



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Electrical & Computer
Engineering

Online Master's Degree in Electrical & Computer Engineering Frequency Asked Questions

Why enroll in the online MS ECE program at UArizona?

- **Online education is the ideal option for working professionals.** This 100% online MS ECE program offers the flexibility to watch lectures on your own schedule. Avoid the commute time and earn a degree from this highly-ranked program, whether you live nearby, in another state or even a different country.
- **The university and ECE department are fully accredited.** The UA is accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (**WSCUC**), while ECE is accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of **ABET**.
- **The online MS degree is the exact same degree earned by on-campus students.** The transcript and diploma will reflect a Master of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering. They will not say “online.”
- **The online MS ECE program at UArizona is highly-ranked and a great value.** U.S. News & World report listed it as a top 25 program among public universities, it received 4.5 out 5 stars from Money Magazine and it earned a Best Value College distinction from the Princeton Review.

How does online study work?

- **Tenure-track ECE faculty members serve as the primary instructors.** Online students learn from the same faculty who teach on-campus ECE courses. If there is demand for a customized online course in a specific career-oriented subject, the department may use an adjunct faculty member who is an expert in that field.
- **All course schedules are flexible.** Lectures can be viewed during evenings and weekends to accommodate study in varying time zones and work schedules. Some instructors livestream on-campus lectures, allowing online students to interact along with those in the classroom. These lectures are also recorded so they can be watched later. Other instructors provide pre-recorded classes that can be viewed on a faster schedule if desired. Access to lectures is provided via the D2L online learning platform.
- **Students can interact during livestreamed lectures.** Most classrooms are equipped with two-way audio so online students can ask real-time questions. There is also typically an option of sending messages via chat.
- **Office hours are typically done via Zoom.** Online students get all the benefits of their on-campus colleagues through regular office visits with faculty over Zoom.

- **Homework assignments are managed via the D2L online learning platform.** Assignments are uploaded to an online dropbox on D2L. Typically, the period for each assignment includes a weekend to provide flexibility for students who work during the week.
- **Exam scheduling is flexible.** Online students can take exams at a time that fits with their schedule. For example, some instructors may provide a 24-hour window during which students can take a one-hour exam.
- **An exam proctor is generally not required.** Most exams are provided via the D2L online learning platform and may require the student to use a webcam. Some instructors might use a third-party proctoring service whereby the students interact with a remote proctor via a webcam.

What are the degree requirements? How long does it take?

- **Degree requirements include 10 three-unit graduate courses.** In addition to ECE graduate courses, students may also take up to nine units of other STEM-related, approved graduate courses.
- **Transfer credit is welcomed.** Students can transfer up to six semester units of coursework if approved by the department and the Graduate College.
- **Course load is typically one or two classes per semester.** ECE graduate classes are offered in the fall and spring. Most online students who work full-time choose to take one or two courses per semester. During the summer, studies can continue with non-ECE courses. It is wise to budget 15 hours per week for a three-unit graduate-level course.
- **Typically, degree completion takes about 3 - 4.5 years if working full-time.** Of course, students who are not working full-time may finish quicker.
- **No additional exam is required for completion of the program.** After finishing the approved coursework with acceptable grades, the MS degree is awarded. There is no end-of-degree exam.
- **There are no required courses for the online MS ECE program.** Students have flexibility in tailoring their plan of study to meet their career goals. In addition to ECE graduate courses, students may include up to nine units of non-ECE graduate courses with prior approval.

What subjects are available for study?

- **Students can choose a highly focused curriculum or explore a broad field of topics.** Examples of popular ECE studies include cybersecurity, high-performance computing, machine learning, network security, optical communication systems, quantum sensing and communications, signal and image processing, and software-defined radio. For more information on offered classes, visit our [online program overview](#).
- **Non-ECE courses add breadth to the study plan.** A vast array of non-ECE online courses are offered, including mechanical engineering, biomedical engineering, entrepreneurship, information science, optical sciences, software engineering, and systems engineering.
- **Study is available for fall, spring and summer sessions.** ECE courses are typically offered in fall and spring only. Non-ECE courses are available throughout the year, including summer. A semester is generally 15 weeks of lectures plus the final exam period. Summer sessions are normally either 5 weeks or 10 weeks, including the final exam period.

- **A list of available fully online courses is available.** Visit the UA Student Center [class search site](#) and select *Arizona Online*.

What are the prerequisites? What equipment is needed?

- **Certain graduate ECE courses ask for previous study.** Students should contact the instructor in advance with any questions about prerequisite material. If a student has a non-ECE bachelor's degree, they may not be prepared for some courses. If so, the student can review the syllabus for that course and do self-study with the textbook. Alternatively, the student may choose to enroll in the undergraduate course at Arizona Online or another institution, prior to beginning the graduate coursework.
- **A personal computer with internet access is needed.** The following basic equipment is required: a computer with a webcam and microphone (built-in or external), internet access with sufficient reliability for video streaming, an up-to-date web browser, and a disk drive with sufficient storage to download video files for offline study if desired.

What support is provided? Are advising and counseling available?

- **A wealth of support services are provided to help students complete their degree.** These include [advising](#), [counseling](#), [academic support](#), [disability resources](#) and [career networking](#).

What does it cost? Is there financial aid?

- **Tuition cost can be determined via the bursar's office.** See the [tuition calculator](#) for details.
- **Financial aid may be available.** Visit the university [scholarships & financial aid page](#) to learn more about qualifications.
- **Tuition installment plan is available.** For payment options see the [tuition payment plan overview](#).
- **Refunds are possible if deadlines are met.** More information can be found at the bursar [policies](#) and [refund](#) pages.

How do you apply to the program?

- **Apply now via UArizona GradApp.** To apply, fill out the [graduate admissions application](#).
- **Be sure to meet the application deadlines.** The fall semester deadline is August 5 and the spring semester deadline is January 2. Specific class dates can be found at the [academic calendar](#).
- **Both US students and international students can apply.** For details regarding immigration eligibility, consult with [International Student Services](#).
- **English proficiency proof is required for applicants from a country where English is not the official language.** Visit the [international applicants page](#) to learn more about what is needed.
- **Requirements include an appropriate bachelor's degree.** Applicants typically have a bachelor's degree in electrical and computer engineering from an institution recognized by the UA. If the student has a STEM degree that is not ECE, the application will be considered, but they may want additional self-study or background courses after admission. If the student has a bachelor's degree in a non-STEM major, background courses will be required before admission will be considered. Contact the [ECE graduate advisor](#) for further information.

- **Recognized undergraduate degrees are determined by the Graduate College.** For accreditation requirements, visit the [recognized U.S. degrees page](#) or the [international admission requirements page](#).
- **Minimum undergraduate GPA is 3.00/4.00.** For details about calculations, visit the [GPA calculator](#).
- **An application fee is required.** The application cost is available from the [Graduate College](#).
- **Transcripts must be uploaded with the admission application.** Unofficial transcripts may be uploaded with the application. Official transcripts are required at least 30 days before classes begin. Further information is available at the [Graduate College](#).
- **Other documents are also required when applying.** Applicants must submit a resume, a statement of purpose, and at least one reference letter.
- **GRE scores are not required.**
- **The timeline for processing an admission application is about one week.**
- **Applicants must accept an admission offer in a timely manner.** To register for courses, incoming students must accept admission at least 2 weeks before classes begin.
- **Admission can be deferred to a subsequent term.** If the student is unable to start the program during the term listed on the application, **admission may be deferred** to the following spring, summer or fall semester within one year. Contact the [ECE graduate advisor](#) to request an update of the admission term.

Is more information available?

- **Contact the UA Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering for further information.** Feel free to reach out to the [ECE graduate advisor](#) with any questions.
- **Or learn more at Arizona Online and the Graduate College.** See the [Arizona Online FAQ](#) and the [Graduate College Admissions FAQ](#).