Introduction
The purpose of this guide is to provide information to graduate students in the Mechanical Engineering (ME) Department on the various policies and procedures that need to be followed from admission through graduation. Topics addressed include academic advising, paperwork and deadlines, and thesis/project preparation instructions.

In the following instructions in this document, it is assumed that the admission process is complete. If your admittance was conditional for any reason, you must satisfy those conditions as soon as possible to avoid graduation delays.

The Department Graduate Advisor is a full-time ME faculty member who is responsible for administration of the Masters Degree programs in mechanical engineering. The best time to consult in-person with the Graduate Advisor is during the office hours. Phone and email can also be used (email is your best option for a quick response). Note that the Graduate Advisor is not required to be in the office during breaks (spring, winter and summer), so try to take care of any business involving the Graduate Advisor during the regular semester sessions to avoid processing delays.

Also, be aware that you must coordinate much of your paperwork through the Graduate Studies and Research Office (GSRO), located in the Student Services Center (SSC) on the first floor of the 10th street Parking Garage. Their phone number is 408-924-2480 and the website at: http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Prospective/Index.html this website contains information you should read regarding general policies and procedures. This site also contains on-line forms you will be able to use, as described below.

Classified and Conditional Admittance Status
Each student must achieve “Classified” standing, as soon as possible and before exceeding a total of 12 units. If you were initially admitted as Conditionally Classified, you will need to achieve
‘Classified’ standing by satisfying all the requirements listed on your notification of admittance that was mailed to you. You must then notify the Graduate Advisor when you have met all the conditions by filling out the Change of Status Form, so that the necessary form can be sent to the GSRO for upgrading your standing to Classified.

**English Requirement**

*Each* graduate student at San José State University must satisfy the University-mandated “Competency in Written English” requirement. This is in *addition* to the TOEFL exam that most international students must take as part of their admission process. The English requirement *must* be satisfied before registering for the Thesis/Project course. The English requirement can be satisfied in the following ways:

- By passing E100W or E200W (either as a graduate student or as an undergraduate student). Students who obtained their B.S. degree from a California State University (CSU) institution automatically satisfy the English requirement. Note that in order to take E100W or E200W, you must take the Writing Skills Test (WST) the semester *before* you enroll in E100W or E200W. More information on the WST exam can be obtained in the Testing Office and at the website: [http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/Testing/wstbull.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/Testing/wstbull.html)

- By completing an approved course that will satisfy the English Competency requirement. For the list of approved courses visit the Graduate Studies and Research web site: [http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/forms/gwar.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/forms/gwar.pdf)

- By passing the WST exam with a sufficiently high score – see the website [http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/Testing/wstbull.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/depts/Testing/wstbull.html) for the required scores.

- By approval of a petition to waive the English requirement. There are generally two circumstances in which such a petition might be approved:
  1. By passing an upper-division technical writing course (similar to E100W and not an English course) while obtaining your BS degree. To initiate a petition in this area, you must submit a course description, course syllabus, transcript, and sample course materials to the Graduate Advisor. After review and approval by the ME Department, your petition will be forwarded to the college and then to the GSRO. If approved there, your English requirement then becomes satisfied.
  2. By being the sole author of a published document. Technical papers published in archival journals are best; however, work reports that are professionally prepared and exhibit depth and skill in technical report writing will sometimes suffice. Reports done as part of your undergraduate studies (e.g., a senior design project report), or simple, job related reports will not be sufficient. To initiate a petition in this case, consult the department’s Graduate Advisor, he can help you process the petition. If approved by the department advisor, college of engineering, and the Graduate Studies and Research Office, your English requirement then becomes satisfied.

**GRE Requirement**

All Students must take the GRE exam. A combined score of 1,000 is required for the sum of scores on the Verbal and Quantitative sections, and a minimum score of 3.0 in the Analytical Writing Test.
**TOEFL Requirement**
All students applying from non-English speaking countries, where the medium of instruction was not English, must complete the TOEFL exam and obtain a minimum score of 550 (or 213 on computer based test).

**Advising**
Each semester, a computer-generated “hold” is placed on your record. In order to register, you must have the hold removed by being advised by the Graduate Advisor. Each semester, a letter is sent out by the advisor, describing the advising process. These instructions must be followed carefully – if not, you will not have your advising hold removed until the second week of the following semester! For continuing students, absolutely no advising is available during final exam week, winter break, or summer break! Advising forms are available from the department office. (See pages 7 and 8 for a sample of the forms.)

**An important note about course load and grades:** In order to graduate, two grade constraints must be met. First, your overall GPA (including all 100- and 200-level courses taken at SJSU, while enrolled in the MS program) must be 3.0 or higher. Second, your GPA for **just** the thirty units that you use on your Candidacy form (described below) must also be 3.0 or higher. If at any time your overall GPA drops below 3.0, you are placed on **Academic Probation**, until your overall GPA is back to the 3.0 or higher. For example, if you are on Probation and take one course the next semester, you must receive a “B+” or better in that course or else you will then be **disqualified**. Reinstatement from Disqualification requires a minimum of one semester in which you must take six units of 100-level course work that will **not** be applicable to your graduate degree! Therefore, consult with the advisor and select your course load carefully to ensure good grades and avoid Probation/Disqualification!

**Paperwork and Deadlines**
The Graduate Studies and Research Office website maintains a summary of important deadlines you must meet at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Grad_File_Dates.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Grad_File_Dates.html), be sure to consult this page occasionally to ensure you meet all deadlines. It is your responsibility to see that these deadlines are met!

**Candidacy Form**
When you have achieved Classified standing, satisfied the Competency in Written English requirement, and completed at least 9 graduate units, you should file your **Candidacy** form. You can access this form on-line at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Forms.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Forms.html). You should first print a blank copy of the form and fill it out by hand. Then take this draft version to the Graduate Advisor during his office hours for his review. Noting any corrections, return to the web page and carefully fill in the Candidacy form (note you cannot save it – so make sure there are no mistakes or you will have to re-enter it!). Print a final copy and take it to the Graduate Advisor for approval and signature. The Graduate Advisor will then submit it to the GSRO for you. **Note the deadlines:** the Candidacy form must be submitted by October 1 for May graduation and March 1 for December graduation.
Sometime later (typically two or three months), you should receive a letter from the GSRO admitting you to Candidacy. This means your form was approved. If there is a problem with your form, the GSRO will send you a letter describing the problem and advising you to consult with the Graduate Advisor, which you should do immediately. If you do not receive any notification regarding your Candidacy form by the end of the semester in which you submit it, you should contact the GSRO to determine its status.

**Graduate Project/Thesis Proposal**
The semester before you register for your thesis/project course, you must fill out the Graduate Project/Thesis Proposal form, available from the Graduate Advisor or his web site. (See page 10 for a sample of the form). This form must be filled out completely, attached to your proposal and signed by your project/thesis advisor. This form must then be turned into the Graduate Advisor before starting your thesis/project course. The Graduate Advisor will sign the form and then forward it to the department Chair for approval so that you can enroll in the Project/Thesis course. More details on completing your project/thesis are provided below.

**Application for Award of Master’s Degree**
The semester you are scheduled to graduate, you must submit an Application for Award of Master's Degree form by the date specified by the GSRO (usually around the fourth or fifth week of the semester). You can print a copy of this form from the website: http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/forms/awardmd.pdf (this form cannot be filled out on-line like the Candidacy form). The completed form should be submitted directly to the GSRO.

And, as detailed below, you must carefully schedule the completion of your thesis/project to allow sufficient time for your oral defense and for submitting your thesis/project report.

**Completing Thesis/Project Requirements**

**Introduction**
The culminating experience for the MSME degree requires successful completion of the thesis/project requirement. This program entails six units of credit and either may be selected depending on the nature of the work used to fulfill the requirement. The thesis option (Plan A) is selected by taking ME 299 after admission to Candidacy. The project option (Plan B) is selected by taking ME 295A followed by ME 295B. A Graduate Project/Thesis Proposal form must also be submitted and approved by the Mechanical Engineering Department before you can register for ME 299 or ME 295A (see page 10 for a sample of the form). The Graduate Project/Thesis Proposal form may be obtained from the ME Graduate Advisor or his web site and the Admission to Candidacy form may be obtained on-line as described above.

**Selecting an Advisor, Option, and Topic**
While the bulk of the thesis/project work is typically done following completion of several courses towards the degree, it is in the student's best interest to begin his/her thesis/project efforts as early as possible. The first step, best done in the first or second semester of study, is to select an advisor and topic. Students may approach a potential thesis/project advisor with a topic of their choice (e.g., a work-related project) or they may seek suggestions from the faculty member.
The Thesis/Project advisor must be an SJSU faculty member from the Mechanical or Aerospace Engineering Department and will recommend the committee members for the project. In addition, the faculty member must agree to serve as the thesis/project advisor. The thesis/project work may commence after choosing a topic and securing a faculty advisor. The advisor will then also assist in submitting the Graduate Project/Thesis Proposal form. At the completion of the research or project work, a formal thesis or project report, respectively, must be prepared. It is strongly recommended that one semester be allowed for the preparation of the formal written thesis; the project report may be completed in less time but should still be representative of a professionally written document.

Student is also expected to make a final ‘defense’ presentation at the end of each semester.

**Thesis or Project?**
Pursuing the thesis option requires preparation of a formal thesis and can require more time to complete than the project option. The thesis, however, becomes a published document and may be a valuable component of one's professional achievements. Research documented in a thesis will in many cases also lead to a published article in an archival journal. In general, the thesis option is well suited for analytical, numerical, and experimental research topics of a more original nature. Completion of a thesis may also aid in successfully applying for admission to Ph.D. programs at other universities.

The project option typically involves a topic less theoretical and more directly applied in nature than that of the thesis option. Projects frequently entail the assembly or modification of hardware in an experiment workstation and/or software development. Completion of a project demonstrates the ability to apply theoretical concepts to an actual problem and is a valuable achievement for one's professional dossier. The project option may also be used for a research topic that is not appropriate for thesis publication.

**Review of Progress Presentation**
Toward the end of the first semester of thesis/project work, the student must deliver a written report and prepare an oral presentation to his/her committee. This presentation should clearly describe the thesis/project topic, progress to-date, and the plan for completion of the thesis/project during the next semester. The date for all the presentations will be the day before the final exams begins.

Following the presentation, the committee will convene to determine if adequate progress has been made during the first semester. If the committee determines that adequate progress has not been made, then the student will be assigned a grade of No Credit (NC) for ME 299 and an appropriate letter grade for ME 295A. If adequate progress has been made, a grade of Credit (CR) for ME 299 courses and a letter grade for ME 295A courses will be assigned. Those receiving a ‘CR’ or a grade of ‘C’ or better may register for the second semester of her/his thesis/project.

**Preparing the Thesis**
Specific format requirements must be adhered to in preparation of the thesis. The SJSU Catalog provides some information on format requirements. In addition, the document *General
*Instructions for Master's Theses* is available (for free) to aid in thesis preparation from the GSRO. *Form and Style*, by Slade, available at the Spartan Bookstore, is a valuable reference for examples of good thesis form.

In obtaining thesis approval from the GSRO, the student must defend his/her thesis. This is accomplished by a successful oral defense of the thesis work to the student's official committee. This committee must have a minimum of three members, including the faculty advisor as the chair. The other two are typically SJSU faculty (not necessarily from Mechanical Engineering), although one member may be from industry. The oral defense is scheduled by the department on the dead day of the semester. A rough draft of the thesis must also be provided to each committee member two weeks in advance of the defense date. The deadlines for a particular semester of interest are available from the GSRO at [http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Grad_File_Dates.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/Current/Grad_File_Dates.html) and are strictly enforced. Note that a final *bound* copy of the thesis must be given to the advisor (the original must be turned into the GSRO) *and* the department (through the Graduate Advisor). While not required, it is also customary to offer committee members copies as well.

**Preparing the Project Report**

The final report for a project is generally similar to a thesis report. A final bound copy must be given to your committee chair, and if requested, to the committee members.

As in the thesis option, the student is expected to make a formal oral presentation to his/her committee. A rough draft of the project report must also be provided to each committee member two weeks in advance of the defense date. The final hard-bound copies are due to the course instructor and project advisor within three weeks after the semester ends.
Mechanical Engineering Department  
MSME Program of Study Checklist

Name: ___________________________  Student ID #: ___________________
(Last Name, First Name, MI)  
Email Address: ________________________________  Home Phone: ________________
Work Phone: ____________________________  Today’s Date: ________________

Advising for Semester: _________________________

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<th>Units</th>
<th>Semester Completed</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td><strong>Approved Courses</strong></td>
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<td>ME 154</td>
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<td>ME 157 or 182 or 190</td>
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<td><strong>English Competency</strong></td>
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<td>Requirement Course</td>
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*English Competency Requirement could be met by taking E100W, E200W, or any other course approved by the Graduate Studies Office

*My admission to SJSU/ ME/ MS program was:  
☐ Classified  ☐ Conditional

*Conditions for classified admission are satisfied:  
☐ No  ☐ Yes, on: ____________________________

NOTE:  
1. If you are conditionally classified, you cannot exceed a total of 12 units.  
2. You must satisfy the Competency in English requirement before starting your MS Thesis/Project

Approved by Graduate Advisor: ___________________________  Date: ________________
ME Graduation Requirement Checklist
(Must be updated each semester prior to the advising appointment)

*Undergraduate Institution: ________________________________

*Undergraduate Major: ___________________________ GPA: ____________

*GRE Scores: __________ (V) __________ (Q) __________ (A)
(If applicable, otherwise leave it blank)

*Semester admitted to SJSU: ________________

If Conditionally Classified, Date Classified Status Achieved: ________________

Date: “Competency in English” requirement Satisfied: ________________

Date filed for Admission to Candidacy: ________________

Date filed for Graduation: ________________

Thesis/Project Option: ☐ Project ☐ Thesis

Project/Thesis Title: ________________________________

Committee Chair: ________________________________

Committee Members:
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________

For official use only

Advisory notes:
______________________________
______________________________
______________________________
Mechanical Engineering Department
Graduate Project/Thesis Proposal

Name:______________________________ SSN#:_________________________

Date:_____________ Area of Specialization: _______________________

I wish to register for (circle one):
ME 295A/B (Project)
ME 299 (Thesis)

Project/Thesis Title:
_____________________________________
_____________________________________

List of Committee Members:
(Obtain oral approval from each before listing)

<table>
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<th>Thesis</th>
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<td>1.____________________________, Chair</td>
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Thesis/Project Description:
Attach a two to three page description of your project/thesis. Include a description of the current state of your topic, how you will advance that state, what you plan to produce or deliver to justify your effort and a schedule for your work.

Estimated Graduation Date:_________________________
Student Signature:_________________________________ Date:____________

Approved:
Committee Chair:_________________________________ Date:____________
Graduate Advisor:_________________________________ Date:____________
Department Chair:_________________________________ Date:____________