

SIUE Department of Civil Engineering MS Degree Policy: Writing-Proficiency Requirement

Because of the importance of communication skills to the engineering profession and the need for good writing and presentation skills to complete degree requirements, all C. E. M.S. students are required to complete satisfactorily (i.e., receive an A or a B) a technical writing course (i.e., ENG 491). If you believe you already possess excellent writing skills (e.g., earning As in college English courses, obtaining a GRE verbal score of at least 75%, or obtaining a TOEFL score of at least 280), you may elect to submit a personally-written, original essay (see below) to be evaluated for conditional exemption from the English course requirement. If conditional exemption is granted, then you will substitute another approved course for your program of study. Because the exemption will be granted based only on one essay, it will be conditional. If, based on writing required during the program, the faculty determine that your writing skills are inadequate, then the English requirement may be re-instituted. This decision cannot be appealed.

If you decide to write an essay, you must submit it before completing your plan of study (i.e., within the first term of your enrollment) and no later than:

- February 15 if you begin in a spring semester
- June 1 if you begin in a summer term
- September 15 if you begin in a fall semester.

Submit the essay to the Graduate Program Director. A Review Committee made up of graduate faculty in the Department of Civil Engineering will evaluate the essay. The evaluation should be completed within one month of the submittal. The decision of the Review Committee is final.

Write on a technical topic in your area of specialization (i.e., environmental, structural, or transportation), citing sources where appropriate. For example, you may write about a project of historical significance or your proposed research project. The essay must be original, type-written, double-spaced, and between 500 and 1000 words in length. The essay will be evaluated based on following directions, professionalism, clarity, organization, and grammar. Essays that are plagiarized are grounds for disciplinary probation or suspension from the University.