

COMPUTER SCIENCE MS

Degree Requirements

The following requirements are in addition to, or further elaborate upon, those requirements outlined in The Graduate School Policy Guide (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/>).

Master's

Total Units Required: 12

Prerequisites: Prior to their first quarter of study, MS students in Computer Science must take a preliminary exam covering topics in our undergraduate CS core sequence (COMP_SCI 111-0, COMP_SCI 211-0, COMP_SCI 212-0, COMP_SCI 213-0, COMP_SCI 214-0). The preliminary exam is offered only once per year in the week before *New Graduate Student Fall Registration* begins. This exam is not available to BS/MS students, or to transfers from another degree program.

Each student pursuing an MS degree in the Computer Science Department must declare their intention on the Graduate Student Tracking System (<https://gsts.northwestern.edu/site/login/>) (GSTS) to follow one of these three plans:

- a) Thesis MS Degree, or
- b) Project MS Degree, or
- c) Course MS Degree.

The three options are summarized below. The student's declaration is subject to approval by their adviser. We recommend that this declaration be made during the second (winter) quarter, but we require that it be made no later than the middle of their third academic quarter, e.g., May 1st for those beginning in fall.

Course	Title
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Course Requirements

Twelve (12) units of graduate-level credits are required for the CS MS degree.

At least six (6) units of the 12 units must be COMP_SCI classes (excludes both COMP_SCI 499-0 and COMP_SCI 590-0 - these are not classes).

At most six (6) of the 12 units can be courses other than COMP_SCI classes. Such courses must be approved in advance.

At least three (3) of the 12 units must be courses at 400-level or above (includes COMP_SCI 499-0, but excludes COMP_SCI 590-0). Approved non-COMP_SCI 400-level courses can satisfy this requirement.

Plan A: Thesis MS Degree

Total Units Required: 12

In this plan, a student declares their intent to earn the MS degree by completing a formal thesis that reports substantial original research results. A maximum of three units of COMP_SCI 590-0 research credit can be counted toward the 12-unit requirement for the Thesis MS degree. Successful completion of this degree includes all coursework, formation of, and reporting by, an MS Examination Committee, and written approval of the student's completed thesis by that committee.

Plan B: Project MS Degree

Total Units Required: 12

In this plan, a student declares their intent to earn the MS degree by completing a project and writing a project report that contains results based on existing theory and techniques, or results of a significant

experimental verification. A maximum of two units of COMP_SCI 590-0 research credit can be counted toward the 12-unit requirement for the MS Project degree. Successful completion of this degree includes all coursework, formation of, and reporting by, an MS Examination Committee, and written approval of the student's completed project report by that committee.

Plan C: Courses-only MS Degree

Total Units Required: 12

In this plan, the student must satisfactorily complete 12-courses approved by the student's adviser. The choice of courses must represent a coherent program of study, and must prepare the student for advanced work in a specific field selected in coordination with the adviser.