Qualifying Exam/PhD Proposal

Advisory Committee

Each candidate, with the advice of the PhD advisor, needs to establish an advisory committee (usually following the successful completion of the preliminary exam).

In accordance with the University requirements, the committee consists of 4-6 members nominated and approved by the CIS Department faculty. The committee chair is the candidate's PhD advisor in charge of the candidate's research and dissertation and must be a member of the CIS faculty. The candidate may have a co-advisor who must be a UD faculty, possibly from another department. A co-advisor is a member of the advisory committee. At least two members represent the area of proposed research. The committee must also include at least one member of the CIS faculty working outside the main area of the proposed research. At least one member must be from outside the CIS Department.

The proposed advisory committee must be submitted to the Graduate Committee for approval, using the PhD Committee Approval Request form. On the back of the form or on a separate piece of paper the candidate must write, for each committee member, a 1-2 sentence explanation stating his/her main position and credentials and why you choose this particular faculty member to be on your committee. This short explanation should be provided for each committee member.

The completed form must be submitted at least **3 weeks prior to the planned date of your Proposal Presentation (AKA the Qualifying Exam, see more below)**.

The form must then be approved by the CIS faculty (all tenure-track faculty whose primary appointment is in the CIS Department or who have a joint appointment in CIS, but not including continuing track faculty, research faculty, affiliated faculty, visiting faculty, secondary faculty, or adjunct faculty).

Qualifying Examination

Each candidate must pass a qualifying exam. The exam typically takes a total of about 2 hours. The advisory committee prepares an examination (oral and/or written) testing a candidate's knowledge in the area of proposed research. Part of the examination includes an oral presentation (45-50 minutes) of the candidate's proposed dissertation research. A student passes the qualifying exam as long as there is no more than one negative vote.

Prior to taking the qualifying exam, candidates must submit a dissertation proposal and a written plan describing their background and research interests. The proposal and plan are submitted to the advisory committee at least **3 weeks prior to the planned date of your Proposal Presentation,** and are considered as input to the qualifying examination. Copies of "Discussion on PhD Thesis Proposals in Computing Science" are available in the CIS Department Office.

The qualifying exam is normally taken one year after passing the preliminary exam. During this year a student should actively investigate research possibilities and select a dissertation topic.