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](https://www.uaportal.az) 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.