

CMSE committee responsibilities¹

This document offers guidelines for the key responsibilities for each committee in CMSE. The descriptions below are intended to serve as a guide, not an exhaustive list of all potential responsibilities. Committees may need to assume additional responsibilities not listed here to meet changing needs in their domain.

Note that “standing committees” are those that are required by CMSE’s bylaws. “Ad hoc committees” are those that have been created by the Department Chairperson or by AdCom for a specific purpose, and which may be long-lived and persist across many years, or only exist for a brief period of time until an activity is completed.

Advisory (standing committee)

The departmental Advisory Committee (AdCom) is the main governing body of the department, whose primary responsibility is to advise the chair on policy decisions affecting the department as a whole by soliciting feedback and input from the faculty and community members. Specifically, the advisory committee’s job is to:

1. Identify needs for departmental policies, draft new policies for implementation, and suggest revisions of pre-existing policies.
2. Provide advice to the chair as requested or needed.
3. Solicit feedback from faculty as necessary.
4. Discuss department and college committee progress and issues with committee chairs and provide feedback and support.
5. Maintain the department bylaws and implement changes as necessary; and
6. Create and populate ad hoc committees for specific tasks (these committees are typically time-limited).

DEI (ad hoc committee)

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee will:

1. Listen to, and digest concerns and suggestions related to DEI from, all members of the CMSE community.
2. Seek to educate CMSE on DEI-related topics.
3. Develop a departmental strategy related to DEI efforts, in cooperation with AdCom.

The departmental strategy should seek to integrate DEI into all committee efforts in CMSE, coordinate those efforts across the department, potentially propose metrics for success and assessment methods for these metrics, and identify practical efforts for improving DEI in the department related to recruitment, retention, and culture. This strategy should be aligned with College and University-level plans to the greatest extent possible. The DEI committee charter is outlined in “CMSE_DEI_committee_charter_sentFaculty_31Aug2020.pdf”

¹ Approved by CMSE’s Advisory Committee on April 30, 2021

Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (standing committee)

The activities of the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) committee are as follows:

1. Maintain review procedures and guidelines for eligible faculty at all career stages;
2. Review candidate packages, including peer comparisons and external reviews as appropriate, and provide a report with vote on each candidate to the Department Chair; and
3. Communicate concerns and suggestions, especially with respect to the diverse backgrounds of CMSE faculty, to the colleges.

Graduate Admission and Studies (standing committee)

The Graduate Admissions and Studies committee develops policies pertaining to admission standards, recruitment of graduate students, evaluation of incoming students, promotion of graduate students, and all aspects of the graduate curriculum. Specific duties include:

1. Conduct graduate student admission, including: a) review application materials; b) rank applications; c) coordinate with faculty who are looking for new students; d) make suggestions for university and CoE fellowships; e) help facilitate applications to fellowships and other awards for incoming students.
2. Review and recommend university or college level student awards as well as departmental awards.
3. Plan the graduate-level special topics courses for the upcoming year, in coordination with the Undergraduate Studies committee.
4. Advertise CMSE's graduate programs (MS and PhD) externally and internally, to increase applications to CMSE's graduate programs.
5. Adjust admission rubrics for graduate student applications by taking into consideration diverse research directions and expected backgrounds in CMSE.
6. Provide feedback to the Graduate Director and Department Chairperson regarding graduate student support as Teaching Assistants.
7. Discuss issues and set policies related to the core courses and qualifying exams.
8. Create resources for graduate student career development, e.g. successful fellowship and internship applications.
9. Maintain and modify graduate curricula (certificates, degrees) and courses.

Undergraduate Studies (standing committee)

The Undergraduate Studies Committee is broadly responsible for issues relating to CMSE undergraduate courses, curricula, and the students that interact with them. Specific major activities include:

1. Maintain and improve undergraduate curricula and courses. Monitor and improve the educational experience for undergraduate students taking CMSE courses and participating in CMSE curricula (i.e., minors and majors).

2. Manage undergraduate courses, including (A) monitoring and adapting curriculum and policies as needed, and (B) identifying any necessary changes to course descriptions and implementing changes following university processes. This may be done in coordination with other departments for jointly-operated courses (e.g., CMSE/STT 180, CMSE/MTH 314).
3. Review and approve requested undergraduate course and program changes for non-CMSE courses that impact CMSE majors and minors.
4. Coordinate with the Learning and Research Technology Committee to address the needs/issues of hardware and classrooms (e.g., laptops, projectors, TLE requests, etc).
5. Plan the undergraduate-level special topics courses for the upcoming academic year, in coordination with the Graduate Admission and Studies committee.
6. Plan and host the Alumni Distinguished Scholarship open house for CMSE, in addition to any other undergraduate-focused events. More generally, handle advertising for the DS degree.
7. The chair of the committee and/or the Undergraduate Director(s) represent the CMSE department on the (i) Undergraduate Chairs and Directors meetings for the College of Natural Science; and (ii) the College of Engineering Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Colloquium (ad hoc committee)

1. Organize weekly colloquium series to cultivate a culture of scientific inquiry, continual education, and collaborative research.
2. Solicit suggestions for speakers from faculty, postdocs, and graduate students in the department.
3. Invite speakers with an aim towards:
 - a. Ensuring a diversity of topics covered
 - b. Ensuring a breadth of the department can invite speakers
 - c. Improving the diversity of speakers
 - d. Improving the diversity of talks on both topics and presenters.
4. Advertise all lectures and coordinate visits from the lecturers.
5. Ensure that speaker schedules are posted on the department web page in a publicly-accessible format and update them as appropriate.

Brown Bag seminar (ad hoc committee)

1. Organize and manage the schedule of seminars and send announcements.
2. Solicit suggestions for speakers from faculty, postdocs, and graduate students in the department.
3. Monitor the diversity of talks on both topics and presenters and seek to ensure that this diversity represents departmental interests and goals.
4. Organize career development-related talks for postdocs and graduate students.
5. Ensure that speaker schedules are posted on the department web page in a publicly-accessible format and update them as appropriate.

Frontiers Workshop (ad hoc)

The committee will organize a regular conference (every year or every other year, as resources permit), with themes centered around the interests and focus of the department. The committee will:

1. Plan the major theme and topics of the conference, seeking input from the CMSE faculty, graduate students, and postdocs.
2. Seek funding for the workshop from intra-MSU and external sources, including coordinating with the Department Chairperson for departmental funding.
3. Set the dates of the conference at least a year in advance. Make reservations (e.g., conference rooms, reception, hotel blocks) in a timely manner.
4. Solicit speaker suggestions from CMSE faculty, graduate students, and postdocs at least a year in advance, select a slate of speakers, and send invitations.
5. Recruit participants from MSU and other institutions.
6. Create and maintain a workshop website with registration.
7. Engage faculty, staff, postdocs and students with management of the workshop prior to the event and while it takes place.
8. Draft summaries after the workshop on both the scientific topic(s) and the management/format of the workshop, with an eye towards creating institutional memory for improving the next iteration of the workshop.

Learning and Research Technology (ad hoc)

The overall charge of this committee is to acquire and manage technology that facilitates education and research across the department. The committee will:

1. Manage teaching-related hardware issues such as laptops and peripherals, portable digital projectors, and more specialized hardware (including department-purchased hardware at ICER).
2. Ensure that we have enough hardware (and in sufficient quantities), for CMSE courses by putting together TLE requests and budget items for the department budget.
3. Manage teaching-related software issues, including JupyterHub servers, auto-grading systems, etc. This may be done in collaboration with other units on campus (e.g., ITS, DECS).
4. Periodically assess the state of research computing hardware in the department to determine if there are purchases that benefit many members of the department (e.g., visualization hardware), acquire that hardware, and make it available for members of the department.
5. Maintain a set of documentation describing the hardware and software available for teaching and research.

Online Education (ad hoc)

The Online Education committee is a short-term ad hoc committee that is broadly intended to give guidance to instructors in the department relating to online teaching. This committee was created in response to MSU's educational efforts going online due to the pandemic, and will most likely be disbanded (or folded into the Learning and Research Technology Committee) after the pandemic is over. The committee will:

1. Organize the guidelines and suggestions for remote teaching.
2. Communicate basic best practices to CMSE faculty and provide feedback on course design and instruction (upon request).
3. Serve as a resource for questions about online instruction.
4. Coordinate distribution of teaching tools (tablets, notebooks, pads, etc) to instructors in support of CMSE courses.

Awards (ad hoc, but long term)

The overall goal of the Awards committee is to ensure that faculty, staff, postdoctoral researchers, and students receive recognition for their achievements.

1. Manage the nomination and recommendations for department, college, and university faculty awards, including: a) sending announcements, b) actively seeking out faculty to nominate for awards and organizing those nominations, c) reviewing nominations and materials with the goal of providing feedback for improving nomination packages, d) sending recommendation/nomination packages to the appropriate email address/website/person in a timely manner, and e) ensuring that letter-writers submit letters by deadlines.
2. Collect external award/fellowship information for faculty/postdoc/students and create an accessible compilation of this information. Send reminders regularly. Nominate department members for external awards, typically in collaboration with those individuals, and shepherd nomination materials through to submission.
3. Manage the CMSE department internal awards, for students, faculty, and staff: a) coordinate with the Graduate Admissions and Studies Committee to confirm the available funds, b) send announcements and rubrics, c) review nominations and application materials, and d) send recommendations.
4. Develop and implement a protocol to help improve the application materials for external awards.

Recruitment and Publicity (ad hoc)

The overall goal of this committee is to publicize the department and its activities, in service of raising the department's visibility and recruiting applicants to our graduate programs. Specific duties include:

1. Maintain updated recruitment material, e.g., posters, powerpoint slides, and handouts, for faculty to advertise CMSE;
2. Identify the need for videos and other web-based materials, including faculty research and teaching highlights, student research highlights, and advertising videos, and coordinate with appropriate MSU units to produce and disseminate them appropriately;
3. Collect information from previous undergraduate, graduate, and visiting (e.g., REU) students on their experiences in CMSE; and
4. Work with faculty to regularly update and improve research group webpages.

Postdoc Hiring and Mentoring (ad hoc)

The overall goal of this committee is to manage the hiring of postdoctoral researchers. Specific duties include:

1. Advertise postdoctoral positions broadly, in appropriate venues.
2. Oversee the postdoc hiring procedure, ensuring consistency with both MSU HR policy and CMSE needs.
3. Review and rank applicants for the department's teaching-focused Fixed Term Assistant Professor positions, including coordinating funding with faculty interested in collaborating with specific candidates.
4. Organize professional development opportunities for CMSE postdocs, leveraging college, university, and external resources as appropriate.

Undergraduate Data Science Curriculum (ad hoc)

This committee is intended to guide the launch of the Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Minor in Data Science, and which has members from CMSE, CSE, and STT. After the B.S. in Data Science and Minor in Data Science are up and running and each course created for the major and minor are taught at least twice, this committee's charge will be revisited and it will likely be disbanded, with its duties folded into the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Specific duties include:

1. Identify learning goals for B.S. in Data Science and Minor in Data Science.
2. Identify and coordinate learning goals and curricula for each required course in order to meet degree-wide goals.
3. Coordinate with faculty to teach or develop new courses for the DS major and minor.
4. Maintain lines of communication with partner departments (STT and CSE).

Long-Term Planning (ad hoc)

This committee was created to develop a strategic plan for the department, in preparation for the search for an external department chair. It has been put on indefinite hiatus.

Postdoc Association (ad hoc)

The CMSE Postdoctoral Researcher Association is intended to represent the interests of the department's postdoctoral researchers. Its purposes are to:

- 1) Provide a space for CMSE's postdoctoral researchers to discuss issues of mutual interest, to socialize, and to engage in professional development.
- 2) Survey postdoctoral researchers about areas of concern, and work with the faculty and staff in the department to address these concerns.
- 3) Find and disseminate professional development opportunities, including teaching and mentoring opportunities, interview skills, etc.
- 4) Act as a point of contact for the department faculty and staff for social and professional activities (e.g., soliciting volunteers to participate in interviews)

Graduate Student Association (ad hoc)

The CMSE Graduate Student Association is intended to represent the interests of the department's graduate students. Its purposes are to:

1. Provide a space for CMSE's graduate students (M.S. and PhD students alike) to discuss issues of mutual interest, to socialize, and to engage in professional development.
2. Survey graduate students in CMSE about areas of concern, and work with the faculty and staff in the department to address these concerns.
3. Act as a point of contact for the department faculty and staff for social and professional activities (e.g., soliciting volunteers to participate in interviews)