Digital forensics is a discipline addressing the collection, processing, and analysis of digital data for the purpose of verifying/validating the existence of an event of investigative, intelligence, cyber, or business interest. The data can be from physical media, a mobile device, real-time network traffic, the Internet of Things (IoT), unknown code, memory, the cloud, and many other sources. Digital forensics is interdisciplinary by nature and our program includes computer engineering, computer science, information technology, law, and ethics. Digital forensics is a key component in criminal, corporate, civil, cyber defense, incident response, intelligence, and counter-terrorism matters. In the last several years, with a proliferation of digital storage, transmission, and processing of sensitive information, there has been an increase in the aberrant use of digital devices. This aberrant behavior includes but is not limited to digital extortion, intrusions, economic espionage, child exploitation, cybercrime, fraud, terrorism, and identity theft. In response to this, digital forensics has become an important profession serving both public and private sectors. The MS in Digital Forensics will prepare graduates for a wide variety of careers to include law enforcement, various other branches of government, incident response, and all facets of cyber security by combining academic education with real world practical techniques and by offering advanced training in analyzing digital evidence, intrusion forensics, reverse engineering, network analysis, legal, and ethical matters.

Admissions

Students who hold a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in engineering, math, science, computer science, business (with a quantitative background), economics, or other analytical disciplines, or students who have equivalent work experience indicating analytical aptitude, may apply. Depending on their background, some domestic applicants may be accepted provisionally and required to complete 3 to 12 credits of preliminary course work before they are allowed to enroll in any of the core or specialty courses in the program. A minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.00 is required for acceptance.

Requirements

Total credits: 30

Electives

Students who do not choose the above concentration should select 9 credits from the following:

- DFOR 590: Special Topics in Digital Forensics
- DFOR 663: Operations of Intrusion Detection for Forensics
- DFOR 664: Incident Response Forensics
- DFOR 698: Independent Reading and Research
- DFOR 710: Memory Forensics
- DFOR 720: Digital Audio Video Forensics
- DFOR 725: Linux Forensics
- DFOR 730: Forensic Deep Packet Inspection
- DFOR 737: Cloud Forensics
- DFOR 760: Legal and Ethical Issues in IT
- DFOR 761: Malware Reverse Engineering
- DFOR 762: Mobile Device Forensics
- DFOR 763: Registry Forensics - Windows
- DFOR 764: Mac Forensics
- DFOR 767: Penetration Testing in Digital Forensics

Concentration in Penetration Testing/Reverse Engineering (PTRE)

Focused on the practical aspects of penetration testing and reverse engineering. Students are expected to master tools, techniques, and methodologies of penetration testing and reverse engineering.

Core Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DFOR 510</td>
<td>Digital Forensics Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFOR 660</td>
<td>Network Forensics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFOR 661</td>
<td>Digital Media Forensics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFOR 663</td>
<td>Operations of Intrusion Detection for Forensics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or DFOR 664</td>
<td>Incident Response Forensics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFOR 760</td>
<td>Legal and Ethical Issues in IT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or DFOR 770</td>
<td>Fraud and Forensics in Accounting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFOR 762</td>
<td>Mobile Device Forensics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFOR 790</td>
<td>Advanced Digital Forensics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits 21

Both DFOR 760 and DFOR 770 may be taken, but only one may be used in the core component.
Accelerated Option Requirements

Students must complete all credits that satisfy requirements for the BAS and MS programs, with up to 12 credits overlapping from the following courses:

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Degree Conferral

Students must apply the semester before they expect to complete the BAS requirements to have the BAS degree conferred. In addition, at the beginning of the student’s final undergraduate semester, students must complete a Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition form that is submitted to the Office of the University Registrar and the VSE Graduate Admissions Office. At the completion of MS requirements, a master’s degree is conferred.

Cyber Security Engineering, BS/Digital Forensics, Accelerated MS

Overview

Highly-qualified students in the Cyber Security Engineering, BS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/engineering/cyber-security-engineering/cyber-security-engineering-bs/) have the option of obtaining an accelerated Digital Forensics, MS.

For more detailed information, see AP6.7 Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Degrees (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7). For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP6 Graduate Policies (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/).

Admission Requirements

Students in the Cyber Security Engineering, BS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/engineering/cyber-security-engineering/cyber-security-engineering-bs/) program may apply for this option if they have earned 90 undergraduate credits with an overall GPA of at least 3.25. Criteria for admission are identical to criteria for admission to the Digital Forensics, MS program.

Accelerated Option Requirements

Students must complete all credits that satisfy requirements for the BS and MS programs, with 6 credits overlapping.

Students register for two Digital Forensics core courses (6 credits) in place of two of the three required technical electives, as part of the undergraduate degree requirements.

Note: Students complete all Digital Forensics, MS core courses and apply the two courses from the above list toward the Digital Forensics, MS requirements.

Degree Conferral

Students must apply the semester before they expect to complete the BS requirements to have the BS degree conferred. In addition, at the beginning of the student’s final undergraduate semester, students must

Accelerated Master’s

Applied Science, BAS (Cyber Security Concentration)/Digital Forensics, Accelerated MS

Overview

Highly-qualified students in the Applied Science, BAS, Cyber Security Concentration (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/interdisciplinary-programs-courses/applied-science-bas/#cybs) have the option of obtaining an accelerated Digital Forensics, MS.

For more detailed information, see AP6.7 Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Degrees (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7). For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP6 Graduate Policies (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/).

Admission Requirements

Students in the Applied Science, BAS, Cyber Security Concentration (https://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/interdisciplinary-programs-courses/applied-science-bas/#cybs) program may apply for this option if they have earned 60 undergraduate credits with an overall GPA of at least 3.25. Criteria for admission are identical to criteria for admission to the Digital Forensics, MS program.

Students who are accepted into the BAM Pathway will be allowed to register for graduate level courses after successful completion of a minimum of 75 undergraduate credits and course-specific pre-requisites.
complete a Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition form that is submitted to the Office of the University Registrar and the VSE Graduate Admissions Office. At the completion of MS requirements, a master’s degree is conferred.

Information Technology, BS/Digital Forensics, Accelerated MS

Overview
Highly-qualified students in the Information Technology, BS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/engineering/information-sciences-technology/information-technology-bs/) have the option of obtaining an accelerated Digital Forensics, MS.

For more detailed information, see AP.6.7 Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Degrees (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-7). For policies governing all graduate degrees, see AP 6 Graduate Policies (http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/).

Admission Requirements
Students in the Information Technology, BS (http://catalog.gmu.edu/colleges-schools/engineering/information-sciences-technology/information-technology-bs/) program may apply for this option if they have earned 60 undergraduate credits and take graduate level courses after completion of 75 credit hours with an overall GPA of at least 3.25. Criteria for admission are identical to criteria for admission to the Digital Forensics, MS program.

Accelerated Option Requirements
Students must complete all credits that satisfy requirements for the BS and MS programs, with a minimum of 3 credits (maximum 9 credits) overlapping from the following courses:

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Degree Conferral
Students must apply the semester before they expect to complete the BS requirements to have the BS degree conferred. In addition, at the beginning of the student’s final undergraduate semester, students must complete a Bachelor’s/Accelerated Master’s Transition form that is submitted to the Office of the University Registrar and the VSE Graduate Admissions Office. At the completion of MS requirements, a master’s degree is conferred.