Graduate Comprehensive Exam Study Guide

The comprehensive exam is given near the end of each long semester and during the second summer session at times announced by the department. Sitting for and passing the exam is a requirement for the MSE degree. Two hours is allotted for the closed book exam, which consists of fifty multiple-choice questions and is Scantron scored. An NCEES approved calculator is permitted (see http://www.ncees.org/exams/calculators/). Using a non-approved calculator will cause the offender to be dismissed from the exam; the student may return the following semester for a retest. It is recommended that students verify the acceptability of their calculator with the department before the exam date.

Thirty percent of the exam is intended to test general EE knowledge drawn from five areas: circuits, electronics, controls, electromagnetics and a collective area that for lack of a better term the department calls "computer engineering". The questions are similar to those found on the Fundamentals Exam used for professional registration purposes. This material should, at best, require only a short review. Students may wish to include the following or similar texts in their preparation:


The balance of the exam (70%) will reflect current research areas and the graduate courses that accompany them. These areas include: VLSI design, signal processing, communications and computer networking.

The faculty will determine a passing score for the exam and students not meeting the passing score will be reviewed to determine whether or not they will be required to sit again for the exam. The faculty may assign articulation of further graduate work prior to the second exam. A student may sit for the exam a maximum of two times.

Any student found cheating during the exam will be dismissed from the program and will not receive a degree.