

Graduate Student Progress Guidelines

This documents describes what is expected of graduate students in the School of Computing in terms of making satisfactory progress through their degree programs.

PhD Program:

Milestone	Good Progress	Acceptable Progress	Comments
Choose advisor and <i>initial committee</i>	2 semesters	2 semesters	
Program of study approved by advisor and initial committee	2 semesters	3 semesters	
Complete required courses	3 semesters	5 semesters	Program requirement: 5 semesters
Full committee formed	4 semesters	5 semesters	
Program of study approved by committee	4 semesters	5 semesters	University requirement: one semester before defense
Written qualifier	5 semesters	6 semesters	University requirement: one semester before defense
Oral qualifier (proposal)	5 semesters	7 semesters	University requirement: after written qual. and one semester before defense
Dissertation defense	9 semesters	12 semesters	
Final document			University requirement: within 3 months of defense

MS Program:

Milestone	Good Progress	Acceptable Progress	Comments
Choose advisor	1 semesters	2 semesters	
Full committee formed	2 semesters	3 semesters	
Program of study	2 semesters	3 semesters	
Complete required courses	3 semesters	3 semesters	Program requirement: 3 semesters
Defend proposal	3 semesters	4 semesters	University requirement: one semester before defense
Thesis defense	4 semesters	5 semesters	
Final document			University requirement: within 3 months of defense

Terminology:

Initial committee— This consists of two University of Utah faculty members and an advisor, who must meet the School of Computing requirements for advising. The initial committee is different from the *full committee*, who will ultimately administer the qualifier and evaluate the dissertation. The full committee must be chosen to conform to program requirements. The initial committee is automatically dissolved when the student forms a full committee.

Semesters— Semesters are counted from the date admitted to the program, not counting leaves of absence or summers.

Good vs acceptable progress— Students completing milestones within the time frame denoted as “good” are generally considered to be in good standing in the program. Students completing milestones within the time frame denoted as “acceptable” are considered to be making acceptable progress in the program and are encouraged to continue on and attempt to meet successive milestones within the time frames denoted as “good.” Such students may or may not be considered in good standing, depending upon evaluation of the director of graduate studies (DGS) with input from their advisor and advisory committee. Students not completing milestones within the time frame denoted as “acceptable” are not considered in good standing. The DGS can make exceptions to this guideline with input from the advisor and advisory committee.

Director of Graduate Studies— References to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) may include include only the DGS or the DGS in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee.

Monitoring of Progress

Annual meetings and reports:

Each year the student will prepare a one-page summary of their progress and submit it to the advisory committee in preparation for a meeting that includes the student and advisory committee. The advisory committee will meet with the student and hear a presentation from the student and engage the student in a discussion about their progress in the program. A “meeting” in this context is some form of interactive communication between the student and the committee. The important aspect of this meeting is that the student and the committee be able to ask questions of one another and respond to those questions. In this document *advisory committee* refers to either the initial committee or full committee, depending on which committee is active during that particular part of the program.

The advisor will prepare a short report (approved by the advisory committee), which includes a checklist of milestones (using a form provided by the School). This report will comment on any milestone that is not met within the time frame denoted as “good.” In the event that students have unmet milestones that have passed the “acceptable” time frame (as indicated in the guidelines), the advisory committee can either request an exception to keep the student in good standing (and justify the exception) or recommend that the student not

be considered in good standing. The advisory committee will also give an overall evaluation of the student's progress as acceptable, unacceptable, or borderline and make recommendations of what (if any) actions should be taken by the student and the department.

Actions by the DGS and the School:

In the event that a student is found not to be in good standing (a decision made by the DGS based on reports from the advisory committee) one or more actions may be taken. For example, the School may assign the DGS to counsel the student, deny opportunities to serve as departmentally funded TA, discontinue tuition waiver benefits, or remove the student from the program. In the event that a faculty member fails to meet with advisory committees and report on their students, the DGS may elect to disallow this faculty to advise new students.