Hi there. I am glad that you are interested in our MS&E department. Here I would like to answer some most frequent questions regarding our department and the Ph.D. life here.

**Q:** What is MS&E department about?

**A:** MS&E is a large department which consists of 8 areas that vary across very mathematical subjects like operations research, probability and stochastic systems to very managerial topics like strategy and policies or entrepreneurship. The problems we work on usually come from industrial world. We do not make real products, instead, we study how to use scientific methods to make our society work more efficiently.

**Q:** How many people are there in the Ph.D. program? Where are they usually from?

**A:** For the Ph.D. program, we enroll about 20 people per year, with numbers varying a lot across different areas every year. In more technical areas, we see most people from China, India, Iran and Turkey, while there are some students from the States in the other areas.

**Q:** How long does one expect to graduate?

**A:** Usually 5 years. Some students graduate in 4 years and very few students graduate more than 6 years.
Q: How does the qualification exam work?

A: The qualification exam takes different forms and takes place at different times for each different area. Some of them are written tests while the others are oral tests or writing essays. In general, the qualification exam is not very competitive, all of the students are expected to pass the exam. Yet you need to prepare it to handle it well.

Q: What are the course requirements?

A: You need to take about 54 units course for graduation, that is about 18 courses. Each area has a list of required courses as well as elective courses. You should find most of the courses easy with few exceptions.

Q: How does the funding work in the department?

A: Ph.D. students are guaranteed to have fundings. The source could be either fellowship, TA or RA. You should know what type of funding you get before you come. If it is an RA, the department will assign you a position before each quarter starts. You can also find funding outside the department, but it is generally not necessary to do so.

Q: When should I start finding advisors? When do I need to confirm your advisor? Is it hard to find an advisor?

A: Usually students will confirm their advisors in their second year, after their qualification exams. But it is better to get to know some professors earlier, at least get some ideas on who you might be interested in working with. It’s better to talk to your potential advisors as long as you are interested. There are few cases where students have difficulty in finding advisors, but as long as you start to prepare it early, it shouldn’t be a problem.

Q: Could I choose an advisor from other department, e.g., from the business school?
A: Yes. You can choose advisors from any department. But they may not pay you, which means you still need to do TA or RA jobs within the department. Furthermore, you need to have an MS&E advisor to co-advice you, in addition to the advisor you chose.

Q: What are the typical placement after graduation?

A: It varies. Many people choose to stay in academia while others choose to go to industry. For those who stay in academia, business school, industrial engineering department are the most common place to go. For those who go to industry, financial institutions (including investment banking, hedge fund), IT companies, consulting companies or operations department in industrial companies are the most typical places to go.