

**Department of Computer Science**  
**University of Houston**  
**Rules and Regulations of Ph.D. Program in Computer Science**  
**(Revised 08/06/2012)**

**1. Program Requirements**

- 1.1. A student must complete a minimum of 72 credit hours subject to the following restrictions:
  - a) At least 36 credits of approved, regular, or special topics (XX97) courses. At most nine of these hours may be outside the Department with the approval of the student's research advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.
  - b) At least 6 but not more than 12 credits of dissertation (8X99).
- 1.2. Satisfactory completion of the core requirement.
- 1.3. Obtain a research advisor.
- 1.4. Satisfactory performance on the preliminary examination.
- 1.5. Maintenance of satisfactory progress.
- 1.6. Publication of doctoral research.
- 1.7. Preparation of a written dissertation and satisfactory defense thereof.

**2. Time Limitations**

Program requirements have certain strict time limitations. The time limitation period begins as soon as the student has 18 or more hours of credits applicable to a graduate degree (M.S. or Ph.D.) in Computer Science. These include transferred credits as well as credits earned at UH. The time limitations apply to M.S. students who later decide to continue in the Ph.D. program as well as to Ph.D. students.

**3. Core Requirements**

A student satisfies the core requirements by taking a set of four or more courses from the three lists below with a GPA of 3.4 or better and no grade less than B. At least one course must be from the Theory list and one from the Systems list. The Director of Graduate Studies may in exceptional cases waive at most one of the four courses based on similar courses taken at another university.

**3.1. Theory**

Data Structures and Algorithms (COSC 6320)  
Numerical Analysis (COSC 6364)  
Theory of Computation (COSC 6369)

**3.2. Systems**

Database Systems (COSC 6340)  
Computer Architecture (COSC 6385)  
Languages and Compilers (COSC 6361)  
Operating Systems (COSC 6360)

**3.3. Computational Science**

Machine Learning (COSC 6342)  
Bioinformatics (COSC 6371)  
Digital Image Processing (COSC 6380)

Full-time students must complete the core requirement in at most 2 long semesters after the time limitation period begins. Part-time students (six hours or less every semester) must complete the core requirement in at most 4 long semesters after the time limitation period begins. Failure to complete the core requirement with the required GPA within the time limitation normally results in an M.S. student not being allowed to continue into the Ph.D. program and a Ph.D. student being removed from the Ph.D. program.

#### **4. Research Advisor**

Students are urged to find a research advisor as early as possible. Full-time and part-time students should have a research advisor by the end of the second long semester after completing the core requirement. As part of the process of finding a research advisor, all Ph.D. students are required to take/attend the Graduate Colloquium course, COSC 6110, no later than the first Fall semester after completing the core requirement. Students may register for doctoral research if they have an advisor and have completed the core requirement.

#### **5. Preliminary Examination**

A student must pass a preliminary examination administered by the student's dissertation committee. The dissertation committee consists of the student's **research advisor** and at least **four** other members. At least one member of the committee must be from outside the department and the majority of the members must be voting faculty of the Computer Science Department. The examination is open to the public. The purpose of the examination is to determine the fitness of the student for Ph.D. level research. The exact content of the examination is at the discretion of the dissertation committee. All faculty members in attendance as well as the committee members may ask the student questions. The committee may have a closed session with the student at the end of the examination. The committee will submit a written report to the Director of Graduate Studies concerning the student's performance on the preliminary examination and assign an overall evaluation of satisfactory or unsatisfactory. A student who passes the preliminary examination is classified as a Ph.D. candidate. Full-time and part-time students must take the preliminary examination no later than the end of the third long semester after completing the core requirement.

#### **6. Maintenance of Satisfactory Progress**

The Director of Graduate Studies will review a student's progress at the end of every long semester after completing the core requirement subject to the following rules:

- 6.1. If a student does not have a research advisor by the end of the second long semester after completing the core requirement and any subsequent semester, then the student is automatically classified as not making satisfactory progress.
- 6.2. If the student has not taken the preliminary examination and received a satisfactory evaluation from the dissertation committee by the end of the third long semester after completing the core requirement and any subsequent semester, then the student is automatically classified as not making satisfactory progress.
- 6.3. If a student has not attended the required number of department seminars, then the student is automatically classified as not making satisfactory progress.

- 6.4. At the end of each semester that the student has a research advisor, the advisor must give the Director of Graduate Studies a written report concerning the student's progress and specify whether the student is or is not making satisfactory progress.

A student who is evaluated as not making satisfactory progress on two consecutive reviews is normally removed from the Ph.D. program.

A decision to remove a student from the Ph.D. program for failure to successfully complete the core requirement within the time limitation or for two consecutive unsatisfactory reviews will be brought to the entire faculty for a vote.

#### **7. Dissertation Defense**

A candidate will be required to present his/her dissertation in a public defense. The dissertation committee decides the acceptability of the dissertation. Candidates are expected to publish results of their dissertation research prior to the dissertation defense.

#### **8. University Academic Regulations and Degree Requirements**

Students must satisfy all the university academic regulations and degree requirements for a Ph.D. degree. See the Academic Regulations and Degree Requirements section of the online graduate catalog at [http://www.uh.edu/grad\\_catalog/](http://www.uh.edu/grad_catalog/).

