



Applying to the University of Illinois Graduate College Online M.S. in Crop Sciences Program (all specializations)

The Online Master of Science degree in Crop Sciences Program is a non-thesis degree that does not require GRE scores for admission at this time. **Please note:** a thesis option is possible with the necessary consultations and approvals from the department.

There are two ways you can approach obtaining an M.S. degree in Crop Sciences: **(1)** try out the program by taking a few classes as a non-degree student, and then apply for admission to the Graduate College and apply your non-degree courses toward your degree upon admission; or **(2)** apply directly for admission to the Graduate College/Crop Sciences program before you take your first graduate-level course. Both options are described below.

Enrolling as a Non-Degree Student

Graduate students can apply up to 12 credit hours of UIUC non-degree status completed courses into the Online Crop Sciences M.S. degree program. This option allows you to take a few graduate-level courses as a non-degree student before you apply for admission to the Graduate College. **Do not** wait until you have completed 12 hours to apply as the application processing can take several weeks to complete—please consult with program staff on proper application timing for your specific situation. As a non-degree student you simply set up a new student account and register at the Office of Continuing Education website at <http://www.continuinged.uiuc.edu/occe-sites/outreach/Registration.cfm>. Registering for graduate-level courses (400 and 500-level only) will ensure that credit for those courses, if taken as a non-degree student, can be applied toward an M.S. degree in Crop Sciences upon formal admission. Be sure you read the course descriptions of each course prior to registration in the course catalog found under “course search” at www.outreach.uiuc.edu.

Applying to the Graduate College

The Department of Crop Sciences provides an interdisciplinary graduate education. Consequently, students who come from a variety of backgrounds succeed in our program. There are certain standards that apply to all applicants, regardless of their proposed area of specialization. In order to be admitted to the Crop Sciences Online graduate program applicants:

- Must have at least a 3.0 grade point average for the last 60 hours of their undergraduate coursework (or the last two years if the undergraduate institution used a system other than semester hours). Students who do not meet this requirement may occasionally be admitted on "limited status," NOTE: no student below a 2.5 GPA in their last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework will be considered for entrance.
- Must have earned a baccalaureate degree and should have adequate preparation in the fundamental sciences and courses appropriate to their proposed field of study in plant sciences. In general, this will require coursework in the biological and/or physical sciences from an accredited University or College. Prerequisite coursework should include, at minimum, two or three classes in biological or physical sciences, a course in mathematics, and routine communication courses, all at the college level. Students with deficiencies may still be accepted conditionally, but they may be asked to make up undergraduate level coursework from an accredited college, university, or community college or to successfully complete (B or higher grade) two or three upper level University of Illinois classes before admission is granted to the Online Crop Sciences M.S. Degree Program.
- Students whose native language is not English are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System. Test scores must be less than two (2) years old from date of enrollment. Minimum score requirements are available at <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/admissions/instructions/04b.cfm>.

NOTE: The GRE is not required for admission to the online M.S. program.

Application Process

1. Students must apply online at www.grad.illinois.edu in the online application area called “Apply Yourself”. The application will not be fully processed until the fee (\$60 for domestic and \$75 for international applicants) is paid by credit card (Visa or MasterCard). You are applying to the Crop Sciences Online program (MSU). Our Program Code is [1OKS0030MSU](#).
2. Upload the following documents into the “Apply Yourself” application at www.grad.illinois.edu :
 - Statement of purpose, which should be no more than two pages. In this statement, please indicate one or two specific areas of potential interest for your future graduate study. Statements that are too broad or narrate your past (such as: “ever since I was a young person I loved...”) can weaken your application. You should include why you are applying for the online program at Illinois, and what career plans you have upon completing the degree. Additionally, if you took courses in non-degree status please indicate those as well in your statement for the review committee.
 - Your current curriculum vitae or resume.
3. The University of Illinois online graduate application now asks that the applicant upload their transcripts directly to the online application form at www.grad.illinois.edu. Please scan your transcript(s) and upload it/them to the application at the Graduate College website or attach an electronic copy you have downloaded from your previous institutions. Please send an official transcript copy then to the Department of Crop Sciences to the contact below. Please upload and send transcripts from all institutions from which you received a degree sent directly to:

Dianne Carson, Graduate Secretary
Department of Crop Sciences
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
AW-101 Turner Hall, MC-046
1102 S. Goodwin Ave.
Urbana, IL 61801
4. Request letters of reference from three people who are familiar with your academic abilities, research skills, and/or potential as a professional in the field of crop/horticultural/plant sciences. These letters should be from current or former instructors (2 academic references) and one professional reference. Because you are applying to graduate school, and not for employment, the academic references are very important. If you do not have three people who meet these criteria, or you have been out of college too long to obtain references from your undergraduate instructors, you should consider taking courses as a non-degree student before applying in order to enhance your chances of admission. If one of your references are unable to upload the recommendation into the “Apply Yourself” application system, he or she should mail it to Dianne Carson, Graduate Secretary, at the address listed above in #3. Please try to have all references upload the letters if at all possible.
5. If your native language is not English, you must request the submission of your TOEFL, IELTS, or TSE scores to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (institution number 1836, program code 00). The scores must be less than two years old on the first day of the proposed semester of entry. The minimum scores required for admission can be found at <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/admissions/instructions/04b.cfm>.

6. Below are some possible areas of specialization that may be asked of you on the application form. If you are unsure which to use, you can indicate Crop Production, which is used by many students as an area of specialization if working in traditional agriculture, or others select the Horticulture specialization for those desiring to study more about turf and ornamentals and related areas. This is just your area of interest but you are NOT held to only studying courses in that selected field of expertise.

Biometry • Bioinformatics • Crop Production • Environmental Sciences • Horticulture • Integrated Pest Management • Ornamental Horticulture • Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Cytogenetics • Plant Molecular Biology and Physiology • Plant Pathology • Weed Science

For further assistance or questions please contact:

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