Mechanical Engineering, PhD

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering

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director of graduate studies: Petros Sofronis
overview of admissions & requirements: https://mechanical.illinois.edu/graduate/applying-mechse-graduate-programs
overview of grad college admissions & requirements: https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply
department website: https://mechanical.illinois.edu/
program website: https://mechanical.illinois.edu/graduate/graduate-degree-programs/phd-programs
department faculty: https://mechanical.illinois.edu/people
college website: https://grainger.illinois.edu/
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The Department of Mechanical Science & Engineering offers both a traditional doctoral program (for students with a previous master’s degree) and a direct doctoral program (for students with only a bachelor’s degree) in Mechanical Engineering.

Opportunity exists for specializing in i) biomechanics via the Biomechanics (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/biomechanics/) optional graduate concentration, ii) cancer nanotechnology via the Cancer Nanotechnology (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/cancer-nanotechnology/) optional graduate concentration, and iii) computational science and engineering via the Computational Science & Engineering (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/computational-science-engineering/) optional graduate concentration.

Admission Requirements

An applicant for admission to the PhD program in Mechanical Engineering in Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering must:

1. Be a graduate of an institution awarding a baccalaureate degree equivalent to that granted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign;
2. Be adequately prepared for advanced study as demonstrated by his or her previous program of study and scholastic record; and
3. Be recommended for admission by the Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering. A minimum grade point average of 3.25 (A = 4.00) for the last two years of undergraduate study is required, and a minimum grade point average of 3.50 (A = 4.00) is required for any previous graduate work completed.

Scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) (http://www.ets.org/) general test are required of all applicants. Based upon the previous preparation of the student, prerequisite courses may be specified by the advisor, but the credit may not be applied toward a degree.

All applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit TOEFL (http://www.toefl.org/) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (http://www.ielts.org/) scores as evidence of English proficiency. Minimum admission requirements (https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/instructions/04c/) are set by the Graduate College.

The Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering accepts PhD applications for both Spring and Fall terms.

Financial Aid

Students admitted to the PhD program are eligible for Board of Trustees (BOT) tuition-waiver generating appointments at the University of Illinois, including research assistantships, teaching assistantships, and fellowships. Starting in Fall 2020, Grainger Engineering PhD students in their first five years of enrollment who meet the minimum eligibility requirements (https://grainger.illinois.edu/academics/graduate/phd-funding-guarantee/) are guaranteed a funded appointment for fall and spring that includes a full tuition waiver, a partial fee waiver, and a stipend.

All applicants whose native language is not English, regardless of US citizenship, who wish to be considered for teaching assistantships must demonstrate spoken English language proficiency (http://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/taengprof.htm) by achieving a minimum score of 24 on the speaking subsection of the TOEFL IBT or 8.0 on the speaking subsection of the IELTS. Students who are already at Illinois may request to take the on-campus EPI test (http://cte.illinois.edu/testing/oral_eng/epi_overview.html), for which the minimum passing score for TA eligibility is 4CP. All new teaching assistants are required to participate in the Graduate Academy for College Teaching (https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/grad-academy-for-college-teaching/) prior to the start of their first semester as a teaching assistant.
Graduate Teaching Experience
Although teaching is not a general Graduate College requirement, experience in teaching is considered an important part of the graduate experience in both the ME and TAM PhD programs.

Department Research
A new paradigm in research is being created in the department by integrating basic sciences such as biology, chemistry, applied mathematics, and applied physics with the traditional mechanical engineering and engineering mechanics disciplines of fluid mechanics/thermal sciences, solid mechanics/materials and controls/dynamics. This integration is fostering new directions and discoveries in nanomechanics, nanomanufacturing, biomechanics and computational science and engineering.

The goal of all research in the department is to address critical societal problems in the areas of health, security/defense, energy/environment, manufacturing, and transportation. While the basic function of departmental research is generation of new knowledge, a growing number of projects are prompted by current needs of the state of Illinois, the United States, and the world. For more information, see the department’s research Web site (https://mechanical.illinois.edu/research/).

MechSE faculty are major participants in activities at the department, college, and university level via research centers and programs that are integral to the MechSE graduate program. For more information, see the department’s research centers Web site (https://mechanical.illinois.edu/mechse-research-centers/).

MechSE’s wealth of research laboratories allows faculty, graduate and undergraduate research assistants, and postdoctoral and visiting scholars to conduct theoretical and experimental investigations of phenomena related to materials behavior, combustion, micro- and nanomechanical systems, controls and dynamics, thermodynamics, biomechanics, and much more. For more information, see the department’s research laboratories Web site (https://mechanical.illinois.edu/research/mechse-laboratories/).

Other Graduate Programs in the Department of Mechanical Science & Engineering

degree programs:

Mechanical Engineering, MENG (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/mechanical-engineering-meng/)

optional concentrations:
Biomechanics (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/biomechanics/) | Cancer Nanotechnology (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/cancer-nanotechnology/)

Mechanical Engineering, MS (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/mechanical-engineering-ms/)

Theoretical & Applied Mechanics, MS (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/theoretical-applied-mechanics-ms/)

Theoretical & Applied Mechanics, PhD (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/theoretical-applied-mechanics-phd/)

optional concentrations for MS and PhD programs:

Biomechanics (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/biomechanics/) | Cancer Nanotechnology (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/cancer-nanotechnology/) | Computational Science & Engineering (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/computational-science-engineering/)

optional concentration for the PhD:

Data Science & Engineering (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/engineering/concentration/data-science-engineering/)

Opportunity also exists for specializing in energy and sustainability engineering via the Energy and Sustainability Engineering (EaSE) Graduate Certificate Option (http://ease.illinois.edu/)

Information listed in this catalog is current as of 05/2022