

THE MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN COMPUTER SCIENCE PROGRAM

University of Southern California
Computer Science Department, a division of Viterbi School of Engineering
Henry Salvatori Computer Science Center
Los Angeles, California 90089-0781
(213) 740-4494
(213) 740-7285 (Fax)

Web Address: <http://www.cs.usc.edu>
Student Advisor for Master Program: shirley.chan@usc.edu

For questions regarding your admissions application status, please contact:
Admissions Office of Viterbi School of Engineering: (213) 740-4530
Admissions Office of Viterbi School of Engineering:
viterbi.gradadmission@usc.edu

GENERAL INFORMATION
2007-2008

The Master of Science in Computer Science Program provides intensive preparation in the concepts and techniques related to the design, programming, and application of computing systems. The program requires the student to take a broad spectrum of courses, while simultaneously allowing for emphasis in desired areas of specialization. The Computer Science Department at the University of Southern California offers the following Master of Science Degree:

<http://www.cs.usc.edu/current/graduate/default.htm>

RESEARCH FACILITIES:

The Computer Science Department research facilities include the following laboratories: Programmable Automation, Robotics, Parallel Knowledge Processing, Computer Vision, Brain Simulation, Parallel Computing, Computer Architecture, Computer Networks and Distributed Systems, Computer Networks and Distributed Systems Performance, VLSI Design and Test, VLSI/CAD, Database, Software Engineering, and Computer Animation. Each lab is run by one or more faculties and each has a wide variety of equipment. Most laboratories have SUN Ultra 5 and Ultra 10 workstations, some have IBM Risc System workstations and servers, Symbolics Lisp machines, Hewlett Packard workstations, etc. In addition to the individual research laboratory facilities, the department and graduate students have access to a SUN Ultra 10 and Pentium

III, 128 MB RAM computers, which is used for homework, word processing, and general departmental administration. The graduate students have a private laboratory that contains a variety of SUN workstations, plus personal computers including Pentium III, and Apple Macintosh machines. Laser printers are available for output. All machines are connected to the local 10 Mbps ethernet network having a fiber backbone, and to the Internet, providing access to researchers around the world.

COMPUTER SCIENCE GRADUATE ORGANIZATION (CSGO):

In Spring of 1990 the Computer Science Graduate Organization (CSGO) was formed to improve the quality of research and academic life for graduate students in our department. In support of this, we provide a formal method of communication between the faculty and the graduate students, both by having representatives at faculty meetings, and on most major departmental committees--including admissions and faculty search committees. We also work to promote the professional and social development of the students and facilitate interaction between the faculty and students in a relaxed atmosphere. For further information regarding CSGO e-mail "csgo@pollux.usc.edu".

TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION:

The School of Engineering permits a master's student in Computer Science to receive a maximum of 4 transfer units of graduate credit. All graduate courses taken elsewhere for which the student wishes to petition transfer of credit should be of "500" level or above, be of quality of "B" or better and have course content directly related with computer science. Transfer units count as credit (CR) toward the master's degree and are not computed in the grade point average. All transfers are subject to evaluation by the Computer Science Department and the Office of Admissions of the University. Transfer courses must be taken no more than seven years prior to the student's graduation date. Once accepted to the program, the student must initiate the action by filing out a "Request for Transfer of Credit" form available in the department office. This form must be submitted along with an Admission Credit Evaluation form available from the Degree Progress Department.

TRANSFER TO COMPUTER SCIENCE FROM ANOTHER USC GRADUATE PROGRAM:

Students enrolled in other M.S. programs at USC who wish to transfer into Computer Science should see the CS Department advisor for consultation. Students currently not enrolled in the School of Engineering must fill out a supplemental application form available at the Admissions office.

EXEMPTION FROM REQUIRED COURSES:

A student who is proficient in a required course, e.g., by having had an equivalent one elsewhere, may be excused from taking that course. The student

must present evidence of his or her proficiency and then acquire a written waiver from a faculty advisor. Exemption from a course is not equivalent to the awarding of credit. Thus, if one course is waived, the student must take another course in its place.

MAINTENANCE OF MINIMUM GRADE-POINT AVERAGE:

A minimum grade-point average of 3.0 must be maintained for all 400-level and above course work undertaken at USC leading to the M.S. degree. A minimum grade of C (2.0) is required in all courses for graduate credit. In addition, students must have achieved a grade of "B" or better on all units taken elsewhere for which transfer credit is requested.

DISTANCE EDUCATION NETWORK (DEN):

The University's School of Engineering, of which the Computer Science Department is a part, televises a number of its most popular courses live via the Distance Education Network. This network allows students to take all core graduate computer science courses, as well as many electives, at remote sites both in and outside the Los Angeles area, including most of the local aerospace installations. For further information on the television program, contact the Distance Education Network Office at (213) 740-0114, or check the DEN website at <http://den.usc.edu>.

FINANCIAL AID:

Unfortunately, there is little financial assistance available directly from the Computer Science Department to support master's study. Assistantships and fellowships generally are allocated to students who are working toward Ph.D. degrees. Only in the most extreme circumstances does the department award financial aid to master's candidates. Applicant's interested in university aid, i.e., insured loans, fellowships, and scholarships, should contact the University Financial Aid Office at (213) 740-1111. In addition, The Graduate School also awards certain scholarships and fellowships. Interested students should contact The Graduate School Fellowship division at (213) 740-9056.

ADMISSION CREDIT EVALUATION:

Once a student is admitted and has certified his/her intent to enroll, the Degree Programs Department will prepare a Credit Evaluation for the student. Generally this is done during the first semester of enrollment if your admission file is complete and final transcripts verifying the baccalaureate degree have been received by the Office of Admissions. This document, prepared by the University Admissions Office, is the final step in the admissions process. Its purpose is to verify that the student has received a bachelor's degree and to list any coursework available for transfer credit. Therefore, it is important that the student provide a complete official transcript if one has not already been submitted to the Admissions Office.

GUIDANCE:

The student's program of study for the Master's degree is subject to the approval of an advisor. Staff and faculty advisors are available to counsel students on a first-come, first-served basis during registration and at their respective office hours during the regular school year. A continuing student in the M.S. program may have his or her Permit to Register approved in classes for which all prerequisites have been met, as long as a departmental advisor form has been filled out by the student and initialed by an advisor. However, the student is held responsible for course decisions made without prior advisor consultation. Similarly, although it is sometimes possible to register for courses at remote television sites without prior approval, it is the responsibility of the student to make certain that such coursework is appropriate for the M.S. program.

THE PH.D. DEGREE:

If the Ph.D. is the ultimate degree objective, the applicant should contact the Computer Science Department Ph.D. Advisor as soon as possible. Failure to do so at the beginning of the first semester of graduate work could seriously jeopardize the applicant's chances of being successfully screened into the Ph.D. program.

TIME SCHEDULE:

It is expected that students who do not have to take any deficiency courses will be able to complete this program in 2-3 semesters of intensive full-time study. All requirements for the Master's degree must be completed within five calendar years from the date on which the student is granted graduate standing. Those students planning to attempt the program on a part-time basis should keep in mind that computer science courses are generally not offered in the evening nor are they offered during the summer session.

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REQUIREMENTS, PLEASE VISIT:**

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For questions regarding the Computer Science program, please contact:

Student Advisor of Master Program: shirley.chan@usc.edu or (213) 740-4496

****Do not send applications to Viterbi School or Computer Science Department****

****All applications must be reviewed by the Office of Admission of USC before they are forwarded to the appropriate departments****

GENERAL ADMISSIONS INFORMATION

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS:

Admission to the University is determined by the Computer Science Department and the University Office of Admissions is highly competitive. General requirements for admission to the graduate program are the same as those for the School of Engineering as described in the School of Engineering Bulletin of the University. The following are basic requirements:

- A bachelor's degree in computer science, mathematics or engineering from an accredited college or university.
- Satisfactory results on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Applicants must take the General Aptitude Test. The Advanced Computer Science, Mathematics, or Engineering Area Test is recommended but not required. Test scores over five years old will not be considered. General test information and testing dates can be obtained from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) at (609) 921-9000. (www.ets.org)

- Substantial background in computing (the equivalent of USC's undergraduate courses CS 101, CS 102, CS 201, EE 101, EE 357 constitute a minimum requirement) and must have completed several courses in college level mathematics (at minimum one discrete mathematics course and one year of calculus). Students lacking these prerequisites **must** complete them at other institutions before applying to USC. In addition, students lacking breadth in Computer Science are required to take certain deficiency courses upon admission to the program. It is highly recommended that all the deficiency courses are completed before filing an application for admission.
- Intellectual promise indicating the ability to perform high level graduate work in a rigorous academic atmosphere.
- International students are required to take the Test of English as a Second Language (TOEFL). This requirement applies to anyone who is a native of a foreign country who does not meet the minimum standard on the verbal section of the GRE. Prior coursework in the U.S. will not be considered adequate to waive this requirement. Information on this test can also be obtained from ETS.

Because of the high degree of competition present, the applicant should make certain that he or she meets all of the required prerequisites *BEFORE* applying to the master's program. *THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT ADMIT STUDENTS IN PROBATIONARY STATUS; APPLICANTS WITHOUT ADEQUATE BACKGROUND AND/OR VALID TEST SCORES WILL BE REJECTED.* Since GRE and TOEFL scores usually take at least six weeks to process, the applicant should plan his or her test date(s) accordingly. It is the applicant's responsibility to make certain scores are received by the university Office of Graduate Admission by the deadline date.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

Formal application for admission to the School of Engineering is made through the University Office of Graduate Admission. *IN ADDITION TO FILING AN APPLICATION AND THE REQUIRED FEE, THE APPLICANT MUST REQUEST THE REGISTRAR OF EACH COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY ATTENDED TO FORWARD ONE OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF RECORD DIRECTLY TO THE OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS AT THE ADDRESS PRINTED ON THE APPLICATION.* USC does not take responsibility for the collection of transcripts-*NOT EVEN THOSE OF CURRENT OR PAST USC STUDENTS. ALL OFFICIAL GRE AND TOEFL SCORES MUST BE SENT BY ETS TO THE ADMISSIONS OFFICE.*

All required documents should be forwarded directly to the University Office of Graduate Admission at the following address (**DO NOT MAIL ANY DOCUMENTS TO THE COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT**):

USC Office of Admission
GRADUATE
University Park Campus
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0915

NOTE: Any materials sent via FedEx, DHL or other express mail services must be addressed to:

USC Office of Admission
3601 South Flower Street
Tyler 1
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0911

The set of documents should include:

1. One official copy of all college or university transcripts (required);
2. An official copy of the applicant's GRE scores (required);
3. An official copy of the applicant's TOEFL score (required for international students only).

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF ADMISSION RECEIVE ALL OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED MATERIALS BEFORE ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATION CAN BE GIVEN TO THE APPLICANT'S FILE. Therefore, it is in the applicant's best interest to make certain that all documents are received by the earliest date possible. While applications are considered as they become complete, the deadline for filing application materials is **JUNE 15** for Fall semester and **OCTOBER 1** for the following Spring semester for MS applicants. No personal interview is necessary.

FOR GRADUATE ADMISSIONS APPLICATION, PLEASE VISIT (DO NOT MAIL ANY DOCUMENTS TO THE COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT):

<http://www.usc.edu/admission/graduate/apply/>

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GRADUATE
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