CIVIL AND INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEERING, PHD

Banner Code: VS-PHD-CEIE

Laura Kosoglu, PhD, Associate Department Chair; Director, CEIE Graduate Program; Associate Professor
Phone: 703-993-5319
Email: ceiegrad@gmu.edu
Website: https://civil.gmu.edu/academics/phd

The Doctor of Philosophy in Civil and Infrastructure Engineering was created to prepare students for advanced leadership positions in research and development in the public or private sector, academics, or government. Students may elect to study in the areas of: construction engineering and management, environmental and water resources engineering, geotechnical engineering, structural engineering, or transportation engineering. Admitted students will complete both required and applicable coursework in their technical interest area based on a plan of study prepared with a doctoral advisor. They will take qualifying exams that assess student’s breadth of knowledge at the graduate level and competency to conduct research. They will form a doctoral committee and prepare and defend a dissertation proposal leading to PhD candidacy. Finally, they will conduct original scholarly research and prepare, then defend a doctoral dissertation. Both part-time and full-time study is available.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions
Requirements
All general George Mason University and specific Volgenau School admission requirements (including deadlines) apply. In addition, all applicants, including Mason undergraduates, must submit the following:

- Official transcript of undergraduate and graduate course work,
- For applicants whose official language is not English, official TOEFL scores which meet the minimum requirements set by the Volgenau School,
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals knowledgeable about the applicant’s professional or academic work (at least two of the letters should be from individuals with doctorates),
- Recent professional résumé,
- Substantial statement of interest that includes a description of the specific area of proposed dissertation research, contacts the student has made with potential faculty advisors, and an explanation of career and research goals

Admission decisions will be based on the student’s qualifications, the availability of a faculty advisor, and the faculty advisor’s approval in their proposed area of research. The application materials will be reviewed by the department doctoral committee and decisions made with input from appropriate faculty members.

Financial support for outstanding applicants is available in the form of fellowships as well as research and teaching assistantships. For best consideration, applicants are encouraged to apply early and to contact potential faculty advisors to express interest in support.

Policies

Reduction of Credit
Students must complete a minimum of 72 graduate credits, which may be reduced by a maximum of 30 credits from a completed master’s degree in civil engineering or other related fields. Reduction of credit requires the approval of the program director or designee and the dean or designee of the school. They determine whether the credits are eligible for reduction of credit and applicable to the degree program and the number of credits to be reduced.

Program Requirements
The PhD in Civil and Infrastructure Engineering requires 72 graduate credits. Admitted students are expected to hold at a minimum a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering or a degree in a closely-related engineering or science field.

The degree plan outlined in Degree Requirements is based on a student who receives a full 30 credit reduction. Students who do not receive a full credit reduction must choose additional credits in consultation with their advisor.

Requirements

Degree Requirements
Total credits: 72

Doctoral Coursework
A minimum GPA of 3.50 is required and no C grades are allowed for the coursework earned beyond the MS. A detailed plan of study will be prepared for each student upon acceptance into the program and in consultation with the faculty advisor, which outlines all course requirements to include:

Required Courses
The following must be completed while in residence in the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEIE 800</td>
<td>Civil, Environmental, and Infrastructure Engineering Colloquium (must be taken at least twice)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEIE 990</td>
<td>Civil and Infrastructure Dissertation Topic Presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select one from the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEIE 603</td>
<td>Research Methods in Civil Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEIE 796</td>
<td>Directed Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits: 6

Courses Chosen with Advisor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Courses, especially in the student’s technical interest area, chosen in consultation with his or her advisor (minimum)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits: 12
Dissertation Committee

A dissertation committee (separate from the examination committee) is formed upon successful completion of the qualifying exams. The dissertation committee is composed of at least four members, including the student’s advisor. The student, in consultation with their advisor, shall select at least one other full-time CEIE Department faculty member to serve on the committee, and at least one committee member from outside of the CEIE department. At least three members of the committee are to be members of the Mason graduate faculty. All committee members must hold earned doctorates and possess applicable knowledge and experience in the student’s chosen topic. The CEIE Department Chair must approve the composition of the dissertation committee. Additional committee members from outside Mason (e.g., from industry, other institutions, etc.) may be appointed if approved by the majority of the CEIE faculty. The committee must be formed and approved before admission to candidacy (described in the next section) and before registering for CEIE 999 Doctoral Dissertation. Substitutions to the dissertation committee are allowed with the approval of the CEIE Department Chair.

Dissertation Proposal Preparation and Advancement to Candidacy

After successfully passing the qualifying exams and forming of a dissertation committee, the student may register for CEIE 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal research credits and begin preparation of the dissertation research proposal. The student will consult with his or her advisor on the selection of an original scholarly topic and preparation of a formal research proposal. Students are also encouraged to register for the required CEIE 990 Civil and Infrastructure Dissertation Topic Presentation course during this time. Students must schedule a formal proposal defense (also known as the research competency exam) with all members of their chosen committee present. This cannot be done before successful completion of the qualifying exams. Committee members should receive printed copies for the final proposal not less than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date.

The research competency exam (proposal defense) includes the written proposal and a presentation of the planned dissertation research. The dissertation proposal defense shall not include already completed research. The dissertation proposal defense is the main opportunity for the committee to provide input and for the dissertation committee members to examine the student’s knowledge in higher-level course work and familiarity with existing and emerging research related to the student’s research area. After the student’s presentation, and after private deliberation, the committee makes a pass/fail determination that is given to the student by his or her advisor.

Students who pass the research competency exam are admitted to candidacy and become PhD Candidates. Students who do not pass the exam may, in consultation with their advisor, schedule a second exam within 120 days of receiving notice of the first exam result. Students who do not successfully pass the research competency within this period are terminated from the program.

Dissertation Research and Defense

On successful completion of the dissertation proposal, students are to conduct original research under the guidance of their dissertation director and dissertation committee members. Students are not to schedule their dissertation defense sooner than two semesters after advancement to candidacy. The dissertation must represent achievement in research, must be a significant contribution to the field of civil engineering, and should be deemed publishable in refereed journals. When the majority of
the research has been completed, the candidate is to submit a written
draft of the dissertation to the doctoral dissertation committee and
schedule an oral defense to be attended by the doctoral dissertation
committee. The CEIE department and the CEIE Graduate Coordinator
must be notified of the defense at least two weeks prior to the defense to
allow time to advertise it broadly.

On successful completion of the oral defense, students must submit a
final dissertation that meets the guidelines specified by the Guide for
Preparing Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Projects. If the student
fails to defend the dissertation successfully, the student may request a
second defense following the same procedures as the initial defense.
This request has no time limit, other than the general time limits for the
doctoral degree as per Mason policy. The student is strongly advised
to consult with the committee before scheduling the second defense.
If the student fails on the second attempt to successfully defend the
dissertation, the student will be terminated from the PhD program.
Following a successful public defense and completion of the final form of
the dissertation, the dissertation committee recommends the candidate
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Teaching Opportunities
All PhD students are encouraged to participate in teaching activities in
consultation with their major advisors. Teaching opportunities include
presenting lectures, conducting recitation sessions, serving as a teaching
assistant, working as a laboratory assistant, participating in teaching
workshops, preparing course materials, and other related activities
approved by the student's advisor.