

# Communication and Information Sciences Ph.D. Program Policies & Procedures

Effective January 1, 2012

*These policies and procedures are effective for students admitted fall 2011 onwards. Students admitted prior to fall 2011 are governed by the August 2010 version for program requirements, but should follow the administrative procedures outlined in this document for scheduling of proposal and final defenses.*

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### 1.0 Summary of Program of Study

This section outlines the major milestones and deadlines of the Communication and Information Sciences (CIS) Ph.D. program, most of which detailed in later sections. 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; (b) developing the ability to productively synthesize diverse data, theories, and methods; and (c) demonstrating the ability to conduct research. The student then focuses on proposing and conducting original research in his or her area, and writing and defending a dissertation on that research.

1.1 The following are the major requirements and milestones of the CIS program.

1. Enroll in and meet the requirements of CIS 720 each and every semester while in the program.
2. Pass CIS 701, 702, and 703 with at least a B in each of these courses.
3. Pass at least one approved research methods or data analysis course (in addition to CIS703) with a grade of B or better. A list of approved courses will be posted on the CIS website; and additional courses will be considered by petition.
4. Pass one primary area examination and two secondary area examinations, as outlined in section 3.0 Area Examinations.
5. Publish or obtain approval of a research paper under the guidance of a research mentor with CIS 699 enrollment, as outlined in section 4.0 Research Paper.
6. Choose a dissertation committee chair and work with that chair to select other committee members and write the proposal.
7. Pass the proposal defense, as outlined in section 5.0 Preparation and Defense of Dissertation Proposal.

8. Pass the dissertation defense and turn in the final revised dissertation with signatures, as outlined in section 6.0 Dissertation Research and the Final Oral Examination.

1.2 The following deadlines are detailed later in this document:

1. By the end of the first year, each student must attempt at least one area examination
2. By the end of the second year, each student must pass at least two area examinations and submit a research paper for publication or for review by a faculty committee.
3. By the end of the third year, each student must pass all three area examinations and have a research paper accepted for publication or approved by a faculty review committee.
4. By the end of the fourth year, each student must complete the proposal defense (which requires passing the additional research methods or data analysis course).
5. By the end of the seventh year, each student must successfully defend the dissertation and submit it to Graduate Division.

## **2.0 Advisors**

This section summarizes the various advisory relationships between faculty and students that are recognized by the program.

- 2.1 (Initial Advisor) The Communication and Information Sciences (CIS) Chair will serve as both academic advisor and research mentor to all new students during the first year until a research mentor is agreed upon. Subsequently, the CIS Chair will remain available to all students for advising on program requirements.
- 2.2 (Research Mentor) By the beginning of the second year, each student will choose a faculty research mentor from among the regular, cooperating or affiliate CIS faculty. If the student has no preference or the faculty member declines, the CIS Chair will assign a faculty research mentor. The faculty research mentor is specifically responsible for helping the student develop a research area of interest and prepare a research paper as specified in section 4. The student may change research mentors at any time, with the agreement of the new mentor. The mentor may or may not become the dissertation chair, subject to 2.4.
- 2.3 (Other Advisors) In developing a study plan for a particular area examination, the student should attend the informational meetings held by professors who are responsible for the examination's content, and seek their advice concerning which courses to take in preparation for the examination. The student is encouraged to seek additional guidance from other CIS faculty members about planning a program of study and planning a program of research and teaching experiences.
- 2.4 (Dissertation Chair and Committee) 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 dissertation 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.

2.5 (Executive Board) The CIS Executive Board consists of the chairs of the four CIS programs or their designees and the CIS Program Chair. In addition to specific functions outlined in this document, the CIS Executive Board serves to resolve questions concerning CIS program policies and procedures, and must also approve requests for exceptions to Graduate Division policy.

### **3.0 Area Examinations**

3.1 Each student is required to pass three area examinations: one primary examination and two secondary examinations.

3.2 (Areas) The examinations shall be chosen from the areas currently offered by the CIS program and documented on the CIS website. In exceptional circumstances, students can petition the CIS Executive 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 area of study as opposed to an 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.

3.3 (Scheduling) Area examinations will be scheduled once each semester, based on student requests and subject to faculty availability. Students will inform the CIS Chair about intent to take an examination or multiple examinations in any given semester by the announced deadline at the beginning of the semester. This notification shall indicate how the exam area requirements have been met. Such notification is binding and results in a failure if the student does not attend the examination session unless the student sends a written request to withdraw from the examination three weeks prior to scheduled examination date.

3.4 (Retakes) If a student has failed an examination twice and wishes to take it again, he/she must petition the CIS Executive Board in writing (via the CIS Chair) to retake the examination.

3.5 (Committees) The area examinations shall be written by a committee consisting of at least three faculty members, with department representation according to original documents of the CIS Program and subsequent amendments by the Executive Board. The area coordinator and the CIS Chair shall appoint each committee. The CIS Chair shall appoint the area coordinator. If there are unfilled positions, the CIS Chair will ask the program/department chair for assistance in finding qualified examiners.

3.6 (Content) Content of the examinations is at the discretion of the examination committee members. Generally they reflect topics covered in suggested courses and texts and articles suggested by the course instructors, area coordinators, and

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examination committee members. Secondary examinations will test students' general knowledge at a level sufficient to teach a course in the specified area of study.

Primary examinations include the area secondary examination and an additional portion that tests students' ability to conceptualize, plan 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 shall receive a reading list.
- 3.8 (Format) Each secondary area examination shall be 3 hours in duration. Each primary area examination shall be 6 hours in duration, and include a 3-hour secondary portion and a 3-hour primary portion with a lunch break between them. At the discretion of the exam committees, students may fulfill the primary requirement by passing the secondary portion of the exam, then passing the primary portion in a subsequent semester.
- 3.9 The area examinations will be closed book unless area coordinators, with one month's notice, designate it otherwise.
- 3.10 (Outcomes) The area examination committees shall decide whether or not the student has passed the area examination. For secondary examinations, the possible outcomes include either passing or failing. For primary examinations, three possible outcomes include passing the entire examination, passing only the secondary portion, or failing. A fourth outcome, "incomplete", is obtained when the student passes the primary portion but not the secondary portion. In the case of an incomplete, the examination committee may, at its discretion, allow the student to finish the primary examination by passing the secondary portion in the future or require the student to retake both portions. In case of deadlock, the examination coordinator will seek guidance from the CIS Chair, who may elect either to render a decision or to refer the matter to the CIS Executive Board.
- 3.11 Examination results will be given to the CIS Chair, who will officially notify the student of examination results. (Unofficially, the examination coordinator can inform students once results are known.)
- 3.12 (Deadlines) Each student must attempt at least one examination in his or her first year in the CIS program. Each student must pass at least two examinations by the end of his or her second year in the program. Each student must complete all required area examinations by the end of his or her third year in the program.
- 3.13 Progress of the students in completing examinations will be monitored by the CIS Chair and reported to the Executive Board. Students will 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 examinations in a timely manner.

## **4.0 Research Paper**

- 4.1 Students are required to prepare at least one research paper of publishable quality, and either publish that paper or obtain a positive assessment as outlined in 4.5, below.

- 4.2 The research paper will be first-authored by the student and based on research led and conducted primarily by the student. Co-authorship by others is permissible under prevalent academic standards.
- 4.3 The research paper must be based primarily on work undertaken under the guidance of a CIS faculty member. The student is required to enroll in at least one credit of CIS 699 with that faculty member for the purpose of undertaking this work.
- 4.4 Although the student is encouraged to approach the research paper as a pilot for the students' dissertation research, the student may elect to change topics for the proposed dissertation research.
- 4.5 "Publishable" shall preferably be evidenced by publication in a peer-reviewed conference or journal recognized by a research community that is relevant to the paper topic. As a general guideline, students should submit papers to journals and conference proceedings covered in scholarly databases such as ABI/INFORM, Academic Search Premier, ACM Digital Library (including the ACM Guide to Computing Literature subset), Communication Abstracts, IEEE Computer Society Digital Library, Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts, or Web of Science. Open access journals meeting all criteria in this section are also acceptable venues for publication. The student shall submit the paper, the reviews, evidence of acceptance, and supporting documentation on the reputation and acceptance rates of the publication venue to the CIS Chair for review and approval or denial by the CIS Executive Board. If a suitable publication venue has a lengthy editorial review process that would delay the student's progress, or if the paper is not accepted for publication, the paper, evidence of submission and other supporting documentation may be submitted to the CIS Chair by the CIS faculty member guiding the student's research. The CIS Chair will supervise review of the paper by three CIS faculty (regular, cooperating or affiliated) and make a recommendation to the CIS Executive Board concerning whether the paper is of publishable quality. One external reviewer with expertise relevant to the paper topic may also be substituted for one CIS faculty reviewer, at the discretion of the CIS Chair.
- 4.6 The student shall submit a paper under either process outlined in 4.5 by the end of the second year in the program. The student shall have a research paper accepted under either process outlined in 4.5 by the end of the third year in the program.

## **5.0 Preparation and Defense of Dissertation Proposal**

- 5.1 (Preview) Students should begin to look for active research programs that fit their backgrounds and interests in their first year, and initiate contact with the professors doing the research. Although the proposal cannot be defended prior to passing all area examinations, an approved methods course and submitting the research paper, students are encouraged to work toward that goal by getting involved in research while studying for the examinations. After a successful proposal defense, a student is classified as "all but dissertation" (ABD).
- 5.2 (Proposal Document) A formal requirement of the program is that the student prepares a 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 literature from other fields) and (c) a description of the methodology to be used. In most cases, these chapters of the proposal will correspond to the first three chapters of the dissertation. If a pilot study or other preliminary investigations have been conducted, these should also be reported.

5.3 (Proposal Defense Prerequisites and Deadlines) Defense scheduling is subject to these requirements:

1. Students must finish CIS 701, 702, and 703, the required research methods or data analysis course, the area examinations, and the research paper before defending the proposal.
2. The student must complete “Doctorate – Pre-Candidacy Progress (Form I)” providing documentation that the requirements of 5.3.1 have been met. The completed form is submitted to the CIS Program Office.
3. The proposal defense must be completed by the end of four years.
4. This period can be extended by petition to the CIS Executive Board (via the CIS Chair), but extension is subject to a seven-year limit as stated in section 6.0 Dissertation Research and the Final Oral Examination.

5.4 (Dissertation Committee) 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 the University Representative. The majority of the dissertation committee must be selected from the CIS graduate faculty (as listed on the CIS program website), 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. The University Representative must be a regular member of the graduate faculty (as defined by the Graduate Division) and not inside the CIS program (regular, cooperating or affiliated). The Graduate Division’s policies are detailed on its website.

5.5 (Scheduling the Proposal Defense) The student must *complete* the following steps least two weeks in advance of defending the proposal:

1. The student must obtain approval of the proposed committee from the CIS Chair, and from the CIS Executive Board via the Chair, before scheduling the defense. The student must submit the proposal title and abstract, a draft of the proposal including references, the proposed committee, and a justification of the appropriateness of each committee member to the CIS Chair by three weeks before the proposal defense to allow time for this process..
2. The student must schedule a proposal defense meeting at a time that the dissertation committee and the CIS Chair can attend, and arrange a room. The student must complete “Doctorate – Advance to Candidacy (Form II)” (available at on the Graduate Division website under “Forms”) and give it to the dissertation committee chair prior to the scheduled defense.
3. The student must distribute an announcement of the proposal defense that includes the title and 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. 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.
- 5.6 (Proposal Defense/Comprehensive Examination) The student will present the proposal and the committee will orally examine the student at the proposal defense meeting in compliance with Graduate Division requirements for the Comprehensive Exam. The dissertation committee must decide whether:
  - The proposal as written is accepted.
  - The proposal with modifications is accepted.
  - The proposal is not accepted.
- 5.7 (ABD) If the proposal is accepted, the dissertation committee signs Form II. If the dissertation research project involves human subjects, the student must obtain approval from the University IRB (Committee on Human Studies), with revisions to procedures as specified in the proposal defense. The signed Form II and a copy of the human subject authorization is then forwarded to the Graduate Division, indicating that the student has successfully completed the Graduate Division requirement for a comprehensive examination and has advanced to all but dissertation stage (ABD)
- 5.8 If a proposal is not accepted, the committee can require additional courses or readings, or even that the student not be allowed to proceed with the proposed dissertation topic. The student may submit another proposal.

## **6.0 Dissertation Research and the Final Oral Examination**

- 6.1 The final formal requirement of the program is that the student research and write a dissertation that is reviewed and accepted by the dissertation committee, defended by the student in a final oral examination, and submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Division, as described in this section.
- 6.2 (Involvement of Committee) The student should work closely with the dissertation committee chair and other committee members while doing the dissertation research and writing the dissertation, and keep them advised of the dissertation's progress. Students are encouraged to seek feedback from each committee member on an ongoing basis and revise the dissertation accordingly so that the dissertation copy to be defended reflects at least one round of informed revision.
- 6.3 (Scheduling the Final Defense) Scheduling of the final oral examination requires submission of the following information to the CIS Chair at least 21 days in advance of the intended examination date (to allow for resolving issues in time to meet the university requirement for a public announcement 14 days in advance):
  1. The intended date and time of the defense.
  2. The intended room, which has been reserved. (The room should be reserved for at least 2.5 hours to allow sufficient time for follow-up discussion.)

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3. The title and abstract to be used for the announcement.
4. For *each* dissertation committee member (see 6.5),
  - a. Written confirmation that the member can attend the specified date and time, except when remote participation or proxy has been approved, in which case the student shall attach appropriate approval forms;
  - b. A written indication of whether or not that member believes that there is reasonable evidence that the research will be ready for defense by the specified date;
  - c. Optionally and independently of the judgment in (b), written comments concerning work that the committee member recommends be done before the defense for the research to be acceptable; and
  - d. The signature of the committee member.

Committee members may send 6.3.4(a-c) to the CIS Chair via email, with courtesy copy to the student and the dissertation chair.

6.4 Each committee member has the right to require a *draft* of the dissertation one week before approving scheduling of the formal defense. A committee member may opt to waive this right if that member already has sufficient evidence of defense readiness from prior communications with the student (see 6.2).

6.5 A majority of the committee must indicate that the research will be ready for the formal defense before the defense is scheduled. This majority must include the dissertation chair. Assent to schedule the defense does not constitute a promise that the student will pass.

6.6 At least 14 days in advance of the oral examination, the student shall complete all of the following:

1. Meet all appropriate CIS and Graduate Division guidelines for the defense, including the official announcement in the University Calendar.
2. Distribute an announcement, abstract of the dissertation, and an invitation to attend to all CIS faculty members and students via the CIS faculty and student email lists. (Faculty may elect to do this on behalf of the student, but it is the students' responsibility to ensure that the announcement is made.)
3. Provide each member of the dissertation committee and the CIS Chair with a reading copy of the dissertation. The reading copies shall be in the format required by the Graduate Division.
4. Make an electronic copy of the dissertation available for access by the public. (The preferred method is to provide a URL at which the most recent draft may be downloaded in PDF. The URL will be posted on the CIS web site and in announcements.)

6.7 The student should complete "Doctorate – Dissertation Evaluation (Form III)" (available on the Graduate Division website) and bring it to the scheduled defense.

6.8 The final oral examination is open to all interested faculty members and students. They are encouraged to attend. The student's presentation shall not extend beyond one hour from the scheduled start time. Subsequently, all who attend shall be offered

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the opportunity to question the candidate during the public portion of the defense. However, only committee members participate in determining the outcome. The committee shall have the opportunity to discuss the defense in private (without the public or student present) immediately after the public event has ended and before signatures are requested.

- 6.9 After the oral examination is complete, the dissertation committee members should sign Form III only when they are ready to indicate one of the following two outcomes:
  1. A “pass” if
    - a. the dissertation research is adequate, and
    - b. the student has successfully defended the dissertation research, and
    - c. the dissertation document is accepted, possibly subject to specified modifications.
  2. A “fail” if one of the above conditions is not met.
- 6.10 Committee members should not sign “Doctorate – Dissertation Submission (Form IV)” until they believe that any necessary modifications (from 6.9.1.c) are adequately completed. The student is responsible for providing each committee member with the evidence they require.
- 6.11 If the dissertation is accepted, the student shall 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.
- 6.12 If a dissertation is not accepted, the student may submit another dissertation.
- 6.13 The CIS program will not recommend that the Graduate Division grant an extension beyond the seventh year to students who have not defended a proposal. A one-time exception for extenuating circumstances requires written appeal to the CIS Executive Board via the CIS Chair, but approval of this appeal by CIS does not guarantee approval by the Graduate Division.