Dept. of Computer Science and Software Engineering Guidelines for Ph.D. Students

The following is a timeline of study progress suggested to you by the Departmental Graduate Advisory Committee, based on various existing deadlines applicable for your advancement through the program.

CRITICAL EVENTS

1. **Advisory Committee:**
This committee needs be formed for each Ph.D. student during the first two weeks of the first term of study. The committee should consist of the supervisor(s), two faculty members in the department, and one faculty member from outside the department. The committee is to be approved by the Graduate Program Director (GPD) on behalf of the Graduate Advisory Committee.
The committee has to create a reading list consisting of research papers, sections of handbooks, advanced textbooks, etc. that the student needs to work through no later than until the end of the second term in the program. The reading list should generally be related to the intended research area of students but may also include breadth topics. This reading list needs to be created until the end of the third week of the first term in the program.

2. **Coursework:**
The coursework required of a Ph.D. student (normally 3 graduate courses without undergraduate equivalent) should be completed within the first year and consists of courses approved by the advisory committee/supervisor.

3. **Comprehensive Exam (ENCS 8501):**
Each Ph.D. student must prepare and complete the comprehensive exam preferably at the end of the first term but no later than at the end of the second term in the program. The comprehensive examination has to be based on topics from the reading list. The comprehensive examination of students consists of two mandatory parts:
   i. Preparation of a written research report (at least 20 pages) based on the assigned reading list.
   ii. Oral or written examination about the assigned reading list and the submitted report.
The committee decides whether part ii of the comprehensive examination will be oral or written. The committee will either conduct an oral examination or

prepare questions for a written examination. These examinations have to take place at the end of the students' first or second term.

The grade for the examination would be Pass/Fail. There is no fixed percentage to pass but a clear pass would be above 75%. The committee will then recommend the Pass/Fail grade for ENCS 8501 by email to the GPD. A student who fails the examination the first time is permitted to repeat the examination at the end of the next term. Students failing a second time are withdrawn from the program. For more information, please contact the Graduate Advisor in the CSE department (halina@cse.concordia.ca).

4.   **Thesis Proposal:**
After passing the comprehensive exam, a student is required to prepare and present a thesis proposal to be defended before his/her Advisory Committee within 18 months of entry to the program. This proposal should give clear evidence of knowledge of the research topic and understanding of the research problems proposed. An indication of the research methodology should also be presented. Successful students will be officially admitted into (Ph.D.) *candidacy*.

5.   **Ph.D. Seminar: (ENCS 8011)**
Normally after about 9 months of their admission to candidacy, Ph.D. students are required to register in this course and report their research progress. This course is scheduled and coordinated by the GPD. All students enrolled in this course are required to be present in these seminars. The advisory committee of a student who is presenting his/her seminar will also be present for the seminar. The seminar requirement thus includes (i) presenting a seminar on research progress made since thesis proposal and (ii) attending other Ph.D. seminars held during this period, which spans over Fall and Winter. This is a good opportunity for the student to get a critical feedback from the committee members and other PhD students. The supervisor(s) discusses the student's progress with the advisory committee and recommend their Pass/Fail decision to the GPD.

6.   **Annual Review:**
A student is evaluated by his/her supervisor every year (usually in May). Unsatisfactory progress, in coursework, exams and research may result in an unsatisfactory report. A student may be withdrawn from the program with unsatisfactory progress for two consecutive years, upon recommendation of the supervisory committee.

7. **Thesis Defense:**

A thesis examination committee should be formed, under recommendation of the supervisor, before a thesis is submitted. Typically, the examination committee includes members of the Advisory Committee and a member from outside Concordia as the External examiner. The committee must be endorsed by the GPD and approved by the Faculty Graduate Advisory Committee. Adequate time must be given for appointment of the external examiner and evaluation of the thesis, including the written reports from all examiners before the defense can be held. It is advisable to at least allow 8 weeks from the time of submission to the time of defense.

Note: All references of time duration in the above are for full-time students. Refer to the Graduate Calendar for other details.