

# Distance Education MAE Master's Program Student Guide

Hello Distance Education Master's Students,

Included here is important information to help ensure you are meeting all of the requirements for the Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering distance education master's degree program. Please review this information, and if you have any follow up questions please email the MAE Graduate Office at [mae\\_gradoffice@ncsu.edu](mailto:mae_gradoffice@ncsu.edu).

## Quick Guide to Resource Links Provided in this Guide

Quick links are provided here for easy access, but many of these links will make more sense after reading through the guide.

University Calendars - <https://studentservices.ncsu.edu/calendars/>

EOL Academic Calendar - <https://www.engineeringonline.ncsu.edu/about/calendar/>

Graduate Student Handbook - <https://www.ncsu.edu/grad/handbook/index.php>

Graduate School Forms - <https://grad.ncsu.edu/faculty-and-staff/forms/>

MyPack Portal User Guide - <https://sis.emas.ncsu.edu/students/>

EOL Courses by Semester - <https://www.engineeringonline.ncsu.edu/apply-and-enroll/online-courses/>

[Student Information System Training Manual](#)

[How to create a Plan of Work](#) (video)

MAE Graduate FAQ - <https://www.mae.ncsu.edu/graduate-faqs/>

MAE Graduate Advising Website - <https://www.mae.ncsu.edu/academics/graduate-programs/graduate-advising/>

MAE 586 - Projects in Mechanical Engineering [course description](#) page

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## Master's Degree Requirements

### Non-thesis MS requirements:

- Minimum GPA: 3.0
- Graded Courses: You must have a minimum of 27 credits from graded courses
  - o Up to 3 courses (9 credits) can be from non-MAE courses approved by your advisor
- Project Work Credits: You must have 3 credits of MAE 586
- Total Credits required is 30

All distance education students will complete MAE 586, which is an independent project course. Students will work with a project advisor (MAE faculty) to perform an analysis or experiment of mutual interest to both the student and the advisor. Students will first complete a one-page project proposal which includes a timeline of major tasks. There is no final defense and the student does not need to form an exam committee. The final grade is determined by the project advisor.

**Academic Advisor:** The MAE Director of Graduate Programs (DGP) serves as the faculty advisor for all DE students.

\*DE student **do not** register for MAE 801. This is an introductory research seminar for on-campus graduate students.

## Enrollment & Credit Hour Requirements

### DE students submit course enrollment requests to Engineering Online

- Course pre-requisites are verified by Engineering Online
- If pre-requisites need an exception, the course may require instructor's approval to enroll
- Engineering Online will enroll students once approved

### All students are required to maintain Continuous Enrollment

- Continuous Enrollment means there is no break in your enrollment/registration. If you have a break in your enrollment you will need to re-apply to the program.
- It is possible to file a Leave of Absence for up to two (2) semesters during your academic career at NCSU.
- Read more in the Graduate Handbook: [section 3.14a Requirements of Continuous Enrollment](#)
- Distance Education students are not required to maintain full-time enrollment (9 credit hours). However, students who are not registered as full-time students by Census Day (the 10<sup>th</sup> day of classes each semester) lose their eligibility for student loans.
- Read more in the Graduate Handbook: [section 3.14b Requirements for Full/Half-Time Registration](#)
- Students are not required to be enrolled in the summer term to maintain continuous enrollment. Further, if a student applies for a leave of absence, they do not need to include the summer term.
- EOL keeps a webpage with upcoming academic and registration dates at <https://www.engineeringonline.ncsu.edu/about/calendar/>
- EOL also keeps a webpage with courses offered by semester at <https://www.engineeringonline.ncsu.edu/apply-and-enroll/online-courses/>

### Enrollment for semesters beyond the 30 credit hours

- If you received an "incomplete" in any course in your final semester and need to finish the course requirements after the end of the semester, then you will need to enroll in one (1) credit hours of MAE 689 the following semester. This course is a placeholder. You must be enrolled in a semester in order to graduate in that semester.

## Plan of Work & Advisory Committee Explained

The Graduate Plan of Work is a document that serves both as a guide to successful degree completion and a contract between students and their programs. In this way, it serves to reduce the potential for misunderstandings about degree requirements and outlines the expected academic progress students should make. It is especially helpful when it is evaluated on at least an annual basis by students with their advisor(s) with any needed modifications recorded at that time. It should be viewed as a “living document” that reflects changes that may occur as students continue to develop and refine their academic programs.

As such, you will be expected to fill out your plan of work in your second semester. For additional information regarding the contents of the PoW, formulation and submission process, timing of submission and revising a PoW can be found in the Graduate Handbook ([section 3.3 Graduate Plan of Work](#)).

### Plan of Work Completion Schedule

#### **Semester 2: create & submit your Plan of Work in your MyPack Portal**

- Select the Option B – Non-thesis MS plan
- Create your plan of work, listing the courses you plan to complete for your MS degree (30 credit hours are required).
- Select the MAE Director of Graduate Program (DGP) as the committee member
- submit your Plan of work for approval

#### **Continuously: review & save your Plan of Work**

- The review and modification process can be done continuously, especially if the classes you take do not match your original Plan of Work.
- We recommend that you review your Plan of Work at least once a year.

#### **Second-to-last Semester: review & submit your final Plan of Work for approval (if required)**

- If you have made any changes to your course selection since you last approved POW, update the POW to reflect your actual courses completed.
- This will be the final review of your POW and prepares the process for the graduate school to check that you have met the graduation requirements.

### Who is your “Committee”?

Your committee will consist of only one person – the MAE Director of Graduate Program (DGP). You should designate the DGP as the Committee Chairperson. No other committee members are required for non-thesis track students.

### The Plan of Work Review Process:

- 1) Submit your PoW through MyPack Portal.
- 2) The DGP (non-thesis track students) will review your PoW for committee approval.
- 3) The DGP then reviews the PoW for departmental approval.
- 4) If the DGP approves your PoW, it is sent to the Graduate School for final approval.
- 5) Once the Graduate School approves your POW you have met the POW requirement!

**Note:** If at any time in the process your POW is denied, it will be sent back to you for modification. Once you make the necessary changes and re-submit your POW the process begins again.

### Helpful Resource: [Student Information System Training Manual](#)

- Creating a Plan of Work (pg. 4)
- Creating an Advisory Committee (pg. 7)
- Applying for Graduation (pg. 12)

## What is the Independent Project Course MAE 586?

MAE 586 – Project work in Mechanical Engineering is an independent project course with no formal lectures. Instead, you will perform an analysis or experiment under the advisement of a project advisor. You will enroll in MAE 586 as for any other DE course. Students will take the course towards or at the end of your degree, as it is intended to pull the knowledge you have gained in the other courses. You will be assigned one of the instructors of MAE 586 as a faculty mentor for your project.

To start thinking about potential project ideas, select a project from the [project list](#) for Engineering Online (EOL) students or develop your own project idea to present to your faculty mentor. In the first week of the course, students will prepare a one-page project proposal that includes a description of the project and timeline of major tasks. Therefore, it is a good idea to start thinking about specific project ideas before the start of the semester.

## Academic Difficulties

The graduate school will place students who are not progressing satisfactorily towards the degree into one of three categories of academic difficulty at the end of the semester:

- **Academic Warning** – students in this category have accumulated 18 or fewer credit hours and have less than a 3.0 GPA.
- **Academic Probation** – students in this category have accumulated more than 18 credit hours and have a GPA in the range of 2.667 to 2.999.
- **Termination** – students in this category have accumulated more than 18 credit hours and have a GPA below 2.667 or have accumulated 30 or more credit hours and have a GPA below 3.0.

Students in the first categories may continue to enroll in courses, however there may be implications for eligibility for external financial aid. Contact the financial source if you have questions about eligibility. Student in the third category cannot enroll for courses, but may be reinstated by the graduate school, provided the DGP can provide a justification for the performance and a plan to bring the GPA back up in the following semester to meet graduation requirements.

If you fall into one of these three categories (particularly the second or third category), contact the DGP **immediately** so that together you can create an action plan to improve your GPA and avoid future actions by the graduate school. The earlier you put together the action plan and submit to the graduate school, the more likely you will graduate.

Read more in the Graduate Handbook: [section 3.19 Academic Difficulty](#)

## Applying to Graduate (MyPack Portal)

### **IMPORTANT: All students must Apply to Graduate during their final semester**

- A student must Apply to Graduate to the degree posted on the transcript, and receive a diploma. Distance Education students are also welcome to participate in commencement and must Apply to Graduate to do so.
- Apply to Graduate in MyPack Portal: **Student Homepage > Planning & Enrollment tile > Apply for Graduation.** Detailed instructions are available [here](#).
- It is required that students apply to graduate by “Apply to Graduate Deadline Date.” This deadline can be found for the upcoming semesters on the graduate school website at [ETD Deadlines](#).

After Applying to Graduate, students will receive a Graduation Survey from the Graduate Office. This must be completed before the student’s graduation can be approved.

## Semester-by-Semester Program Checklist

### Prior to completing 9 credit hours of coursework

- Create your plan of work and submit in MyPack Portal.
- Designate the MAE Director of Graduate Programs as the Chair of Advisory Committee.

### During the term 27 credit hours will be completed

- Review Plan of Work for accuracy after enrolling in final semester courses and resubmit for approval if necessary.

### Final semester

- Complete MAE 586.
- Apply to graduate in MyPack Portal.