Department of Informatics Dissertation Proposal

Dissertation Proposal

The goals of the Dissertation proposal defense are for the student to demonstrate that he or she has a research direction likely to lead to a successful dissertation, and for the Research Committee and academic community to identify issues and provide guidance. Below are the steps a student must take to be admitted to candidacy:

1. After qualifying examinations, a student must form a research committee based on the University Graduate School guidelines.
2. Submit a written proposal, usually 10-20 pages, and provide it to the student's research committee with sufficient time to go over it before the below-mentioned colloquium (usually at least a few weeks).
3. The proposal should have (1) a clear problem statement, (2) a literature review surveying what others have done in the area, identifying the shortcomings and potential research opportunities in the research area, (3) a direction of research that addresses the issues raised and is of suitable scope for a dissertation, (4), a skeleton of what the dissertation will be, and (5) a proposed timeline/work plan through the intended completion date. The timeline can and will change, but the committee will look for an appropriate scope (neither too large nor too small) and a realistic plan.
4. If the committee accepts the written proposal, a public oral presentation (Dissertation Colloquium) will be scheduled.
5. The public colloquium will be scheduled for a 1 hour time slot, which includes a 45 minute presentation with question and answer time.
6. Immediately following the public colloquium, the student and research committee will meet to discuss the approval or disapproval of the dissertation proposal.

Students are encouraged to remain in regular contact with their research committee members after the proposal defense. If they are not in regular contact in the course of their research, it is recommended (but not required) that you schedule meetings at least once a year for progress reports and feedback. Meeting plans should be discussed with the research committee chair.

Students should remain in especially close contact with the research committee chair while preparing the dissertation, getting feedback on incremental progress and asking questions whenever they are unsure of what is expected.