Instructions for Advancement to Candidacy
Ph.D. in Statistical Science
William F. Rosenberger, Program Director

1. After the student passes the Qualifying Exams, he/she should begin the process of finding a dissertation advisor and a suitable topic. Students should remember that professors are under no obligation to accept students. The dissertation advisor must be a regular graduate faculty member in the Department of Statistics.

2. In consultation with the dissertation advisor (or committee chair), the student should complete a Plan of Studies Form available from the Program Director. This form indicates the 8 courses that the student will be examined on in the Comprehensive Exam, and indicates the composition of the Doctoral Studies Committee and the general area of the dissertation topic.

3. The Doctoral Studies Committee consists of at least 3 members of the graduate faculty in the Department of Statistics and an external member who works in the area of the dissertation.

4. Typically students will take STAT 998 credits in preparation for the Comprehensive Exams. Students can take a maximum of 11 998 credits. Students are also required to take 1 credit of STAT 990 offered every fall and spring, which will count toward the 24 required research credits.

5. Once the 8 courses have been completed and the Doctoral Studies Committee and Program Director have signed off on the Plan of Studies Form, students should apply to take the first comprehensive exam, which is a 1 hour oral exam. The student should arrange with the Doctoral Studies Committee and Liz Quigley to find a suitable time and room. The application to take the exam is found on the Department’s website. The Ph.D. program coordinator also attends the exam, and can ask questions, but does not sign off on the outcome.

6. After the oral comprehensive is passed, and the student is ready to propose a dissertation topic and has complete the requisite STAT 990 and 998’s, the student may apply online to take the second part of the comprehensive exam.

7. Detailed instructions on the Comprehensive Exam are found in the attached document.

8. Upon advancement to candidacy, the student must complete 12-24 credits of STAT 999, depending on how many STAT 998’s have already been completed. Students are required to have 24 credits of 900 level courses with a minimum of 12 999’s.
Ph.D. Comprehensive Exams in Statistical Science

1. The first exam is an oral comprehensive exam based on the 8 advanced emphasis courses listed on the Plan of Studies. It will be conducted by the Doctoral Studies Committee, and may be taken any time after the courses are completed. The Doctoral Studies Committee will provide the student with the format of the exam, including any particular reading list that should be studied.

2. The student has two chances to pass this exam. If the student fails on the first try, then a second exam should be scheduled no sooner than 2 weeks and no later than 8 weeks from the time of the first exam. If the student fails for the second time, termination from the program will follow immediately.

3. The second exam is the dissertation proposal. Students will present a 45 minute talk followed by questioning from the Doctoral Studies Committee. Each student is required to present a written dissertation proposal to the Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the exam. The written proposal should include a literature review, evidence of completed work, and a list of work that will be completed prior to the defense.

4. The dissertation proposal part of the exam must be scheduled at least 6 weeks after passing the oral comprehensive exam. The student is graded “pass”, “conditional pass”, and “fail”. For a conditional pass, the student must make changes and corrections within two weeks, and these must be approved by the Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committee. If the student fails, a second exam must be scheduled within 6 months. If the student fails for the second time, termination from the program will follow immediately.

Members of the Graduate Faculty
Fall 2016

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