

Fall 2026

**CSE Graduate Student
Orientation!**

Today's Outline

- Introduction: Programs, academic advisors, and staff
- Resources
- TA/IA, funding opportunities
- Q&A

About CSE

Almost 1,100 graduate students currently enrolled

(<https://engineering.unt.edu/cse>)

- MS degrees in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Data Engineering
- PhD degree in Computer Science and Engineering

Over 2,800 undergraduate students (counting pre-majors)

- BS in AI launched in Fall 2026

35 Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty in 20+ Research Centers

(<https://computerscience.engineering.unt.edu/research>)

~30 Clinical Faculty and Lecturers

7+ Staff

Many Opportunities - but you have to seize them!!!

Courses for explicit skills, but also...

- Implicit learning and many other soft skills
- Networking, teamwork, collaboration

Extracurriculars

- Research labs
- Students groups - formal and informal
(<https://engineering.unt.edu/support/student-organizations.html>)
- Professional organizations
- Lifelong friendships and colleagues
- Sign up for the CSE Seminar

Check the Website:

The majority of answers to questions in CSE can be answered by checking the website.

<http://cse.unt.edu/> which expands to
<https://engineering.unt.edu/cse/>

In particular, check the tabs for Degrees & Programs, and Resources.

Or google with the terms “unt” and “cse” for what you want!

Academic Advisors

Your **first point of contact** for questions related to your program. Know who it is! (and be patient on responses)

Olyne Hare, MS in Computer Engineering, MS in AI, MS in Cybersecurity, MS in CS



Nola Moudry, MS in Data Engineering, MS in AI, MS in Cybersecurity & MS in CS

Jasmine Kabera, MS thesis and special programs departmental advisor



Caitlin Cannon. PhD Program advisor

Kathryn Beasley. Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs for College of Engineering

<https://engineering.unt.edu/cse/graduate/advising>

Other staff and when to contact them (usually referred)

Trey Castillo. Marketing specialist. You get emails from him, but he is often the intermediary.

Evin Shivers. scheduling (CSEScheduling@unt.edu). You may get emails from them, but generally wouldn't contact them directly about scheduling.

Zaira Martinez. The department contact for CPT questions and forms. Course enrollment permission code provision.

Amber Paschall. Administrative Specialist - Purchasing. Talk to her if you are being funded to travel to a conference.

Help us to help you - consider these steps

1. Try the website, a google search, or your reliable friends first (again, most questions asked are readily found with **online resources**)
2. All prefer **email** for straightforward requests. Use a clear subject title.
3. Refrain from contacting faculty and staff through Teams
- 4. Give a few days for a response**, or longer if it's not time critical. There are often unforeseen administrative delays.
5. Most concerns can be answered over email, otherwise schedule a meeting
6. Generally, try to **avoid just “showing up”** - each staff member handles hundreds of students and has other responsibilities, and face-to-face will not help your chances to get TA/IA/RA without proper preparation and context.

Advising and Enrollment

First semester checklist



Use your my.unt.edu email account. Starting today, the department will only send emails to your my.unt.edu or unt.edu account. Be sure to check your email on a daily basis as we send emails regularly about opportunities, upcoming events, key information, etc.



Get enrolled! You might not be able to enroll in the courses you want during your first semester. Please remember that this is only your first semester and you may need to enroll in supporting courses for now. For future semesters, **early registration** will help you acquire the courses you desire.



Who will your advisor be? Figure that out. PhD students have faculty advisors. MS students have academic advisors. Also, get to know your instructor and the TAs/graders for your courses.

Full-time enrollment

To be full-time enrolled you need to be signed up for **9 credit hours**.

Most international students need to be enrolled full time for visa purposes (exception being students in their last semester, or PhD students who are working on their dissertation research)

Full-time enrollment is also often required for financial support. Check your source of financial support (TA, RA, financial aid) if you plan to take less than 9 credits.

“Add” deadline is coming soon - often the Friday of the first week of class.

“Drop” deadline comes later. Be aware of issues if dipping below full-time enrollment. You won't be able to add a new class after add deadline.

Withdrawals are different from drops. You end up with a W on your transcript, but it doesn't affect your grade. However, international students generally cannot withdraw from classes early simply for failing grades as you must remain full-time enrolled.

Course selection priorities

1. Highest priority - Bridge and Core courses

- a. e.g. MS in CS - groups A,B,C,D. Required courses. Restricted electives
- b. Foundation for later courses (e.g. Machine Learning before Deep Learning)
- c. Ideally you shouldn't be taking any of these in your last semester. Why?...
- d. **Degrees require A or a B in core courses.**
 - i. **Take a core course in your last semester, get a C, and you don't graduate.**
 - ii. Cs in core courses can count as electives.

2. Restricted electives

- a. e.g. MS in AI concentration courses
- b. More flexibility in what you take, but still a restricted list

3. Students can take one **approved** “wildcard” elective course outside of CSCE from the list of [eligible courses](#).

Being Successful

Resources available to you

Resources at Discovery Park

- Center for Student Affairs at Discovery Park
- Career Center
- DP Library
- Park Place Market, Discovery Park's dining operation
- Discovery Perks coffee shop
- General Access Computer Labs
- Shuttle buses
- UNT International, the Learning Center, and the Student Health and Wellness Center also visit DP

Career Center

- Chido Kwande: a Career Coach

Struggling?

If you are struggling with a course, ask for help!

Help Lab: <https://learningcenter.unt.edu/tutoring>

For mental health and wellness concerns, reach out to...

Counseling Services: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>

Maintain your grades

Graduate students who fall below 3.0 GPA (B-average) are on probation after that semester. Also, you will need to have a GPA at 3.0 or above to graduate.

If you are on probation and you have a semester with below a 3.0 average in both the semester and cumulative GPA, you are suspended. You will have to reapply to the university and to your program; there is not a guarantee of readmission.

All MS degrees require a B or higher in core courses for the class to count toward the degree.

Courses with a D or lower grade do not count toward your degree completion.

A common resolution is to retake D or F grades to improve your overall GPA; you can retake 2 courses and replace the grade if you earn a better grade.

CSE Graduate Assessment

You will be invited to take the CSE graduate assessment this semester. It's a mix of undergrad knowledge we expect many students to have as they come in.

It is required for students! It is in your best interest to take it!

Low performance will trigger additional help with class scheduling, course selection, and advising to assure your start and path through the degree is manageable.

High performers may be hired as Instructional Assistants (e.g. 11 of the top 15 scorers were offered IA positions in Spring 2025 and 7 in Spring 2026, and normally we don't hire people in their first semester).

Get involved



Advising is mandatory. Plan ahead and schedule time with your advisor.



[CSE faculty profiles](#) are available online, so take some time to view our professors' profiles and talk to them about their research.



With the permission of a faculty member, **you can attend research lab meetings!** This is a fantastic way to learn more about the current research that is being conducted in the CSE Department.



Stay updated on information! The graduate bulletin board will be updated regularly with upcoming events and opportunities. These will be sent via email too.



Take part in department events. Sign up for the seminar. Summer research opportunities. Listen to Distinguished Speakers. Attend thesis or dissertation defenses. Sign up for [student organizations](#).

Seminars and speakers

The CSE Department Seminar: You can sign up today!

You can take the associated course (**CSCE 5931** with Dr. Zaruba) for 1 credit. Future seminar courses will be available for 1 credit each Fall and Spring. You can also combine these with the 1 credit received from internships to take the place of a single 3-credit elective course on your degree plan.

<https://engineering.unt.edu/cse/research/seminar.html>

Giving back

Assistantships 101: Becoming a TA/IA

- There is an online form which opens at a specific period during the semester prior to becoming a TA/IA.
- All applications will need to be submitted through an online webform. **We don't take Resumes directly over email.**
- Applicants should have officially completed **one full semester** at UNT.
- We would like applicants to possess a 3.5+ GPA and can't move below 3.0 while employed.
- Current semester applications are closed and will be reopening later in the semester. (The deadline will be included on the webpage.)
- **TAs (not IAs) and generally PhD students and** are hired for 2 semesters
- **IAs (formerly known as graders) are generally MS students and** are hired per semester
- Note, For Spring 2025, **500+ students applied for roughly 30 open slots!**

Assistantships 101: Becoming an RA

- Awarded by faculty, dependent on available grant funds
- Contact faculty who share your research interests
 - **Do not cold email multiple professors without compelling reasons - these will be ignored.**
 - **Most common faculty response to an email about an RA is a non-response**
- Common route is to take a regular class with the Professor, then after learning ask to do research
 - Note on Directed Study courses – If you wish to register for a Directed Study course, please contact this instructor early to request an opportunity. Keep in mind, the typical answer given the time commitment of faculty is “No” unless you forward a lab’s goals.
- Or attend open house events each semester
- More on this in a future seminar

Additional Sources of Funding

Scholarships & Fellowships

- Tuition scholarships, university, local and nationally competitive
- UNT's Office for Nationally Competitive Scholarships assists students in pursuing external scholarships and fellowships. Visit www.opgf.unt.edu for more information.
- Pivot is a resource to find funding sources https://pivot.cos.com/funding_main

Graduate Assistantships – can be found through Eagle Careers

Financial Aid – Financial Aid Office

Travel Grants – Through the Graduate School



Questions?