M.S. Degree Requirements

The requirements for the M.S. degree have been altered recently. Students admitted to the Computer Sciences graduate program before January 1989 have the alternative of obtaining the M.S. degree by completing a previously filed plan.

In addition to the requirements of the Graduate School and the University in general, the Computer Sciences Department has the following requirements for the M.S. degree:

I. Courses

The student must receive at least 24 credits in courses numbered 400 or above. Fifteen of these credits must be received for *core* courses: CS courses numbered 700-990 (excluding 702). No courses – including 838, 880, and 999 – may be counted more than once, though up to six credits of 990 may be counted if a Master's thesis is filed with the Department. A qualifying core course for which a grade of S is received may be counted only for non-core credit. Non-core courses will not be counted if a grade of S is received. Instructors often give only S/U grades for 880 and 838. At its discretion, the Graduate Advising Committee (GAC) may declare an individual section of 838 exempt from the repetition restriction.

During registration week of the first semester or summer session of the student's full- or part-time graduate tenure in the Department, the student must, in consultation with GAC, file with the Department a formal proposal of a course plan leading to the Master's degree. This plan must be continually updated for accuracy, substitute courses being noted prior to the end of the semester or summer session during which they are taken.

A course taken outside the Department which is to be counted toward degree requirements must be formally approved in writing by GAC by the end of the semester or summer session during which the course is taken. Credits transferred from other educational institutions will not count toward the M.S. degree requirements.

II. Thesis or Project (Optional)

Students may choose to write a Master's thesis or project report. A maximum of six hours of 990 (thesis and research) may be used to satisfy the M.S. requirements provided that the thesis is approved by two Computer Sciences faculty members. A maximum of three hours of 990 may be used to satisfy the M.S. requirements provided that a Master's project report is filed with the Department. Note that 990 can be counted as core credit. The responsibility for finding a thesis or project advisor is solely that of the student; the Department does not guarantee that an advisor will be provided.

Only a few Master's theses have been written in the Department, but this option is worth considering. There are no rules about the form of a Master's thesis, but it is expected to be a substantial piece of work, for example, a comprehensive survey of a particular area. The difference between an M.S. thesis and a Ph.D. thesis is that the former need not contain original research work. An M.S. thesis might well serve as a basis and major first step toward subsequent Ph.D. research. A Master's project can be somewhat less formal than a Master's thesis, describing a project carried out under the supervision of a faculty advisor.