

## **MS and PhD in Computer Science Program Handbook**

### **Welcome**

### **Message from Chair**

Welcome to the UNLV Department of Computer Science (CS) graduate program at the Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering. We are pleased to recognize the research and scholarly efforts of the graduate faculty and students. Our graduate program offers MS and PhD degrees, and is designed to pursue research at the frontiers of computer science and applications areas. In addition to the traditional thesis option, the MS program offers project and course only options as well. The department also offers an interdisciplinary MS in Cyber Security in cooperation with the Lee College of Business and housed in the Graduate College. The UNLV CS Graduate program offers a unique academic experience because we focus on students pursuing advanced degrees and an education that will expand their knowledge base and propel their career. By combining rigorous academics with real-world application, our students are better prepared to apply their education to real-world problems. The graduate program is supported by faculty who are actively participating in research and development in specialized areas such as Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, Programming Languages and Systems, Cyber Security, and Algorithms and Foundation. The department also offers an interdisciplinary MS in Data Analytics for students with BS/BA degrees in disciplines other than computer science.

The research is supported by computer equipment including Hadoop Cluster, High Performance Computing, GPUs, and Linux based personal workstations.

#### **Mission Statement(s)**

Our mission is to assure overall quality of the CS graduate education and promote culturally and intellectually diverse learning environments in which scholarship and creativity can flourish. In realizing this mission, the Graduate Program acts to recruit, support, retain, and matriculate scholars, researchers, and practitioners educationally empowered with critical skills to become agents of innovation, opportunity, and change.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: [valarie.burke@unlv.edu](mailto:valarie.burke@unlv.edu) or [GradAssociateDean@unlv.edu](mailto:GradAssociateDean@unlv.edu).

### **Department Graduate Faculty**

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

### **Program Information**

Program information is found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog:

[Master of Science in Computer Science](#)

[Doctor of Philosophy - Computer Science](#)

### **Contact Information**

Department Website: [Computer Science](#)

*Department Chair*

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*Graduate Coordinator*

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## **Program Requirements**

Advisory Committee Guidelines

The Computer Science follows the guideline of the Graduate College. The role of the advisory committee is described in the [Graduate Student Handbook](#)

Degree Program Benchmarks

This is described in the Graduate Catalog for the [Master of Science in Computer Science and Doctor of Philosophy - Computer Science](#)

Program Timeline

The general guideline is listed in the graduate catalog under the [Graduate Study Timeline section](#). In Computer Science, it is expected to take two years for the Master degree and four to six years for the Ph.D. degree.

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the graduate catalog.

Annual Mandatory Individual Development Plan

Each winter break and early spring term, graduate students are **required** to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) form [Formerly known as the Student Annual Review]. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress, and it establishes reasonable goals for the year ahead.

Faculty Advisors/Graduate Coordinators have the option to provide feedback to each students' submitted IDP and provide acknowledgement that they have reviewed the IDP.

Reported student data is shared with students' graduate coordinators and advisors to foster opportunities for discussion about students' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and next requirements, and mentoring plans so that students know what they need to do in order to progress successfully through their programs in a timely manner.

Students who are graduating are also required to complete the form in order to record their achievements since the data is also used to track UNLV metrics related to the annual productivity of all students.

Probation

If a student fails to successfully progress in their degree program, their department/school will recommend that the student be placed on probation by the Graduate College. Students on probation may be dismissed/separated from their program for failing to successfully meet the conditions of their probation by the deadline provided. Please see the [Probation and Separation](#) section of the Graduate Catalog for more information.

Additional Program Information

The Computer Science department offers research opportunities in the following areas:

1. Design and analysis of algorithms
2. Operating and distributed systems
3. Computer architecture and networking
4. Computational geometry and robotics
5. Computer graphics and image processing
6. Programming languages and compiler construction
7. Artificial intelligence and expert systems
8. Database design, document analysis and retrieval
9. Software engineering
10. Information security
11. Data sciences

Ph.D. students are expected to make a significant contribution to the Computer Science research community through research publications. Those students who are aiming for an academic career are required to build a stronger research record.

## Discipline Resources

Computer Science professional organizations include Association for Computing Machinery ([ACM](#)) and [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers \(IEEE\) Computer Society](#). Student memberships are available for graduate students at a low cost. Both organizations offer a large collection of research articles through their digital library ([IEEEExplore](#) and [ACM Digital Library](#)) that is accessible from any computer on campus or from off campus through UNLV library services. For publication writing style, both ACM and IEEE provide a paper template on their web site. UNLV Computer Science department is an institutional member of Computing Research Association (CRA). Its web site ([CRA](#)) offers valuable resources for Computer Science researchers including the current research issues, enrollment information in Computer Science, employment data and salary information for Computer Science graduates. There are hundreds of conferences and journals in Computer Science. Their ranking information is available in a few dozen web sites and can be easily found through web search. For conference attendance, partial travel support is available from UNLV Graduate and Professional Student Association ([GPSA](#))

## University Resources

### The Graduate Academy: Innovative Leadership, Professional, and Career Development

The goal of the Graduate Academy is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

### Academic Success Center

The goal of the Academic Success Center is to help students do well academically and complete their studies on time. They offer or will refer you to such programs and resources as tutoring, advising, skills testing, career exploration and more. They guide students every step of the way to the many established resources created to ensure they complete their educational goals. Learn more about the programs and services the center currently offers.

### Alumni Association

With an alumni base 120,000 strong, the UNLV Alumni Association offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

### Commencement Office

Located in the UNLV Office of the Registrar, the commencement office is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College. It is the students' responsibility to ensure they apply for [graduation on time](#) and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College [Student Services Team](#) and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College [RPC Team](#)

### Office of Diversity Initiatives

The vision of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's diversity mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

### Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The DRC is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

### Office of International Student and Scholars

International Students and Scholars (ISS) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

#### Jean Nidetch Women's Center

The Jean Nidetch Women's Center is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

#### The Intersection

The Intersection is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

#### UNLV Libraries

UNLV Libraries has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

#### Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The Graduate & Professional Student Association serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

#### Office of Student Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Conduct collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the *UNLV Student Code of Conduct* by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

#### Military and Veteran Services Center

The Military and Veteran Service Center is staffed with veterans and GI Bill-experienced staff to assist more than 1,000 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

#### The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

#### Writing Center

This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the Online Writing Lab (OWL) page.

## University Policies and Procedures

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Activation for Military Service](#)
- [Change of Address](#)
- [FERPA/Privacy Rights](#)
- [Health Insurance - Mandatory](#)
- [Jean Clery Campus Safety and Security Report](#)
- [Proof of Immunization](#)
- [Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects](#)
- [Rebelmail Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Student Computer Use Policy](#)
- [Title IX](#)

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, on the basis of sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV's Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the online [reporting form](#), or by email at [titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu), by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the [Graduate Catalog](#):

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Academic Policies](#)
- [Admission and Registration Information](#)
- [Degree Progression Policies & Procedures](#)

In addition, the [Graduate College website](#) contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

*Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.*

## Handbook Information

Last revised	Revised by	Changes summary
March 2020	Laxmi Gawali	Updated contact information and policies (votes 3/31; 11-0-3)