

# The Fifth Year MS Program in Computer Science Program Overview

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1

## Why?

- **Allow top undergraduates to spend an extra year at CMU to broaden their educational background and gain research experience.**
  - › Get a chance to do substantial research before going into the "real" world
  - › Get exposure to graduate studies without committing X years (X > 5)
  - › Get better prepared for a PhD program
- **Allow advisors to continue to work with some bright students.**
  - › Often continuing research that started during the student's undergraduate studies

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2

## Format

- **Students are admitted in the Fall of senior year.**
  - › Before you get distracted by job hunting and graduate school applications
  - › Also second admissions cycles in January
- **Students are sponsored by an advisor who has worked with the students on research.**
  - › High GPA is not enough (more on this later)
- **Students spend one summer and one academic year at CMU, doing research and taking graduate courses.**
  - › Experience is similar to that of 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD student
  - › Must complete BS before starting the 5<sup>th</sup> year MS program
- **Outcome is an MS degree in Computer Science.**

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3

## Requirements

- **96 units of credit.**
  - › 48 units (4 courses) of course work
  - › 2 courses must be "star" courses in different areas – breadth requirement
  - › 2 courses can be electives – often in research area
  - › Remaining credit is for research
- **The research should result in thesis document and a presentation.**
  - › The document can be a technical report, conference paper, ... - details determined by advisor
  - › Presentation is an open seminar
  - › Two faculty members have to sign off on thesis document and presentation

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4

## Admissions Criteria

- **Criteria are the same as for "traditional" graduate programs at top schools.**
- **Research experience.**
  - › Independent study, senior thesis, summer jobs, ..
  - › Student must be ready to do top quality research
- **Good grades.**
  - › .. for a good selection of courses
- **Strength of proposed research project.**
  - › Bleeding edge research
  - › Student is well prepared for the proposed project

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5

## Funding

- **Graduate studies are expensive.**
  - › Registration cost, fees, stipend
    - E.g. AY 06-07: tuition: >\$30,000 + fees + insurance
  - › Cost roughly the same as one year of UG studies
    - Tax considerations for loans may be different
- **Many funding options are possible.**
  - › Full or partial funding from advisor
  - › Personal funds
  - › Internal or external fellowships, e.g. Siebel
  - › A combination of the above, e.g. partial funding from advisor plus some personal funds
- **This is important - Talk to your advisor!!**

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6

## How Do You Apply?

- **Fill in an application by October 16.**
  - » Research statement
  - » Letter from advisor and other faculty
  - » Work with your advisor on the definition of the research project and the funding plan
- **Admissions decisions will be returned by November 10.**
  - » Early enough to adjust Spring course selection
- **You are admitted to work with a specific advisor.**
  - » You have to talk to us if you want to switch advisors
- **There will be a second admissions cycle in January 2007.**