

# **Master of Engineering (MEng) Graduate Student Handbook**

**College of Engineering & Applied Science Graduate Studies Office**

**Updated August 2024**

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# Master of Engineering (MEng) Handbook

The Master of Engineering program provides a graduate degree that focuses on the practice of engineering in order to better serve working professionals. Rather than culminate in a research experience and a thesis, the Master of Engineering curriculum provides skills and expertise that enhance the individual's ability to contribute to the technical workforce.

The program provides advanced training to students interested in expanding their knowledge and expertise. Depending on a student's interest, the degree could add significant depth to an individual's understanding of the practice of engineering, or the program could be constructed to focus on greater inter-disciplinary breadth if that is the educational objective of the student.

## MEng Program Options

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- Aerospace Engineering
- Architectural Engineering
- Artificial Intelligence
- Biomedical Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Engineering
- Computer Science
- Electrical Engineering
- Environmental Engineering
- Industrial Systems & Engineering
- Materials Science
- Mechanical Engineering
- Robotics & Intelligent Autonomous Systems
- Software Engineering
- Sustainable Energy

## Admission Requirements

Admissions are controlled by the program in which the prospective student wishes to focus their program of study. The following are nominal criteria for admission into the MEng program:

- Must hold a BS degree from an ABET accredited program (or equivalent if from an international university) in a corresponding engineering discipline and must provide official transcripts from the institution where the degree was obtained
- Individuals without an ABET accredited engineering technology degree may be admissible and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Pre-requisite work may be prescribed
- Minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 / 4.0 or equivalent
- Submit GRE scores (waived for domestic students with a BS degree from an ABET accredited program and a 3.0 or better undergraduate GPA)
- Two letters of recommendation
- Statement of purpose
- International students are required to submit English proficiency scores. Students must meet minimum requirements established by the University. The English proficiency requirement is waived for international students that have earned a degree from a US institution, and for international students who earned a degree from certain countries where the medium of instruction is English.

Individuals may request a waiver of some of the above requirements (e.g., undergraduate GPA less than 3.0) if they provide evidence to the graduate program director that they have sufficient basis to warrant a waiver. It is up to the program to accept or decline this request.

## Advising

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The College Director of the Master of Engineering programs and the MEng Program Coordinator are available to meet with students for academic planning and to recommend courses. Each program also has a MEng Program Advisor to work with MEng students who is most familiar with the curriculum in that program. The advisor will provide guidance on appropriate courses to meet the student's educational objectives and the sequence of these courses. Since the structure

of the MEng program is more flexible than most graduate programs, it is very important that the advisor meet with the student and work with the student to establish the program of study.

Students in the MEng program do not complete a thesis. Instead, a capstone is completed. The student should meet with the advisor or capstone course instructor to seek guidance commensurate with the academic requirements. It is not the responsibility of the advisor to identify a project or capstone experience for each student.

Changes or exceptions to program requirements including course substitution, special topics, and credit hour distribution between core and track areas must be approved by the Program MEng advisor or Graduate Program Director, and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Department's Graduate Program Director or the College Director of MEng Programs is required to sign off on graduation certifications for MEng students certifying that they have met the MEng requirements for graduation.

## Obtaining the Degree

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The degree is based on the successful completion of a minimum of 30 credits of graduate level course work and does not require a thesis. The curriculum is structured to provide a foundation of advanced engineering topics while allowing students flexibility to meet their specific educational objectives. The curriculum includes:

- **Program core courses** taken by all Master of Engineering students regardless of which track they pursue (two courses providing 6 credit hours). The core provides skills in the effective practice of engineering recognizing that for experienced practitioners, effectiveness includes technical skills, project and task management skills, and interpersonal skills.
- **Track required courses** from the discipline of interest (4-5 courses providing 10-15 credit hours depending upon the track)
- **Elective courses** which permit breadth, depth, or interdisciplinary focus depending on student educational objectives (number of course credit hours required depends upon the track)
- **Capstone** demonstrates applications of skills and synthesis of knowledge (0-3 credit hours depending on the options described below. A few programs allow up to 6 credits for capstone). If additional credit hours are taken, they do not count towards a course requirement. Additional details regarding capstone completion are provided in another section of the handbook.
  - For programs where there are multiple MEng Capstone section options in Catalyst (Aerospace Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, and Materials Science), it is imperative that students connect with the professor in whose section they plan to enroll prior to doing so. MEng students in these programs should not randomly enroll in a capstone section without first having a conversation with the instructor of that section about their plans for their capstone.
- **MEng Seminar** (required of some programs) provides instruction on the format and requirements of the MEng program and on helping students maximize success in the program. If students take 3 credits of MEng Seminar, they can only count 3 credits of capstone towards their program of study.

| MEng Curriculum Requirements          | Courses | Credits |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Program Core                          | 2       | 6       |
| Track Required                        | 4-5     | 10-15   |
| Elective Courses                      | 1-3     | 2-9     |
| Capstone                              | 1       | 0-6     |
| MEng Seminar ( <b>some programs</b> ) | 1       | 3       |
| Total                                 | varies  | 30+     |

- MS/PhD Seminar, research/thesis hours, or self-study cannot count towards course requirements. If you take any of these courses, they will be in addition to the 30 course credit hours required for the degree. However, MEng Seminar (ENGR 7001) does count towards the degree for some programs.
- **Special Topics / Independent Study** can only count for a maximum of 3 course credit hours toward the degree. Additional course credit hours of Special Topics will be in addition to the 30 course credit hours required for the degree. Students wishing to apply 3 credit hours of Special Topics toward the degree must get prior approval before taking the course. The faculty sponsoring the Special Topics must indicate the topics to be covered and verify the credit hours covered by the course.

## Capstone

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A capstone experience demonstrating graduate level mastery of program outcomes is required for all graduate students at the University of Cincinnati. For the Master of Engineering program, this capstone experience is expected to provide a setting for the application of engineering principles since the MEng is focused on the practice of engineering rather than research or the generation of new knowledge. The MEng Capstone experience and report provide a mechanism to demonstrate mastery of concepts learned in the program.

**Some programs have very specific capstone requirements. Students must consult their MEng Program advisor for specific capstone credit hour requirements for each individual program and for any specific requirements for satisfactorily completing the capstone.**

Students should register for their Capstone course (during which they will learn about the MEng Capstone requirements and plan their Capstone) in their first spring semester. Students can complete their Capstone project, paper or internship/job during spring, summer, second fall, or second spring semester. If the capstone is not completed in their first spring term, the student may receive an “I” (incomplete), “NG” (no grade) or a “P” (pass) grade for the spring course. Note that a “P” grade does not signify successful completion of the capstone until final capstone report is approved by faculty and College.

With the Program advisor’s approval, students can choose:

1. to complete a project,
2. an MEng capstone evaluation – a comprehensive written or oral exam (only offered in Civil Engineering),
3. to perform an internship (or job),
4. to prepare a written paper under the supervision of the advisor

If a Civil Engineering student chooses the capstone evaluation (#2), this is a zero credit-hour option and students will need an additional graduate course in order to meet the credit hour requirements for the degree. This MEng capstone evaluation can be written or oral, as deemed appropriate by the student’s program.

Faculty and in many cases professionals in the workforce will oversee and guide the capstone experience. Students who are working professionals will likely apply the skills developed through the MEng program to a specific issue faced within the work setting. In all cases, one of the individuals overseeing the capstone experience must be a member of the graduate faculty.

The options are summarized below with additional details provided later in the handbook:

1. **Project** – The capstone project is focused on the application of principles and the practice of engineering and is not meant to be a mini-thesis. The capstone projects provide a mechanism to demonstrate mastery of concepts learned in the program to a specific problem. Students can apply the skills and knowledge acquired in the program to a known problem in order to develop an appropriate solution. These students could also work with faculty to develop a solution to an issue faced in a lab or research group. The project report must be of sufficient length and rigor to demonstrate this mastery.
2. **Capstone Evaluation** – With permission of the Program’s Graduate Studies Director, students can elect to take a comprehensive evaluation that covers the coursework completed as part of the MEng program, including both the core and track courses. This option is only available in Civil Engineering.

3. **Internship (or job)** – Students can choose to perform an internship (or job) if this furthers their learning and career goals. The internship (or job) must be related to the student’s degree area and must likewise demonstrate mastery of concepts learned through the program. The internship report must contain sufficient detail to verify mastery of concepts learned.
  - a. **Domestic students** (US citizens or permanent residents) must submit a [Capstone Proposal form](#) (available from the CEAS student portal at <https://www.ceas3.uc.edu/CeasStudentPortal/login.html>)
  - b. **International students** must receive Curricular Practical Training (CPT) work authorization prior to the start of the internship (or job) by submitting a [CPT Application](#). The CPT Application also serves as the capstone proposal.
4. **Paper** – A written paper can be completed under the supervision of the Program advisor. The paper will address a topic related to the discipline (track) and require the integration of multiple topics within that discipline and demonstrate mastery of concepts learned in the program.

## Students Electing a Project for the Capstone

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Students electing to perform a capstone project must submit a proposal for their project using the [Capstone Proposal form](#). The form can be submitted at any time but full-time students should submit the proposal no later than the last day of classes in the spring semester of their first year of study. Part-time students should submit the form by the end of the first week of the term in which they register for the capstone. Students can proceed with the capstone once they have approval from the faculty member overseeing the capstone project.

The following guidelines apply to the project:

- The project should be commensurate with a three-credit hour graduate course. Projects that include significant data collection, extended collaborations, travel, and / or extensive analysis can be more than three credit hours (this is the exception and only offered in certain programs).
- The project is not a thesis addressing a research issue. It is an application of knowledge and skills gained as part of the Master of Engineering program.
- The project should demonstrate mastery of concepts and an application to a practical engineering or science problem.
- The capstone project includes a written report and an optional presentation. The report will be read by the faculty advisor and a representative from the Graduate Office. If the project is performed in conjunction with work duties, the report and presentation should also be given to the student’s employer.
- The topic and scope of the project shall be agreed upon by the student and the capstone advisor. If the project is performed in conjunction with work duties, the scope shall also be agreed upon by the student’s employer.
- Students should provide capstone advisors periodic updates on work performed and progress on project completion. The format and schedule should be determined between the advisor and the student.

*Guidelines for the Project Report:*

The [final report](#) for a capstone project must contain the following:

- Cover page (generated from Capstone Final Report form found in CEAS student portal), and the following in the report:
- Abstract that succinctly describes the problem addressed, the methods used, and the results,
- Introduction that provides sufficient background to allow the reader to understand the problem, the constraints and the relevant characteristics of the project,
- Methods (approach or analysis, as appropriate) that describe how the problem was addressed; this section should provide some details on how the skills and knowledge gained through the MEng program contributed to the solution,
- Results obtained through the project,
- Discussion of the efficacy of the approach, lessons learned through the project, areas for improvement, additional work that could be performed, and
- Bibliography of references cited.

Project reports should not exceed 10 pages, double-spaced, 11-point font, and one-inch margins. Appendices with code or graphs, for example, can be included and cited in the body of the report.

The [MEng Capstone Final Report](#) is submitted to the student's capstone advisor prior to the deadline established.

- The report is not graded on length but the report is a significant part of the grade for the Capstone and as such should be of sufficient detail and depth to demonstrate a student's mastery of program outcomes applied to a problem of significance.
- Inclusion of tables and figures is encouraged. These should be numbered, labeled and referenced in the text.
- Students must submit original material. The work of others must be properly cited.
- The report will be graded on completeness, clarity, and grammar.

**A copy of the final, approved report must be uploaded to the [CEAS student portal](#) (most programs) in the semester in which the student graduates.**

#### *Guidelines for the Project Presentation (If Required by Capstone Advisor)*

Professionals in the workforce are often called upon to present their work or recommendations regarding technical issues. In many instances, the amount of time a manager can allow is limited and it is necessary for the technical professional to present a clear and compelling description in a condensed time frame. The project presentation provides an opportunity to give such a presentation. It is important that the students carefully plan the presentation and rehearse it in order to do a professional job.

- The presentation should be prepared for a general technical audience unfamiliar with the particular topic addressed.
- Presentation materials are to be prepared and copies made available during the presentation.
- The presentation should be approximately 20 minutes in length and address the same points as the report.
- The student will be expected to answer questions after the presentation.
- The presentation will be graded on clarity, completeness, timeliness and proper preparation.

#### *Capstone Project Grading:*

Projects will be eligible for Pass (P)/Fail (F) grading based on the above criteria. A grade of 70 and above will be considered passing. Faculty cannot assign a letter grade (A, B, or C) to a capstone course.

## **Students Electing an Internship (or Job) as the Capstone** [\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

- **Domestic students** must submit a [Capstone Proposal form](#).
- **International students** must receive Curricular Practical Training (CPT) work authorization prior to the start of the internship (or job) by submitting a [CPT Application](#); this application also serves as the capstone proposal. Biomedical Engineering, Environmental Engineering, and Civil Engineering require that the capstone faculty advisor sign the CPT approval form prior to CPT being approved.

**International students** can be approved for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) work authorization to participate in an internship (or job); detailed information regarding CPT work authorization and the approval process for an MEng Capstone Internship for international students can be found later in this document. CPT can be approved to begin once two full-time semesters (30 weeks) of study are completed. CPT work authorization can only be approved for a timeline that ends before the graduation/Form I-20 expiration date. Once the internship (or job) has started, a student may not change to a different employer. A student's total time on CPT cannot exceed 25 weeks. CPT will be terminated upon graduation/expiration of Form I-20. Once the curricular requirement is met, an additional CPT will not be approved, as there is no curricular reason for the additional work.

**For both domestic and international students**, the minimum time for the experience to count as a capstone internship is 400 hours (for example, 10 weeks on a full-time work schedule). This to ensure that students get an extensive experience that serves as a capstone.

At the completion of the internship (or job), students submit a final report per the instructions in the CEAS Student Portal [MEng Capstone Final Report Internship form](#). In addition to completing the form, the report is expected to be 3-4 pages in length and should contain the following information detailed in paragraph form, not sentence fragments or bullet points.

- Description of duties performed, including technical aspects with sufficient detail to indicate mastery of program



outcomes

- Technologies or techniques utilized in accomplishing duties (list with brief description of how used)
- Learning/experiences in MEng program that were applied during internship (cite course names and describe what aspect and how it was relevant to your duties)

**Note, some programs may require a more substantial written report. In all cases, students should confirm the requirements with the faculty advisor for the capstone.**

Students can perform the internship any time after completion of 15 credits of coursework (note that for international students who require [CPT work authorization](#), students must first complete two full-time semesters of study). For domestic students, it is generally not possible to complete an internship while also completing a full-time academic term; it may be possible to participate in a part-time internship while completing a full-time academic term. For example, students who start the program in the fall semester typically perform an internship during summer semester (third semester of residency) or the following fall semester (fourth semester of residency).

For international students, full-time students are limited in the number of terms they can seek an internship. If a student seeking to do an internship to satisfy the capstone has not identified an internship by the start of the fourth semester (typically the second fall of residency) the student must start a paper or project. The student can continue to look for an internship, but they must simultaneously work on a paper or project in order to make progress toward the degree. A student may be allowed to start an internship during the fourth or fifth semester depending on the timing of the performance of the work. In most cases, students will graduate in the third or fourth semester). If an exception is made and an extension is granted to allow a student to continue to the fifth semester, the student must be finished with the capstone requirements at the completion of the fifth semester of residency. No further extensions will be given.

The MEng program provides students the opportunity to earn a graduate degree. The program does not guarantee a student the opportunity to do an internship. The program also does not allow international students to remain in the program and continue to search for an internship for an extended period of time beyond their Form I-20 expiration date. Students must be making progress toward their degree each academic semester (see further explanation in section on [Academic Progress Standards](#)).

## Students Electing a Capstone Evaluation

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For Civil Engineering, the capstone evaluation can take several forms as deemed appropriate by the Program. The evaluation can be in the form of a written exam, an exit interview, or a summary essay. The Program will determine what is appropriate. The evaluation itself is not a course with any credit hours (0 credit capstone) so students taking this option must ensure that they meet the minimum program requirements for credit hours completed (30).

## Students Electing a Paper for Capstone

Both domestic and international students electing to perform a capstone paper must submit a proposal for their paper using the [MEng Capstone Proposal](#) form. Once the capstone advisor has approved this proposal, work on the paper can begin. The paper should provide an indication of the student's mastery of content and the ability to synthesize information. Students must submit original material with the work of others properly cited. The paper will be graded based on thoroughness, accuracy, formatting and grammar. The paper does not need to be published to be acceptable. The final paper should be sent to the Capstone Advisor and Julie Steimle using the template in the [CEAS Student Portal](#). Length of the paper will be guided by the capstone advisor but in general should not exceed 25 pages.

## Verification of Capstone Completion

A verification of capstone completion is required; students cannot be certified for graduation until the faculty track advisor has approved their final report and the MEng director has approved their final program of study. This form shall be signed by the College Manager of the Master of Engineering Programs (or designee) and one or more faculty members from the program. Faculty advisors reviewing capstone internship reports may also choose to contact managers prior to approving final capstone reports.

## Transfer between Programs

### Transfer from MEng to MS

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Students may be allowed to transfer from MEng status to MS or PhD status. Students **must first complete two academic semesters of residency as a MEng student with the MEng scholarship** and with the proper written approval as follows:

- Submit a Status, Program, or Requirement Change form indicating the proposed objectives of the transfer.
- Signature from a faculty member who will serve as graduate thesis advisor.
- Signature of the Program's Graduate Program Director.
- Some departments have additional requirements for students who wish to transfer to MS, such as a certain GPA threshold or a thesis advisor's commitment to fund student

Transfer petitions may be considered only within certain time frames. Consult the Program Advisor or Graduate Program Director for additional information.

MEng to MS transfer applicants must be in academic good standing and meet all MS admission criteria, as established by the program. Individuals admitted to the MEng program with certain deficiencies (e.g., undergraduate GPA below 3.0 or undergraduate degree in non-qualified discipline) may not be eligible for transfer. Consult the Graduate Program Director for additional details.

The MEng program is not generally intended as a pathway for doctoral study. A student interested in a doctoral program needs to consult the Graduate Program Director in that program early in their course of study so as to be properly advised. PhD admission in some programs requires specific coursework at the Master's level. Once the approvals are obtained, a student can follow an MS program of study but they will still be an MEng student until the two academic semesters are complete.

Very rarely will a student who started as a MEng student and transitioned to MS be permitted to switch back to MEng. If this switch is permitted, at minimum, the student must enroll in three capstone credits and pay tuition and fees for those credits without scholarship support, even if all capstone credit requirements were previously completed. A student may be required to enroll in more coursework if the MEng requirements are not met.

### Transfer from MS to MEng

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Students who are in academic good standing may be allowed to transfer from an MS program to MEng with the proper written approval as follows:

- Submit a [Status, Program, or Requirement Change form](#) indicating the proposed objectives of the transfer.
- Signature from the student's graduate thesis advisor. Faculty invest significant time in advising a thesis student and are not obligated to approve the transfer.
- Signature of the Program's Graduate Program Director.

Except in exceptional cases, students who have been funded as a research or teaching assistant will not be permitted to transfer to a MEng program.

Thesis and research hours do not count toward the MEng degree.

Students who are either full-time or who initially matriculated as full-time students who transfer from an MS program to an MEng program are required to complete at least one full-time academic term after the transfer is approved and pay for the tuition and fees for the full-time semester without any scholarship support from the College. All remaining MEng academic requirements are expected to be fulfilled during this one additional semester.

## Academic Progress Standards

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### Academic Good Standing

In order to be in academic good standing students must be making progress toward degree completion and demonstrate mastery of course content and program learning objectives. A student must accumulate a grade point

average (GPA) of at least 3.0 to obtain a master's degree at the University of Cincinnati. At the graduate level, the lowest passing grade is a C.

To remain in good academic standing, full-time students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average each semester in all graduate-level work in the Master of Engineering program. Part-time students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher after the completion of four courses in the MEng program.

Failure to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA will result in academic probation and/or dismissal, regardless of the number of credit hours already completed with a passing grade. A student who receives an F grade in a course will also be on academic probation.

## Continuous Enrollment

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The Graduate College requires all students to be enrolled (and earn a successful completion grade) in at least one (1) graduate-level credit hour in the student's degree program during each academic year from the first term of enrollment to the last term of enrollment (degree completion/graduation). Students who fail to enroll in each academic year from start to finish lose "active" student status. International students must register in fall and spring semester for 1 credit hour minimum until they graduate or are on OPT and students on CPT must register for 1 credit each academic semester. Domestic students must enroll in at least one credit each academic year (fall, spring, summer).

For international students, once you have completed all 30 credits required for the degree, you need to please apply for reduced course load on iBearcatsGlobal and iEngineering. Approval of reduced course load allows you to enroll in only one credit hour in remaining fall and spring semesters. (No reduced course load approval is required for summer semester.)

Please see a few tips regarding reduced course load:

- List Julie Steimle's name as advisor in the iBearcatsGlobal request. No advisor is needed in iEngineering.
- You only need to apply for reduced course load once. You do not need to re-apply each semester.
- If you have finished all 30 credits and coursework required for graduation, the reason you are selecting for needing reduced course load is that you are "done with coursework." (Do not say "yes" to the question that you are graduating in the current semester unless you are 100% sure you are graduating in that semester.)
- You can enroll in UC student health insurance if you are on reduced course load, but you will need to "enroll/opt in" in your Tasks tile in Catalyst. The health insurance charge will be added to Catalyst if you "enroll/opt in." You can also choose to arrange for health insurance independent of UC while on reduced course load.
- You will need to pay the tuition fees for one credit hour. Students who become inactive while on academic probation may not be permitted to re-enroll in later terms and complete the degree. Specific policies and procedures regarding reinstatement can be found in UC's [Graduate Student Handbook](#) of the University of Cincinnati Graduate College.

## Progress toward Degree

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Students are expected to make progress toward their degree during each academic semester they are registered (summer is an academic semester if a student is registered for any coursework). Students typically enroll full-time during the first and second academic semesters (typically fall and spring). Students may complete a capstone (project, paper or internship) during the third semester (typically summer).

International students who hope to do an internship to satisfy the capstone, but have not identified an internship by the start of their fourth semester (their second fall semester), must start a paper or project at the beginning their second fall semester. The student can continue to look for an internship but they must work on a paper or project in order to make progress toward the degree. Looking for an internship or job is not making progress toward the degree.

## Course Completion

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Students are expected to complete all courses in which they enroll. Official withdrawals (W or WX) do not calculate into the cumulative GPA and are acceptable to an extent. Multiple withdrawals over successive terms suggest that a student may not be completing coursework at a sufficient pace for satisfactory progress toward the degree.

Failing and non-participation grades (F, UW, and X) indicate a student is not successfully completing courses, and therefore not making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Students who earn more than one failing grade in any single term, or more than two failing grades over any number of terms, may be dismissed without further opportunity for redemption.

Students in academic jeopardy may be denied enrollment until these grades are resolved. Enrollment may be denied to any student with more than one unresolved grade on record until all grades are resolved.

Note: Grades are not replaced at the Graduate Level at UC. If a course is taken more than once, all grades earned are calculated into the cumulative GPA.

## Academic Probation

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Academic Probation is defined as the period during which a student's ability to meet minimum academic standards is tested. The goals of academic probation are to ensure students are aware they are not meeting minimum requirements for their degree and to give students a reasonable opportunity for academic redemption. Enrollment, participation, and grades are closely monitored while on academic probation. Students are expected to earn their highest grades while on academic probation; these grades will be used as an indicator of future student progress, and to determine whether a student can reach a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 without the need for coursework beyond that which is required for the degree.

Causes for probation include:

1. Any student who does not meet the GPA requirement
2. A student fails to adhere to the University's Student Code of Conduct
3. Multiple course withdrawals and / or incomplete (I or NG grades assigned) courses
4. Receiving an F grade

Part-time students on academic probation have up to two terms of part-time (maximum six hours per semester) enrollment to achieve a 3.0 GPA. If after this period a student's cumulative GPA in program coursework is not above 3.0, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Full-time students on academic probation are required to meet with their academic advisor and present a plan for returning to good academic standing. Students should consider reducing the number of credit hours taken in a term so that they achieve grades that help return them to good academic standing. Students on academic probation for a second term will be blocked from future enrollment pending the outcome of their grades for the second term of probation.

## Repeating Courses

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If a student does not successfully complete a program course (C or better), the student may repeat the course once. If a student is unsuccessful in the course the second time, the student may be eligible for dismissal.

## Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form is a serious offense that cannot be tolerated in an academic community. Misconduct— including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, aiding and abetting misconduct, forging faculty signatures and/or violating ethical or professional standards—may result in a failing grade in a course and/or suspension or dismissal from the University. Students are encouraged to be familiar with the [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#).

## Time to Degree

International students are required to complete the degree after no more than five semesters of residency; most will complete the degree within three or four semesters. International students seeking to do an internship to satisfy the capstone are referred to the section above on "Progress toward Degree." Capstone requirements will typically be completed by the end of their second fall semester, but with exception may be completed by the end of the second spring semester.

|           | Graduate in 2 Semesters   | Graduate in 3 Semesters   | Graduate in 4 Semesters   | Graduate in 5 Semesters   |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|
| Fall'24   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> </ul>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> </ul>   |
| Spring'25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> <li>Submit MEng capstone project</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Term</li> </ul>   |
| Summer'25 |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a project/paper or complete 400 hours in an internship/job</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work on project/paper or start internship/job</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work on project/paper or start internship/job</li> </ul>                     |
| Fall'25   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a project/paper or complete 400 hours in an internship/job</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work on project/paper or start internship/job</li> </ul>                     |
| Spring'26 |   |   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a project/paper or complete 400 hours in an internship/job</li> </ul> |

## Appeal of Decisions

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Students will be informed of all decisions affecting their status in the program and each has a right to appeal under the [grievance procedures](#) drawn up by the Graduate School of the University. The process and procedures for appeal are described at the Graduate School's website.

## Progress and Probation Notification

The Manager of the Master of Engineering Program, a Graduate Program Director or a representative of the College Graduate Studies Office will notify students via email of their probationary status and any specific progress requirements. Notices are sent at the conclusion of each academic term, and only to UC student email addresses.

## Graduation Requirements

Students must complete all the academic requirements of the program to graduate including:

- Minimum of 30 credit hours
- Capstone requirement
- Minimum of 3.0 GPA with no grades below a C
- Program of study approved by Graduate Program Director or CEAS Graduate Studies Office

In addition, students must complete the following forms, upload them to [the CEAS student portal](#) by the published deadline, typically two weeks prior to graduation. Students also need to provide an electronic copy of their final, approved capstone report and complete the CEAS exit survey found in the [CEAS Student Portal](#). (Note: Mechanical Engineering have different procedures. Graduation instructions will be email to all potential graduating students each term.)

1. [MEng Program of Study](#) form
2. [MEng Student Capstone Final Report](#) form
3. [Student Code of Conduct Verification](#) form

Students must [apply online for graduation](#) and pay the non-refundable graduation application fee of \$50 even if a student does not intend to attend graduation ceremonies. If the student fails to graduate in that semester, the student will need to apply to graduate in a subsequent semester again and pay the \$50 application fee again.

[Graduation deadlines](#) are set by UC's Graduate College and are not flexible. Failure to meet the deadlines will result in delaying graduation until the following semester, requiring submission of a new application for graduation.

In addition, students are asked to complete CEAS's [graduation survey](#); this survey will be sent to students after they have applied to graduate. The College uses information from the survey to identify strengths and weaknesses in the programs and to identify opportunities to improve the programs.

## Forms

- [MEng Program of Study Form](#)
- [MEng Code of Conduct Verification Form](#)
- [MEng Capstone Proposal Form](#)
- [CPT Application](#)
- [MEng Capstone Final Report Form](#)
- [Status, Program, or Requirement Change Form](#)

## CPT/OPT Work Authorization for International Students [\(Return to Table of Contents\)](#)

### Definitions:

**Curricular Practical Training (CPT)** – Work authorization available to international students which allows them to apply their course content to fulfill a requirement of their degree program. CPT work authorization approval is necessary from CEAS and UC International for a student to be employed in an internship or job under CPT. Step-by-step instructions are listed below.

**Registration** – For the purpose of this document, registration means being registered for one or more credits through the University of Cincinnati. After completion of the first full year of full-time studies, graduate students are required to be registered with UC for a minimum of one credit every fall or spring term that they continue until the semester of graduation. This maintains student status for student visa purposes and student status for UC purposes.

**Full-time Employment** – According to USCIS policy, working 21 or more hours per week (Typical US work week is 40 hours). There is no limit to the number of hours a student may work on CPT.

**Part-time Employment** – According to USCIS policy, working 20 hours or less per week.

**Capstone Internship** – A capstone internship is a work experience used by MEng students to meet the capstone requirement. Either an internship or long-term employment experience can be used for the capstone internship. Capstone internships will have a defined end date (will be defined based on the terms of employment or the CPT MEng requirements when a student submits the CPT application).

**Internship** – An internship is a full-time or part-time work experience, the work must be related to the degree, should be paid, and is typically for a set time (between 10-25 weeks). Internship students typically do not get benefits. The experience is considered a chance for students to get experience and for employers to “try out” the student before deciding to hire them on a long-term basis.

**Optional Practical Training (OPT)** – Work authorization that allows F-1 students to gain work experience to complement their academic program. Typically, CEAS graduate students participate in post-OPT after they have completed required coursework or, in many cases, post-graduation.

**Job/long-term employment** – (Sometimes called a “full-time job”) a job is a paid employment with no designated end-date. Employees are hired by an employer and will typically get benefits (insurance, time off, etc.) as well as a salary. As long as the offer letter states that the employment is “at will,” the employer and the employee both have the legal right to end the employment for non-discriminatory reasons without recourse.

**Semester** – Fall, spring, or summer terms through UC. During fall and spring terms, you must be registered with UC in order to maintain your student status. In summer terms, you do not have to be registered with UC, unless on CPT.

### CPT FAQs

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Different universities, colleges, and degrees utilize CPT differently to fulfill their unique academic requirements, so these CPT FAQs and CPT application instructions are specific to your MEng Capstone requirement:

#### 1. Who processes CPT work authorization?

- a. Amanda McLaughlin reviews your CPT application documents and confirms that your work responsibilities are

related to your MEng Degree.

b. Then UC International reissues your Form I-20 with the CPT work authorization directly on the Form I-20.

**2. Is there a CPT card?**

- No, your proof of CPT work authorization will be noted directly on your reissued Form I-20.

**3. Does my internship or job have to start at the beginning of the semester?**

- No, your internship or job can start at any time during the semester.

**4. What if my offer letter doesn't specify an end-date?**

- An end-date from the employer isn't necessary to apply for CPT.
- If there isn't an end-date in the offer letter, you can apply for all 25 weeks of CPT. This is a good option because if you end up deciding to end your CPT sometime between having completed the minimum required 400 required hours and the max 25 weeks because you want to graduate or work for a different employer on OPT, there's absolutely no penalty for ending CPT early. By doing this, you won't have to bother applying for a CPT extension.
- If a specific end-date is in the offer letter, you must use that end-date as your CPT end-date.

**5. Can I use an internship or a job to fulfill the MEng Capstone Internship option?**

- Yes, you can use an internship (short-term employment) or job (long-term employment) to fulfill the Capstone Internship option in a full-time (21 hours or more per week) or part-time (20 hours or less per week) weekly work schedule.
- The CPT application process is the same for an internship or a job.

**6. Can I use an unpaid internship to fulfill the MEng Capstone Internship option?**

- Yes. An unpaid internship requires an offer letter that clearly states that the internship is unpaid.
- Apply for CPT for an unpaid internship the same way you would apply for a paid internship/job.

**7. Can I use an internship or job outside the US to fulfill the MEng Capstone Internship option?**

- Yes. The goal of the MEng Capstone requirement is for you to apply what you learned in your MEng coursework, so even if the internship or job is outside the US, if it allows you to apply what you studied in your MEng coursework, it can be used to fulfill the MEng Capstone.
- If your internship or job is outside the US, for record-keeping purposes you'll still need to go through the process of applying for CPT, but CPT will not actually be issued on your Form I-20.
- UC will not provide work visa support for internships and jobs outside the US.

**8. If I have an on-campus part-time job that is related to my MEng coursework, can I use it to fulfill the Capstone Internship option?**

- Yes. In this case you would not need CPT, so instead of submitting a CPT application, you would submit a [Capstone Proposal](#) and explain your situation in the Description of Position Responsibilities field.
- If the on-campus employer wants you to work more than 20 hours per week, you'll need to apply for CPT.
- The minimum of 400 hours of employment still applies in this situation with a minimum of 10 weeks working in a full-time (21 hours or more per week) weekly work schedule or 20 weeks working in a part-time (20 hours or less per week) weekly work schedule.

**9. Am I permitted to simultaneously work on CPT at a full-time off-campus internship/job and my part-time on-campus job?**

- Yes.

**10. Do I need to be registered for a course at UC while I'm working on CPT?**

- Yes, starting after your first two semesters, to maintain your student status, you must enroll in the MEng Capstone course during the summer of 2025 and each semester you're on CPT until you graduate. There won't be any coursework for the Capstone course while you're on CPT, and you do not need to physically be in Cincinnati.
- For those employed on CPT during **summer'25** semester:
  - Enroll in the zero-credit hour [ENGR 8060](#) MEng Capstone regardless of your engineering department.
  - Because ENGR 8060 is a zero-credit hour class for the summer, you will not be charged any tuition fees for this class.

- It is your responsibility to enroll in ENGR 8060 for the summer. The last day to drop a full semester course in summer'25 semester and get a 100% refund is May 26, 2025, so if you enroll in the wrong capstone class for summer'25 for one credit hour and want to change it to ENGR 8060 after May 26, 2025, you will not get a refund for the one credit hour of tuition.
- If you receive an offer of employment anytime after May 12, 2025, email Julie Steimle asking her to grant permission in Catalyst for you to enroll in ENGR 8060, including your M number in the email.
- For **fall'25** and **spring'26** semesters, the zero-credit hour ENGR 8060 MEng Capstone is not available.
  - In those two semesters, if you are working on CPT and/or have not yet graduated, to maintain your student status you must enroll in the MEng Capstone course associated with your major/discipline for one credit hour (for example, CS 8060, EECE 9060, MECH 9011, etc.).

**11. How soon can I apply for CPT work authorization?**

- You may apply for CPT up to 90 days before the end of your first year of study (the first “year” is your first fall and first spring semesters), but will not be permitted to begin working until your approved CPT start-date.

**12. How long does it take for CPT to be processed so that I am able to start working?**

- It takes no more than a total of 10 *business* days (this does not include weekends or holidays) for CEAS to approve your CPT and for UC International to reissue your Form I-20, so plan and communicate with your employer accordingly.

**13. Can I rush my CPT application?**

- No. Amanda and UC International both process CPT in the order in which the applications were submitted, and it could take up to 10 business days total to process. Plan accordingly and communicate this clearly to your employer so that they can manage their expectations.

**14. When can I begin working on CPT Work Authorization?**

- Those who are on student visas must complete two full-time semesters (fall and spring) that involve in-person coursework at UC before you are eligible to be employed on CPT work authorization.
- The fall'24 MEng batch can begin working on CPT as early as the first day after spring semester, Monday, May 5, 2025 (as long as they have applied for CPT).
- MEng students are limited to five semesters, so summer semester is *not* a “break” for MEng students, but, rather, it is the third of five semesters and is a prime hiring season for internships.

**15. When an employer offers me an internship or job, what documents are required from the company for the CPT application?**

- a. An offer letter from the employer that has the following:
  - It's on company letterhead
  - Your start-date (end-date is not necessary)
  - Your internship or job title
- b. A description of your internship or job responsibilities in one of the following documents:
  - The offer letter itself
  - A separate letter on company letterhead
  - A screen capture of an email from someone from the company, including the email header that shows it's from someone at the company.
  - A screen capture of the original internship/job posting that is clearly from the company.

**16. What's the difference between an “offer letter” and a “CPT letter?”**

- There is no such thing as a CPT letter because the employer plays absolutely no role in the CPT authorization process other than providing an offer letter. The employer gives you an offer letter of employment and the University of Cincinnati issues the CPT work authorization. If the employer wants to call it a CPT letter, that's fine, but, in reality, it's actually an offer letter.

**17. If I get an offer letter, and I accept it, does it mean that I am bound by law to pursue my CPT there only?**

- No. After accepting an offer of employment and applying for CPT, you can change your mind and decline that offer of employment up until two weeks before your originally requested CPT start-date.
- If you need to decline an offer of employment that you've already accepted, it's *highly* recommended that you call the employer to tell them that you are declining the offer that you already accepted, and then follow-up



with an email confirming the same. This way, you will not have broken a relationship with that employer, nor will you have tarnished UC's reputation with that employer.

**18. What if the internship or job is not directly related to my MEng coursework, but it is related to my previous work experience, my bachelor's degree, or a certification, can I still get CPT work authorization?**

- No, because the "C" in CPT stands for "Curricular," which means that the internship or job must be related to your CEAS MEng curriculum in order to be appropriate for CPT work authorization.
- For example, a Civil Engineering student will not be authorized for CPT work authorization for an internship or job as a Python Developer just because they have work experience in Python or a certification in Python; a Civil Engineering student's internship or job must be related to Civil Engineering. In this example, just adding an intro course that covers Python to their class schedule does not justify CPT work authorization for a Civil Engineering student for an internship or job as a Python Developer.

**19. Can I apply for CPT before I leave the US or while I'm out of the US?**

- Yes, you can apply for CPT before, during, or after you're outside the US as long as you have access to a color printer.
- If you apply for CPT before or during international travel, indicate in your CPT application in iBearcatsGlobal that you need a travel signature on your Form I-20, or submit a [request for a travel signature in iBearcatsGlobal](#).
- In contrast, you should *not* travel outside the US while your OPT application is pending.

**20. Can I travel outside the US while on CPT?**

- Yes, because you can [request a travel signature](#), and because your re-entry into the US will be justified by the CPT work authorization that will be directly printed on your reissued Form I-20 which you are utilizing to complete your academic requirement.

**21. How many weeks of CPT work authorization am I allowed to use?**

- CPT work authorization will be authorized for a maximum of 25 consecutive weeks.
- There is no exception to this 25-week limit.
- You may find information from other universities or on the USCIS.gov, ICE.gov, studyinthestates.dhs.gov, and the UC International page that says a student may use 50 weeks of CPT, but CEAS has identified 25 weeks as the amount of time necessary for MEng students to effectively apply their MEng coursework.

**22. I didn't apply for enough CPT; how do I extend my CPT?**

- Just restart the CPT application process in the CEAS Student Portal and answer "yes" to the "Are you extending your CPT?" question.
  - If your original offer letter does not have an end-date, then simply include the original offer letter and any supporting documents you included in your original CPT application and submit the new combined CPT PDF in iEngineering and iBearcatsGlobal as you did before.
  - If your original offer letter has an end-date, request a new offer letter or an email from your manager in which they express that they want you to work beyond your original end-date. Then add that revised offer letter/email to your new combined CPT PDF, along with the original offer letter and supporting documents you included in your original CPT application and submit the new combined CPT PDF in iEngineering and iBearcatsGlobal as you did before.
- There can be no gap between your original CPT end-date and the first day of your CPT extension. In other words, the start date of your CPT extension must be the day after your original CPT ended; for example, if your CPT ends on a Friday, October 10, the first day of your CPT extension must be Saturday, October 11, with no break between the original CPT and the CPT extension.

**23. What if my internship ends before I use all 25 weeks of my CPT?**

- There's no penalty for not using all 25 weeks of CPT.

**24. Can I lose eligibility for OPT if I work too much on CPT?**

- If a student on an F-1 visa works on CPT for more than 364 days, they *completely* lose access to OPT, but MEng students will *never* come close to crossing this line because CEAS limits master's students to 25 weeks of CPT.

**25. Can I have my Form I-20 end-date extended beyond my five MEng Semesters so that I can use all 25 weeks of my CPT?**

- No, the requested CPT end-date must be before the student's Form I-20 expiration date, unless, for some reason, the MEng student was not provided an I-20 expiration date that allows for their full five semesters.
- Summer semester is not a "break" for MEng students, but rather the third of five semesters.
- A Form I-20 extension will only be approved if there is a valid curricular reason. See Julie Steimle for Form I-20-related questions.

**26. What's the minimum amount of time I have to work to meet the MEng Capstone Internship option?**

- The Capstone internship requirement will be met by working a minimum of 400 hours of employment in a full-time (21 hours or more per week) or part-time (20 hours or less per week) weekly work schedule.

**27. Is there an upper limit of hours per week I can work while on CPT?**

- There is no upper limit of hours you are permitted to work each week on CPT. You can work more than 40 hours per week while on CPT.

**28. Is it possible to change my CPT to a different employer after I start working?**

- No. Once your CPT start-date arrives, it is not possible to change employers.
- To clarify further, it's not possible to divide your 25 weeks of CPT between two employers.

**29. What if my 25 weeks of CPT end before graduation day, and I need to keep working after my CPT end-date?**

- Apply for OPT to begin the day after your CPT ends (even if it's a Saturday). This is called "Post-completion OPT" (not pre-completion OPT) because it will be *after* you have completed your academic requirements.

**30. Can OPT start before I graduate?**

- Yes, apply for OPT to begin the day after your CPT ends. This is called "Post-completion OPT" (not pre-completion OPT) because it will be *after* you have completed your academic requirements.

**31. Can I change to a different employer when moving from CPT to OPT?**

- Yes. You do not need to work for the same employer when moving from CPT to OPT. While on OPT, you can change employers.

**32. When should I submit my MEng Capstone Internship report?**

- The MEng capstone internship report will be due two weeks before graduation.
- Contact Julie Steimle with Capstone Report-related questions.

**33. How do I maintain my full-time student status after I complete my two semesters of coursework?**

- **For Summer Semester (Your third of five semesters):** Your student status will be maintained during summer semester without you doing anything or you can work in an internship or job on CPT during summer semester.
- **For Fall and Spring Semesters (your fourth and fifth of five semesters):** Because USCIS requires you to do something to progress towards completing your degree during *any* fall or spring semester in which you are a student (and searching for an internship or job does not qualify as "something to progress towards completing your degree"), if you have not started working in an internship or job by the first day of fall'25 semester you *must* begin working on your Capstone Project or Capstone Paper.

**34. Because I have to start working on my project at the beginning of my second fall semester if I haven't been hired yet, what happens if I get a job offer during fall semester?**

- If you receive an offer of employment during your second fall semester, you can abandon the project you began working on at the beginning of the semester and apply for CPT. In this case, submit your Capstone Internship report to fulfill the MEng Capstone requirement.

**35. Is it mandatory to complete the minimum work requirements of 400 hours of employment in a full-time (21 hours or more per week) or part-time (20 hours or less per week) weekly work schedule?**

- Yes. CPT will not be issued for an internship or job that will not provide at least 400 hours of work.

**36. Does there need to be a gap between my CPT end-date and graduation?**

- No. Your CPT end-date can be the same date as your graduation date.

**37. Does there need to be a gap between my CPT end-date and OPT?**

- No. If you are moving directly from CPT to OPT, request OPT to start the day after your CPT end-date, even if the day after your CPT ends is a Saturday.

**38. Can CPT go beyond graduation?**

- No, CPT stops at graduation, after which you can work on OPT the day after graduation, provided you have applied for OPT and received your EAD card.

**39. What is my CPT application deadline?**

- *Students who began coursework in fall 2023* must receive an offer letter and submit their CPT application by the end of the day November 30, 2024. Even with this deadline, CPT start date could be in spring'25 semester, as long as you are able to complete the minimum 400 hours required to fulfill the MEng Capstone Internship option before spring'25 graduation.
- *Students who began coursework in fall 2024* must receive an offer letter and submit their CPT application by the end of the day November 30, 2025. Even with this deadline, CPT start date could be in spring'26 semester, as long as you are able to complete the minimum 400 hours required to fulfill the MEng Capstone Internship option before spring'26 graduation.

The entire CPT approval process takes up to (no more than) 10 business days (up to 5 business days for CEAS to approve it and up to 5 business days for UC International to reissue your Form I-20). Amanda McLaughlin prioritizes CPT applications, so a request to “rush” the process will not be honored; please plan ahead and communicate with your employer accordingly. UC International has asked me to remind you that they serve *all* international students at UC, and they always process CPT in the order in which they receive the applications; when students ask UC International to rush their CPT processing it actually slows down their process because they have to take extra time to respond to the student.

### To apply for CPT, please start from the beginning and follow all six steps:

1. **Confirm that your offer letter on company letterhead contains the following information:**
  - a. Internship/Job title
  - b. Detailed description of your anticipated internship/job responsibilities\*
  - c. Start date (end-date is not necessary in the offer letter)
  - d. Address at which you will be working (it *must* contain a street address, not just a city and state)
    - \* *If your offer letter does not include a detailed description of your anticipated responsibilities, you must provide additional documentation in the CPT PDF. This can be a screen capture of the original job posting from your employer's career page, LinkedIn, or Handshake, or a screenshot of an email or letter from your employer outlining your anticipated responsibilities. The text you enter in the CEAS Student Portal CPT Application form must exactly match the description of responsibilities from the offer letter, job posting, or email. Do write an introduction and do not rewrite the description in your own words. Ensure that the screenshot clearly shows it is a document from your employer (i.e. if it's an email, include the To: and From: sections in the screen capture).*
2. **Identify or choose the end-date.** If your offer letter doesn't contain a specific end-date, then you must calculate it yourself or choose it depending on your desired timeline. If you want to utilize the max 25 weeks (not "6 months") that CEAS allows for MEng students, use this handy [date calculator](#) to get the specific date.
  - o When you calculate your CPT end-date, if the 25 week end-date falls shortly after that semester's [commencement date](#), it's best to choose the commencement date as your CPT end-date. This way, you can choose the day after commencement as your OPT start-date and seamlessly continue working for that same employer.
3. **Complete [the CPT Fill-in Form in the CEAS Student Portal](#).** After submitting the online CPT fill-in form, click on “Create CPT PDF” which will contain the MEng CPT Approval form and the CEAS Policy for Approval form, to which you will attach the supporting documentation from your employer to create the combined CPT PDF. It is preferred that you sign this PDF electronically; please do not print it out to sign it by hand.
4. **Combine documents for the CPT PDF** including these documents in the following order:
  - a. **FIRST:** “MEng CPT Approval” form
  - b. **SECOND:** “CEAS Policy for Approval” form (signed digitally)
  - c. **THIRD:** Offer letter on employer letterhead (and, if necessary, the supplementary internship/job description document from the employer)
5. **Submit your Combined CPT PDF in:**
  - a. **[iEngineering first](#)**
    - There may be a different advisor or no advisor listed, but proceed as it is, and Amanda will automatically be notified by email of your submission regardless of how your advisor is listed in iEngineering.
  - b. **then [iBearcatsGlobal](#)**
    - Put Amanda McLaughlin as your advisor using the email address [mclaugae@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:mclaugae@ucmail.uc.edu), making sure to submit the same combined CPT PDF in both platforms (upload the full combined CPT PDF in iBearcatsGlobal when it prompts you to upload your “offer letter”).

6. **Once you submit your CPT applications** in iEngineering and iBearcatsGlobal, Amanda will receive email notifications from both iEngineering and iBearcatsGlobal which will prompt me to review them both to confirm that the information in both platforms matches and that your employment meets the curricular standards of your MEng curriculum. If it does, she'll approve it, and then it will be in the hands of UC International to approve your application in iBearcatsGlobal and reissue your Form I-20 so that it specifically lists the company name and address and your CPT Timeline.
  - a. You will receive notification of my approval of your CPT application via the personal email address that you provided to CEAS when you applied to the MEng program.
  - b. Until UC International reissues your Form I-20, your status in iBearcatsGlobal will be “pending.”
  - c. **UC International will email your reissued Form I-20 to you**, and you should print it out on a color printer.

**If you do not have an SSN**, when UC International sends you your reissued Form I-20, UC International will include SSN application instructions. USCIS allows you to begin working for your employer for up to 90 days from your employment start date while your SSN application is pending. *When applying for your SSN (not when applying for CPT)*, you will be asked for your employer's Employer Identification Number (EIN), which is like an SSN for companies. This is not something that employers post publicly, but it is absolutely normal for new hires to ask employers for it, so feel free to contact the company's HR and ask them for it.

**Once your CPT begins**, it's not possible to change your CPT to a different employer.

## Staying Registered with UC to Maintain Status

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- During the second term of your first year, you will register for your capstone course per your degree plan/syllabus. However, you will not do your actual capstone internship until after the end of the second term.
- During any semester a student is employed on CPT work authorization, they must be registered for a minimum of one credit of the MEng Capstone course. This includes summer semester.
- If the internship or job lasts beyond the graduation date for the semester during which the internship began, they must register for one credit hour of MEng Capstone course during that following semester.
- If the student is not employed on CPT during summer semester, then the student does not need to register for summer semester.

## Completing Your Capstone Internship and Obtaining a Passing Grade

- In order to get a passing grade for your capstone internship, you must:
- Successfully complete your internship experience (minimum 400 hours).
- Complete an internship report.
- Deadline for completion of this evaluation/report is the last day of your CPT Capstone internship, or the “MEng Final Submission” deadline for the semester in which you graduate (if your CPT/Capstone Internship ends at the end of the semester in which you graduate). The deadline is typically two weeks prior to graduation.

## The Capstone Internship Grade

- Capstone internships will be graded on a pass/fail basis. You will receive a P or F grade. A grade of P is required for graduation. The P grade does not affect a student's GPA.

## Optional Practical Training (OPT): Working beyond the Capstone Internship

- Employment beyond 25 weeks of CPT must be on Optional Practical Training (OPT) work authorization.
- You are not required to do CPT in order to qualify to apply for OPT. Students can apply for OPT regardless of whether or not they took advantage of CPT. Once you apply for OPT, you cannot apply for CPT or extend the dates of your current CPT.
- It takes up to 100 days to get OPT work authorization.
- 5 business days for CEAS to process the OPT application
  - + 5 business days for UC International to process the application
  - + 90 for USCIS to process and deliver the EAD card
  - = 100 days
- If students neglect to register for OPT on time, CPT WILL NOT be extended to fill the gap in time between the

original end of CPT and the beginning of OPT.

- More information about OPT can be found [here](#), including a seminar video which UC International requires you watch prior to applying for OPT.
- Julie Steimle ([julie.steimle@uc.edu](mailto:julie.steimle@uc.edu)) should be the advisor listed on iBearcatsGlobal OPT request. Please see her for any questions regarding OPT.
- Students should also apply for OPT on iEngineering. Once the request is submitted in both iBearcatsGlobal and iEngineering, Julie Steimle will review and hopefully approve in both portals.
- You are permitted to apply for [OPT Premium Processing](#).
- Once your OPT application is approved by UC International, they will send you an email with next steps. This email will also include helpful instructions for what to do when you receive your EAD, what to do if you change your job or become unemployed, etc. Please save this email and use it as a resource while on OPT.
- STEM Extension OPT does not need to be approved by UC CEAS Graduate Studies. Please direct questions about STEM OPT to [international.students@uc.edu](mailto:international.students@uc.edu).