Master of Science in Cybersecurity-Policy Track (MS-CSEC) FAQs

1. What kind of background do students in the program have?
MS-CSEC (Policy) students come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds. The degree is suited for students with work experience seeking professional advancement, but also can benefit students coming straight from an undergraduate degree.

Some students already have degrees in computer science or engineering, or have worked as IT professionals for some years, and are interested in expanding their expertise in business and public policy. Others have a background in international affairs or other social science fields and want a stronger technical background and more specialized knowledge of cyber security issues.

You do not need to be a computer scientist or experienced programmer to benefit from the degree; however, it is advisable to have some prior coursework in and/or practical exposure to information technology.

2. What kind of opportunities are available for graduates of the Policy track?
There is a well-recognized need to expand the workforce in cybersecurity, and this need prevails across a variety of economic sectors. Commercial corporations need risk managers and operations workers who understand the economic and organizational aspects of cyber security. Government agencies at the state, local and federal levels also need cyber security workers to develop policies for managing sensitive data and networks. Cyber security is an important consideration in Fintech industries, which are prevalent in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The military and intelligence agencies are a big source of demand and experience. International organizations and legislators are increasingly concerned with cyber security issues. The program and the School of Cybersecurity and Privacy form the nexus of a thriving network of cybersecurity professionals that can help advance your career.

3. How long does it take to get through the program?
Most commonly it takes four semesters (i.e., two years). However, as the program is only 32 credits, students who take a full load each semester can finish the program in three semesters.

4. Can I take the program part-time while working?
Yes. Some courses are held in the evening for working students and there is no requirement to take a specific number of credits each semester. It is common for students to take an extra semester or two, especially if they find relevant internships.

5. Do I need to find a potential supervisor before applying for the program?
No.

6. What kind of financial aid is available?
The CyberCorps Scholarship for Service program is a highly competitive federal scholarship program, limited to about 5 students. Applicants must be U.S. citizens. Awardees of the CyberCorps SFS receive a full tuition coverage and a stipend along with internship opportunities, in exchange for an agreement to work for the U.S. government in a cybersecurity role for two years after graduation.

Other students may be supported by Teaching or Research Assistantships with faculty members who have grant funding. The number of assistantship positions varies from year to year. TA and RA positions are usually not awarded to incoming students in their first semester.

7. What courses do I need to take to complete the degree program?
The MS-CSEC (Policy) is a 32-credit degree program. It involves 14 credit hours (3 courses) of required core courses common to all three tracks, 12 credits (4 courses) of drawn from a menu of core courses in your specialty area (Policy), one elective from another track, and two free electives. The curriculum is described in full on the following website: https://spp.gatech.edu/masters/mscybersecurity/curriculum

8. When do I need to apply?
The MS-CSEC campus program admits students for the fall term only. Fall admission priority deadline is February 15th 11:59 PM EST. Subsequent applications may be accepted on a rolling basis. Our application process is online at: http://grad.gatech.edu/apply-now.

9. What do I need to submit to apply?
The application package requires:
- Application fee - $75 or $85 International Students
- Official transcripts from all schools attended.
  - During the application process you can upload your unofficial transcript, and once you have been accepted you will be contacted with further information on where to send your official transcript.
- Test scores
  - GRE scores are required.
  - Institute code: R5248
  - Department code (GRE/TOEFL): 94
  - English Proficiency requirements: https://grad.gatech.edu/english-proficiency
    - The department does not accept Duolingo test scores as a proof of English proficiency.
- An essay describing your career goals and preparation for the program
- Three letters of recommendation from people in the field, your former employers or teachers who can vouch for your interest in the field and capabilities to do graduate level work.

10. What about the online program?
The same program is available in online format, with reduced tuition costs. The online program tends to attract more experienced professionals who go through the program part time and often are working full time. Unfortunately, due to the different tuition rates, students cannot cross over between the online and campus programs. That is, campus students cannot take online MS-CSEC courses and vice-versa. The online program admits students in the Spring semester as well as in Fall semester.

11. When do classes start?
For every semester you can find all important dates regarding when classes start, when you can sign up for classes, and other important dates with the link below:
https://registrar.gatech.edu/calendar

12. When will application decisions be released?
March 1st for the Fall semester.

13. Is it possible to pair two master's programs and study them concurrently as a dual degree?
No, not at this time.

14. Can I choose two tracks or concentrations?
This program does not offer multiple concentrations. You can change your concentration to another track, however, by submitting an explanation and application.