL score is below 79, you should retake the TOEFL test. If you have received the degree from a recognized institution in the U.S. or Canada, your TOEFL requirement will be waived. Universities in Quebec (i.e., French-Canadian institutions) would not qualify for the exemption.

3. What’s the IELTS score requirement?

Answer: We also accept IELTS scores. The minimal IELTS score is 6.5. If your IELTS score is below 6.5, you should retake the IELTS test. If you have received the degree from a recognized institution in the U.S. or Canada, your IELTS requirement will be waived. Universities in Quebec (e.g., French-Canadian institutions) would not qualify for the exemption.

4. Can I have my TOEFL requirement waived?

Answer: If you are an international student, your TOEFL requirement can’t be waived. If you are a domestic student, there is no need to take the TOEFL test. If you have received the degree from a recognized institution in the U.S. or Canada, you will be exempted from the TOEFL requirement. However, universities in Quebec (i.e., French-Canadian institutions) would not qualify for the exemption. In case you are a Nigeria applicant, in order to have your TOEFL waived, you need to get a medium of instruction certificate to be sent to Auburn University’s Graduate School with your official transcripts. Your medium of instruction certificate must be officially issued by your institute. For further questions regarding waiving your TOEFL requirement, please contact Ms. Penny Christopher (pzc0003@auburn.edu) at the Graduate School.

5. Can I have my GRE requirement waived?

Answer: If you apply to on-campus graduate programs, your GRE requirement can’t be waived. In case you are an online student pursuing an online degree, you will be exempted from the GRE requirement.

6. Can I still apply to the CSSE graduate program with my low GRE scores?

Answer: We don’t automatically discard applications that fail to meet the GRE requirement. We take a "whole person" approach to evaluating applications to our graduate program. Instead of just looking at a single test score (or grade point average),
we take into account all the information that you provide us: GRE scores, transcripts, recommendations, etc. If one measure is below our minimum, we expect other items to be commensurately high enough to balance it.

7. What department code should I use to report my GRE scores? (New)

Answer: The department code 5199. If you didn’t use 5199, it should be fine as long as you use 1005 as the institution code. Your GRE scores will come to the admission office of our graduate school. Feel free to use the general department code or the CSSE code.

8. Why Auburn still has not yet received my GRE scores? (New)

Answer: If you just ordered your official scores a few weeks ago, they could still be in process. The only issue would be in the name and/or date of birth on your score report is not the same as you listed on your application. If this is the case, please send Director Theresa Morgan (morgatk@auburn.edu) a copy of your unofficial score report so that our staff at the graduate school can manually search for your scores. Otherwise, please know that it can take upwards of 4 weeks for ETS to send the graduate school your official scores and for the system to post them to your application.

9. Will you review my application before the deadline without my official GRE score report?

Answer: If you apply for our on-campus graduate programs, your application will not be reviewed by the graduate committee without official GRE scores. I recommend you to have your GRE scores ready prior to your application. Please note that the GRE score requirement is exempted for prospective students who apply to the online graduate programs.

10. Where should I mail my official transcript and recommendation letters?

Answer: Your official transcripts should be sent to the Graduate School using the following address:

The Graduate School
106 Hargis Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849-5122

You may either mail your recommendation letters to the above address or have your recommendation uploaded through the ApplyYourself system.

11. Can I be admitted to the CSSE graduate program using unofficial transcripts?

Answer: Your unofficial transcripts will only be used for the purpose of application evaluation. Please be mindful that an applicant may not be admitted (and immigration
documents requested) without the official transcript. Our graduate school cannot accept international/domestic official transcripts emailed or scanned by prospective students. Private evaluation reports are not accepted in place of official transcripts from the institution. The graduate school only accepts official transcripts in an unopened envelope from your international/domestic undergraduate institution to our institution in the postage mail. (DHL, UPS, FEDEX, etc.). Nevertheless, our graduate committee may review the unofficial transcript for the initial recommendation. To avoid issues with time, it is better if you can submit your official materials as soon as possible. Your official transcripts should be sent to the Graduate School using the following address:

The Graduate School
106 Hargis Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849-5122

12. Is it acceptable for me to upload WES transcript to the online application system? (New)

Answer: The graduate school requires an official copy of all transcripts issued directly from your institution. If you submit an outside evaluation with your application materials, it will be added to your application. However, WES transcripts will not be accepted in lieu of an official transcript.

13. Can I apply with any missing item?

Answer: You may start applying to our graduate programs with a few missing items. Important application items should include:
- GRE Scores
- TOEFL or IELTS Scores (International Students)
- Official Transcripts
- Personal Statement
- Resume
- Recommendation Letters

Please note that due to any missing item in your application package, we will be unable to review your application. After all the required items are submitted to the ApplyYourself system, we will review your application.

14. What are the requirements (e.g., format and purpose) of a personal statement?

Answer: The statement of purpose is a way for you to let us know why you want to come to Auburn University, to highlight any special achievements or skills you have, or to explain areas of your application which might appear to be irregular. Your personal statement gives you a chance to tell us anything you want us to know.
In addition, a well written personal statement tells the CSSE graduate committee that you have the capacity to write coherently and think logically. Your personal statement should include an introduction, a body, and a concluding paragraph. Your essay should also demonstrate your motivation and capacity to succeed in our graduate program of computer science and software engineering.

15. What should I do if I can’t have my recommendation letters uploaded to the ApplyYourself system?

**Answer:** Please have the recommenders email address changed to their personal emails to see if that works for them. If this does not work, the Director of Graduate Programs - Dr. Qin - can take the letters via email and upload them. Please keep in mind that it is always preferred to have the recommenders do this themselves.

16. Can I apply to the graduate programs through Emails?

**Answer:** No, you can’t. You should submit all the documents online to Auburn University’s Graduate School. Your email attachments won’t be reviewed by the graduate programs committee. You won’t be admitted through this email communication.

17. What are application deadlines?

**Answer:** Application packets must be completed by May 1 to receive priority consideration for funding for the fall semester. June 15 is the latest an application can be accepted and still provide enough time for processing at the university level. The corresponding dates for the spring semester are Oct. 1 and Nov. 15. Please note that applications are accepted and evaluated after these deadlines; however, this may delay the desired starting semester.

18. How many prior credits can be transferred toward to my degree at Auburn?

**Answer:** You must earn at least 24 credit hours, or half of the total hours required for a master’s degree, whichever is greater, at Auburn University. A program that requires 30 hours of credit will be limited to 6 semester hours of transfer credit. The credit-hour-transfer policy can be found here: https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonTransferofCreditfromOtherInstitutions.pdf

19. How to fit my long name into the name fields in the ApplyYourself system?

**Answer:** The name field is currently set to 60 characters, so this should be enough. Try entering just one of your names in the field. Once you have submitted the application and uploaded your passport copy, send Director Morgan (morgatk@auburn.edu) an
email to review your name and she will see if anything needs to be adjusted. On the actual application (not the profile) enter your full name as listed on your passport.

Prerequisite Background

**20. Is it mandatory to have a Master’s degree in CS to be eligible for admission into the Ph.D. program?**

**Answer:** No. It is not mandatory to have a MSc. Degree prior to your application to the Ph.D. program. You may apply to the Ph.D. program without the Master’s degree in computer science. However, you have to demonstrate strong evidence that you will be a successful doctoral student in the computer science and software engineering program. Such evidence includes, but not limited to, high undergraduate GPA, high TOEF/GRE scores, excellent recommendation letters, B.Sc. degree in computer science or software engineering, and IT working experience. Prior to your application, you are strongly recommended to contact a CSSE professor who is willing to be your major professor (i.e., advisor or chair of your supervisory committee).

**21. Can I apply to the CSSE program programs without the B.Sc. degree in Computer Science or Software Engineering?**

**Answer:** We welcome students into our program who have earned degrees in other disciplines; however, to be admitted to the program, we expect students to have roughly the equivalent of a baccalaureate degree in computer science. In other words, you must have some minimum prerequisite skills to be admitted to one of our graduate programs.

Per the MS-CYBE/MS-CSSE/PhD-CSSE description on our department’s website, most applicants should have an undergraduate degree in a closely related area. Appropriate background in the following undergraduate-level areas will be required for MS-CYBE/MS-CSSE/PhD-CSSE students.

- Fluency in a high-level programming language such as C, C++, Java, or Python
- Data structures and algorithms
- Discrete mathematics
- Computer organization and architecture
- Operating systems
- Computer networks

Students without this background will be required to take the following courses before admission to the MS-CYBE/MS-CSSE/MS-PhD program.

**Semester 1**

- COMP 2210 Fundamentals of Computing II
- COMP 3240 Discrete Structures
COMP 3350 Computer Organization and Assembly Language Programming

Semester 2
COMP 3270 Introduction to Algorithms
COMP 3500 Operating Systems
COMP 4300 Computer Architecture
COMP 4320 Computer Networks

You may take the pre-requisite courses through our online undergraduate degree program or CPSC for short: https://csonline.eng.auburn.edu/ You may contact Dr. Chapman (chapmro@auburn.edu) – the director of the program or Mr. Russell Denney (rwd0015@auburn.edu) – Student Services Coordinator, if you have any question regarding the online undergraduate degree program. The following table summarizes the mappings between CSSE Graduate Program Pre-requisites and the CPSC equivalent courses (i.e., online undergraduate courses listed at https://csonline.eng.auburn.edu/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMP Course</th>
<th>CPSC Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMP 2210 Data Structures in Java</td>
<td>CPSC 1233*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*1213 &amp; 1223 if no background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP 3240 Discrete Structures</td>
<td>CPSC 3243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP 3350 Comp Org and Assembly Language</td>
<td>CPSC 3303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP 3270 Algorithms</td>
<td>CPSC 3273 &amp; CPSC 3283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP 3500 Operating Systems</td>
<td>CPSC 3333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP 4300 Computer Architecture</td>
<td>CPSC 3323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMP 4320 Computer Networks</td>
<td>CPSC 3353 &amp; CPSC 3363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application Status

22. Did you receive my official TOEFL/GRE scores?

Answer: All documents received by the Graduate School are date stamped and processed in the order they are received. Once your documents have been processed they will be uploaded to your application in the ApplyYourself system.

23. Can you check my application status for me?

Answer: Thank you for applying for the M.S. program in our department at Auburn University. It will take approximately four weeks for the graduate committee to make a decision on your application. Then, the graduate school will send a notification to you. You also can check your application status on the ApplyYourself system.

24. When will you make my admission decision?

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**Answer:** After you complete your application, the Graduate Admission Committee, of which I am the chair, will review the materials and make an admission decision. We make admission recommendations by the end of each month.

**25. Can my intended graduate program be changed to Ph.D. after being admitted into the M.Sc. program?**

**Answer:** Yes, you can. There are two options to change your intended graduate program.  
Option 1: You initially join our department as a Master’s student. If your advisor (a.k.a., major professor) endorses your application for the Ph.D. program, you can file a curriculum change form. Please download the curriculum change form below.  
- Curriculum Change Form (Domestic Students): https://web.auburn.edu/alpha/CurriculumChangeDomestic.aspx  

Option 2: You contact the graduate school to change your application from Master’s to the Ph.D. program. Please be aware of a potential risk in this option - your Ph.D. application may be declined.

**26. Can I modify in the ApplyYourself system my application from the Master’s program to the Ph.D. program?**

**Answer:** You can’t change the intended graduate program by yourselves in the ApplyYourself system. However, you may contact the Graduate School and ask the graduate program to be changed on your application.

**27. I am a current CSSE Master’s student. How can I apply for the Ph.D. program?**

**Answer:** There are two cases in which current CSSE Master’s students may apply to the Ph.D. program.  
Case 1: Without any CSSE professor’s endorsement, you must directly apply to the Ph.D. program through the ApplyYourself system. Your application fee will be waived, because you are a current Auburn graduate student. You may need to contact the graduate school to seek the application fee waiver. After you have submit your application, please inform Dr. Qin, who will process your application in a timely manner.  

Case 2: If your advisor (a.k.a., major professor) endorses your application for the Ph.D. study, then you will simply file the curriculum change form by adding the Ph.D. program into your curriculum. Please be advised that you shouldn’t replace the M.Sc. program with the Ph.D. program. Rather, you add the Ph.D. program into your graduate study, meaning that you will receive both the M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees from our department.
Please find the curriculum change form here:

- Curriculum Change Form (Domestic Students):
  https://web.auburn.edu/alpha/CurriculumChangeDomestic.aspx
- Curriculum Change Form (International Students):
  https://web.auburn.edu/alpha/CurriculumChangeIntl.aspx

### Graduate Assistantships

**28. How can I apply for a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA)?**

**Answer:** All new students, both domestic and international, are automatically considered to be candidates for graduate teaching assistant (GTA) positions. There is no special process to apply for GTAs. There are no set requirements for financial support; a large number of students with excellent qualifications apply each year for a limited number of positions. GPAs, standardized test scores (e.g., GRE and TOEFL), technical background and programming skills are collectively considered. While a position may become available at any time throughout a semester, we make decisions for GTA positions for fall and spring semesters in March and November, respectively.

**29. How does the CSSE department offer graduate teaching assistantships or GTAs?**

**Answer:** If you received the Master’s degree in Computer Science or Software Engineering, you should apply to the Ph.D. program rather than the M.Sc. program. We give Ph.D. students higher priorities than M.Sc. students when it comes to GTA assignments.

Our department prioritizes the award of Teaching/Graduate Assistantships to incoming graduate students as follows (in decreasing order of priority):

1. Students, admitted to the doctoral program, hold a Master’s (thesis) degree in CS, SE or a related field
2. Students, admitted to the doctoral program, hold a Master’s (non-thesis) degree in CS, SE or a related field
3. Students, admitted to the doctoral program, hold a Bachelor’s degree in CS, SE or a related field
4. Students, admitted to the master’s program, hold a Bachelor’s degree in CS, SE or a related field

Note that this applies only to the award of assistantships. All qualified students will be considered for admission to our graduate program leading to MS or PhD degrees.

In case you haven’t received the M.Sc. degree in Computer Science or Software Engineering, I suggest you to be admitted as a Master’s student in the first semester. If you enjoy conducting research and you have research capability, then you may apply for
the Ph.D. study by submitting a curriculum change form provided that your advisor endorses your application. Please note that the department will not consider MS students for assistantships until they have been here for at least one semester.

30. What is the tuition fellowship for international students?

**Answer:** If you are awarded graduate teaching assistantship or research assistantship, the Auburn graduate school will offer you the tuition fellowship. In other words, your tuition fee is waived regardless of in-state tuition or out-state tuition.

31. What fees are not covered by my tuition fellowship?

**Answer:** Some fees such as international student fee, enrollment fee, insurance charges, and graduation fee won’t be covered by the tuition fellowship. Please refer to the following website for an estimate on tuition rate and fee: http://auburn.edu/bannerappdev/tuition/

Master’s of Science in Cybersecurity Engineering

32. Is there any industry certification (e.g., CEH and GIAC) that the MS-CYBE degree program prepares students for?? (New)

**Answer:** The MS-CYBE program doesn’t offer trainings that address a specific certification; instead, MS-CYBE offers an education that provides students with the foundational background for earning the various certifications on their own. By the time a student graduates with the MS-CYBE degree, he/she should feel comfortable with tackling the specifics of the CEH, OSCP, CISSP, and GIAC certifications.

After Being Admitted into the CSSE Graduate Program

33. How to defer my admission to a later term? (Updated)

**Answer:** Requests to defer an offer of admission will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Your request may be granted for reasons such as illness, military service, religious service, and the like. You must seek an approval from the director of graduate programs (i.e., Dr. Qin) at the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering. To proceed with your deferment request, you will need to confirm your intent to enroll on your application and submit the required financial documentation. After you have your documents in order, please contact Director Theresa Morgan (morgatk@auburn.edu) at the Graduate School to further process your request.

Admission is valid for up to one year; you may seek to defer your admission for a third semester in extenuating circumstances. You should be mindful that your admission
deferral request of another year (i.e., beyond the third semester), however, would require a new application. In this case, you don’t need to submit additional copies of the official transcripts and test scores on file with the Graduate School, because these archived documents will be moved to your new application upon its submission.

34. How to transfer credits from the graduate school in my former university?

**Answer:** Master’s Students: You can transfer up to six (6) credit hours from your former graduate school to Auburn. If you transfer a total of six credit hours, you need to take at least 24 semester hours (for thesis option) or 27 credit hours (for non-thesis option) to earn the M.Sc. degree from our department.

Ph.D. Students: If you are a doctoral student, a maximum of 30 semester hours of graduate work completed outside CSSE may be applied toward your Ph.D. degree requirements. This case includes courses taken in other departments at Auburn University and course work from another university.

For all the transfer-credit cases, only graduate-level courses which resulted in a grade of "B" or better are eligible for transfer.

You may download the policy on transfer credits from the link below.

https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/PolicyonTransferofCreditfromOtherInstitutions.pdf

35. What is the deadline to confirm my enrollment intent?

**Answer:** The deadline is 90 days before classes start.

36. What’s the next step after receiving an admission letter from the CSSE department?

**Answer:** Your Auburn student ID will be generated with the graduate school admission, which is after the departmental recommendation and you have confirmed your intent to enroll. Instructions on how to activate your account is in the graduate school acceptance letter. Once admitted, you may log into your online application to view the letter.

37. How to solve the medical-hold problem?

**Answer:** You will need to contact the AU Medical Clinic directly with all questions regarding the medical hold: https://cws.auburn.edu/aumc/Forms.aspx
For information on immunizations and vaccines, please contact the student health services at Auburn University medical clinic at (334) 844-4416. The website is cws.auburn.edu/aumc

With the medical hold, you will be unable to register any course. Please note that the Graduate School and our department cannot remove the medical hold.

If you are a distance graduate student with a medical hold, you should contact Mr. Clint Lovelace (jcl0014@auburn.edu) to clear the medical hold.

38. Where do I upload the financial document?

Answer: Please scan your bank statement to a pdf and email it to Ms. Penny Christopher (pzc0003@auburn.edu) at the Graduate School. If the bank statement is not in your name, please have your sponsor fill out the Official Statement of Finances. Here is the http://graduate.auburn.edu/international-student-resources/official-statement-finances-2017-2018

39. Is proof of finance provided by my father’s employer acceptable?

Answer: You must send a bank statement to Ms. Penny Christopher (pzc0003@auburn.edu) at the Graduate School.

40. Why I haven’t yet received my I-20 form after I submitted all the financial documents?

Answer: It is likely that your I-20 form hasn’t been created because you haven’t yet been admitted by the Graduate School. Once you submit the financial documentation to our graduate school, you will be notified of the status update on your application and will be able to see the same online. This is the point when your admission documents are forwarded to the Office of International Programs for immigration processing and mailing. If you haven’t already, please send the requested financial documentation and affidavit of support from your sponsor to Ms. Penny Christopher (pzc0003@auburn.edu) at the Graduate School.

Below is the current breakdown of the Office of International Programs (OIP) advisors:
Jennifer Jackson – LName A-J
Swati Kukreja – LName K-S
Carol Lovvorn LName T-Z

41. Where can I rent an off-campus apartment?

Answer: You may find apartment guides below:
https://offcampushousing.auburn.edu
https://www.apartmentguide.com/apartments/Alabama/Auburn-University/
42. How to get to Auburn University from the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport?

Answer: You may use the Groome Transportation Shuttle Service. Please book a shuttle ticket here: https://groometransportation.com/auburn/

43. What is the tuition fee for online Master of Science programs?

Answer: $949 per credit hour for online MS students.

Non-Degree Applications

44. What is the non-degree application procedure?

Answer: The Graduate School only requires an official copy of the highest degree earned by each non-degree applicant. Once this has been received, the student is granted admission for one term only (without further approval) and for a maximum of 12 hours. Graduate Non-degree admission does NOT constitute admission to a degree seeking program. If, at any time, the student wishes to enter a degree seeking program, a new application along with all requirements must be submitted.

If the GPD approves a non-degree applicant taking, please let the admission director at the graduate school know as soon as possible. Once all the requirements are met, the admission director will process the admission.

If the GPD does not approve of the applicant taking courses in CSSE, please will discuss with the admission director about other alternatives.

45. Can international students apply for non-degree graduate studies in your department to take computer science re-quisite courses?

Answer: If you are currently in in a degree non-computer science program, then you may take any computer science pre-requisite courses in his current degree program. You cannot graduate and apply for Non-Degree graduate program in our department. If you have any question, you may follow up with Obrad Budic in the Office of International Programs.

References:
FAQs by the Auburn Graduate School
http://graduate.auburn.edu/current-students/frequently-asked-questions/