

Information for Computer Science Ph.D. Students

Last revised: 01.17.2023

This document describes detailed regulations, procedures, and forms for the Ph.D. degree in Computer Science. For **Degree Requirements**, please refer to the [Graduate Catalog](#) for the up-to-date requirements.

First Semester

- You should discuss your curriculum plan with your advisor, and fill in the **Ph.D. curriculum planning form** (available at the CS Department website, at http://www.memphis.edu/cs/pdfs/forms_grad_phd_planning.pdf). Your advisor will determine:
 - Whether you have an approved master's degree
 - How many credit hours you can transfer (not applicable to those who have an approved master's degree)
 - Information about qualifying exam: whether certain courses can be waived, if not, you need to enter the semester you expect the course to be taken. A core course may be waived if you have taken a similar course at the graduate level and passed with at least B. Please show your transcript, course catalog and course syllabus to your advisor and the graduate coordinator as a proof.
- The form needs to be signed by your advisor, the graduate coordinator, and the Department chair. It will be kept at the department office.
- After your planning form is approved by your advisor, the graduate coordinator and the Department chair, do the following if applicable:
 - if it includes an Approved Master's Degree from a university other than UofM, you must submit the Transfer Credit Evaluation (Doctoral Program) form, found here: https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/forms/doctoral_transfer_credit.pdf. In the form, for the *Transfer Course Title*, put "Transfer master's degree from [university name] for a total of [number of approved credits] credits". Leave the *Transfer Course Number* and *U of M Equiv. Course* fields blank. The CS Graduate Coordinator must approve this form.
 - if it includes credit transfers, you need to submit the doctoral transfer credit form: https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/forms/doctoral_transfer_credit.pdf.

Each Semester

- Take the required and elective courses until you reach the number of credits required by the PhD degree.
- Make continuous progress on your research, publishing high-quality peer-reviewed papers, and exploring and developing the ideas that will lead to your dissertation topic.

Qualifying Examination

- Satisfactory completion of the core requirement is deemed as passing the qualifying examination. Students with an approved master's degree may satisfy a core course requirement by taking the final exam of the core course and obtaining a passing mark as equivalent to obtaining a B or better grade in the course (note that the credits for the core courses will not count toward the PhD degree if a student has an approved master's degree, as they are at the 7000 level). A maximum of two attempts are allowed for each core course, and they must be made within the first 39 credits hours of entering the program (24 for students with an approved master's degree).
- After completing the qualifying exam requirements, you need to pick up the **Ph.D. curriculum planning form** from the department office and have all the information verified by your advisor.

Forming a Dissertation Committee

- **Once you settle on** a dissertation topic (which should be at most 2 years after you entered the program – 1 year if you have a master's degree), you will need to set up a dissertation committee. The committee must have a minimum of 4 members including your dissertation advisor (one of the members can be from a department other than Computer Science). Your advisor should guide you in the choice of the members, and he/she has to approve the choice.
- Once the committee has been formed, you need to fill in a **Thesis/Dissertation Faculty Committee Form** (http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/forms/td_committee_form.pdf). Have the form signed by your committee members, the graduate coordinator and the department chair.
- If you need to change the committee membership, you need to fill in a separate Thesis/Dissertation Faculty Committee Form.
- **Form your committee at least one semester before your comprehensive exam (see below).**

Comprehensive Examination (Dissertation Proposal Defense)

- You should have written a dissertation proposal before you can take the comprehensive examination.
- Two weeks before the examination, you should have your copy of the proposal approved by your advisor and sent to all members of the committee for review.
- The exam includes an oral presentation of your dissertation proposal, together with any additional questions that the committee deems necessary to be answered.
- On the day of the exam, you need to bring the following forms to the examination:
 - **Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Defense Form**
(<http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/forms/tdproposal.pdf>)
 - **Comprehensive Examination Results Form**
(<http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/forms/compexamresults.pdf>) Remember to select "Both Oral and Written Exam" for the Type of Exam administered.

Post Comprehensive Exam

- Once you pass your comprehensive exam, register in COMP9000 (dissertation) continuously until you pass your dissertation.

At the Beginning of the Semester You Plan to Graduate

- See this webpage for the Graduate School instructions and deadlines:
https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/graduation.php
- You will need to do two key things right away:
 - **Apply to Graduate.** This is done in the <https://my.memphis.edu> portal.
 - Submit a **Doctoral Degree Candidacy Form**. The online form is found here:
https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/graduation.php. The form must be signed by your advisor, the graduate coordinator, and the department chair.

Dissertation Defense

- You should be aware of the formatting requirement of your dissertation. Please refer to the **Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Guide** at the Graduate School website (https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/td-guide.php) for details.
- **Two weeks** before the examination, you should have a completed version of the dissertation approved by your advisor and sent to the committee members.
- You need to bring the **Thesis/Dissertation Defense Results Form** (http://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/pdfs/forms/td_defense.pdf) to your defense.
- Notice that the deadline for defending the dissertation if you want to graduate in a particular semester is typically 4 weeks before the last day of classes. Please refer to the Graduate School website at https://www.memphis.edu/gradschool/current_students/graduation.php for exact dates.