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Summary of a Student's Progression Through the Program

1. Coursework and other activities are planned with the CIS chair and/or other faculty advisors.

2. Students should develop a program of study geared toward passing exams and preparing for a dissertation proposal.

3. By the end of the third year, all four area examinations should be completed.

4. The student chooses a committee chair and works with him/her to select other committee members.

5. The proposal is defended. Student shall respond to members’ suggestions. If the dissertation research project involves human subjects, the CIS chair will not sign off until he/she has received written notification of approval by the human subjects committee.

6. Dissertation research is completed, thesis is written and defense is scheduled.

1.0 ADVISORS

1.1 The Communication and Information Sciences (CIS) Chair will serve as an advisor to all new students.

1.2 The student is encouraged to seek additional guidance from CIS faculty members about planning a program of study and planning a program of research and teaching experiences.
1.3 In developing a study plan for a particular exam, the student should meet, in a timely fashion, with the professors who are responsible for the exam's content.

1.4 When the student begins to focus on a proposal topic, the student should identify a chair for the dissertation committee. The chair of the dissertation committee must be on the “regular” CIS graduate faculty (who are among the faculty members of the four programs constituting the program – Communications, Information & Computer Sciences, Information Technology Management, and Library and Information Science). The student should receive guidance from his/her chair about:

1. Selecting committee members

2. Developing a dissertation topic and writing a proposal

3. Conducting the dissertation research and writing the dissertation

4. Other issues related to the student's academic program

**2.0 PROGRAM OF STUDY**

2.1 The student is expected to spend two to three years, depending on the student's background: a) obtaining comprehensive mastery of the methods and substance in the field of communication and information sciences; and (b) developing the ability to productively synthesize diverse data, theories, and methods. Meeting these goals is the first requirement of the program.

2.2 CIS faculty members will help in the selection of appropriate activities (coursework, independent study, research and teaching apprenticeships, etc.).

2.3 The student must take CIS 701, 702, and 703 in a timely manner and must have at least a B in each of these courses. CIS 720 must be taken each semester while in the program.

2.4 Beyond the course requirements in 2.3, there is no minimum number of credits required to demonstrate mastery and ability. The student and the student's advisors must work out a suitable program which may include non-course activities and/or formal coursework.

2.5 This phase of the doctoral program is completed when the student has passed the four area examinations.

**3.0 AREA EXAMINATIONS**

3.1 There are four area examinations required: two primary areas and two secondary areas of study. These area examinations will be given once each semester.
3.2. The students sign up for specific exams during the first two sessions of the CIS seminar. Students who sign up for specific exams are committed to take them unless they send a written request to withdraw from the exam three weeks prior to the first scheduled exam for the semester.

3.3 Students must attempt at least one exam in their first year. The students must pass at least two exams by the end of the second year (total). By the end of their third year, students should complete any remaining examinations.

3.4 Progress of the students in completing exams should be monitored by the CIS chair and the Executive Board. Students may be warned in writing if they are failing to make sufficient progress. The CIS Executive Board may drop students from the program if they do not complete the exams in a timely manner.

3.5 The area examinations shall be written by a committee consisting of at least three people, with department representation according to original documents of the CIS Program and subsequent amendments by the board. Each committee shall be appointed by the area coordinator and the CIS chair. The area coordinator shall be appointed by the CIS chair. If there are unfilled positions, the chair will ask the program/department chair for assistance in finding qualified examiners.

3.5 Content of the exams is at the discretion of the exam committee members. Generally they reflect topics covered in suggested courses and texts and articles suggested by the course instructors, area coordinators, and exam committee members.

3.6 The secondary area examination shall be at least 3 hours and the primary area examination (comprised of the secondary and primary parts) at least 6 hours and no more than 8 hours. Secondary exams will test students’ general knowledge of the specified area of study. Primary exams will additionally test students’ ability to conceptualize and evaluate research in the specified area of study.

3.7 Each area examination committee shall provide students with information to help them study for the area examinations. At minimum, students should receive a reading list.

3.8 The area examination committees shall decide whether or not the student has passed the area examination. In case of deadlock, the exam coordinator will seek guidance from the CIS Chair.

3.9 The area comprehensive examinations will be closed book unless area coordinators, with one month's notice, designate it otherwise.

3.10 It is always best to take the regular examinations offered by the CIS Program. However, in exceptional circumstances, students can petition the CIS Board for a special secondary area examination other than those usually offered. The special area should (1) be a rigorous academic area, (2) be a generic as opposed to application area, (3) involve
faculty other than CIS faculty, (4) not cover material covered in other examinations, and (5) follow the policies used in regular examination areas.

3.11 Students will inform the CIS Chair about intent to take an exam/exams by the second CIS 720 seminar session each semester. During the same session, if a student has failed an exam twice and wishes to take it again, he/she must petition the CIS Chair in writing to retake the exam. The decision of whether a student may retake an exam will be made in consultation with the area exam committee. Any disagreement between the chair and the area exam committee will be resolved by the CIS Executive Board.

3.12 Exam results will be given to the CIS Chair as soon as possible. The CIS Chair officially notifies the student of exam results. (Unofficially, the exam coordinator can inform student once results are known).

4.0 PREPARATION AND DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

4.1 Students should begin to look for active research programs that fit their backgrounds and interests, and initiate contact with the professors doing the research. Although the proposal cannot be defended prior to passing all four area exams, the students are encouraged to work toward that goal while studying for the exams. Although we recommend that the students get involved as early as possible in research projects, a CIS student must pass all four written exams to demonstrate sufficient interdisciplinary background before defending their proposal. After a successful proposal defense, the CIS students are then classified as “All-But-Dissertation” (ABD).

4.2 A formal requirement of the program is that the student prepares an extensive dissertation proposal, and defends it at an open meeting. Most proposals contain (a) an introduction to the problem being studied, (b) a review of the relevant literature (including related relevant literature from other fields) and (c) a description of the methodology to be used. If a pilot study or other preliminary investigations have been conducted, these should also be reported. In most cases, the proposal will correspond to the first three chapters of the dissertation.

4.3 Students should start work on a proposal while still taking CIS 701, 702, and 703. The proposal defense should be completed by the end of four years. This period can be extended by petition to the CIS Board.

4.4 The proposal must be reviewed and formally accepted at a proposal defense by a dissertation committee consisting of at least five members including a non-CIS member of the UHM graduate faculty (as an “outside” member). The majority of the dissertation committee must be selected from the CIS graduate faculty (www.hawaii.edu/cis/faculty.php), with at least one inside committee member from outside the dissertation Chair’s program/department. Both “cooperating” and “affiliate” CIS graduate faculty are eligible to serve on the CIS dissertation committees as “inside” members, although they are not eligible to chair the dissertation committees. For the
Graduate Division’s policies, visit [www.hawaii.edu/graduate/thesdiss/html/committee.htm](http://www.hawaii.edu/graduate/thesdiss/html/committee.htm). Other faculty members and students are encouraged to attend and participate in the proposal defense. The student must take the following steps in defending the proposal. At least two weeks in advance:

4.4.1 If the dissertation research project involves human subjects, student must obtain prior approval from the human subjects’ committee.

4.4.2 Student must submit names of proposed committee members to the CIS chair at least two weeks before the defense; he/she will check with the Graduate Department about CIS faculty status and graduate faculty status.

4.4.3 Student must schedule a proposal defense meeting with the dissertation committee and the CIS Chair and arrange a room. The student must complete “Doctorate – Student Progress Form II” (available at [www.hawaii.edu/graduate/download/forms/doctoral/DPForm2.pdf](http://www.hawaii.edu/graduate/download/forms/doctoral/DPForm2.pdf)) and give it to the dissertation committee chair prior to the scheduled defense.

4.4.4 Student must distribute an announcement of the defense and copies of an abstract of the proposal by email to all CIS faculty members and students. The announcement must specify the time and place of the defense and specify that CIS faculty and students are invited to attend.

4.4.5 The student must provide each member of the dissertation committee and the CIS Chair with a reading copy of the proposal. Students are encouraged to have received feedback from each committee member and revised the proposal accordingly, so that the proposal copy to be defended reflects at least one round of informed revision.

4.5 If the dissertation committee doubts if the student is prepared to undertake dissertation research, the committee can orally examine the student at the proposal defense meeting. If the committee finds the student ill prepared, the committee can require that additional courses be taken, additional books read, or even that the student not be allowed to proceed with the dissertation.

4.6 The dissertation committee must decide whether:

1. The proposal as written is accepted.

2. The proposal with modifications is accepted.

3. The proposal is not accepted.

4.7 If a proposal is not accepted, the student may submit another proposal.
4.8 The dissertation committee signs Form II if approval is given. The chair will withhold his/her signature until receiving the human subjects’ authorization. A copy of the authorization will then be submitted with the signed Form II to the Graduate Division.

5.0 THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

5.1 The student has successfully completed the comprehensive exam and advanced to dissertation stage (ABD) when:

   1. The student has passed the four area examinations.

   2. The student's dissertation committee has orally examined the student and believes the student is ready to proceed with the dissertation research.

   3. The student's dissertation committee has accepted a dissertation proposal.

5.2 The dissertation committee should sign the Student Progress Form II when all of the above have been successfully completed.

5.3 The UHM Graduate Division allows the oral defense to be attempted only twice.

6.0 DISSERTATION RESEARCH AND THE FINAL ORAL EXAM

6.1 The final formal requirement of the program is that the student research, write and defend a dissertation.

6.2 The student should work closely with the dissertation committee chair and other committee members while doing the dissertation research and writing the dissertation. The student should consult, as necessary, with other members of the dissertation committee and keep them advised on the dissertation's progress. Students are encouraged to seek feedback from each committee member on an ongoing basis and revise the dissertation, so that the dissertation copy to be defended reflects at least one round of informed revision.

6.3 The dissertation must be reviewed and formally accepted by the dissertation committee.

6.4 The final oral exam is open to all interested faculty members and students. They are encouraged to attend. They may participate in the examination, but they do not have a vote.

6.5 The student must take the following steps in preparation for the final oral examination. At least two weeks in advance the student must:

   1. Schedule the final oral examination with the dissertation committee, fill out necessary forms including “Doctorate – Student Progress Form III” (available at
www.hawaii.edu/graduate/download/forms/doctoral/DPForm3.pdf) and give them to the dissertation committee chair prior to the scheduled defense, and meet all appropriate Graduate Division guidelines including the official announcement.

2. Distribute an announcement, abstract of the dissertation, and an invitation to attend to all CIS faculty members and students at least two weeks before.

3. Provide each member of the dissertation committee and the CIS chair with a reading copy of the dissertation.

6.6 The reading copies should be in the format required by the Graduate Division.

6.7 The dissertation committee must decide (as recorded on the Student Progress Form III) whether:

1. The student has successfully defended the dissertation

2. The dissertation’s content is acceptable.

3. The dissertation is accepted subject to modifications.

4. The dissertation is not accepted.

6.8 If a dissertation is not accepted, the student may submit another dissertation.

6.9 If the dissertation is accepted, the student will provide the program with a copy of the complete thesis after all of the changes and corrections have been made. This copy shall become the property of the program and will be made available to all interested students and members of the faculty.