COMPUTING AND SOFTWARE
GRADUATE STUDENT
FAQ

How to apply for September Admission?

Important information about the application process:

If you require technical support with the Grad application, email technical support: **gradadm@mcmaster.ca**

The application system will allow you to partially complete the process (if necessary) and return to it later.

Have a valid credit card or debit card ready for the application fee ($110 CAD).

It takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete an application. For security reasons, you will be logged out of the online application if you take more than 45 minutes on any one page.

Please note that admission is on a rolling basis until all spots are filled.

This guide will lead you through the online application process: https://gs.mcmaster.ca/how-to-apply/

What is required to apply?

1. Official Academic Transcripts and Degree Completion Certificates
2. Statement of Interest
3. Resume/CV
4. ELP (TOEFL/IELTS) Scores (if applicable)
5. Proof of Permanent Resident Status (if applicable)
6. Two (2) Academic References

Official Academic Transcripts and Degree Completion Certificates:

Electronic academic transcripts for ALL post-secondary studies completed or in progress at the time of application must be included in your application. Transcripts must show all courses and marks (where applicable), along with the transcripts' legends/keys/grading schemes. If you are presented with an offer, it will be conditional that you provide us with the original copies at a later date. If the final transcript does not show that a completed degree has been conferred, an official/notarized copy of your diploma is also required.

Resume/CV:

Like with the statement of interest, your resume/CV should be uploaded to your application as a PDF file; without it, your application will be deemed incomplete. It should be in the same format as you would submit for an employment opportunity.

What should be in my Statement of Interest (SOI)?

The statement of interest should be uploaded to your application as a PDF file; without it, your application will be deemed incomplete. This document should be a few paragraphs indicating the type of research you are interested in pursuing; how your education and experience aligns with research areas in the Department of Computing and Software; any contributions you hope to make to research initiatives during your study and how you plan to make them (methods, approach) and finally evidence of your ability to work collaboratively and independently. This statement helps faculty members identify prospective graduate students for their program.

Can I submit professional references?

The admissions committee requires two (2) academic references.

You can submit Professional References in lieu of Academic ones IF you have graduated more than 5 years ago.

Two Academic References

Before beginning your application, you should obtain the consent of two instructors who are familiar with your academic work to provide confidential reference reports. You are not required to submit reference letters as part of your application; however, you must list your references and their contact information in your application. By entering the email addresses of your references through your online application, McMaster's Electronic Referencing (e-reference) system will send your referees an e-reference request on your behalf.

If, for some reason, you are unable to use the Electronic Referencing System, you can download the reference form (Referee Report on graduate application: [ref_report_grad_applicant.pdf (mcmaster.ca)](ref_report_grad_applicant.pdf) and send to your referees for completion. Downloaded reference forms must be sent by the referee DIRECTLY to the Graduate Administrative Assistant through email (gradcas@mcmaster.ca)

Now that you've applied, what's next?

Application Acknowledgement:

Once you have submitted your online application, you will receive an email confirming your application has been successfully submitted. The email will contain important information about how to access the Application Status Portal to monitor the status of your application and the checklist of required documents.

Application Assessment Period:

Applicants can check their application status online anytime, after their application has been submitted, by logging into the Application Status Portal through SLATE.

For international applicants: completed applications will remain open until end of May. Selected applicants will be contacted.

For those International applicants not selected by end of May, a notification will be sent out in June.

Admission for all programs is based upon supervisor acceptance – it is not automatic. Although it is not mandatory, you can reach out to a supervisor of choice and introduce yourself and express interest.

NOTE: Admission is very competitive, so meeting/surpassing the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to our program. Many variables are considered when the Department of Computing and Software is making a decision to recommend an application for admission, some of which include: research fit; available funding; applicant's statement of interest; the applicant's specific industry/research experience outlined in their resume/CV; and the applicant's reference reports. GRE scores are NOT taken into consideration for admission.

Will I receive financial support?

Full time MASc/MSc students receive funding from the department/supervisor in the form of scholarships and/or teaching assistantships (funding is for 20 months). Full time PhD students receive funding from the department/supervisor in the form of scholarships and/or teaching assistantships (funding is for 48 months). There is no funding for MEng students.

What are the tuition rates?

 Pending Board of Governors approval. All fees are subject to change.

Please visit the Registrar website: https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/fees/graduate/

 Under "Faculty of Engineering"

 MASc/MSc – under "Research Programs – Masters"

PhD – under "Graduate Programs – PHD"

MEng – under "Graduate Programs – Course Based or Professional Programs"

Can the application fee be waived?

No. Unfortunately we cannot waive the application fee for any reason. Your application WILL NOT be processed without payment.

Do I need to find a supervisor or need the support of a professor before applying?

No. An applicant does not need to seek out support of a supervisor before they apply. However, in your application you MUST identify 3 potential supervisors. ALL programs require supervisor acceptance in order to receive admission. Although it is not mandatory, applicants do have the option to also contact and email potential supervisors (contact info found on our website) to introduce yourself and express interest.

I haven't heard back from a prospective supervisor- what should I do?

It is recommended that you review the bios and research of our faculty members before applying to identify Areas of Research and projects that align with your interests and experience. You may wish to reach out to your chosen faculty member(s) by email to generate their interest. In your initial communication with faculty members, you should offer a brief introduction sharing your research interests and explain how you expect your education and experience will contribute to their research. Our faculty members are very busy year-round so a lack of response from them typically means that they are not accepting new graduate students at that time.

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Can I apply even if my GPA is low?

Yes, but in this case you would have to secure the strong support of a prospective supervisor before you submit your application to be considered for admission into the program.

Can I apply even if my English Language Proficiency (ELP) score is too low?

Yes, but in this case you would have to secure the strong support of a prospective supervisor before you submit your application to be considered for admission into the program.

Can I be exempt from providing my English Language Proficiency (ELP) score?

Proof of English proficiency can be satisfied by providing any of the following test results from tests taken within 2 years of the application deadline:

TOEFL Scores (iBt version only):

Minimum 550 – written test

Minimum 213 – computer-based test

Minimum score of 88

IELTS Scores:

Test MUST be academic; not general

Minimum overall score of 6.5

Minimum score of 5.5 for each section

*If English IS the language of instruction at your previous institution, you can be exempted from the ELP requirement by providing either:

1. an official letter from your previous institution stating that the language of instruction is English, OR

2. official transcripts which state that English is the language of instruction.

Is admission automatic?

Admission is based upon supervisor acceptance – it is not automatic.

After receiving an offer of admission, every graduate student in Computing & Software will have a supervisor who is a faculty member who directs the student's work on his/her degree program.

What are the areas of specialization of your department?

1. Computer Systems
2. Health Informatics & Bioinformatics
3. Scientific Computing & Optimization
4. Security Privacy & Data Analytics
5. Software Quality
6. Theory & Methodologies of Computation

Is an undergraduate degree in computer science or software engineering necessary to pursue a graduate degree in computer science or software engineering in Computing & Software?

No, but an applicant for any graduate program in Computing & Software must have substantial background in computer science or software engineering or a related field.

My application is complete, what do I do now?

Your completed application is sent for review by our admissions committee. If deemed admissible, your application will be made available to all faculty currently accepting new students. If selected, you will be contacted by an interested faculty member directly and any offers of admission will come from the School of Graduate Studies. An applicant may choose to contact a faculty member to introduce themselves and express interest in working with them.

Can I re-apply if I'm unsuccessful?

If an unsuccessful applicant wishes to reapply, a new application package – including supporting documentation and application fee – must be submitted. Applications from one year are not held over to another year. All documentation submitted in support of your application for admission becomes the property of the University and will not be returned.

Do you offer both full and part time studies for your programs?

Yes. All our programs are offered on a full-time and part-time basis.

How long is each program?

Our MASc/MSc/MEng programs have a nominal duration of 16-20 months. All full-time Masters students have up to 24 months to complete the program on-time. (part-time Masters students have up to 3 years to complete on-time) All full-time PhD students have up to 48 months to complete the program on-time. (part time PhD students have up to 6 years to complete on-time)

What is the difference between thesis master's degree (MSc or MASc) and a course master's degree (MEng)?

Thesis master's students complete four courses and write and defend a thesis that presents the results of an individual research project. MASc students are required to complete a seminar and defense. Course master's students complete six courses and an independent study project.

What is the difference between computer science (CS) and software engineering (SE)?

Computer science is the general study of the science and engineering of computing. Software engineering is the disciplined development of software in accordance with engineering principles. There is a large overlap between these two fields with respect to both of study and employment.

What is the difference between the PhD degree programs in computer science and software engineering?

Students in the first program focus on computer science, while students in the second focus on software engineering. Otherwise, the two PhD programs are very similar: students complete four courses, pass a two-part comprehensive exam and write and defend a thesis that presents the results of a PhD level research project.

What is a typical entry date?

We only accept 1 intake per year – Fall (September)

Do I need to send you official transcripts?

No. We do not require any official documents unless an applicant is granted an offer of admission. Only PDF copies are required for application review. Original copies of the language test scores must be sent directly to the department graduate administrator.

Do I need to submit GRE results?

No. We do not require GRE results. You are free to include it but it will not enhance your application.

Do I need to send you an official hard copy of IETLS or TOEFL?

No. We do not require an original to be sent but a copy MUST be included in your online application.

Is Co-op an option in any of your programs?

Yes. Students that are enrolled in PhD, MSc/MASc and MEng programs are eligible to complete a co-op work term after completing 8 or 12 months of studies (varies according to program) only with supervisor approval.

Where can I see Grad courses offered per term?

CAS Graduate Courses are listed on our department's website: [Courses – Faculty of Engineering (mcmaster.ca)](mcmaster.ca)

The grad course timetable per term is listed on our department's website, under Resources- Graduate Tab: [Resources – Faculty of Engineering (mcmaster.ca)](mcmaster.ca)

Can I defer or change the start date?

Your offer of admission is only valid for the term of entry indicated; this applies to all details and funding information contained within the offer. Deferrals can only be approved for up to two consecutive terms within the same academic year with supervisor approval.

Approval needs to be emailed to the CAS departmental graduate assistant who will then initiate the process to produce a revised offer of admission. Deferrals cannot be approved for a year; applicants would need to reapply for admission if a deferral is longer than 1 academic year.

International applicants that are deferring must reapply for admission by the SLATE application portal deadline in March.

Changing application information:

*Please make sure that you fill out your name correctly. If you are offered admission to McMaster University, we will register you under the name that appears on your application form. Your name should be consistent with your passport, birth certificate, social insurance number, etc. unless your personal situation changes.

Received an offer of admission?

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU NOW HAVE YOUR OFFER OF ADMISSION IN HAND. WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US.

Accepted offer: How-to-apply

Do you have conditions on your offer? You are responsible for ensuring that all documentation is submitted to gradcas@mcmaster.ca prior to the deadline. Late submissions will affect your admission status. Read more about clearing your conditions: https://gs.mcmaster.ca/ive-accepted-my-offer/

Contacting CAS:

Please email gradcas@mcmaster.ca

Sending Official Documents:

Department of Computing and Software
c/o Graduate Administrative Asst
Information Technology Building (ITB)
Room 202
McMaster University 1280 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8S 4L7
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