

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Admission Requirements

### What are the admission requirements?

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. To be considered for admission, you must have:

- A four-year baccalaureate degree in Computer Science from an accredited institution
- 3.0 or equivalent GPA
- International students must meet [English Language Proficiency Requirements](#)
- The GRE requirement has been waived through Fall 2024 applications

To find a link to the online application, list of admission materials, and application deadlines please see our [website](#).

### What if my previous degree is not in Computer Science?

Depending on the breadth of your previous academic CS background, you might consider the following:

1. Apply for the MS degree directly. The CS admissions committee will assess your academic/CS background, along with the other application components, to determine overall fit and readiness for the graduate program and issue an admission decision accordingly (which could include a recommendation to pursue the options mentioned below).
2. Develop the CS academic background needed for graduate study before applying to the MS program. There are 2 options for this at PSU, both of which require [postbaccalaureate admission](#):
  - a. Complete the [Grad Prep program](#) with a grade of B or higher in each course. The Grad Prep courses are the essential prerequisites for CS graduate courses. An applicant's previous, relevant coursework can be reviewed to determine if any of the Grad Prep coursework can be waived. Course syllabi and transcripts are required to conduct this review.
  - b. Complete a [2nd Bachelor's degree in CS](#). Postbacs are not required to re-take general education requirements, and can have some other requirements waived based on prior coursework.

### Am I eligible for Grad Prep as an international student?

Yes, international students are eligible for the postbaccalaureate Grad Prep program and can receive an I-20 for the program. The challenge for international students is that they must enroll

full-time (12 undergraduate credits = 3 classes) as part of their F-1 visa requirements. However, the Grad Prep program is, for the most part, a part-time program (1 to 2 classes each quarter) given the prerequisite structure. So, international students will need to find 3rd class to take, when the required Grad Prep courses are not equivalent to full-time for a given quarter.

## Can I apply while my Bachelor's degree is in progress?

Yes, you can apply for graduate admission while your degree is in progress. Include your most current transcripts in your application. Final transcripts and confirmation of degree completion are required once those are available.

## What if my undergraduate GPA is below the minimum requirement of 3.0?

It is possible for an applicant to be recommended for admission whose undergraduate GPA is slightly below 3.0 if their overall application is very strong and the admissions committee determines that the applicant is a good fit for the program. It is recommended that an applicant's low GPA be addressed in their Statement of Purpose within their application.

Applicants who are offered admission who have a cumulative undergraduate GPA between 2.5 and 2.74 or the equivalent from the degree-granting institution(s) are eligible for University Conditional status. After completing 9 letter-graded graduate credits at PSU with a GPA of 3.0 or higher, students with University Conditional status will automatically be given Regular status.

## Which GPA is evaluated if I took graduate-level courses previously, or already have a graduate degree?

For applicants who have earned 9 or more letter-graded graduate credits, the graduate GPA supersedes the undergraduate GPA for admission review purposes. The minimum graduate GPA is 3.0.

## Can I be admitted if I do not meet the English language proficiency requirement?

Yes, conditional admission is possible. If an applicant is offered conditional admission, they will be required to complete coursework in PSU's [Intensive English Language Program \(IELP\)](#). Any IELP coursework that is required depends on the test scores that were received within the application and will be detailed within the admission letter. To waive this requirement, updated scores that meet the [minimum requirement for graduate study](#) must be received prior to a student's first term.

## Can I be admitted if my previous bachelor's degree was a three-year program?

In most cases a four-year bachelor's degree is required for admission. However there can be exceptions to this, for example: three-year Bachelor's + one- or two-year Master's program, or postgraduate diplomas, etc. Degree equivalency is assessed by the PSU Graduate School's degree equivalency team once an application has been submitted, during the admissions review process.

## I am applying for the PhD program, should I connect with potential faculty advisors before I apply?

Doctoral admission depends on a strong academic background, research experience, a clear research direction, and the availability of a faculty advisor within the proposed research area. It can greatly strengthen a doctoral application if a faculty advisor has already been confirmed. That said, an applicant can apply without one in place.

## I submitted my application, when can I expect to receive a decision?

Admission decisions are typically issued about 6-8 weeks after the [application deadline](#) for complete applications. For applications that are incomplete after the deadline, admission decisions will be issued 6-8 weeks after all required documents have been received. Once the admission decision has been released, applicants will receive a notification from the Graduate School that their decision letter is available to view within the application portal.

## I applied by the deadline, but I am still missing one/both reference(s), what should I do?

References can be received after the deadline. The application system will send your references automatic reminders until they respond. Please note that applications are only reviewed once all application materials have been received, so late references will delay your admission decision timeline.

## I missed the application deadline, can I still apply?

Yes, if the term you are applying for is still an option within the application portal, you can still apply. That said, applicants are encouraged to apply as close to the posted deadline as possible to ensure a smooth transition into the program if admission is granted. Since admission decisions are issued within 6-8 weeks, an applicant who applies late could receive their admission decision after the priority course registration date for their admission term, and courses could become full.

## What are the funding opportunities within the department and university?

For more information about the funding available in the CS department, visit:

<https://www.pdx.edu/computer-science/graduate-assistantships>.

- Teaching Assistantships (TA)
  - Can be awarded to both MS and PhD admitted students and are applied for separately from the application for admission. The CS department offers between 15-25 positions each quarter. TAs might teach a lecture under the supervision of a faculty member or support a course in other ways for approximately 15-20 hours per week. They receive a monthly stipend and a tuition remission.
  - PhD applicants who apply by the priority application deadline for a Fall term start will automatically be considered for an admission offer with guaranteed funding (in the form of a guaranteed 3-term Teaching Assistantship assignment).
  - TA positions are limited and are therefore competitive.
- Research Assistantships (RA) are less centralized and administered by individual faculty members; these are usually awarded to PhD students.

For additional information about other financial support resources and opportunities offered through PSU and the PSU Graduate School, visit:

- <https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/funding>
- <https://www.pdx.edu/student-finance/scholarships>
- <https://www.pdx.edu/gradschool/scholarships-and-awards>
- <https://www.pdx.edu/international-students/scholarships> (international students only)

## Can I transfer credits from another institution to the PhD degree program?

PhD students can transfer an unlimited number of graduate-level credits with the approval of their faculty advisor and the CS department. The transfer credit request process can only be started once a student is 1) admitted, and 2) has matriculated in the program. To initiate the process, the [PhD Plan of Study](#) and [GO-21D Transfer Credit Request form](#) are submitted to the department. The GO-21D lists the requirements that all requested transfer credits must meet. Course syllabi or related materials may also be required, in order to request applying transfer credits towards core requirements.

## Can I transfer credits from another institution to the Master's degree program?

MS students can transfer a maximum of 15 credits with approval from the CS department and the PSU Graduate School. The transfer credit request process can only be started once a student is 1) admitted, and 2) has matriculated in the program. To initiate the process, the [MS](#)

[Plan of Study](#) and [GO-21M Transfer Credit Request form](#) are submitted to the department. The GO-21M lists the requirements that all requested transfer credits must meet. Course syllabi or related materials may also be required, in order to request applying transfer credits towards core requirements.

## I was admitted, now what should I do?

Congratulations! You will soon be contacted by the CS Graduate Advisor with more information. In the meantime, refer to the Admitted Student Checklist that is linked in your admission letter: <https://www.pdx.edu/admissions/admitted-graduate-students>. We look forward to welcoming you to the program!

## Can I defer my admission?

Yes, admitted students can defer their admission for up to one year from their original term of admission. To request a deferral, consult the [PSU Academic Calendar](#) and contact the CS Graduate Advisor ([gccs@pdx.edu](mailto:gccs@pdx.edu)) to request a future start term. If a student does not enroll in their term of admission, and does not defer their admission, their admission will be canceled.

International students can expect to receive an updated I-20 document from the PSU Graduate School within 7-10 business days of their deferral request, if the [required financial documentation](#) has already been received by their office.

It is not possible to defer admission beyond one year. A new application will need to be submitted to be considered for admission. Some of the original application documents can be reused. English proficiency test scores (if applicable) that are more than two years old are accepted if the score exceeds the minimum requirement and the applicant maintains continuous residency in the United States since the exam date.

## I was denied admission, what are my options?

Our admissions committee noted that [insert reason from Slate reader notes]. Admission decisions are final. To be re-considered for admission, an applicant would need to reapply. I hope this information helps you and I wish you well in your future endeavors.

# Application Requirements

## What are the application requirements?

See the admission web page for a complete list:  
<https://www.pdx.edu/computer-science/graduate-admission>.

## What are the application deadlines?

- Fall Term (September start): March 1st
  - Priority for PhD program : December 15th\*
- Winter Term (January start): September 15th
- Spring Term (April start): November 1st

\*PhD applicants who apply by the priority deadline for a Fall term start will automatically be considered for an admission offer with guaranteed funding (in the form of a guaranteed 3-term Teaching Assistantship assignment). These offers are limited and are therefore competitive.

## Which transcripts am I required to submit for the application?

Portland State requires a complete educational history in order to evaluate your application. This includes a list of all community colleges, colleges and universities that you have previously attended. The Graduate School requires copies of transcripts only from schools where a bachelor's degree was awarded and/or graduate-level coursework was completed.

For application purposes, unofficial copies are sufficient. Official copies of application documents (like transcripts, English proficiency test score reports, etc.) are only required upon admission to the program and instructions for how to submit these will be provided at that time.

International applicants who receive semester marksheets in addition to consolidated transcript reports, are required to submit these as part of their application. International applicants may also be required to provide a copy of their degree certificate. This is not required for the CS admissions committee's application review, but it must be submitted upon admission to the program.

## Where do I send my official documents?

If you are offered admission, you will be required to submit official copies of the application documents (transcripts, English language proficiency reports, etc.), as the final verification step after enrolling in your program. Instructions for how to submit these documents will be provided within the admission letter.

## How can I send my English proficiency test scores to PSU?

When ordering TOEFL or IELTS test score reports for graduate admission, use Portland State's institutional code: 4610. PSU's undergraduate admissions team receives all test scores, including those for graduate applicants.

## I have letters of recommendation already, can I upload these within the application portal?

Letters of recommendation are accepted in place of the online reference option within the application, if the letters are not more than two years old. These can be submitted directly to the CS Graduate Advisor ([gccs@pdx.edu](mailto:gccs@pdx.edu)).

## Can I change my references after I submit my application?

Yes, you can exclude recommenders and add new ones on your application status page at <https://apply.pdx.edu/apply/status>. There's text on that page that says 'To re-send notification emails to your recommenders, re-visit the recommendations page, click "Edit", and then click "Send Reminder". Once you navigate to the recommendation page there are instructions for adding new recommenders. If you need to delete a recommender, click the "Edit" button next to the recommender's name then select "Exclude." This will allow you to enter a new recommender. To change the email address of a recommender post-submission, follow the same process to exclude the recommender and then create a new entry with the correct email address.

## Can I change my application term after I submit it?

Yes, it is possible to move the application term to an earlier term (if the application for that term has not closed) or a later term (within one year of the original term). To request a new application term, consult the [PSU Academic Calendar](#) and contact the CS Graduate Advisor ([gccs@pdx.edu](mailto:gccs@pdx.edu)).

## How can I apply for an application fee waiver?

To initiate an application fee waiver request, applicants must first complete the application, upload all required materials, and receive at least 2 references. Please inform the CS Graduate advisor ([gccs@pdx.edu](mailto:gccs@pdx.edu)) once your application is complete, and they will consult the admissions committee about your request. Please note that it is too late to apply for an application fee waiver for Spring 2024.