

**Georgia State University**

**Department of Computer Science**

**Graduate Handbook**

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## Contents

1. Computer Science Department .....	3
1.1 The Graduate Team.....	4
1.2 Forms.....	5
1.3 Student Conduct .....	5
1.4 Complains and Conflicts .....	5
2. General Class Registration Information .....	6
2.1 Course Transfer .....	6
2.2 Course Waiver (including Foundation Course Waiver) .....	8
2.3 GSTEP – Georgia State Test of English Proficiency .....	9
3. M.S. Degree.....	10
3.1. Change of Concentration .....	10
3.2. Research Advisor Selecting and Changing.....	11
4. Ph.D. Degree .....	12
4.1. Annual Review .....	12
4.2. Ph.D. Qualifier .....	12
4.3. Research Advisor Selection and Change .....	14
4.4. Travel and conferences.....	15
4.5. Obtaining M.S. degree Along the Way .....	16
5. Graduate Student Employment.....	17
5.1. Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA).....	17
5.2. Graduate Research Assistant (GRA).....	18
5.3. Ph.D. Funding .....	18
5.4. Curricular Practical Training (CPT) .....	19
5.5. CSc 8901: Perspectives in Computing .....	20
6. University Policies and Resources .....	20
6.1. Student Center .....	20
6.2. Web resources .....	21

# 1. Computer Science Department

The Department of Computer Science offers M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Computer Science. Both degree programs provide students with advanced training in the fundamental principles and processes of computation. The following programs are available:

## M.S. in Computer Science

- Computer Science concentration
- Bioinformatics concentration
- Security and Privacy concentration

## M.S. in Data Science and Analytics

- Big Data and Machine Learning (BDML) Concentration

## Ph.D. in Computer Science

- Computer Science concentration
- Bioinformatics concentration

Computer Science faculty are actively engaged in a wide variety of research endeavors. Research efforts are concentrated on artificial intelligence and neural nets, mobile systems and robotics, bioinformatics, databases, digital image, and signal processing, graphics and visualization, networks, parallel and distributed computing, programming languages, simulation and modeling, and software engineering.

The information about the department such as chair, faculty, and staff are located at: <https://csds.gsu.edu/about/>.

## 1.1 The Graduate Team

The graduate team includes multiple graduate directors and staff who will support your graduate studies in the department. We're here to help.

1st Option for Academic Help	Degree-related Support: AGD A	Employment-related Support: AGD B
-Go to the college website at: <a href="https://cas.gsu.edu/graduate-services/">https://cas.gsu.edu/graduate-services/</a>	-Course-related issues such as course waiver, credit transfer, plan of study, graduation requirement, PhD qualifiers, etc.	-GTA hiring, review, and assignment, CPT, RCL, hiring by another department, etc.
-College academic advisor: Ms. Samantha Gray Jakobeit <a href="mailto:sjakobeit1@gsu.edu">sjakobeit1@gsu.edu</a> , Ms. Nicole Weeden <a href="mailto:nweeden@gsu.edu">nweeden@gsu.edu</a> (404) 413-5041	- Associate Director of Graduate (AGD) Studies: Dr. Ashwin Ashok <a href="mailto:aashok@gsu.edu">aashok@gsu.edu</a>	- Associate Director of Graduate (AGD) Studies: Dr. Wei Li <a href="mailto:wli28@gsu.edu">wli28@gsu.edu</a>
25 Park Place, Suite 300 Atlanta, GA 30303	25 Park Place, Room 734	25 Park Place, Room 733

2nd Option for Academic Help	Graduate programs and more*	Department Head
- Administrative Specialist: Mr. Jamie Hayes <a href="mailto:jhayes14@gsu.edu">jhayes14@gsu.edu</a> (404) 413-6107	-Director of Graduate Studies: Dr. Xiaojun Cao <a href="mailto:cscgrad@gsu.edu">cscgrad@gsu.edu</a>	- Department Chair : Dr. Armin Mikler - Associate Chair : Dr. Raj Sunderraman
25 Park Place, Room 732	1 Park Place, Room 626	(404) 413-5700

\*BDML is a concentration of a university-wide MS in Data Analytics (MSA) degree. The BDM program director is Dr. Rafal Angryk, [rangryk@gsu.edu](mailto:rangryk@gsu.edu).

**NOTE:** This graduate handbook will likely answer all typical inquiries and questions from graduate students about their program and progression through it to graduation. Please be respectful of the graduate team's time and only email if the question is not being answered by this document or by GSU Graduate School website information. For all other inquiries email [csggrad@gsu.edu](mailto:csggrad@gsu.edu) and one of our graduate team personnel will respond.

**NOTE:** Before you make inquiries, identify if it is DEGREE related or EMPLOYMENT related. If DEGREE, then reach out to AGD A. If EMPLOYMENT, then reach out to AGD B

**NOTE:** Inquiries regarding immigration, visa, international student status, i20, SEVIS, and such must be directed to GSU ISSS: <https://iss.gsu.edu/>

## 1.2 Forms

CS Department specific Graduate program forms: <https://csds.gsu.edu/graduate/forms/>  
College of Arts and Sciences forms: <https://cas.gsu.edu/graduate-services/student-resources/>  
Foundation course waiver request form: <https://cas.gsu.edu/request-to-transfer-credit/>  
CS PhD Qualifiers registration form: <https://forms.office.com/r/yjS945Z28z>  
Change of concentration form: <https://cas.gsu.edu/change-of-concentration/>  
CS Department Research Advisor change form: <https://csds.gsu.edu/graduate/forms/>  
ISSS/Employment Forms (e.g. CPT): <https://iss.gsu.edu/current-students/f-1-students/f-1-employment/>

## 1.3 Student Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct specifies the University's expectations of student behavior and students' rights at the Institute. The code also creates a standard by which students and student organizations are expected to conduct themselves in an environment conducive to academic excellence. The Dean of Students Office oversees the administration of the code for both academic and non-academic misconduct. Please read the entire Student Code of Conduct and other student policies on the Dean of Students Office website <https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/>.

## 1.4 Complains and Conflicts

The staff is available to help you. If you are a Ph.D. or M.S. thesis student, this particularly includes if you ever find you are struggling to effectively communicate with your advisor or are experiencing a conflict that you cannot resolve on your own. The staff is available to hear your concerns and advise you on how to find solutions. We can help you determine the best methods to communicate directly with your advisor and/or hold mediated conversations between you and your advisor. We encourage you to reach out to us as soon as you are experiencing a problem so that we may help you reestablish an effective working relationship before the problem escalates. You can trust that we will respect requests for confidentiality, except on issues we are required by law to report, related to sexual harassment and violence.

The Office of Ombudsperson is an impartial entity that strives to see that faculty, staff, and students at the university are treated fairly and equitably. Georgia State staff, faculty, and graduate students can seek the advice of the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson is impartial, neutral, and confidential. The rights and interests of all parties to disputes are considered, with the goal of achieving fair outcomes. For more information about Ombuds services, please visit <https://ombuds.gsu.edu/>.

## 2. General Class Registration Information

Panther Access to Web Services (PAWS, <http://paws.gsu.edu/>) is a portal for students to conduct most student enrollment processes such as registering for classes, linking to online course work, checking and completing financial aid, paying tuition, etc. Online class registrations can be done from PAWS. Every semester, you will be assigned a time ticket that provides a date and time for when you can begin course registration on PAWS. Priority is given to students who are scheduled to graduate for the upcoming registration term and then to continuing students according to the total credit hours earned, etc. The GSU's official registration guide is available here: <https://registrar.gsu.edu/registration/registration-guide/>.

With the ever-growing enrollments, some of our graduate courses are filled quickly. As of Summer 2022, the university has implemented a new waitlist function via your PAWS account for selecting courses. This waitlist function will allow you to add yourself to a waitlist for a full course. If a seat becomes available for a section (either through a student dropping or the department adding seats to the section), students at the top of the list will have 24 hours to register (you will be notified via your GSU email). If you don't register during that time frame, the next student on the list can register. A video explaining the use of the system is available at <https://vimeo.com/680206858>.

It is required that each student **should NOT register for MORE THAN THREE 6000/8000-level classroom-taught courses per semester**, even with the intention to drop some of them later. As we all know, graduate courses require a huge time commitment. Thus, doing more than 3 graduate courses and doing GTA/GRA/Grader duties simultaneously are not feasible. We believe that students who take more than 3 graduate courses may not be able to effectively conduct their duties. **Violation of this requirement will result in the revocation of a current GTA assignment in the current semester or low priority GTA assignment in the following semester.** You will also be at risk of having your excess courses automatically dropped to bring you into compliance with this policy.

**NOTE:** Certain courses require departmental approval. For such courses, please email the CS department administrative person in charge -- 2nd Option for Academic Help (see Graduate Team section 1.1). For all other registration issues, please email—1st Option for Academic Help (see Graduate Team section 1.1)

### 2.1 Course Transfer

Contact person is College Academic Advisor (see Section 1.1)

Approver is AGD A

Submit waiver request using this form: <https://cas.gsu.edu/request-to-transfer-credit/>

The transfer of graduate course request forms should be submitted at the GSU College of Arts and Sciences site (see URL above), following the instruction to attach required documents (syllabus and transcript). For Ph.D. students, submit your request after you pass the qualifying exam. For M.S. students, submit your request in your first semester. No application will be accepted outside of the submission time window. Please allow at least 4 weeks for the processing of your request. You can check your results at [paws.gsu.edu](http://paws.gsu.edu)

You must submit the following documents:

- 1) A copy of the course syllabus for each course you want to transfer. If a course syllabus is unavailable, you must obtain satisfactory documentation of the course content from the institution where the course was taken. You must submit copies of course descriptions from course catalogs or websites instead of your descriptions. A URL may also be given if the material is currently accessed from the Internet using the given URL. You may also submit additional supporting materials such as assignments, exams, etc.
- 2) An official transcript or a copy from your Graduate Admission file. Copies of grade reports are not acceptable.

The following restrictions and requirements for credit transfer are currently enforced:

*All programs:*

- 1) Coursework transferred from other institutions is subject to the seven-year time limit on requirements for the master's degree and the ten-year time limit on requirements for the doctorate.
- 2) All graduate transfer credits must have been earned at an accredited graduate college. All credits requested in transfer must carry a letter grade of "B" or above in graduate-level courses. No "S/F" or "P/F" graded courses may be transferred. Petitions will not be considered for an exemption from this requirement. Please note that transfer credit may impact your GPA.

*Master's candidates:*

- 1) A maximum of 6 semester hours of transfer credit may be applied to your degree program. A request for more than six hours must be accompanied by a Petition for Deviation from Graduate Bulletin Regulations, which is available from the Office of Graduate Studies or at:  
[http://www2cas.gsu.edu/docs/grad/graduate\\_deviation\\_petition.doc](http://www2cas.gsu.edu/docs/grad/graduate_deviation_petition.doc)

*Doctoral candidates:*

- 1) A maximum of 30 semester hours of transfer credit may be applied to your degree program.
- 2) In general, all credits requested cannot be counted as CORE course credits. If the course in a previous institution is considered qualified for credit transfer but the number of credits for that course is not the same as that for GSU's equivalent, the credits will be transferred to CSc 8099.

CSc 8099 can **only be counted as elective courses (not CORE or breadth courses)** towards your Ph.D. degree. Exceptions can be made only for senior Ph.D. students who transferred to GSU together with their advisors. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please note that even if such a request is approved, the number of transferred credits will be the same as in the previous institution.

Information provided by students to obtain transfer credit is considered true and accurate. If such information is found to be falsified or inaccurate, it may be grounds for cancellation of enrollment and/or disciplinary action.

## 2.2 Course Waiver (including Foundation Course Waiver)

Contact person is AGD A

Submit waiver request using this form: <https://forms.office.com/r/cQe8RPZSLl>

The form will request you to submit the following collated as a single PDF file:

- 1) The syllabus or course description of each course. You must submit copies of course descriptions from course catalogs or websites instead of your descriptions. A URL may also be given if the material is currently accessed from the Internet using the given URL. You may also submit additional supporting materials such as assignments, exams, etc.
- 2) An official transcript or a copy from your Graduate Admission file. Copies of grade reports are not acceptable.

Students are recommended to submit the request in the first semester. Please allow at least 4 weeks for the processing of your request. You can check your results on [paws.gsu.edu](https://paws.gsu.edu).

**Note: Foundation courses** are NOT the same as pre-requisite courses for courses at GSU. Foundation courses are background knowledge that the graduate CS program expects the incoming students to know already to be successful in the program. Foundation courses will not prevent a student from registering for the semester. The foundation courses will NOT count towards the student's degree and will NOT show up on the academic transcript. It is a check for the department to ensure that the student has the right background covered. The onus is on the students to ensure they have prepared themselves with the right background.



The information provided by students is considered true and accurate. If such information is found to be falsified or inaccurate, it may be grounds for cancellation of enrollment and/or disciplinary action.

## 2.3 GSTEP – Georgia State Test of English Proficiency

Students with TOEFL scores between 80 and 100 or IELTS scores between 6.5 and 7.5 should take the GSTEP during orientation to determine the need for placement in ESL 7250 and/or ESL 7350. The Graduate Programs office will support Applied Linguistics to cover the cost of administration and scoring for these students. Students whose scores fall below 80 on the TOEFL or 6.5 on the IELTS should enroll in both ESL 7250 and 7350. Historically, ~85% of students scoring below 80 (TOEFL) or 6.5 (IELTS) are recommended for these ESL courses after GSTEP testing.

In the past, GSTEP testing has been made available to any international graduate student, whether their college or department follows through with ESL course recommendations or provides their own language support. Currently, the GSTEP will only be offered to students in colleges that avail themselves of the ESL courses offered by Applied Linguistics.

### 3. M.S. Degree

A grade of B must be earned for all courses counting toward Computer Science graduate degrees. The department offers Bioinformatics and Security and Privacy Concentrations as well as the core program. Students in the Security and Privacy Concentration are required to complete a project. For the core program and Bioinformatics concentration students can choose among thesis, project, or course only options, which are described in the following sections. Note that the students choosing the project option must be supervised by a CS faculty advisor, and the projects and associated requirements will need to pass certain quality requirements. Students should frequently check the degree catalog information posted on the department website.

- M.S. in Computer Science  
[https://catalogs.gsu.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=39&poid=11597&utm\\_source=program-list&utm\\_campaign=catalog](https://catalogs.gsu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=39&poid=11597&utm_source=program-list&utm_campaign=catalog)
- Dual B.S./M.S. in Computer Science  
<https://cas.gsu.edu/academics-admissions/undergraduate-learning/dual-degree-programs-overview/>
- M.S. in Data Science and Analytics  
<https://cas.gsu.edu/program/data-science-and-analytics-ms-big-data-and-machine-learning/>

As a first-year MS graduate student, you must decide on your track. It can be either of the three:

#### **Project Option**

max. 3 6000-level courses + min. 4 8000-level courses + 4 credits of MS Project CSc 8930

#### **Thesis Option**

max. 2 6000-level courses + min. 4 8000-level courses + 6 credits of Thesis CSc 8999

#### **Course-only Option**

Max 4 6000-level course + min 5 8000-level course + 1 credit of CSc 8901

If you are going with a Project or Thesis option, you need to find an adviser. Use the CS 8900/9900 seminar as an information source about what research is happening in our department. It will help you decide which faculty member you want to work with and learn about general ethics and about succeeding in the graduate program.

#### 3.1. Change of Concentration

**Submit** the request using this form: <https://cas.gsu.edu/change-of-concentration/>

**Contact and Handling person:** College Academic Advisor. (Approver: AGD A)

To change the concentration a student should provide a reasonable justification. It may be, for example, a letter from the student's advisor indicating that his/her current project is related to the topic lying outside the current concentration.

Reach out to AGD A if there are complexities or you need to inquire about eligibility etc. Do NOT submit your request via email, as it will not be processed. If an associate graduate director is not available, then reach out to the graduate director.

### 3.2. Research Advisor Selecting and Changing

All new M.S. students who are assigned as graduate assistants (GTA, GRA, or GLA) are expected to find a research advisor and get involved in a research project in the FIRST semester itself in the department (whether they select thesis or project options). If an M.S student wishes to change their advisor, they must first discuss the matter with their current advisor and satisfactorily complete all the graduate research assistant and research obligations and find a new faculty advisor.

## 4. Ph.D. Degree

A minimum grade of B must be earned for all courses counting toward Computer Science graduate degrees. Please check the following catalog information:

[https://catalogs.gsu.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=39&poid=11601&utm\\_source=program-list&utm\\_campaign=catalog](https://catalogs.gsu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=39&poid=11601&utm_source=program-list&utm_campaign=catalog).

### 4.1. Annual Review

Students are supervised by their research advisors throughout their Ph.D. training. Fifth year students supported by the department for 4 years must pass an additional round of evaluation to assess their progress towards graduation and decide if their assistantships for the 5th year can be renewed. The student's performance over an academic year is evaluated by their advisor based on the following criteria:

- 1) Past year GPA
- 2) Degree milestones completed in the past year (Ph.D. qualifier, Dissertation proposal)
- 3) Publications and conference presentations
- 4) Teaching effectiveness (if applicable)

The advisor rates the student's performance. The graduate directors in consultation with the faculty set the criteria for the scores (1 Poor to 5 Excellent)

### 4.2. Ph.D. Qualifier

Doctoral program students must complete a Qualifying Examination in the research areas. The qualification process consists of two parts:

**1) Curriculum Requirement.** The student must complete three courses in two core areas (Theories and Systems) and receive at least two A grades and one B grade in these courses to meet the curriculum requirement of the qualifying process. Timeline: A typical student (one who is admitted to the Ph.D. program with very few foundation courses to take) is expected to qualify by the end of the third semester (excluding summers) after admission.

**2) Research Examination.** The objective of the research examination is to assess the student's potential to begin doctoral-level research. The examination will assess the student's abilities to read and understand research papers in their field; formulate a problem clearly and provide the motivation and requirements for a solution; determine if a solution is correct; assess to what extent a presumably correct solution solves the problem; clearly identify potential next research problems and provide solutions; communicate effectively both in writing and orally; and answer questions related to the problem and its solutions.

- The student will request the research examination in one of the following areas of Computer Science: Artificial Intelligence, Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, Database and Data Mining, Graphics and Visual Computing, Networks and Distributed Systems, Numerical and Scientific Computing, Security and Privacy, Software Engineering, and Theoretical Foundations.
- A committee of 3 faculty members will choose 2 research papers and assign them to the student. The chosen papers are preferably to be published in the recent 4 years in top-tier journals such as ACM/IEEE Transactions related to the subject area. Paper 1 is the key paper. Paper 2 should be related to Paper 1. Paper 2 could be from flagship conferences, but it is not necessary to be published in the recent 4 years.
- The student has at least 2 months to prepare a paper review written report. An oral defense will be scheduled, in which there will be general questioning by the committee. The written report must be submitted to the committee at least one week before the oral defense.
- The result of the research exam is PASS/FAIL. A student who receives a FAIL in the first attempt will be given a second and final attempt. In the second attempt, at least 1 new committee member will replace a committee member in the first attempt, and the student's advisor's performance evaluation of the student will be considered.

*Qualifier exams (starting Spring 2025) will be administered in the last week of January (for Spring) and last week of August (for Fall). No qualifiers administered in Summer*

### **To-do Steps for Candidates:**

1. **Qualifier Registration:** <https://forms.office.com/r/yjS945Z28z>

Registration window for exam in Spring 2025: **1<sup>st</sup> Sep to 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2024**

Registration window for exam in Fall 2025: **1<sup>st</sup> Apr to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

(Same annual deadlines and schedule thereafter. Early registrations are welcome)

2. Work with the assigned committee to schedule qualifier in the qualifier-week (last week of Jan for Spring and last week of Aug for Fall).
3. Prepare for the qualifier (you are given a typical 2-month advance notice on the papers).
4. Submit qualifier report at least 1 week in advance to the committee via email (strictly enforced deadline)
5. Complete the oral examination (requires presentation in front of the committee). Decision from committee will be relayed to the student immediately (except for special and complex cases if they arise).
6. Formal notification of completion email will be received by the student from the graduate director in-charge of qualifiers.

### **Qualifier General instructions:**

- Must be scheduled in the qualifier-week (candidate must coordinate with the committee). The candidate is responsible for scheduling and booking the rooms (a slot of 1.5 hr. max for booking) for the session.  
Exam Duration: 1 hour for the examination (40 min presentation + 20m Q/A)
- The candidate presents the Papers1 and 2 to the committee via slides. The session will be seen as a lecture by the candidate on the research conducted in Papers1 and 2.
- Advice for candidates: Ensure you have read all details of the work presented in the papers. Though it is not your work, and you are not the author, the qualifier exam primarily tests you on your ability to understand peer work and your ability to present that to an audience ensuring the audience fully understands it
- Note to candidates: In addition to the information presented in the papers, the committee is free to question you on any fundamentals and concepts related. For example, if your area is signal processing, then do not be surprised if a committee member asks you to define Fourier Transform and frequency spectrum.
- The exam is IN-PERSON and must be held only in GSU Downtown campus: If any member of the qualifier examiner committee is traveling, they can login remote. The student is responsible for setting up the virtual meetings (preferably Teams or Webex).

### Qualifier Reports

- Candidates must email the report as a single PDF to the committee **NO LATER THAN ONE WEEK prior to the qualifier (no extensions). Submission until 11.59pm Atlanta time is acceptable.** Report template: [GSU CS Ph.D. Qualifier Report Format Instructions updated4Feb2024.pdf](#)
- For any report received with a timestamp after this deadline, the candidate will be disallowed from attempting the exam this semester
- Issues due to IT malfunctions and delays or outages or health issues of the candidate will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis

*The slides from a qualifier boot-camp your reference:*

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/15EOIz1KNogp9wGhBEzoVAHiZKou-GYjA8h0gDEN-1rs/edit?usp=sharing>

## 4.3. Research Advisor Selection and Change

Advisor change form: <https://csds.gsu.edu/graduate/forms/>

Approver/Contact person: AGD A

All new GRAs and GTAs must FIND a RESEARCH ADVISOR within the FIRST SEMESTER of their graduate studies in the department.

The process for assigning undesignated GRAs to research projects and advisors accommodates both student and faculty desires to the maximum extent possible. The Director of Graduate Studies will make the final GRA/GTA project-advisor assignments based on:

- Student preference
- Faculty preference
- Project priority (externally funded projects have the highest priority)
- Current distribution of graduate students among advisors

If a Ph.D. student wishes to change their advisor, they must first discuss the matter with their current advisor and satisfactorily complete all the graduate research assistant and research obligations and find a new faculty advisor.

Advisor Change requests should be submitted before the semester starts. The current advisor will be sent an email to approve this request and "release" the student. The current advisor will be asked to provide feedback on the progress and completion of graduate assistant duties. The new advisor will then be sent an email with the current advisor's feedback to approve this request and "accept" the student. Students who fail to conduct and finish their research projects or arbitrarily abandon the assigned projects will not be considered for graduate assistantship duties.

The process of changing advisors is overseen by AGD A (if no such entity, then Director of Graduate Studies) and involves three parties: the student, current advisor, and future advisor. The student is responsible for acknowledging all the other parties and the Director of Graduate Studies during this process. Failure to notify may hinder the student's timely graduation and jeopardize the continuation of graduate assistantship support.

#### 4.4. Travel and conferences

**Forms:** TA: Travel Authorization form for Students:

<https://finance.gsu.edu/download/travel-authorization-form-student/>

TES: Travel Expense: Will be emailed once the TA form is submitted to [coasbst@gsu.edu](mailto:coasbst@gsu.edu). See below for Steps

There is no specific budget for student travel to conferences or professional work. Student travel is often funded by their research advisors for travel to conferences, conducting experimental work and other research and professional development-related travel. Travel grants for students may be handled in partial by the department in rare and specific cases as they arise and are up to the

purview of the department chair. It is important that the trip is authorized by the supporting faculty and the department chair.

**Deadlines for submission of forms (strict):**

- **TA:** Travel authorization (BEFORE TRAVEL) - AT LEAST one month before
- **TES:** Travel expenses (AFTER LAST DAY OF TRAVEL) - WITHIN 30 days after
- **Conference Registration:** AT MOST 30 days after PURCHASE of registration.

**Steps:**

- Prepare the TA form and have the SPEEDTYPE and PI approval from the research advisor. If there is no research advisor, then send it to the Department Chair for signature.
- Email the TA form to [coasbst@gsu.edu](mailto:coasbst@gsu.edu) with Subject line: *CSC Travel Reimbursement <your full name> TA form*
- Within 5-10 business days you will receive a partially filled TES form from a college business services person who will be handling your reimbursement request.
- Complete it and send it back to [coasbst@gsu.edu](mailto:coasbst@gsu.edu) with Subject line: *CSC Travel Reimbursement <your full name> TES form*

## 4.5. Obtaining M.S. degree Along the Way

Ph.D. students can obtain an M.S. degree while doing their Ph.D. To qualify for the M.S. degree, Ph.D. student must have evidence in plan of study form of the following:

- passed the qualifier
- have all foundation courses completed/waived
- published (under review not acceptable) at least one paper in a conference or journal as the first author
- completed 7 courses (at least 4 of them at 8000-level)
- must have completed CS Seminar CSc 9900

(We can substitute 4 credits of CSc 8981 for CSc 8930)

Students must apply on <https://paws.gsu.edu/> for graduation with MS degree along the way.



## 5. Graduate Student Employment

**Contact person for payroll and stipend payments:** Graduate Director (csgrad@gsu.edu)

To be hired as a GRA or GTA, you must be a full-time student. Students receiving assistantships for a given term must be enrolled during that term. In addition, GRA should take 4 credits of 8981 and a GTA should take 4 credits of 8982. Many GRA assignments, however, consist of the same project that you are pursuing as a thesis or dissertation. In this case, you must spend at least the specified number of hours per week (20) on the project to fulfill your work obligation. Any hours spent beyond these are considered your educational responsibilities and are under your control.

In case of multiple appointments, the department strictly enforces the Graduate School policy, according to which total work hours of all appointments cannot exceed 20 hours/week.

For tuition waiver information, please consult with GSU Graduate Assistant Policy at:

[\[https://gsu.policystat.com/policy/8944245/latest/\]](https://gsu.policystat.com/policy/8944245/latest/).

### 5.1. Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)

**Contact person (no payroll/payment issues):** AGD B

**GTA Application:** via OGMS

**Note:** DO NOT EMAIL the department or the graduate director team seeking for GTA. In which case your application will NOT be considered.

See **CS Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Policies in Appendix A**

GTAs are selected by the department graduate director team in charge of employment -AGD B. To be considered each M.S. candidate must apply via OGMS every semester that they are seeking for the TAsip. For Ph.D. students, the GTA ships are offered yearly. New, incoming students are automatically considered as applicants and will be reviewed for potential GTA offers. However, if there was no GTA offered on your admit letter then it is unlikely that you will receive an offer once you join. GTA is a highly competitive process. To give a perspective, as of Fall 2024 the number of graduate students has reached 400 and the number of GTA openings are less than 30% of that number.

A GTA in general, must

- Diligently and responsibly complete the assigned job duties;
- Conduct in-person office hours at least 1 hour per week, which shall be held on-campus office locations specified by the department;
- Sign up for at least 12 credit hours, during the academic year and 9 credit hours in the summer semester, including at least 1 credit for CSc 8982 (if full then use CSc 8981) under

the name of the course instructor (if full then Graduate Director); please ensure that you register for the mandated number of credit hours, or your tuition waiver will be revoked;

- Not engaged in OPT/RCL/GRA/RCL/outside-department employment;
- Attend a minimum of one departmental GTA in-person training given at the beginning of the semesters (Fall, Spring); In addition to the GTA training, students are required to attend another GTA training workshop in their first semester as a GTA;
- Be physically available on campus from the first day of the semester to the last day of the semester;
- Ask for permission for any absence this semester from the course instructors and Director of Graduate Studies.

GTA's will be evaluated semester-wise on a department level with recommendations and questionnaires sent to associated faculty.

## 5.2. Graduate Research Assistant (GRA)

**Contact person:** your research advisor offering the GRA is always the first point of contact

Do NOT email the CS graduate director team inquiring about GRA openings.

The research openings are specific to each faculty member's lab or group. You must reach out to faculty directly (email to start with) if you are interested in working with their group/lab and/or requesting them to advise you on research.

GRAs will be evaluated semester-wise on a department level with recommendations and questionnaires sent to associated faculty/advisor. GRAs must also maintain a minimum GPA as specified by the GSU graduate school policies.

A GRA in general, must

- Diligently and responsibly complete the assigned job duties;
- Sign up for at least 12 credit hours, during the academic year and 9 credit hours in the summer semester, including at least 1 credit for CSc 8981 (if full then use CSc 8982) under the name of the research advisor (if full then Graduate Director); please ensure that you register for the mandated number of credit hours, or your tuition waiver will be revoked;
- Maintain good academic standing with a minimum GPA of 3.00;

## 5.3. Ph.D. Funding

Funding for Ph.D. students could come from the department via a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) or from their advisors via Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA). The department funding is limited to 5 years and is given only to students who are making good progress in their research. In case of poor research performance, the funding may be terminated earlier.

A Ph.D. student can receive TA for up to 5 years. Funding renewal depends on the advisor's annual evaluation and teaching performance for the first 4 years. If a student has received TA for 4 years and expects the assistantship to be renewed for the 5th year, the Graduate Committee will evaluate the student's overall performance to decide whether the assistantship can be renewed. Upon assistantship renewal, a 5th-year student may be asked to teach at least once.

## 5.4. Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

**Contact person and Department Approver:** AGD B

Forms: <https://iss.gsu.edu/current-students/f-1-students/f-1-employment/>

**Steps:**

1. Register for 1 credit of CS 8980. Approval from AGD B required
2. Submit form provided by ISSS
3. Upon email from ISSS of decision (approved/declined) work with the employer and ISSS for next processes.

Continuing graduate students with F1 visas can be employed outside GSU with Curricular Practical Training (CPT). CPT is temporary, off-campus employment authorization for F1 visa students. The work must be either required or related to a course in the student's major program of study, and the student will receive academic credits for the work. To be eligible for CPT graduate students must

- Be enrolled full-time for at least one academic year (Fall+Spring) prior to authorization at GSU or at another SEVIS-approved institution.
- Have an active F-1 status
- Have good academic standing with the school
- Get approval from the director of graduate studies.

Students do not qualify for CPT application after the completion of their program of study and the work cannot begin without SEVIS notation on your I-20. CPT is employer-specific, which means an offer of employment is required to apply. The application windows and specifics of the employment letter is provided by International Student and Scholar Services and are available at <https://iss.gsu.edu/current-students/employment-authorization/f-1-practical-training/curricular-practical-training-cpt/>.

## 5.5. CSc 8901: Perspectives in Computing

Until further notice, this will be administered as a 1-hour oral examination with AGD A.

The exam date and location will be communicated via email directly to the candidate during the graduating semester. The oral exam will evaluate the candidate based on their knowledge gained through the courses taken at GSU. The candidate can choose any 1 course to their liking and the questions will be based upon that course. No more specific material or syllabus will be provided. The evaluation will result in a Pass/Fail score.

If the candidate Fails, they can redo the exam within 1 week. Second Fail will require the student to re-attempt the exam in the following semester (this will force the student to register for one more semester).

## 6. University Policies and Resources

### 6.1. Student Center

The Student Center houses numerous offices and programs that promote student growth and development, enhance academic success and foster involvement in the university community.

These student resources also help students navigate university services, learn new skills and deal with the practicalities of campus life.

Office	Location
<a href="#">Black Student Achievement</a>	Student Center East, Suite 300
<a href="#">Civic Engagement</a>	Student Center East, Suite 304
<a href="#">Dean of Students</a>	Student Center East, Suite 303
<a href="#">Disability Services</a>	Student Center East, Suite 205
<a href="#">Student Affairs</a>	
Administration	Student Center East, Suite 301
Creative Services	Student Center East, Suite 211
<a href="#">Greek Life</a>	Student Center West, Suite 475
<a href="#">New Student Orientation</a>	Student Center East, Suite 304
<a href="#">Leadership Development</a>	Student Center West, Suite 475
<a href="#">Multicultural Center</a>	Student Center East, Suite 206
<a href="#">PantherDining</a>	Student Center West, Suite 358
<a href="#">PantherDining Catering</a>	Student Center East, Suite 318
<a href="#">Parent Relations</a>	Student Center East, Suite 304
<a href="#">Religious Life</a>	Student Center West, Suite 469
<a href="#">Student Center Administrative Office</a>	Student Center East, Suite 310
<a href="#">Student Organizations</a>	Student Center West, Suite 475
<a href="#">University Career Services</a>	Student Center West, Suite 270

## 6.2. Web resources

- PAWS: <https://paws.gsu.edu/>  
Register for classes, pay tuition, view financial aid information, and view information about your current status at the university.

- iCollege: <https://icollege.gsu.edu/>  
Access online course materials.
- Student Email System: <https://technology.gsu.edu/technology-services/it-services/email-and-file-storage/panthermail/>  
View student email.
- Housing: <https://myhousing.gsu.edu/>  
Explore Housing Options.
- Student Health Insurance: <https://studentcenter.uhcsr.com/school-page>  
Access Student Health Insurance.
- Registration Guides: <https://registrar.gsu.edu/registration/registration-guide/>  
View registration, fees and final exam information.
- Schedule of Classes: <https://registration.gosolar.gsu.edu/StudentRegistrationSsb/ssb/term/termSelection?mode=search>  
View schedule of classes.
- Course Catalogs: <https://enrollment.gsu.edu/catalogs/>  
View graduate catalogs.
- Final Exam Schedule: <https://registrar.gsu.edu/registration/semester-calendars-exam-schedules/>  
View final exam schedule.

## Appendix A

### CS Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Policies

Students should consult the university graduate assistant policy, which can be found at <https://graduate.gsu.edu/policy/#graduate-assistant-policies>. In case of conflict between the two documents, the university policy takes precedence.

### 1. **Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)**

Students appointed as a GTA must have a baccalaureate degree and be enrolled in the graduate program. There are two levels of GTA: GTAA and GTAB

- Graduate Teaching Assistant, Level A (GTAA):
  - Lab TA: lab leaders who lead lab sessions.
  - Grader: course assistants who perform grading.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant, Level B (GTAB):
  - Must be GTAB certified.
  - Independent instructor who teaches courses.

### 2. **GTA Eligibility for PhD Students**

To be GTAB, the student must have completed 18 hours of graduate course credit in CS. All full-time Ph.D. students in CS should contact the department to apply for GTAB certification and be GTAB certified (generally after one year of study at GSU).

Only GTAB can apply to teach as a Teaching Fellow (TF). All department-supported Ph.D. students should submit their course preference for TF (or GTAA) by the specific deadline for each coming semester. If a student does not submit on time, assignments will be made based on the department's needs.

A Ph.D. student can receive a teaching assistant scholarship for up to 5 years. Funding renewal depends on the advisor's annual evaluation and teaching performance for the first 4 years. If a student has received GTA for 4 years and expects the assistantship to be renewed for the 5th year, the Graduate Committee will evaluate the student's overall performance to decide whether the assistantship can be renewed. Upon assistantship renewal, a 5th-year student may be asked to teach at least once.

### 3. **GTA Eligibility for MS Students**

An MS student can apply for GTA if they are eligible to work and not engaged in OPT/GRA/RCL/outside-department employment. GTA applications should be submitted according to the department instructions by the specific deadline for each coming semester.

### 4. **GTA Appointment**

A GTA offer cannot take effect without a wet signature from the student. The student shall submit a signed GTA offer to the department program coordinator in person, at least 10 days before the start of the semester. The GTA employment begins on the first day of a

semester and continues until the last day of the same semester. The expected workload of each GTAA (including Lab TA and Grader) is 20 hours per week.

Your assignment may be canceled if you do not respond to appointment confirmation by the required deadline. Subsequent renewal of your assistantship is contingent upon satisfactory work, academic performance, and department needs.

## **5. TF/GTA Responsibilities**

Once a student accepts a TF/GTA appointment, he/she agrees to comply with the following terms:

- Diligently and responsibly complete the assigned job duties;
- Conduct in-person office hours at least 1 hour per week, which shall be held on-campus office locations specified by the department;
- Sign up for at least 12 credit hours, during the academic year and 9 credit hours in the summer semester, including at least 1 credit for CSC 8981 or CSC 8982 under the names of the course instructor or Director of Graduate Studies; please ensure that you register for the mandated number of credit hours, or your tuition waiver will be revoked;
- Maintain good academic standing with a minimum GPA of 3.00;
- Not engaged in OPT/RCL/GRA/RCL/outside-department employment;
- Attend a minimum of one departmental GTA in-person training given at the beginning of the semesters (Fall, Spring); In addition to the GTA training, students are required to attend another GTA training workshop in their first semester as a GTA;
- Be physically available on campus from the first day of the semester to the last day of the semester;
- Ask for permission for any absence this semester from the course instructors and Director of Graduate Studies.