Civil and Environmental Engineering, M.S.

Graduate study in civil and environmental engineering prepares students for professional careers and further study. The principal concentration areas are environmental engineering and environmental science; hydraulics, hydrology, and water resources; structures, mechanics, and materials; sustainable water development; and transportation.

Research and Study Areas

Structures, Mechanics, and Materials

The structures, mechanics, and materials curriculum is designed for students who wish to gain knowledge and skill in the mechanics of solids and structures that they can apply to civil infrastructure systems and other fields. The program concentrates on developing appropriate methodologies for tackling broad, complex issues related to civil infrastructure systems, and on educating engineers in the implementation and application of methodologies to actual engineering projects. Faculty members have expertise in structural engineering, design optimization, solid mechanics, and computational methods.

Transportation Engineering

The transportation engineering curriculum is geared toward students interested in developing specialized knowledge and skills applicable to the diverse set of issues associated with transportation. Faculty members have expertise in traffic engineering, infrastructure management systems, pavement engineering, advanced construction materials, dynamic load and pavement simulation, optimal design, winter highway maintenance, real-time simulation, human factors, intelligent sensors, nondestructive testing, transportation planning, and travel demand modeling.

Water and the Environment

The water and the environment graduate program focuses on both fundamental and applied aspects of environmental systems and processes across a range of scales. The water and the environment program offers unique opportunities for students to actively participate in the research, analysis, and design aspects of real-world problems. There are three areas of specialization—environmental engineering and science; hydraulics, hydrology, and water resources; and sustainable water development.

The environmental engineering and science curriculum provides a comprehensive base of coursework and research in the areas of air and water quality management; environmental chemistry and microbiology; natural systems modeling; and processes for water supply, pollution control, and solid and hazardous waste management.

The hydraulics, hydrology, and water resources curriculum is associated with IIHR—Hydroscience & Engineering, a world-renowned research institute, where senior staff members of the institute are professors in the program. IIHR offers unique curriculum opportunities in laboratory and field-scale experimentation, and in mathematical modeling with IIHR’s high-speed computer facilities.

The sustainable water development curriculum is focused on training interdisciplinary professional engineers, researchers, educators, and those who are ready to meet the water resource challenges of communities most in need. Community service and professional development experiences complement innovative research at the food, energy, and water nexus.

Across all specialization areas within water and the environment, interdisciplinary research and study are conducted with programs including the Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research, the Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination, the Iowa Superfund Research Program, the Hazardous Substances Research Center, and the Center for Biocatalysis and Bioprocessing; the Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering (College of Engineering); the Departments of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Geographical and Sustainability Sciences (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences); the Department of Microbiology and Immunology (Carver College of Medicine); the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health (College of Public Health); and the School of Planning and Public Affairs (Graduate College). Other areas of interdisciplinary focus include groundwater contamination, biotechnology, global climate change, and hazardous substances.

Requirements

The Master of Science program in civil and environmental engineering requires a minimum of 30 s.h. of graduate credit for thesis students; 31 s.h. for nonthesis students. The program enables students to concentrate in one or more areas of their choice. Students who choose the thesis program may earn up to 6 s.h. for the thesis. M.S. students must maintain a g.p.a. of at least 2.75.

With the approval of their advisor, students develop a study plan that satisfies the requirements of their chosen curriculum. Students must pass an oral examination and in some program options, a written examination.

Consult the department’s Graduate Program Resources web page for more detailed information about the M.S. program in civil and environmental engineering.

Combined Programs

M.S. (Sustainable Water Development Subprogram)/M.S. in Urban and Regional Planning

The Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the School of Planning and Public Affairs collaborate to offer a combined Master of Science in civil and environmental engineering with a sustainable water development subprogram/Master of Science in urban and regional planning.

Separate application to each degree program is required. Applicants must be admitted to both programs before they may be admitted to the combined degree program. For more information, see the M.S. in urban and regional planning (Graduate College) in the Catalog.
Admission

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College on the Graduate College website.

Each of the program’s curricula is flexible; students may be admitted from all disciplines of engineering as well as from the mathematical and basic sciences.

Applicants should have a cumulative undergraduate g.p.a. of at least 3.00. Those with grade-point averages slightly lower should contact the department.

Applicants should have a combined verbal and quantitative score of at least 301 on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test. Lower scores are considered with other evidence of academic promise (recommendation letters, grade-point average). GRE General Test scores also are used in financial aid decisions.

Financial Support

A significant number of research assistantships are available on a variety of research projects, and a limited number of teaching assistantships may be available. Selection of recipients usually is based on scholastic achievement and research interest.

Career Advancement

Current and projected demand for M.S. graduates is excellent. Graduates are placed in advanced technical positions in industry, consulting firms, or government, or they may continue their graduate study. On average, 93-98 percent of graduates are employed in their field of study or pursuing advanced education within seven months of graduation.

Engineering Career Services develops and promotes experiential education and professional opportunities for students. Professional staff coordinate the college’s co-op and internship program, engage in employer outreach, and provide opportunities for students to network with employers, including an engineering career fair and other career-development programming each semester.

Engineering Career Services also offers individual advising and class presentations on résumé and cover letter preparation, job and internship search strategies, interviewing skills, and job offer evaluation.