FAQ for Graduate Students Applying to the Professional Master’s in Mineral Exploration Program

1) Pay attention to deadlines.

There are several deadlines that must be met for your application to be given full consideration. These deadlines are by far the most important thing to keep in mind when applying to Mines. Deadlines: https://www.mines.edu/graduate-admissions/deadlines/

2) What materials are necessary?
   a. Application fee
      i. There is a non-refundable application fee of either 70 (USD) or 95 (USD) depending on when you submit your application.
      ii. For more info, please see: https://www.mines.edu/graduate-admissions/fall-deadlines/
   b. Transcripts
      Transcripts are the best indicator of your ability to succeed academically. You must submit all transcripts from all previously attended institutions so the department’s admissions committee can view your academic history and how your education has advanced.
   c. Resume/CV
      i. Your resume should contain a comprehensive list of your education, and professional experience.
         Important Note: Special trainings, publications, projects, internships, etc. should be included in your resume. Certificates (athletic, special trainings, internships etc.), published papers, etc. should not be submitted with your application packet.
      ii. Make sure you update your resume. A current resume gives a prospective advisor a good understanding of what work you have engaged in and how long an exposure you have had to the minerals industry.
      iii. Just like for any job application, a good resume or CV can communicate a large amount of information to the powers that be. Please ensure the info is truthful and representative of you as a professional. Your resume
needs to communicate your level of experience. You can elaborate on experience in your statement of goals. Your resume and experience are not the sole decision factors the admissions committees consider, but experience is weighted heavily as a deciding factor.

d. Statement of Goals
   i. The statement of goals is typically one to two pages in length.
   ii. The purpose of the statement of goals is to introduce yourself to the Graduate Admissions Review Committee. Your essay should cover the basics. Who are you? What is your background? In the statement, you should address professional and personal goals, as well as why Colorado School of Mines would be the best place to achieve those goals. Why are you applying to Mines? What is your passion for geology? Why have you decided to leave your career and go back to school? What are you hoping to gain out of this program? Where do your ambitions lie? Why do you feel as though you will succeed? What are some professional challenges you have overcome to get where you are today? The application essay is to give the Admissions committee a clear view of who you are and why you are applying to the Professional Master’s in Mineral Exploration program at Mines. Please make sure to explain your level of experience.

e. Three Letters of Recommendation
   i. Who should write a letter for you?
      1. Letters from past professors and employers are preferred. Anyone who directly supervised the applicants work and can attest to your professional or academic profile is best. Please do not have family members or personal references write letters of recommendation for your application. Family members usually cannot speak to your professional caliber in an unbiased manner.
      2. We never accept letters of recommendation directly from the applicant. Letters must be submitted by your professional reference to the Mines Graduate School. The letters will be forwarded to the department after you have completed and submitted your application.

f. More info about the application process can be found here: https://www.mines.edu/graduate-admissions/faq/

3) What proficiency tests should I take?
   a. The department only accepts the GRE test.
      i. The GRE test is offered both on computer and in hand written versions. It covers quantitative reasoning, analytical writing, verbal reasoning, and
research sections. The test is aimed at evaluating all disciplines and is used as a tool to evaluate many types of students applying for master’s graduate degrees.

b. What scores are needed?
   i. There is no minimum score that qualifies an applicant for acceptance. The applicant will need to demonstrate proficiency in Math, Verbal, and Writing sections of the GRE. The proficiency exams become more important the longer an applicant has been out of school. It is recommended that you take the exams sooner rather than later. The material may be increasingly difficult to recollect as time passes. The Admissions Committee will take the GRE into account when evaluating the application as a whole.

c. What level of English is required to apply? (for international applicants)
   i. The department accepts and TOEFL or IELTS scores.
   
   ii. Mines applicants must be able to pass either the TOEFL or IELTS exam to prove proficiency in English. This basic level of English proficiency ensures that a communication barrier does not exist between professors, staff, and students. It is important for students at Mines to have a firm grasp on the English language to ensure academic success. All classes are taught in English. A minimum level of communication skill in English is essential to transfer ideas and complete assignments at Mines.

d. Where can I take these exams?
   i. It is important to note that some countries do not (or seldom) administer proficiency exams. If an applicant cannot find a testing location near or inside their home country, special arrangements are possible to satisfy the requirements. Any special arrangements must be approved by the department. Contact the program director for details.
      1. An applicant may provide credible references or letters of reference that confirm his/her understanding of material covered in the GRE.
      2. TOEFL or IELTS must be taken before admission is granted. There are no exceptions for this requirement.

e. How do applicants prepare for the exams?
   i. There are many online and classroom based prep courses that can be helpful to applicants. However, there is no program or service that Mines offers to prepare a student for the TOEFL, IELTS, and GRE. If a student chooses to enroll in preparatory course, they must do so at their own expense.
4) Are there resources to help assist in the application process?
   a. The graduate School's website https://www.mines.edu/graduate-admissions/application-process/ contains an abundance of information in addition to this FAQ. Please visit the link to get a better idea of what the application process requires from an administrative perspective.
   b. International Student and Scholar Services provides a wide range of information for international students https://www.mines.edu/isss/.

5) What should I expect to invest financially?
   a. There is a link to the estimated costs of attendance on the graduate school's web page for international, out-of-state, and in-state students (https://www.mines.edu/graduate-admissions/costs/). This link has some other helpful information regarding financing your education and estimating your cost of attendance. Estimates should be viewed as minimum cost of attendance and should be evaluated as such. Although Golden is a small city, cost of living is fairly high compared to other parts of the country. We encourage you to do your own research on what your expected costs of living will be.
   b. The school will not typically provide funding for incoming students in the Professional Master’s in Mineral Exploration program. It is the applicant’s responsibility to secure funding for tuition, room and board, meals and recreation for the duration of the program. The sources of funding can vary, but usually come from either personal capital, student loans, scholarships, or tuition can be employer funded.
      i. If the student’s tuition is funded by an employer, it is an agreement between student and employer that does not involve Mines. Hence, if the employer rescinds funding it will be the student’s responsibility provide funds through different means to finish the program.
      ii. Fellowships, scholarships, and grants are an excellent way to fund your education. The links below provide information on some opportunities available to students in the program.
         Link for possible grants: https://finaid.mines.edu/grants/
         Fellowships by the Society of Economic Geologists:
         http://www.segweb.org/SEG/Students/Graduate_Student_Fellowship_Program/SEG_Students/Graduate_Student_Fellowship_Program.aspx
         Scholarships by the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration:
         http://www.smenet.org/students/grants-scholarships

6) About the Professional Master’s in Mineral Exploration program
   a. What level industry experience is expected of incoming students?
      i. The program is designed to bolster your industry knowledge and education. This non-thesis, master degree program is designed for
working professionals who want to increase their knowledge and skills, while gaining a thorough up-date of advances across the spectrum of economic geology, mineral exploration techniques, and mining geosciences.

ii. Candidates for the Professional Master Degree must possess an appropriate geosciences undergraduate degree or its equivalent. See below for detail.

b. How long does the Professional Master’s program take to complete and graduate?
   i. Please note that admission to the program is competitive. Preference will be given to applicants with a minimum of two years of industrial or equivalent experience.
   
   ii. Admission to the program is generally restricted to individuals holding a four-year undergraduate degree in earth sciences. Candidates for the degree of Professional Master in Mineral Exploration must have completed the following or equivalent subjects, for which credit toward the advanced degree will not be granted. These are general geology, structural geology, field geology, mineralogy, petrology, chemistry (2 semesters), mathematics (2 semesters of calculus), physics (1 semester), and an additional science course other than geology.
   
   iii. The program requires a minimum of 30 credit hours. A minimum of 15 credit hours must be accumulated in five of the following core areas: mineral deposits, mineral exploration, applied geophysics, applied geochemistry, applied structural geology, petrology, field geology, and economic evaluation. An additional 15 credit hours may be selected from the course offerings of the Department of Geology and Geological Engineering and allied departments including Mining Engineering, Economics and Business, Geophysics, Chemistry and Geochemistry, Metallurgy and Materials Science, and Environmental Sciences.
   
   iv. The program is self-paced and be completed while the student work’s part time. The Professional Master program is designed to be completed in 2 semesters with a full course load. Selection of courses will be undertaken in consultation with the academic advisor. Up to 9 credit hours may be at the 400-level. All other credits towards the degree must be 500-level or above. A maximum of 9 credit hours may be independent study focusing on a topic relevant to the mineral exploration and mining industries.

7) Info on the location
   a. Colorado
      i. Colorado is a high altitude arid state that goes through all four seasons. There are many outdoor recreational activities including hiking, mountain
biking, skiing nearby. The weather is variable but we enjoy, on average, 300 sunny days a year. It is cold in the winter months and we often see large snowstorms each year. We suggest that you visit the campus to ensure that you will be comfortable in this type of climate.

b. Golden
   i. The city of Golden is located on the Front Range at the base of the Rocky Mountains. This is an ideal terrain to study geology. There are many good examples of concepts you will learn through your course of study right in our back yard! Field trips are taken frequently in many classes. And courses take full advantage of our proximity to a variety of geological environments.
   ii. Golden is a 20-minute drive from downtown Denver. Many students live in Denver and the surrounding areas and commute to Golden. There is bus and light rail transit that can transport students between Denver and Golden. Students can purchase a transit pass to take full advantage of transportation services.

c. Please visit: https://www.mines.edu/graduate-admissions/visit/ to plan your visit to campus accordingly.
d.