



CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING, MECHANICS AND MATERIALS

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Dear Prospective Student:

I am delighted that you are interested in studying Structural Engineering, Mechanics or Materials (SEMM) at the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) Department at the University of California, Berkeley. Our program is consistently top-rated nationally by U.S. News and World Report; last year we were, again, rated number 1!

First and foremost: I encourage you to apply to Berkeley. It is easy to do, and it is the only way you can enter into the competition for your place in the SEMM graduate program. Admission into the SEMM graduate program at the UC Berkeley CEE Department follows a standard application procedure defined by the University of California (UC Graduate Division). We go through great lengths to make sure all applications are evaluated properly and given equal treatment. We accept graduate student applications in the Fall semester only. The deadlines for receiving your complete application, if you plan to start your graduate studies in Fall 2009, are: December 15, 2008 (for fellowships and admissions) and February 3 2009 (for admissions only, no fellowships). Our application process is now completely electronic (except for the official transcript of your grades which you have to mail to Berkeley, possibly with a certified translation). Please go to [http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/grad\\_app.shtml](http://www.grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/grad_app.shtml) and follow the process outlined there. The CEE admissions page <http://www.ce.berkeley.edu/grad/> has the links to guide you through the list of important supporting documents and answers to many questions we received from students like you over the last few years.

Let me now answer a few other questions you may have about the graduate program at the SEMM group at Berkeley.

The minimum requirements for acceptance are: 1) a Bachelor's degree (or equivalent) from an accredited institution: UC Berkeley's Graduate Division establishes the equivalency; 2) enough undergraduate training to do graduate work in SEMM: we consider your transcript carefully and use our collective experience to evaluate the courses you have taken no matter where in the world you have done so; 3) a minimum average grade of 3.0 on our scale: UC Berkeley's Graduate Division does the necessary conversions; 4) a high GRE score; and 5) a minimum TOEFL score of 570 (230 CBT, 68 iBT) for international applicants.

The selection of SEMM graduate students is quite competitive. In any given year only between one-quarter to one-third of the applicants are offered admission. So, while we strictly respect the minimum requirements, the accepted students have grade-point averages and test scores well above the minima. We also pay careful attention to your statements of purpose (Form F) and the letters of recommendation the referees you selected write to us. It is, therefore, very important that you write a well organized, clear and focused statement of purpose: we need a good idea of why you want to be a graduate student and what you want to do at SEMM.

The cost of graduate school at Berkeley, various fees and tuition, is provided at <http://registrar.berkeley.edu/Registration/feesched.html#gradacad>. Living costs in the city of Berkeley and the San Francisco Bay Area are about \$20,000 per year. Financial support is available, but you have to apply for it at the time when you put together your application. Click the “Fellowship application” links at <http://www.ce.berkeley.edu/admissions/grad/application.php>. Indicate you need financial aid, and specify if you want to work as a research or teaching assistant, or both: all students, US and international are eligible. International students who want to be teaching assistants (graduate student instructors, officially) need to pass the spoken English portion of the iBT examination with a score of 25 or the TSE. If you are a US citizen or permanent resident, you are eligible for a number of merit-based fellowships from the University of California system and numerous US fellowships from public (such as NSF Graduate Fellowship) or private (such as Hertz Fellowship) sources. Do the due diligence by googling these. International students often come to Berkeley with fellowships from their home states, from international foundations (such as Fulbright or Goethe), or multi-national programs (such as UNESCO or UC-MEXUS), or with support from private companies. I encourage you to enquire about what opportunities are available to you before you give up and simply ask us to provide financial support. Decisions on financial support are extremely competitive: only the students accepted based on the academic merit of their application are considered for financial support.

Once in the SEMM graduate program, you have a wide variety of courses to choose from. They are listed at <http://www.ce.berkeley.edu/sem/courses/>. You can go to <http://www.ce.berkeley.edu/Courses/> to see the courses offered this semester in the CEE Department and view the course web pages; to see the entire UC Berkeley course catalog go to <http://www.berkeley.edu/academics/sked.shtml>. At this time, I do not know your background and cannot suggest what courses you may want to take; however, we offer advice to incoming graduate students during the week before classes start. I strongly encourage you to contact your graduate student advisor (one of the SEMM faculty, you will get your assignment in good time) to select your courses once you choose to come to Berkeley.

At Berkeley, we conduct research that shapes the future of structural engineering, mechanics and materials. You will have a chance to take part in this exciting endeavor. I strongly encourage you to visit the faculty web pages to see their most recent work. Also, look up papers we wrote in journals in your library. Or, simply google us. Once you find someone who you would like to work with, do not hesitate to write them with specific questions on their current and future projects: this is the best start towards working on a project at Berkeley.

Finally, if you have questions or need more information, please contact me directly at [Stojadinovic@ce.berkeley.edu](mailto:Stojadinovic@ce.berkeley.edu) or ask our admissions office at [aao@ce.berkeley.edu](mailto:aao@ce.berkeley.edu) for assistance. Also, let us know in advance if you are planning to visit the UC Berkeley campus and our home in Davis Hall, so that we can assist in arranging meetings with SEMM faculty and students about the SEMM graduate program. Note, also, that UC Berkeley and Stanford CEE Departments organize a joint visitation weekend for admitted, potential graduate students. Traditionally, the CEE Department Open House at UC Berkeley is on the third Friday of March. If you submit your application for the SEMM graduate program and are offered admission as a graduate student, you will receive more information about this important visitation day. I wish you the best in your graduate studies (at Berkeley, I hope) and in your future career.

Sincerely,



Bozidar Stojadinovic,  
Professor