Graduate work in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering (BSE) leads to the master of science and doctor of philosophy degrees. Graduates of the program help fill the need for highly educated engineers in industry, consulting firms, government agencies, and educational institutions.

Students who undertake graduate studies in BSE normally have as their goal a better understanding of the current theories, principles, issues, and problems in biological systems. They desire a better understanding of how knowledge is generated, how it is critically evaluated, and how solutions to problems are generated. Graduate studies improve the ability of students to think critically and creatively, and to synthesize, analyze, and integrate ideas for decision making and problem solving.

The department offers students an opportunity to undertake research and advanced study in different specialization areas such as biological systems, environmental quality and natural resource engineering, waste management, food and bioprocess engineering and food safety, machinery systems, bioresources and biorefining, and agricultural safety and health.

Graduate research assistantships, project assistantships, and fellowships are available on a highly competitive basis.

### ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program’s admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program’s website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements** ([https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements](https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements)) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).

Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online ([https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/](https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Deadline</td>
<td>June 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Deadline</td>
<td>August 1 for international applicants; October 1 for domestic applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Deadline</td>
<td>March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)</td>
<td>May be required in certain cases; consult program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Proficiency Test</td>
<td>Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements (<a href="https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/english-proficiency">https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/english-proficiency</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letters of Recommendation Required

The department requires that students have a strong engineering background for admission to its graduate program. Most applicants have a bachelor of science degree from an ABET/EAC–accredited engineering program or an engineering undergraduate degree from an international institution. Applicants who do not have a bachelor of science degree from an ABET/EAC–accredited engineering program may be admitted with a stipulation that they complete supplemental work. Contact the department for details concerning additional requirements. Applicants are evaluated based on their academic record and educational objectives and letters of reference.

### FUNDING

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information ([https://grad.wisc.edu/funding](https://grad.wisc.edu/funding)) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and processes related to funding.

### REQUIREMENTS

#### MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements ([http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext](http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext)), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

#### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

##### MODE OF INSTRUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mode of Instruction Definitions**

- **Evening/Weekend**: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.
- **Online**: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.
- **Hybrid**: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.
- **Accelerated**: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame.
advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

**Requirements Detail**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Credit Requirement</th>
<th>72 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Residence Credit Requirement</td>
<td>32 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</td>
<td>At least 50% of credits applied toward the graduate degree credit requirement must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university's Course Guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Graduate GPA Requirement</td>
<td>3.00 GPA required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Grade Requirements</td>
<td>Graduate students in BSE must maintain a minimum overall B average (3.0 GPA) during their graduate studies. Seminars, research, or other special problems credits may not be used to offset BC or C grades. No grade below a C will be accepted for fulfilling course work requirements for the degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments and Examinations</td>
<td>Doctoral students are required to take a comprehensive preliminary/oral examination after they have cleared their record of all Incomplete and Progress grades (other than research and thesis). Deposit of the doctoral dissertation in the Graduate School is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Requirements</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Minor/Breadth Requirements</td>
<td>Doctoral students must complete a doctoral minor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUIRED COURSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSE 900 Seminar</td>
<td>42-54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSE 901 Graduate Research Seminar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSE 990 Research (Thesis)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Preparatory/Professional Communications Course</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students may choose from the following or select another course in consultation with their advisor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E P D 654</td>
<td>Teaching in Science and Engineering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSE 799 Practicum in Agricultural Engineering Teaching</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Footnotes**

1. At least 36 of the course credits must be taken in physical sciences. At least 9 credits must be from the 600 to 800 level classes from an engineering department and/or comparable technical area. All course credits need to be taken as a letter grade unless course is only offered for credit/no credit. Credit/no credit courses must get prior approval from advisor. Only 1 credit/no credit of the 9 credits can be used to fulfill your credits from 600- to 800-level classes.
2. All graduate students are required to register for one credit of BSE 900 Seminar (only offered fall semesters) within the first three semesters as a graduate student in BSE. However, if you completed your master’s degree in BSE, you do not have to repeat the 1-credit seminar.
3. As a part of the seminar, all students are required to make an oral presentation reporting their research results, typically during the last semester of their graduate program (if you took this course as an M.S. student, you will need to repeat the course as a Ph.D. student to reflect your current research).
4. Graduate students should register for an appropriate number of credits of BSE 990 Research (Thesis Research). If the student’s progress is satisfactory, the student will receive a grade of P (progress) for each semester of BSE 990 Research until the final semester. At that time all of these credits will be given an S (satisfactory) grade by the major professor.
5. The teaching course credits shall not be used to fulfill 9 credits of 600 to 800 level classes from an engineering department and/or comparable technical area. Teaching preparatory courses and seminar courses will NOT count toward the required 24 (42) course credits.

**POLICIES**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES**

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the program’s degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

**MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

The Graduate Program Handbook (https://bse.wisc.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-student-resources) is the repository for all of the program’s policies and requirements.

**Prior Coursework**

Graduate Work from Other Institutions

For well-prepared advanced students, the program may accept prior graduate coursework from other institutions toward the minimum graduate degree credit and minimum graduate coursework (50%) requirement. The minimum graduate residence credit requirement can be satisfied only with courses taken as a graduate student at UW—Madison. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements. Up to 6 research credits received for the master's degree may be transferred from another accredited institution. No other research credit may be transferred. Eighteen (18) Master's course credits earned from another institution maybe transferred towards Ph.D. Additional credits need to be approved by the BSE Graduate Instruction and Research committee.
UW–Madison Undergraduate
For well-prepared advanced students, the program may decide to accept up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above completed at UW–Madison toward fulfillment of minimum degree and minor credit requirements. This work would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

UW–Madison University Special
The program may decide to accept up to 15 University Special student credits as fulfillment of the minimum graduate residence, graduate degree, or minor credit requirements on occasion as an exception (on a case-by-case basis). UW–Madison coursework taken as a University Special student would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PROBATION
The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor.

To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED
15 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may be required to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

OTHER
Funding decisions are made by faculty supervisors of the admitted students based on the funding availability and project need.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES
Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Articulates research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of study.
2. Formulates ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within the field of study.
3. Creates research, scholarship, or performance that makes a substantive contribution.
4. Demonstrates breadth within their learning experiences.
5. Advances contributions of the field of study to society.
6. Communicates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.
7. Fosters ethical and professional conduct.

PEOPLE
Faculty: Professors Reinemann, Anex, Bohnhoff (emeritus), Etzel, Gunasekaran, Hanna, Hartel, Holmes, Kammel, Karthikeyan, Kung, O'Leary, Pan, Ralph, Shinners, Straub, A. Thompson, Walsh; Associate Professor Larson, Runge (chair); Assistant Professors Digman, Luck, Zhang