

Master's Program
Department of Computer Science
University of Rochester
Rev. March 2026

1. Program Requirements

The MS degree requires at least 30 credit hours of graduate-level (400+) coursework. Any 400+ level CSC course, except CSC 400, can count toward the MS degree with the exception that courses taken at the 200-level cannot be repeated at the 400-level to count toward the degree. Up to 12 credits of non-CSC courses can be counted toward the degree, but each course must be preapproved by the Graduate Education Committee before registration. No more than two CSC 494 Internship courses can be counted toward the degree. No more than 10 credits of courses that are not 3-4 credits can be counted toward the degree.

All students are assigned a staff advisor and a faculty advisor, who can assist with research opportunities and questions about courses. The faculty advisor will also supervise internship courses.

Students are expected to enroll in 12 credit hours in each of their first two semesters, with 9 credit hours required to maintain full-time status. Students requiring less than 9 credit hours to complete their degree will register for CSC 897 to maintain full-time status. If a student has already used CSC 897 in a previous semester, they will register for CSC 899. CSC 899 carries a continuing enrollment fee, while CSC 897 does not.

Only one grade of “C” is permitted in the program. Any grade of “C” or below will put a student on Academic Probation. A second grade of “C” or below during the Academic Probation period is grounds for automatic academic dismissal. The GEPA academic probation policy can be found here: https://www.rochester.edu/college/gradstudies/graduate-handbook/academic/academic-progress.html#academic_probation_policy.

Each MS candidate must choose one of the following options:

Plan A, Thesis Option (requires 6-12 research credits)

This option must be selected before the end of the second semester of study, preferably before the start of the second semester so the student can enroll in research during the Spring semester. This requires an MS plan declaration, one-page project proposal, and list of committee members.

All Plan A students must successfully defend a thesis. The defense must be conducted by a committee of no less than two CSC faculty members and one outside faculty member. The thesis defense must be completed by the Friday before the last day of classes in their last Semester. Please see here for thesis guidelines:

<https://www.rochester.edu/college/gradstudies/academics/masters-defense.html>

Plan B, Exam Option (0-6 research credits allowed)

This is the default option for the CS MS program. Students will complete an exit exam due the Friday before the last day of classes in their last Semester.

Exit Exam:

An MS student must submit a written essay to satisfy the Plan B exit exam requirement. The essay should describe material of some of the courses taken by the student in past or present semesters, discuss what the student learned and found to be most interesting in each course, and explain how the course may help in the student's future professional career.

A total of five courses must be included in the exit exam unless a student has enrolled in CSC 899.

If a student has enrolled in CSC 899, then it must be included in the exit exam in addition to five more courses (a total of six courses).

If a student has enrolled in CSC 494 during the academic year, then CSC 494 must be one of the courses included in the exit exam. If a student has enrolled in CSC 494 during the summer, then CSC 494 can be included in the exit exam, but it is not mandatory.

Other courses eligible for inclusion are 400-level classroom courses, 500-level seminar and topics courses, and no more than one project/research course (491 or 495) taken for at least four credits.

The writing for each course should be about a page in length (450-500 words minimum) and should begin with the official course title and number. Do not use any words that are not your own. Cases of suspected plagiarism are subject to the College's Academic Honesty Policy (<http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/>). Penalties for violations can be as severe as expulsion, without the MS degree.

2. Internships

International Students may take an Internship (CSC 494) after two full semesters of study have been completed (Summer does not count). Internships taken during the summer may be full-time (40 hours), but any internship taken during the Spring or Fall is limited to part-time (20 hours). An internship counts toward the maximum number of research credits allowed and only two internships may count towards the MS degree.

US students have no job reporting requirements and would not take an internship course to gain employment but should follow the same hourly limitations.

3. Optional Spring Research Semester Extension

Students that would normally graduate in December may optionally extend their program by one semester to do research with a CSC professor in Spring. An email will go out in October asking about extensions. In order to qualify for this extension, students must:

- Be in Good Academic Standing.
- Be set to complete at least 30 credit hours by the end of December.
- Arrange to do research with a Computer Science Professor in Spring and provide a signed research contract before the end of October (specific dates may vary from year to year).
- Register for CSC 899 in Spring.

4. TA and RA Positions

There is not a TA requirement for the Master's program in CS. TA and RA positions are required by the PhD program and are almost never offered to MS students. In the rare event that a position is offered, being assigned as a TA is considered an add-on employment position and UR Employment verification guidelines will be followed. Compensation for TA add-on employment is paid by the semester at the established MS TA hire pay-rate. A Social Security number is required, as is having an I-9 on record with HR.

5. Mental Health Resources

The University Counseling Center is available to all students, and 24-hour consultations are available by calling (585)-275-3113 or through <https://www.rochester.edu/uhs/ucc/crisis-services/>.

The CARE network (<https://www.rochester.edu/care/>) is also available to assist students with resources for various mental and physical concerns, as well as the ability to anonymously file a report to express concern about a person, incident, or issue.

6. Emergency or Temporary Closings and Other Changes in Class Schedules and University Operations

The University plans to commence and conclude classes on the dates indicated in the academic calendars. But unforeseen circumstances or events may occur that require the University to temporarily close or otherwise make adjustments to its student life, residential housing, class schedules and format, method and location of instruction, educational activities, and operations because of reasons beyond the University's control.

For example, such circumstances or events may include but are not limited to inclement weather, the onset of public health crises, being subject to government order(s), significant safety or security concerns, faculty illness, strikes, labor disturbances, sabotage, terrorism, war, riot, civil unrest, fire, flood, earthquake, acts of God, malfunction of University equipment (including computers), cyberattacks, unavailability of particular University facilities occasioned by damage to the premises, repairs or other causes, as well as disruption/unavailability of utilities, labor, energy, materials, transportation, electricity, security, or the internet.

If any of these or other unforeseen circumstances or events outside of the University's control occur, the University will respond as necessary and appropriate, and it assumes no liability for any interruption or adjustments made to student life, residential housing, class schedules and format, method and location of instruction, educational activities, and operations caused by these or other unforeseen circumstances or events. And the University shall not be responsible for the refund of any tuition or fees in the event of any such unforeseen circumstances or events, except as may otherwise be expressly provided in the University's Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policy or its published tuition refund schedule ([Payments and Refunds - Office of the Bursar](#)).