

Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures for Graduate Admissions

1st Edition
Approved June 2010

1. Overview

This document presents guidelines, policies, and procedures for graduate admissions in the Civil Engineering Department. Admission requirements for graduate study at Cal Poly Pomona are set so that admitted students will have a high probability of success in graduate-level academic work. Students are selected on the basis of academic performance and preparation, as assessed by the review of completed preparatory courses for the emphasis area of study desired. An applicant may be admitted to the graduate program in the category of unconditional admission or conditional admission as described in this document. Meeting the minimum requirements does not ensure graduate admission, which is limited by the number of places and the amount of student support available in the Cal Poly Pomona MSCE graduate program.

The department, in general, discourages the duplication of advanced degrees in the same field. Students who apply for a second academic degree at the same level or lower than the one they already hold are required to show compelling cause to the department.

2. Unconditional Admission

Students admitted must be ready to immediately begin graduate studies in civil engineering. A minimum of 45 quarter units (equivalent to 30 semester units) is required for the MSCE degree.

Unconditional admission normally requires satisfying all of the following requirements:

- BSCE degree or equivalent from an ABET accredited program
- Overall GPA ≥ 3.0
- Preparatory coursework GPA ≥ 3.0
(See Section 4 for the specified preparatory coursework for each emphasis area)
- Satisfy English proficiency requirements as stated in Section 5.1

For applicants who do not satisfy all of the above, GRE scores will be required as stated in Section 5.2.

Unconditional admission also may be granted in other cases, such as:

- Applicants with a BSCE degree from a foreign university that is comparable to an ABET-accredited program
- Applicants with a BSCE degree whose GPA is at least 2.75, but who have other professional accomplishments such as being a licensed professional engineer, completion of noteworthy projects, a record of scholarly publications, etc.
- Applicants with a BSCE degree who are licensed structural engineers or licensed geotechnical engineers in California
- Applicants who have successfully completed a total of 12 units of graduate-level coursework as undergraduates or through Open University and received grades of B or better.

3. Conditional Admission

Applicants who do not qualify for unconditional admission may be considered for conditional admission. Conditional admission is made only if there are special circumstances or extenuating conditions, depending upon the number of applicants and their quality and if there are sufficient and appropriate resources available to support the needs of the students.

Students admitted conditionally will be required to satisfy certain specified conditions in order to continue in the program. In some cases the conditions consist of completing additional preparatory coursework, while in other cases they might consist of satisfying certain academic expectations.

Applicants who are considered for conditional admission are required to submit their GRE scores. See Section 5.2 for the requirement of GRE scores. In addition, two recommendation letters will be required.

3.1. Applicants With ABET Accredited BSCE Degree

Successful applicants normally will have an undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0. We sometimes also conditionally admit applicants with a slightly lower GPA if other parts of their application are particularly strong.

Admitted students under this category typically are required to complete their first 12 units of graduate-level coursework with a GPA of at least 3.0.

Applicants with an ABET accredited BSCE, but who have not completed undergraduate courses in their technical emphasis area comparable to required courses for Cal Poly Pomona BSCE students, or those who have low grades in individual courses may be required to complete appropriate undergraduate courses with a B or better as one of the conditions.

3.2. Applicants Without ABET Accredited BSCE Degree

Applicants who do not have an ABET accredited BSCE degree, but who do have a closely-related degree will be considered for conditional admission.

3.2.1. **Applicants with a BSCE Degree From a Foreign Institution**

The evaluation of applicants who have a BSCE degree from a foreign institution requires considerable judgment. All graduate applications whose native language is not English and who hold a bachelor's degree from a college or university where the principal language of instruction was not English must demonstrate competence in English. Applicants must request official results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to be submitted directly to the Admissions Office at Cal Poly Pomona as part of the application package prior to be considered admission. See Section 5.1 for the requirement of TOEFL scores.

In some cases, applicants with excellent academic records from well-regarded programs may be granted unconditional admission. Others may be granted conditional admission, typically with a requirement that the first 12 units of graduate coursework be completed with a GPA of at least 3.0.

3.2.2. **Applicants with a BSCE Degree From Non-ABET Accredited US Institutions**

Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution comparable in standard and content to that awarded at Cal Poly Pomona. Applicants with a non-ABET accredited BSCE degree from a regionally accredited institution will be considered for conditional admission on a case-by-case basis.

3.2.3. **Applicants with a Bachelor's Degree in a Closely-Related Discipline**

Applicants with a bachelor's degree in other fields of engineering, architecture, urban planning, geology, or other closely-related disciplines will be considered for conditional admission on a case-by-case basis.

4. Preparatory Coursework Expectations

4.1. Preparatory Coursework Expectations for Geotechnical Engineering Emphasis

Students in the geotechnical engineering emphasis are expected to have the following preparatory coursework, either before entering the MSCE program, or as part of a conditional admission.

Mathematics and Science

College-level math and science courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: MAT 114, 115, 116, and 214, MAT 216 or 224, STA 309 or IME 301, PHY 131/L, and CHM 121/L

Engineering Mechanics

Courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: ME 214, 215, 218, and 311

Geotechnical Engineering

Courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: CE 325, 326, and 327L

The above preparatory coursework should have a GPA of 3.0 or higher for admission requirement.

4.2. Preparatory Coursework Expectations for Structural Engineering Emphasis

Students in the structural engineering emphasis are expected to have the following preparatory coursework, either before entering the MSCE program, or as part of a conditional admission:

Mathematics and Science

College-level math and science courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: MAT 114, 115, 116, and 214, MAT 216 or 224, and PHY 131/L

Engineering Mechanics

Courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: ME 214, 215, and 218

Structural Engineering

Courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: CE 304, CE 305, CE 406, and CE 421

The above preparatory coursework should have a GPA of 3.0 or higher for admission requirement.

4.3. Preparatory Coursework Expectations for Transportation Engineering Emphasis

Students in the Transportation engineering emphasis are expected to have the following preparatory coursework, either before entering the MSCE program, or as part of a conditional admission:

Mathematics and Science

College-level math and science courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: MAT 114, 115, 116, and 214, MAT 216 or 224, STA 309 or IME 301, and PHY 131/L

Engineering Mechanics

Courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly course: ME 218

Transportation Engineering

Courses equivalent to the following Cal Poly courses: CE 222/L and CE 223/L

The above preparatory coursework should have a GPA of 3.0 or higher for admission requirement.

5. Test Requirements

5.1 English Proficiency Requirements

All applicants must meet at least one of the following English proficiency requirements:

- Hold a bachelor's degree from a university where the principal language of instruction was English
- Have acceptable TOEFL scores as follows:
 - Paper Based ≥ 550
 - Computer Based ≥ 213
 - Internet Based ≥ 80

5.2. GRE Scores

Although not all applicants may be required to submit GRE scores, the following minimum GRE scores are considered acceptable:

- Verbal Reasoning ≥ 460
- Quantitative Reasoning ≥ 715

6. Review Process

MSCE applications received in the Civil Engineering Department shall be processed as follows:

1. The Administrative Support Coordinator shall prepare a packet with the following documents:
 - Application cover sheet
 - Application
 - Transcripts
 - Test scores if applicable
 - Other relevant documents, as appropriate
2. The Administrative Support Coordinator shall input the application information into the civil engineering graduate student database, and forward the application to the Graduate Coordinator.
3. The graduate coordinator shall conduct an initial review and determine if any critical information is missing.
4. The Graduate Coordinator will include an application review routing sheet in the packet, and indicate the technical area on the routing sheet. The Graduate Coordinator will make any other annotations as needed, and will forward the packet to the faculty in that area.
5. The reviews by the department must be done in a timely manner. At least two faculty members in the technical area shall review the packet and indicate their recommendation on the routing sheet. Each reviewer shall complete the review within three working days. The last reviewer shall return the packet to the graduate coordinator. The graduate coordinator will forward the reviewed applications to the Department Chair.

6. The Department Chair shall review the faculty recommendations. If there is a consensus and the chair concurs, he/she will process the application accordingly. If there are substantive differences between the various reviews, the chair, the graduate coordinator and the faculty will reevaluate the application and make a decision.
7. The Administrative Support Coordinator will then:
 - Input the admissions decision into the civil engineering database.
 - Send an acceptance or denial letter to the applicant. Conditions of admission, if any, will be noted in the letter.
 - Send the cover sheet to the Graduate Admissions Office.