

Department of Informatics  
PhD Program in ICS/INF – GEN and UBIQ tracks  
**Written Assessment and Advancement to Candidacy  
Policies and Procedures**

### **Written Assessment**

One of the requirements for the PhD program in ICS/INF for the GEN and UBIQ tracks is the Written Assessment. The Written Assessment consists of a journal-quality research paper written by the student and submitted to a committee of 3 Informatics faculties, including the student's adviser, who must approve it prior to the student's Advancement to Candidacy Exam. In order to ensure predictability and fairness of the process, the following procedure is to be observed, starting in the Summer'08 quarter.

If the student aims at taking the oral Advancement to Candidacy Exam in quarter Q, the student must submit the research paper to the committee no later than Friday 5pm of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of that quarter. At that time, the student may *unofficially* schedule a tentative date for the Advancement to Candidacy Exam with the committee. This date should be on or after the 8<sup>th</sup> week of that quarter. The committee will send the first round of reviews of the paper back to the student no later than Friday 5pm of the 5<sup>th</sup> week of that quarter. The student then has 1 week to incorporate the feedback into the paper; the second version of the paper must be sent back to the committee no later than Friday 5pm of the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the quarter. The committee will decide the outcome during the following week, and the student will know the result by Friday 5pm of the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the quarter. If the paper is approved, the student can then proceed to *officially* schedule the Advancement to Candidacy Exam for the end of quarter Q, or for the following quarter.

Exceptions to the timings in this procedure are allowed only with the explicit consent of everyone involved.

If the student fails the Written Assessment, he/she will not be allowed to take the Advancement to Candidacy Exam. Instead, the student will be given a second chance at the Written Assessment in a future quarter, not to exceed 1 year from the time the first Written Assessment was tried. Upon a first 'Fail' result, the committee will advise the student on the best course of action. This advice may include a suggestion for whether or not to continue with the current adviser. If the student fails the second attempt of the Written Assessment, the student will be disqualified from the PhD program.

### **Reading List**

Doctoral students are expected to read extensively. Readings should include both highly technical literature and literature that places the field of study in a

broader perspective. Reading is not an activity that happens for any specific milestone of the program, but an activity that the students must learn to integrate in their daily routine from the moment they start the program. Papers read in specific courses count, but aren't sufficient. By the time of advancement to candidacy, students are expected to have read hundreds of papers/books related to information technology in general and to their specific research interests. It is strongly advised that the students start and maintain an annotated bibliography (e.g. using bibtex or other similar tool) to organize their readings, which they can then use for citations as they write papers.

The reading plan should be done in collaboration with the student's advisor as well as with other members of the faculty. For the UBIQ track, there is a fixed minimum reading list for all students. For the GEN track, this minimum list does not exist.

At the time the student turns in his/her research paper (3<sup>rd</sup> week), he/she must also turn in his/her comprehensive reading list. The committee will assess the fitness of this list in the context of the student's research interests, and may assign further readings to the student. The additional readings will be disclosed to the student no later than the first round of reviews (5<sup>th</sup> week).

### **Advancement to Candidacy**

The Advancement to Candidacy Exam is an oral exam that takes approximately 90 minutes, and where the student is evaluated on his/her ability to present research, defend arguments, and react to questions. The exam consists of a 40-minute presentation by the student about his/her research project, as described in the research paper, followed by questions from the committee members. The committee will question the student on several aspects of his/her research work, as well as on more general issues within, and even beyond, the student's reading list.