

# **M.S. in Computer Science Student Handbook**

*(Effective Spring 2021)*

The Department of Computer Science offers advanced studies leading to a Master of Science degree in Computer Science. Our MS degree program in Computer Science is driven by two distinct needs that are fueled by the growth in technological companies and jobs in the Middle Tennessee and Upper Cumberland regions. These needs include:

- Opportunities for personnel from surrounding industries to upgrade their professional skills.
- A strong academic program that prepares graduates to pursue a terminal (PhD) degree in Computer Science.

In order to meet the needs listed above, the following **learning objectives** are emphasized by the Master's program:

1. The student should gain breadth of knowledge in the discipline and depth in the specific area of his/her specialization.
2. The student should learn and gain experience in doing independent academic work.
3. The student should demonstrate knowledge of the techniques, methods, and disciplines of computer science research.

## **Advisory Committee**

Each MS student will have an advisory committee comprised of at least three members. The advisory committee shall be chaired or co-chaired by a CS faculty member and include an additional member from the CS Department. Other members of the advisory committee may be from outside of CS department. This graduate committee may be appointed during the student's first term, but no later than the term in which 15 credit hours of graduate work are to be completed.

At the discretion of the chairperson of the committee, the advisory committee may include more than three members. If desired, two members of the committee may serve as co-chairs of the committee. If a student is not able to identify a sufficient number of faculty who are suitable and willing to serve on her/his advisory committee, the student will be advised by the departmental chairperson that he/she should either change her/his area of research interests to more closely match those of the available faculty, or consider selecting another major. Failure to form a committee is cause for transfer to non-degree status.

## **Program of study**

Each M.S. student must file a program of study containing the schedule of the courses they will complete to fulfill the degree requirements by the time 15 semester hours have been earned but no later than the end of the student's second semester. Each proposed program of study must be approved by the student's advisory committee, the departmental chairperson, and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

## **Probation for unsatisfactory performance**

A graduate student is required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least "B" (3.0). When a student's cumulative average falls below 3.0, but not less than 2.0, the student will be placed on probation. If the cumulative average falls below 2.0, the student will be dismissed. If the term average, on all courses presented as part of the hours required for graduation, during any semester is less than 2.0, the student's record will be reviewed and may be placed on probation.

## **Dismissal for unsatisfactory performance**

A graduate student will be dismissed from the graduate program if any one of the following conditions occurs:

- Two consecutive semesters of probation and recommendation by the student's advisory committee. Summer semester is not included as one of the consecutive semesters if no courses are taken during this term in which a grade of "A" through "F" is assigned.
- Two "F" grades in courses presented as part of the hours required for graduation
- Two consecutive semesters of "No Progress" grades assigned in thesis and recommendation by the student's advisory committee.

A student who has been dismissed for unsatisfactory performance may request reinstatement, provided he/she produces evidence of extenuating circumstances that would prevent dismissal. The request must be approved by the department chair, director of the student's graduate program, the dean of the college, and the Graduate School Executive Committee. The decision of the Graduate School Executive Committee is final.