Satisfactory Academic Progress

Each graduate student is responsible for planning and carrying out a program of study that continually meets with the approval of the Department. Students should meet with a member of the Graduate Advising Committee (GAC) every semester, usually during the registration period, to get approval for the plan for the following semester. The record of approvals and future plans is maintained in a file that is available at any time for the student to inspect. Any exceptions to rules that have been granted to the student are also recorded in this file. A student who wants to drop or add a course during the semester should get the change approved by a member of GAC.

The rules enforced by the Department for satisfactory progress are distinct from the rules used by the Graduate School. The student must satisfy both sets of rules. We will concentrate here primarily on the rules of the Department.

I. Definitions

1. *Full-load and Part-load*
   Part-load students don't have to take as many credits during a semester as full-load students. (The specific rule is discussed below.) All students are considered to be full-load students unless they have been granted part-load status by GAC. Part-load status is granted semester by semester to students who have full-time jobs or non-academic duties or substantial family responsibilities. Such students should apply in writing to GAC at the beginning of each semester for which they want part-load status. They will be notified in writing whether their request has been approved.

   Full-load status is distinct from full-time status as determined by the Graduate School for residence credit. Because of Graduate School rules, students often need to take 9 instead of 6 credits during a semester. The combined effect of the various rules is this:

   Part-load dissertators take 1 credit. Part-load students and dissertators take 3 credits. Full-load students who are TAs, PAs, or unsupported by the Department take at least 6 credits. Research assistants and fellows take at least 9 credits.

   It is essential for foreign students and students receiving V.A. benefits to be full-load students. Foreign students should check with the Graduate School and the Office for Foreign Students to ensure that they are satisfying residence, visa, and other requirements.

2. *Regular Semester*
   In the following requirements, *regular semester* denotes either fall or spring semester of an academic year; it does not include summer session.

3. *Approved Courses*
   Approved courses are courses that have been approved by GAC as appropriate for a student's studies. For students who have neither obtained a Master's degree in Computer Science nor passed the qualifying process, GAC usually approves only courses leading toward the Master's degree.

   Courses are approved only if they fall into one of the following categories:

   (a) Department courses numbered 400 or above.

   (b) Courses from other departments that GAC considers to be an important part of the student's program. These courses will usually be numbered 400 or above.

   (c) CS 302, 352, 354, and 367, and Math 221, 222, and 223, provided that the student has been admitted with deficiencies being removed by taking these courses.

(d) All University of Wisconsin-Madison CS courses numbered 400 and above (and courses cross-listed with such CS courses) taken by a student (and not applied to any other degree) before being admitted as a degree candidate are automatically counted toward our Master's program as approved courses.

4. *Satisfactory Completion of Courses*
   Courses taken for credit and passed with letter grades A, AB, B, BC, C, S, and P are satisfactorily completed. These criteria determine satisfactory completion for the Department. The Graduate School has its own rules, and they should be consulted if any question arises.

5. *Examinations*
   The terms *qualifying examination process, preliminary examination* and *final oral examination* designate the procedures and/or examinations of those names supervised by the Department of Computer Sciences. The requirements for the Ph.D. include time limits for their completion.

II. Satisfactory Academic Progress Criteria

A graduate student in Computer Sciences shall be considered to have made satisfactory academic progress (SAP) at the end of any regular semester only if, at the end of the semester, the following conditions are all satisfied:

1. (a) Before achieving dissertator status: the student has satisfactorily completed at least six (if full load) or three (if part load) credits of approved courses during the semester.
   (b) After achieving dissertator status: the student has satisfactorily completed at least three (if full load) or one (if part-load) credits of courses approved by the student's major professor.

2. The student has removed all incomplete grades from any previous regular semester or summer session.

3. The student has passed any required exams and procedures within designated time limits.

III. Dismissal

Any graduate student who fails to make SAP during two consecutive regular semesters (fall and spring, or spring and fall) will be dismissed from the Department at the end of the subsequent summer session. Any student who fails to make SAP because of criterion 3 will be dismissed from the Department at the end of the subsequent summer session.

IV. Financial Support

To be eligible for financial support from sources controlled by the Computer Sciences Department a student must be making SAP in the Department.

V. Appeal Procedure

Any graduate student may appeal any aspect of the SAP rules, provided that the appeal is made in a timely way. In particular, appealing a decision that a student did not make SAP must be initiated not later than the end of the fourth week of the subsequent regular semester.

To appeal, the student should write a letter to the Chair of GAC stating the basis for the appeal. This letter should explain clearly the reasons for the appeal, and should be accompanied by appropriate documents such as a medical certificate if the appeal is on the grounds of ill health or such as a supporting letter from a Computer Sciences faculty member if the appeal concerns an unusual combination of courses. It will often be useful for the student to discuss the problem with a member of GAC or with the student's personal faculty advisor before putting the appeal into writing.

GAC will consider every such written appeal and will notify the student of its decision at the earliest opportunity, normally within four working weeks. A student who is not satisfied with the

decision by GAC may submit a further appeal in writing to the Chair of the Department. The Chair will place the appeal on the agenda of a regular faculty meeting, will circulate the letter of appeal and accompanying documentation, and will give the student written notification of the meeting. The meeting will be scheduled at the earliest opportunity, normally within four working weeks after receipt of the letter to the Chair. The student and any of the student's advisors may attend the meeting to present the appeal, provided that the Chair of the Department is advised in writing before the start of the meeting. In accordance with Wisconsin law, the meeting will begin in open session, but the Chair will move that the meeting convene in closed session before the appeal is considered.