Introduction
The purpose of this guide is to provide information to graduate students in the Mechanical Engineering program 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 Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). This is in *addition* to the TOEFL exam that most international students must take as part of their admission process. The Writing requirement *must* be satisfied before registering for the Thesis/Project course. The Writing 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://testing.sjsu.edu/wst/](http://testing.sjsu.edu/wst/)
- By passing the WST exam with a sufficiently high score – see the website [http://testing.sjsu.edu/wst/wstscores/](http://testing.sjsu.edu/wst/wstscores/) for the required scores.
- By approval of a petition to waive the Writing Assessment 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 GSRO. If approved there, your Writing requirement then becomes satisfied.
  2. By being the sole author of a published refereed technical paper. Technical papers published in archival journals are best; however, work reports that are professionally prepared and exhibit depth and skill in technical report writing may suffice (very rare). 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, contact the Graduate Studies and Research Office, your Writing Assessment requirement then becomes satisfied.

Contact the Graduate Studies Office if you qualify for the waiver.

Note: The Graduate Advisor is not authorized to approve a waiver.
**GRE Requirement**
All applicants who have graduated from non-US institutions or an unaccredited institution are required to 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 2.5 in the Analytical Writing Test. New Test: The minimum combined score must be 312 or better.

**TOEFL Requirement**
All students applying from non-English speaking countries, where the medium of instruction was not English, must complete the TOEFL exam. The university minimum entrance score for the TOEFL is 550 (paper based), 213 (computer based), or 80 (internet based).

**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. For continuing students, absolutely no advising is available during final exam week, winter break, or summer break! Advising form is available from the department office. (See pages 7 and 8 for a sample of the form.)

**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. 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 Graduate advisor and select your course load carefully to insure 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/gape/current_students/deadlines/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/deadlines/index.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/gape/docs/candidacy.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/docs/candidacy.pdf) You should first print a blank copy of the form and fill it out by hand. You must list only 30 credit units (no more no less) that satisfy the MSME program requirements. 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. See page 9 for a sample of the completed Candidacy form. The Graduate Advisor will then submit it to the Graduate Admission and Program Evaluation office (GAPE) 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://slisweb.sjsu.edu/current-students/graduation-application-process-and-forms/application-form The completed form should be submitted to GAPE, as instructed on the form.

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 degrees requires either passing the Comprehensive Exam or successful completion of the thesis/project requirement. The thesis/project options entail 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). 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 Engineering program 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. The final proposal must be evaluated and approved by student’s advisory committee, the graduate advisor, and the department chair. 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 required 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 the presentations is usually 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). If adequate progress has been made, a grade of Credit (CR) will be assigned. Those receiving a ‘CR’ may register for the second semester of 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.

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 and Aerospace Engineering), although one member may be from industry. The oral defense is scheduled by the department. A rough draft of the thesis must also be provided to each committee member two weeks in advance of the defense date. 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)  Work Phone: __________________

Email Address: ___________________________  Home Phone: __________________
Advising for Semester: ___________________________  Today’s Date: __________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Semester Completed</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required Courses</strong> (6 Units)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ME 230</td>
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<td>ME 270 or ME 273</td>
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<td><strong>Approved Courses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Thesis/Project</strong> (6 Units)</td>
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<td>ME 295A or ME 299</td>
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<td>ME 295B or ME 299</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Prerequisite Courses for students with non BSME degree</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>CE 112</td>
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<td>ME 101</td>
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<td>ME 157 or 182 or 190</td>
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<td><strong>English Competency Requirement Course</strong></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/ MAE/ MS program was:  []  Classified  []  Conditional
*Conditions for classified admission are satisfied:  []  No  []  Yes, on: ___________________________
*Undergraduate Institution: ___________________________  U/G GPA: __________________
*Undergraduate Major: ___________________________  U/G GPA: __________________

**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: __________________

Revised 8/26/14
Candidacy Form Sample: The Graduate Program and Admission Office requires that you complete the form exactly as the sample shown here. Forms filled out differently may cause delay in processing your Candidacy form.
Mechanical Engineering Department
Graduate Project/Thesis Proposal

Name: ____________________ SID#: ____________________

Phone No: ________________ Email address: ________________

I wish to register for (select one): ME 295A/ME295B (Project) ME299 (Thesis)

Project/Thesis Title:

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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Project</th>
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Thesis/Project Proposal:
Attach a project proposal. 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. The objective and the procedure for achieving the objecting must be clear and clearly stated. See MS Thesis/Project Guidebook Document A.

Estimated Graduation Date: ____________________

Student Signature: ____________________ Date: ___________

Approved:

Committee Chair: ____________________ Date: ___________
Graduate Coordinator: ____________________ Date: ___________
Department Chair: ____________________ Date: ___________
Useful Links

1. All about Admission and applying for MSME:
   [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/prospective_students/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/prospective_students/)

2. If you are enrolled in the program, Steps for completing your degree:
   [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/completing_masters/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/completing_masters/index.html)

3. Candidacy and Graduation Deadlines:
   [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/deadlines/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/current_students/deadlines/index.html)

4. Forms you will need for graduation:
   [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/)

5. Fees and Financial Assistance:
   [http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/financial_information/](http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/financial_information/)