FAQ for coursework students

Choosing courses

How many courses should I take each term? How do I choose which courses to take?
Graduate students typically take two to three courses in a term, depending on other activities in which they are involved. There are many courses from which you can choose, at three different levels (600-level, 700-level, and 800-level, depending on the first digit in the course number). You can find a listing of courses here:
https://cs.uwaterloo.ca/current-graduate-students/courses/current-course-offerings
You are encouraged to follow your interests, provided that you satisfy the requirements on areas and levels of courses:
https://cs.uwaterloo.ca/current-graduate-students/table-categories-and-areas-courses
Not all courses listed in the calendar are offered on a regular basis, so planning to wait until a particular course appears in the list of offerings may delay your completion date. The list of tentative courses will be posted when scheduling occurs, but even then last-minute changes can take place. It is best to choose among what is offered each year.

Would it be best to take all the 600-level courses first so that in a later term I can take just two 800-level courses?
- The optimal number of courses to take each term will depend a number of factors, including course availability, prerequisite chains, types of courses, and levels of courses. It is also quite easy to make changes, so that if after the first week of classes you discover that a particular course is not what you expected, you can change to another course.
- Taking 600-level courses early is advantageous if they serve as prerequisites for other courses you wish to take. There are other disadvantages, though. One is that there are often fewer 700- and 800-level courses offered in the spring term, so taking a 600-level course in that term could make scheduling easier. Moreover, 600-level courses are often co-offered with advanced undergraduate courses, and can be structured with assignments, projects, exams, and the like. Many 800-level courses are taught in a seminar style, with presentations by students but fewer assignments. Having a mix of different styles of courses may be preferable to taking all 600-level courses at once. In addition, the type of work required for different disciplines differs. For example, CS 666 typically has no programming work, whereas CS 688 typically has a large project.

How do I know whether I have the prerequisites for a particular course?
Graduate courses don’t generally have specific prerequisites. The instructor will tell students what background is expected for a particular course, either on the course Web site or in an announcement in class; you can use that information to
determine whether or not you are ready for that course (or whether you can pick up the necessary background quickly on your own). In some situations, instructor permission might be required for a course. If in doubt, talking to the instructor is a good idea.

Should I take CS 697, the graduate skills seminar, even though I am not doing research?
Most of the skills taught in the seminar are general ones that will be applicable not only in the classroom but also in the workplace. Upper-level graduate courses often have research-related components, such as projects and papers, for which the seminar will be useful. It is recommended, but not required.

I have a tentative schedule of courses. Can I get advice on my choices?
Yes! Contact the coursework advisor to set up an appointment.

Remedial courses
How do I enroll in a remedial course?
To register for a undergraduate remedial course, you need to obtain a Course Drop/Add form from the CS Graduate Office. You need to take the form to one of the undergraduate advisors to be stamped and signed (instructors are not asked to sign these forms). It can then be submitted to the graduate office for signatures and approval from the coursework advisor and the Graduate Director.

How do I have a remedial course waived?
The coursework advisor makes this decision. You then need to give a written request to Margaret Towell, with the advisor’s reason for waiving the remedial requirement attached or sent by e-mail.

May I take extra remedial courses?
You may wish to take additional undergraduate background to prepare for graduate courses or broaden your knowledge. There are no restrictions on the number of such courses a student is allowed to take, though you should make sure you are making adequate progress towards the completion of your degree (and not just taking remedial courses).

Forms
How do I obtain my supervisor’s signature on my course Drop/Add form, change of status form, or program completion form?
Bring your form to the CS Graduate Office; we’ll handle the logistics of having the
form signed. If you need the signature of the instructor of a course, obtain that signature before handing it in.

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**Quest**

**What does it mean when Quest lists my admission status as "Intention to Matriculate"?**

It could be that you have not yet met the conditions of the offer (e.g., you have not yet provided a final transcript) or that the university’s graduate office (GSO) is waiting to process a batch of students at once. It is usually cleared up well before the term of admission. If you are concerned, you can contact the staff in the CS Graduate Office, who will be informed by the GSO by e-mail when students have been officially matriculated.

**What I see recorded in Quest does not match my understanding of my status. Whom should I contact?**

Please see the staff in the CS Graduate Office to find out the cause of the discrepancy.

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**Co-op**

**I’m a Coursework Master’s student interested in the Co-op Option. What do I need to do?**

- You may apply to take a term as a co-op term provided that you arrange the placement yourself, have completed at least half of the program requirements prior to the co-op term, and register for at least one term of full-time studies after the completion of the co-op term. To obtain the co-op designation, you need to have completed eight months of work (typically as an eight-month work term).
- Co-op students may use JobMine to look at companies that hire students and can use services of Career Services to get help with resumes and letters. However, they cannot access co-op interviews. It is best to apply directly to the company; most companies have a contact on their Web pages for internships and co-op placements.
- To change your status and obtain further information, please see Margaret Towell in the CS Grad Office.
- PD 601 is recommended, as it teaches the basics of how the University of Waterloo co-op process works.
- Just before going on a work term, submit a Change of Status form by checking off the co-op box for two terms.
FAQ for coursework students

I'm an MHI student interested in the Co-op Option. What do I need to do?
This option is administered through UW’s Co-operative Education office.
My co-op employer needs verification of my status. Who can provide that?
Please send all such requests to the CS Graduate Office.

Changing status

May I take time off during the program?
For a single term you can change your status to “inactive”, but for a longer time you may need to apply for readmission.

May I switch to part-time status?
It will depend on your situation; please see the staff in the CS Graduate Office in order to make a request. You need to keep in mind that if you enter the program as a full-time student, even if you later switch to part-time status, the maximum number of terms for program completion (without applying for extensions) is six terms.

How can I check whether or not I have completed the degree requirements?
Please bring an unofficial copy of your transcript along with an Intention to Graduate/ Program Completion form to the CS Graduate Office.

How do I obtain transfer credits for courses already taken?
If you have taken relevant graduate courses elsewhere that have not already been used to obtain another degree, you can apply for transfer credit. The maximum number of transfer credits is half of your total course requirement; the actual number will depend on how many of the courses meet with our approval in terms of level and area requirements.