

UMCES Graduate Assistant Academic Quick Facts

Updated July 2022

Item	Source, Website, or Email Address
General Information	
UMCES Student Resources	https://www.umces.edu/graduate-program-myumces
UMCES Graduate Student Council	Membership: https://www.umces.edu/graduate-student-council Email address: gradstudentcouncil@umces.edu
Policy on Academic Integrity	http://www.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionIII/III100.pdf
UMCP Graduate Assistantship Policies (appointments, duties, tuition and fees, FICA)	UMCP Graduate Assistantship Policy: https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/policies-graduate-assistantships/
UMCP Graduate Catalog (policies and procedures)	https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/
UMCES Policy on Graduate Assistantships	http://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/III711UMCES_0.pdf
Thesis Examining Committee Membership	https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/masters-degrees-policies/
Dissertation Committee Membership	https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/doctoral-degrees-policies/
Filing of Thesis or Dissertation	https://gradschool.umd.edu/students/academic-progress/thesis-and-dissertation-filing
Courses, Research Credits, and Registration	
Course Registration	Testudo: https://testudo.umd.edu
MEES Course Catalog	http://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/Course%20Catalog_8july2022.pdf
MEES Course Syllabi	https://www.umces.edu/mees-course-syllabi
Registration Policies	UMCP Graduate School Website: https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/registration-policies/
Deadlines and Calendars	
Registration and graduation dates and deadlines	https://gradschool.umd.edu/calendar
UMCP Academic Calendar	https://provost.umd.edu/node/3846
UMCES Holiday Calendar	Found here: https://www.umces.edu/human-resources
Forms and Requirements	
MEES Forms	https://www.mees.umd.edu/mees-forms-1-1-1
Additional Graduate School Forms	https://gradschool.umd.edu/forms
MEES Doctoral Requirements	https://www.mees.umd.edu/current-doc-req-1
MEES Masters Requirements	https://www.mees.umd.edu/current-ms-req-1
Mutual Expectations Form	http://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/UMCES%20Mutual%20Expectations%20Rev2.pdf

FAQs

1. What is full time status and how do I maintain it if necessary?

A Graduate Assistant is on an academic appointment not involving academic tenure. The appointment may be full-time (20 hours per week) or half-time (10 hours per week). Full time GAs are required to be signed up for at least 48 units per semester. Assistantships are worth 24 units. GAs holding regular 20-hour appointments are considered full-time students by the University if they are registered for at least 24 units in a semester term or 18 units in a 12-week term program. Please see this link for more information, including calculation of units: <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/registration-policies/>

2. I am a Ph.D. student coming in with credits from a master's program. Can I use those course credits toward my Ph.D. degree?

Credits used to obtain a M.S. degree at UMD or elsewhere cannot be transferred to the Ph.D. program. However, if a student has completed a M.S. degree or partially completed a degree, up to 16 credits of appropriate courses can be waived **with approval of the student's advisory committee**. Students are not able to substitute or waive a foundation course, the Applied Environmental Science course, or the Issue Study Group. Please fill out [this form](#) when deciding which previous courses to use toward your degree.

3. There is a block on my account when I go to register for classes. How do I remove this block so that I can register?

There are a variety of reasons you may have a block on your account when registering for courses. Periodically, students might not have fully submitted their immunization records or there are charges from previous semesters that are still unpaid. For more information on account blocks, please see this website: <http://registrar.umd.edu/current/registration/registration.html#blocks> Contact Amy Griffin or the MEES Office if you need further assistance.

4. What are research credits and when should I sign up for them?

Masters students should use MEES799 strategically throughout their duration in the MEES Program, making sure to leave 1 credit of MEES 799 for the semester they graduate (if not taking courses). You cannot graduate without meeting the requirement of 6 credits of MEES799.

MEES898 is pre-candidacy research for doctoral students and should be used for continuous registration when the student is not taking a course but has not reached candidacy. The registrar automatically signs Ph.D. candidates up for MEES899. You need 12 credits of MEES899 to graduate, and each semester of candidacy, a student is signed up for 6 credits of 899.

For both masters and Ph.D. students, you will sign up for the section that corresponds to your advisor. Please visit this [website](#) or contact your advisor if you are unsure for which section you should sign up. Co-advised students should sign up for their primary advisor's research section number.

5. As a doctoral student, there are two research credits (MEES898 and MEES899). What is the difference in these research credits?

MEES898 is pre-candidacy research for doctoral students and should be used for continuous registration when the student is not taking a course but has not reached candidacy. The registrar automatically signs Ph.D. candidates up for MEES899. You need 12 credits of MEES899 to graduate, and each semester of candidacy, a student is signed up for 6 credits of 899. Please note, MEES899 has a flat tuition fee. Please see this website for

an explanation of MEES899 charges: <https://billpay.umd.edu/tuition-billing-tuition-and-fees/phd-candidacy-tuition-and-fees>

In exceptional cases, in which a student is able to defend the dissertation before completing 12 credits of 899, this requirement can be satisfied by completing a combined total of 12 credits of 898 (pre-candidacy dissertation research) and 899. Students must petition the Graduate School if they wish to use MEES898 credits to satisfy their required twelve 899 credits.

6. What are the guidelines for the formation of my committee? Am I allowed to have non-UMCES or non-UMCP graduate faculty committee members and can they hold non-academic positions?

The M.S. Committee will include a minimum of three members of the Graduate Faculty, at least two of whom will be Full Members (on the graduate faculty at UMCES or UMCP). The Chair of the Committee normally will be the student's advisor, who will be a Full or Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty, or who has been granted an exception to the policy by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The Ph.D. Committee must include a minimum of five members of the Graduate Faculty, at least three of whom must be Full Members. The Chair of the Committee normally will be the student's advisor, who will be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty, or who has been granted an exception to the policy by the Dean of the Graduate School. Each Committee will have appointed to it a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean's Representative may be one of the five voting members. Alternatively, the Dean's Representative may not be a voting member of the Committee. Whether the Dean's Representative votes or not is a decision made by the student, primary advisor and the Dean's Representative before the Dean's Representative is nominated for approval by the Dean of The Graduate School. In addition, the Dean will ensure that there are five voting members on the Committee. Therefore, Committees that have a non-voting Dean's Representative must have at least six members (five voting members and the non-voting Dean's Representative.)

Outside committee members do not need to hold current academic positions (for example, they may be employed by NASA or NOAA). Non-UMCES or non-UMCP Graduate Faculty committee members will need to submit an up-to-date CV and their birth date to the MEES Office.

*Note: if you are co-advised, your second advisor counts as one of the members of your committee.

7. Do all of my committee members have to be present at my milestone meetings?

M.S. Students: The UMCP Graduate School policy is that normally all members of a Thesis Examining Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances. Remote participation by video teleconferencing is permitted under circumstances outlined on the UMCP website: <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/masters-degrees-policies/>

Ph.D. Students: For the oral portion of your comprehensive exam and your dissertation proposal defense, ALL Research Advisory Committee members must be present either in person or remotely. Per policy of MEES for the doctoral comprehensive exam and for the dissertation proposal defense, permission for remote participation must be requested from the MEES Director at least two weeks prior to the event.

Dissertation Defense: Under normal circumstances, all members of a Dissertation Examining Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire dissertation defense and during the committee's

private deliberations following the examination. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances. Remote participation by video teleconferencing is permitted under circumstances outlined on the UMCP website: <https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/policies/doctoral-degrees-policies/>

8. Do I need to be registered for credits the semester I defend? What if I am a summer or winter graduate?

Yes. It is the requirement of the graduate school that all students must have continuous registration. If all of your coursework is complete and your research credits are fulfilled, you will still need to sign up for one research credit the semester you plan to defend and graduate.

Summer Graduation

Students planning to defend and graduate during the summer semester will need to be registered for one credit during one summer session. If a GRA, tuition will be covered by tuition remission, but students are required to pay the summer fees as outlined [here](#). Students will follow the [graduation deadlines](#) outlined by UMD. If you are unable to meet the summer deadlines, all thesis or dissertation edits are due the last business day before the first day of classes of the fall semester, otherwise, you will have to register the fall semester.

Winter Graduation

Since there is no winter graduation, the students who are defending during the winter would follow the Spring Deadlines typically found [here](#). If a student is trying to receive the waiver of registration for spring semester, then everything should be submitted by the last business day before the Spring semester begins.

If a Ph.D. student plans to defend during the summer semester, the student will have to be registered with at least one credit (though more if needed) of MEES899. Students pay per credit based on the tuition rates outlined here: https://oes.umd.edu/sites/oes.umd.edu/files/OES/Summer/ss20_tuition_fees_worksheet.pdf

9. What is the date for the final submission of my thesis or dissertation so that I do not have to sign up for a credit the following semester?

All edits are due the last business day before the first day of classes of the next semester, otherwise, you will have to register the following semester. Per the UMCP Graduate School, "As long as your academically complete document is submitted by the deadline (even without correct Graduate School formatting), it is considered to have met the deadline." We recommend submission a few business days before to ensure everything gets processed on time. Stay in close contact with the registrar's office to ensure your material was received after submission. Please see this website for more information: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/students/academic-progress/thesis-and-dissertation-filing>

10. I am currently an M.S. student and I want to transition to a Ph.D. program in MEES. What is the procedure to do this?

All students switching degree programs must re-apply to the MEES Program. In the new application, they are looking for a new personal statement that reflects the change in goals. Instead of three letters of recommendation, the office will accept one letter of recommendation that is from their master's committee and the student's M.S. and Ph.D. advisor(s). An up-to-date transcript, the initial advisory committee meeting report, and research proposal for the M.S. program must be on file with the MEES Office.

Students who are finishing their M.S. degree and want to start a Ph.D. program, also within MEES, must also re-apply to the program. A new application and statement must be submitted for the Ph.D. including a letter of recommendation from your M.S. advisor and your Ph.D. advisor. If these are the same person one letter will

suffice – no additional transcripts or test scores are required, however, a current and up-to-date transcript must be on file with MEES. Up to 16 credits from the M.S. program can be applied to waive the 24 course credit requirement in the Ph.D. program.

11. How do I change from one foundation area to another?

A current and up-to-date transcript must be on file with MEES. A letter of support for the switch of Foundation Area must be signed by the student’s advisor and submitted to MEES. Upon approval, MEES will send the student’s entire file to the new Foundation Area for review to confirm that the student meets its requirements. The new Foundation Area will render its decision to the student, advisor, and the MEES Office.

Please do not hesitate to contact Amy Griffin (agriffin@umces.edu / 410-326-7211) or the MEES Office (mees@umd.edu / 301-405-6938) if you have any questions.