## Important Dates 2020–21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>Graduate courses and seminars begin.</td>
<td>If you have been waitlisted for a course: As students drop from courses, ACORN will pull in students from the waitlist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 10</td>
<td>Cross-listed courses begin.</td>
<td>If you are enrolling in a cross-listed course as a graduate student you must enroll in the grad section of the course CSC###H and not CSC###H1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Registration deadline to avoid late fees.</td>
<td>Late fees are $44.00.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Final date to submit PhD thesis to SGS to avoid fee charges.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>Final date to add Fall courses without an add–drop form.</td>
<td>Add–drop form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>• Final date for the graduate office to submit MSc reader reports to SGS.</td>
<td>• PhD final thesis must be submitted to SGS for inclusion in November Convocation Ceremony.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>Last day to drop Fall courses on ACORN without academic penalty.</td>
<td>After this date you will need to submit an add–drop form.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Last day of classes in Fall term.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 23</td>
<td>First day of winter break.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 4</td>
<td>University re-opens. Graduate courses and seminars and cross-listed courses begin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 15</td>
<td>Final date to submit PhD thesis to SGS to avoid incidental fees.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>Registration deadline for students registering or starting their program in January.</td>
<td>After this date a registration fee will be assessed. Minimum required payment due (unpaid fees from previous sessions + 100% of current winter session tuition fee charges).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>Final date to add Winter courses without an add–drop form.</td>
<td>Add–drop form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td>• Final date for receipt of MSc degree recommendations.</td>
<td>• Final date to submit final doctoral theses to SGS for March graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Payment deadline to avoid service charges on unpaid Winter tuition and non-tuition fees.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 22</td>
<td>Final day to drop winter session courses without academic penalty.</td>
<td>After this date you will need to submit an add–drop form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Last day of classes in Winter term.</td>
<td></td>
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Introduction

The main goal of a successful Ph.D. is not so much a thesis, but rather (and much more importantly), it is to train a researcher and prepare them for further professional development. One aspect of this training is to ensure that they have a broad and deep knowledge of Computer Science. The starting point for this aspect is the completion of the Ph.D. course and breadth requirements. However, course work is, by design, limited to relatively narrow and well-defined assignments, projects, and exams. To be a successful Ph.D. student, a candidate needs a much broader set of skills, including the maturity as a researcher to cope with significantly more uncertainty than is typically seen in course work. Additional skills include the abilities to evaluate the current literature, to select promising directions for future work, and to follow some of those directions through to the nuggets of new contributions. In our experience with our students, we typically see these skills develop slowly, continuing through to their graduation from our Ph.D. program. However, our expectation is that the foundations for these skills should already be in place and evident by the beginning of the second year of Ph.D. studies.

Specific skills to be developed by a Ph.D. candidate include these:

a) The ability to apply the basic tools of the field in potentially new ways, along with the self-understanding of what they know and what they have yet to learn.

b) The ability to select significant research contributions from a larger set of published papers, and justify that selection (for example, on the basis of the significance of the results or the novelty of the approach).

c) The ability to relate the papers to one another, and to other research in the literature.

d) The ability to critique the research methods used in these papers, including the strengths and weaknesses of these methods and likely threats to validity, whether these are acknowledged in the papers or not.

e) The ability to identify limitations of the results (and possibly errors) reported in the papers, along with their implications.

f) The ability to suggest alternative approaches to answering the research questions posed in these papers.

g) The ability to identify and prioritize lines of investigation for further research, based on an understanding of significant limitations of the research described in the papers and/or important open problems that the papers fail to answer, and also on the likelihood of being able to make progress on such issues.

This handbook describes the program requirements for the Ph.D. program in Computer Science. These requirements are meant to ensure that our students receive regular assessment and feedback on their progress toward these goals, and our graduates meet expectations.
**Ph.D. Programs in Computer Science**

The Department of Computer Science has three Ph.D. programs that are appropriate for students with different backgrounds. Students are assigned to one of these Ph.D. programs upon admission. The end result of these programs is the same, namely a Ph.D. in Computer Science.

1. **Ph.D.:** Students who entered the Ph.D. program after having completed their M.Sc. program in our department.
2. **Ph.D.-M:** Students who have completed the M.Sc. degree (or equivalent) in Computer Science elsewhere and have now entered the Ph.D. program.
3. **Ph.D.-Direct:** Students who have completed a B.Sc. and have entered directly into the Ph.D. program. Also denoted as the Ph.D.-U program

As described below, the degree requirements vary across these three programs due to differences in the student’s prior education.

**Ph.D. Course Requirement**

The course requirement covers the minimum number of courses required by a degree program. In order to obtain credit for a course, the student must obtain a mark of B– or higher. Students in the Ph.D. and Ph.D.-M programs are required to complete four graduate half-courses, while students in the Ph.D.-Direct program must complete eight graduate half-courses.

The only exception to this is for students who obtain transfer credit for graduate courses that were completed but never used toward the requirements of another degree, diploma, certificate, or any other qualification (either at UofT or elsewhere), or as a Non-Degree Special Student. Students may transfer up to 1.0 Full Credit Equivalents (maximum two half-credit courses) to their current degree program.

For students who have completed the M.Sc. program in DCS, any graduate half-courses completed beyond the M.Sc. course requirement (i.e., taken while the student is registered as an M.Sc. student in DCS) can be used towards the Ph.D. course requirement.

**Ph.D. Breadth Requirement**

The breadth requirement for the Ph.D. degree program ensures that students complete courses from a sufficiently wide range of topics within Computer Science. The Ph.D. program requires breadth in different research areas of Computer Science.

CS courses are classified on the basis of their content into four methodologies and sixteen research areas. Methodologies are core problem-solving approaches and/or techniques and general tools emphasized in the course material, while research areas are aligned with the activities of the various research groups in the department. The methodologies and research areas are described in the next section below.
The list of courses in each of the four methodologies is available on the DCS website. Courses that are not listed do not qualify for breadth credit, unless this has been approved or is explicitly noted in the course schedule posted by the Graduate Office.

The exact Ph.D. breadth requirement depends on whether the student is in the Ph.D., Ph.D.-M or Ph.D.-Direct program:

- **Ph.D.:** For a Ph.D. student who is following on from an M.Sc. degree in our department, the eight graduate half-courses taken over their M.Sc. and Ph.D. must include courses from at least four different research areas and three methodologies. In this sense, courses taken during the student’s M.Sc. are counted both for achieving methodological breadth and for research area breadth.

- **Ph.D.-M:** Students who completed a master’s degree elsewhere are required to submit a Plan of Study and Breadth Assessment form at the beginning of their first term in order for the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies to assess which breadth credits can be transferred to their Ph.D. program here. Including these breadth credits, these students must complete courses from at least four different research areas.

- **Ph.D.-Direct:** Ph.D. students who are entering the program directly from a bachelor’s degree are required to take a total of eight graduate half-courses. These must include courses from at least four different research areas and three methodologies.

Graduate courses that were completed (either at UofT or elsewhere) may qualify for breadth credits. Students may request an assessment of breadth for courses from other departments or universities by submitting evidence of the course content (e.g., a syllabus or copies of course notes) and the problem-solving approach or technique used in the course (e.g., copies of assignments or exams). Students in this situation should submit a Plan of Study and Breadth Assessment form to the Graduate Office to seek the necessary approvals. However, graduate courses taken in fulfillment of a bachelor degree’s course requirement (even graduate courses from our department) do not count towards the breadth requirements.

**The Four Methodologies**

**Methodology 1: Analysis and Computation in Discrete Models**

The courses in this grouping focus on the analysis of, and algorithms for, discrete mathematical structures, such as graphs, formal logic, and formal models of computation. The grouping includes courses that analyze computational limitations and discrete computation. These courses study and apply techniques from areas such as probability, combinatorics, algebra, mathematical programming, and formal logic.

**Methodology 2: Analysis and Computation in Continuous Models**

The courses in this grouping focus on the analysis of and algorithms for continuous mathematical models. Topics include the derivation of mathematical models, their
properties, and computational techniques for approximating their solution. These courses study and apply techniques from areas such as probability and statistics, computer graphics, computer vision, numerical analysis, and machine learning.

**Methodology 3: Building Software and Hardware Artifacts**

This grouping includes courses that study the design and implementation of specific software or hardware artifacts. These courses expose students to the challenges in building artifacts such as computer-animated movies, computer-aided design systems, databases, network protocols and devices, and simulations of large-scale systems. Courses in this group typically have a significant project component in which students build a substantial software or hardware artifact.

**Methodology 4: Human-Centered and Interdisciplinary Computing**

This grouping includes courses that study computational paradigms and methods within human-computer interaction or scientific domains outside traditional computational sciences. These courses typically have a cross-disciplinary component, involving fields such as the life sciences, linguistics, psychology, social sciences, and economics.

**The 16 Research Areas**

1. Algorithms and Discrete Math
2. Complexity and Cryptography
3. Computational Biology
4. Computational Linguistics
5. Computer Graphics
6. Computer Systems and Networks
7. Computer Vision
8. Database Systems
9. Distributed Computing
10. Human–Computer Interaction
11. Knowledge Representation
12. Machine Learning
13. Scientific Computation and Numerical Analysis
14. Software Engineering
15. Interdisciplinary Computer Science
16. Robotics

**Ph.D. Student Supervision**

Every Ph.D. student will be assigned a supervisor (and possibly a co-supervisor) prior to registration. The supervisor advises on course selection and thesis topic selection, and provides continuing help during the conduct of research. All students are required to consult frequently with their supervisors throughout their graduate studies, to report on their progress, to ask questions, and to obtain advice regarding their research.
To be the primary or sole supervisor of a Ph.D. student, a faculty member must hold full membership in the School of Graduate Studies, with a specific graduate faculty appointment in the Department of Computer Science (i.e., a CS-SGS membership). (With approval from the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, faculty with an emeritus appointment in CS-SGS may also supervise Ph.D. students.) When a Ph.D. student is co-supervised, at least one of the co-supervisors must be identified as the primary supervisor (a.k.a. supervisor of record), and this faculty member must hold a full or emeritus membership in CS-SGS.

Occasionally the student–supervisor match is not productive. Any student who finds themselves in such a situation should discuss difficulties or concerns with their current supervisor. In many cases, the reason is an issue which might be resolved by talking it out. If no resolution can be found, students who feel a need to change their supervisor are welcome to seek advice from the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. However, the ability to switch supervisors depends on the availability of another faculty member to serve in this role. A Supervisory Committee Composition Form must be submitted to seek approval for change of supervision.

An excellent guide for making the most of the relationship between a student and their supervisor is the supervision guidelines provided by SGS. Take note of the checklists for both students and supervisors provided in Appendix 2 of each version of this document. The Department of Computer Science supports the expectations stated in this guide, and we encourage students to discuss these checklists with their supervisor.

**Ph.D. Supervisory Committee**

The purpose of the student’s Ph.D. supervisory committee is both to aid the student by providing timely advice and to evaluate the student’s progress towards a Ph.D. thesis.

By the end of their 16th month of program registration, each Ph.D. student must form a Ph.D. supervisory committee consisting of at least three members, including the supervisor and, if applicable, co-supervisor. Besides the supervisor, and possible co-supervisor, the other committee members must be associate or full members of SGS (although not necessarily in CS-SGS).

In addition, external experts can also serve on a supervisory committee as “advisors” (this term is not synonymous with “supervisor”). Advisors can take part in all the student’s committee meetings with the following exceptions: a) they do not contribute to a quorum, and b) they cannot vote in the student’s Final Oral Examination (FOE), although they are permitted to attend the FOE.

The request for an external expert to serve as an advisor on a Ph.D. committee can be made by e-mail to the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, gradchair@cs.toronto.edu, accompanied by a brief rationale and CV.

Students should notify the Graduate Office of the formation of the Ph.D. supervisory committee, and of any changes to that committee using the Supervisory Committee
Composition form. Changes to the supervisory committee should only be made in consultation with the Grad Office and all changes must be reported immediately.

**Legacy System for Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meetings**

Ph.D. students who enrolled in their program before 1 September 2015 and are maintaining regular meetings with their supervisory committees may continue with the previous Ph.D. checkpoint system. Alternatively, they may opt into the new system for supervisory committee meetings, as described above. However, if a student under the legacy checkpoint system fails to have a committee meeting for 18 months or more, they will be placed into the new system.

Ph.D. students who enrolled in their program before 1 September 2015 will be asked to complete progress monitoring reports prior to each checkpoint. These reports will be reviewed by the student’s supervisory committee. This replaces the previous progress monitoring system.

**Qualifying Oral Exam**

The Qualifying Oral Exam must be held within 16 months of the start of the Ph.D. program. Note that the student must have formed the Ph.D. supervisory committee and have had it approved at least several weeks in advance of this exam.

Working with their supervisor, the student should select 5–10 research papers to be emphasized at the Qualifying Oral. These should be important papers in one research area of relevance to CS. This research area need not correspond to the student’s eventual choice of Ph.D. topic. Students do not have to be committed to a thesis topic prior to this committee meeting. In relation to the selected papers, the student will be examined on the points (a) through (e) listed in the introduction above. It is expected that students will have read and understood more than just the selected papers, but it is not expected that the student master the majority of the relevant literature at the time of this exam.

In order to help focus the initial questioning, the student will prepare a short position paper (no more than about 10 pages, double-spaced, in a reasonable font) on points (c)–(e), as outlined in the introduction to this handbook. If the student has begun to investigate this area themselves, then they are welcome to briefly describe their progress so far. In addition, it is the student’s option to discuss the expected overall scope of the questioning with their supervisory committee prior to the exam.

At the beginning of the Qualifying Oral, the student will be asked to give a 15-minute talk to introduce their position on the research described in the selected papers. This will be followed by one or more rounds of questioning by the supervisory committee. During this questioning, it is critical that the student demonstrate an understanding of CS tools and techniques that are relevant to pursuing research in the area.
The supervisory committee will provide written feedback to the student (through the DCS Graduate Office), and the student will be invited by the Graduate Office to respond to this feedback. In addition, one of the following examination results will be provided:

1. **Pass**: A pass may be accompanied by constructive feedback and/or suggestions for activity in the next term(s).
2. **Conditional Pass**: The student is given one or more concrete tasks to complete by a specific deadline (no more than a year later). The tasks and the deadline are also communicated to the Graduate Office. The chair of the Qualifying Oral must report to the Graduate Office whether or not the student has cleared the conditions by the deadline. If the student fails to clear the conditions by the deadline, then they will be considered to be making unsatisfactory academic progress.
3. **Fail (with the option to repeat)**: The student is considered to not be making satisfactory academic progress, and must retake the exam within 6 months. The student will not be given a third chance to pass the exam.
4. **Fail (no option to repeat)**: The student must either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated. This result is possible only for students who were not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress at the time of the exam. The Associate Chair, Graduate Studies will review such a recommendation.

**Candidacy**

SGS requires that Ph.D. and Ph.D.-M students achieve candidacy within the first 36 months of their program, and Ph.D.-Direct students within the first 48 months.

Achieving candidacy involves:

1. completing all required courses and satisfying the breadth requirement,
2. successfully passing the Qualifying Oral, and
3. having a thesis topic approved at a meeting of the student’s Ph.D. supervisory committee.

**Course and Breadth Requirements Completion**

Students in the Ph.D. and Ph.D.-M programs are required to successfully complete four graduate half-courses, while students in the Ph.D.-Direct program are required to successfully complete eight graduate half-courses. The Ph.D. program requires breadth in four different Research Areas of Computer Science.

**Thesis Topic Approval**

Students should have their thesis topic approved within 12 months of completing their Qualifying Oral (i.e., no later than 28 months after starting their program). Delaying this step until the SGS deadline for candidacy will make it difficult to complete the thesis within the guaranteed funding period.
A thesis topic needs to be sufficiently broad enough to form the basis of the thesis, and it should be plausible that the student will be able to complete a thesis on the topic within two years. A student may still decide to switch thesis topics after achieving candidacy without affecting their candidacy; however, the student will need to clearly describe their new thesis topic to their committee members and have it approved during their next annual review.

To obtain thesis topic approval, the student should submit a written description of their thesis topic to their committee in advance of the meeting. This document should:

1. describe the scope of the proposed research,
2. explain its context with respect to the current literature (see items (a)–(g) in the Introduction), and
3. provide an initial research plan.

**Yearly Progress Review**

Yearly progress reviews are for students who have passed their Qualifying Oral Exam, but are not yet ready for their Departmental Thesis Examination.

**Timing:** Yearly progress reviews must be held at least every 12 months following the successful completion of their Qualifying Oral Exam. If the student is expecting to schedule their Departmental Thesis Examination shortly after this deadline has passed, then they can contact the Graduate Office to request a one-term extension.

**Purpose:** To assess the student’s research progress since the previous committee meeting and to provide feedback on the student’s research plans for the coming year.

**Student preparation:** The student should prepare a progress report to discuss with their committee. If approaching candidacy, the student should be prepared to have their thesis topic approved. As the student approaches the time of their the Departmental Thesis Exam, the student should prepare a **Thesis Proposal** (see below) for approval at the meeting.

**Committee recommendations:** After a yearly progress review, the supervisory committee will provide written feedback to the student (through the Graduate Office) and the student will be invited by the Graduate Office to respond to this feedback. In addition, the following examination results will be provided:

1. **Pass:** A pass may be accompanied by constructive feedback and/or suggestions for activity in the next term(s).
2. **Conditional Pass:** The student is given one or more concrete tasks to complete by a specific deadline (no more than a year later). The tasks and the deadline are also communicated to the Graduate Office. The meeting chair is responsible for reporting to the Graduate Office whether or not the student has cleared the conditions by the deadline. If the student fails to clear the conditions by the deadline, their progress will be considered unsatisfactory.
3. **Fail (with the option to repeat):** The student is not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress and must hold another Ph.D. supervisory committee meeting within 6 months.

4. **Fail (no option to repeat):** The student must either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated. This result is possible only for students who were not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress at the time of the exam. The Associate Chair, Graduate Studies will review such a recommendation.

**Thesis Proposal**

The primary purpose of a **thesis proposal** is approval from the supervisory committee for the overall scope of the eventual thesis. In preparation, the student should submit a written proposal to the supervisory committee that:

a) outlines both the completed and anticipated results of the thesis;

b) demonstrates that a substantial portion of research has been successfully completed; and

c) provides a clear plan for completing the remaining research.

Typically, a thesis proposal is a draft of a substantial portion of the thesis itself, along with a clear description of the remaining work to be completed. The supervisory committee assesses the scope and relevance of the problems the student has to solve in the proposed Ph.D. thesis. The thesis proposal is typically completed 6–12 months prior to the Departmental Thesis Examination.

**Departmental Thesis Examination**

At the Departmental Thesis Examination, the student defends the thesis before their supervisory committee. Outside members of the department are also invited. A draft of the thesis should be available to the committee members three to four weeks in advance of the examination. Each member of the committee is expected to read the thesis in sufficient detail to form a judgement about its acceptability. The committee may approve the thesis as is, or on condition that revisions be made under the supervisor's direction, or require the student to repeat the Departmental Thesis Examination.

**Final Oral Exam at the School of Graduate Studies**

Upon the successful defence of the thesis at the Departmental Thesis Examination, the candidate will be ready to go forward to the Final Oral Examination (FOE). At least ten weeks prior to the proposed date of the examination, the student should notify the Graduate Office of the intention to book a FOE. All forms and instructions are available on the DCS internal web page or from the Graduate Office. Full FOE details and regulations can be found on the SGS website.

It is important to allow yourself and the Graduate Office plenty of time to organize the necessary steps and follow the required procedures in setting up your Ph.D. Final Oral
Examination. The School of Graduate studies is under no obligation to find a FOE chair if a minimum of six weeks’ notice is not provided; without a chair, the exam cannot proceed.

**Graduation**

Following the completion of the Final Oral Exam and the submission of the final thesis, SGS will submit a Recommendation for Degree and the student’s name will be added to the convocation roster.

A graduation package will be sent to the student from the Convocation Office regarding convocation dates, tickets, etc.

**Deadlines**

Students who fail to meet the deadlines for the Qualifying Oral exam, or the Yearly Progress Review will be considered to not be making satisfactory academic progress. Students who anticipate being unable to schedule a committee meeting before the deadline should contact the Graduate Office as soon as possible. See also General Regulations, section 9.0 Graduate Student Supervision; Degree Regulations, section 13.0 Doctoral Degrees; and specific program requirements in the Programs by Graduate Unit section.

Students must notify the Graduate Office of all scheduled committee meetings at least two weeks in advance of the meeting, so that the appropriate forms can be sent to committee members.

**Time Limit to Degree Completion**

There are two program time limits. The departmental time limit refers to the amount of time a student can receive guaranteed funding from the department. SGS time limits refer to the amount of time a student may register in their program.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Departmental guaranteed funding period</th>
<th>SGS time-limit for degree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>43 months</td>
<td>72 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.-M</td>
<td>48 months</td>
<td>72 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.-U</td>
<td>60 months</td>
<td>84 months</td>
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In exceptional circumstances, a Ph.D. student who does not complete all the requirements for the degree within the SGS time limit may be considered for a maximum of four one-year extensions, bringing the final limit to 10 years for the Ph.D. and Ph.D.-M programs and 11 years for the Ph.D.-U program.
Students who have serious health problems or personal circumstances that prevent them from making satisfactory progress are entitled to take a leave from graduate studies. Such a leave effectively stops the clock for funding and time to degree completion; on return, the student is entitled to resume at the point where they left, without penalty.
## Summary of Ph.D. Degree Timeline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Months in program</th>
<th>Program progress</th>
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| 1 to 2 months     | Submit Breadth Evaluation and Plan of Study Form to Graduate Office outlining:  
|                   | 1. Intended course enrollment and the breadth areas these courses will satisfy.  
|                   | 2. Any requests for transfer of breadth credits from a University of Toronto program or program elsewhere. *Note:* A transfer of breadth credit does not reduce the program’s course requirement.  
|                   | 3. Requests for transfer of course credits (which reduce the number of courses you are required to take for your program) should be included on your Plan of Study form; however, the official request must be submitted using the SGS transfer credit request form obtained from the SGS website.  
|                   | This document must be signed by you and your supervisor or faculty group representative. |
| 16 months         | Form a Ph.D. supervisory committee. **Qualifying Oral Examination.** |
|                   | **Yearly progress review** in a Ph.D. supervisory committee meeting. |
| At least annually following formation of the supervisory committee | Achieve candidacy:  
|                   | • Complete all required course work, including breadth requirements.  
|                   | • Supervisory committee approval of the thesis topic. |
| 12 months following completion of Qualifying Oral Exam | **Departmental Thesis Examination**  
|                   | A minimum of 10 weeks is suggested between the completion of the Departmental Thesis Examination and the FOE. |
| 40 months for Ph.D.  
45 months for Ph.D.-M  
57 months for Ph.D.-U | **Final Oral Examination** at the School of Graduate Studies  
|                   | Students are required to be registered until the submission of the final and corrected thesis. Students will receive 1 month to submit Minor Modifications and up to 3 months to submit Major Modifications following the FOE. |
| 43 months for Ph.D.  
48 months for Ph.D.-M  
60 months for Ph.D.-U | Final thesis submitted where only Minor Modifications are required. |
Forms and Administrative Procedures

All checkpoints that are boldfaced in the table above require submission of scheduling forms to the Graduate Office at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Supervisory Committee: By the 12th month of your PhD program registration, you must form a PhD supervisory committee. Complete the Supervisory Committee form, and submit it to the Graduate Office.

To schedule any departmental checkpoint: Submit the Checkpoint Scheduling form to the Graduate Office at least two weeks before the meeting.

Final Oral Exam: Your Supervisor will contact the Grad Office to get approval for the External Examiner. Once approval is received, you should compute the Final Exam Scheduling form. It will come to the Grad Office, and once we have this we start the scheduling process with SGS. You must allow no less than 8 weeks from the date you send your thesis to the External Examiner to the date of the exam.

Registration and Fees

Students are considered to be registered as soon as they have paid the minimum tuition and incidental fees, or have made appropriate fees arrangements. The registration deadline for students registering in the 2020 Fall session is September 11; after this date a late registration fee of $44 will be assessed.

General fee information:

- Fee schedules are available on the Student Accounts website and students may pay fees as soon as their invoice is updated on www.acorn.utoronto.ca
- UHIP charges for international students are included on their fees invoice.
- Students wishing to make a fees payment from outside of Canada may choose one of the fee payment options outlined on the Student Accounts website.
- While students with outstanding severe conditions will be blocked from requesting registration without payment on ACORN, they can still pay fees at the bank. The payment will not change an INVIT status to REG.
- Continuing students with outstanding conditions from the previous year or who have allowed their registration to lapse do not have an INVIT created for the session and will not be able to pay fees until conditions are cleared.

Students with arrears: Students with arrears — that is, fees owing from prior sessions — are not eligible for Fall registration until they have paid their outstanding balance in full. Students are encouraged to clear their arrears early and seek prompt advice from the SGS Financial Aid and Advising team if they are unable to make full payment before the final day to register.
Requesting to register without payment: Students can request to register without payment (tuition fee deferral) via ACORN if they have no outstanding fees from a previous session and are the recipient of one of the following awards and it exceeds the Minimum Payment to Register amount on their invoice:

- OSAP loan;
- Other provincial government loan;
- U.S. government loan;
- University funding package (major award, research stipend, or teaching stipend).

However, if you are receiving a major award, research stipend, or teaching assistantship which is not part of a funding package, or requesting to register without payment after the registration deadline, the Register Without Payment (Fee Deferral) form must be used.

Final Year Doctoral Fees: Full-time students in the final year of their doctoral program pay a prorated tuition fee based on the full-year tuition fee for their program (i.e. number of months registered times one-twelfth of the annual fee). Incidental and ancillary fees are not prorated. Fees are based on the date of final thesis submission to SGS, not the date of the defence.

Doctoral students who complete all degree requirements (i.e., defend and submit a final thesis with all corrections and modifications approved to SGS) by 15 September do not pay fees for the September session. After 15 September, and the 15th of every month thereafter, a monthly fee is charged for each month the degree requirements are not completed.

Doctoral students will be billed for the annual fee but may choose to pay: (1) the full fee, (2) the minimum first payment, or (3) the fee based on the expected date of completion. If a student pays less than the full-year fee, a monthly service charge will be applied to any outstanding balance starting 15 October. When degree requirements are complete, the Student Accounts Office will adjust the fees accordingly, including service charges to outstanding balances that have accrued since 15 September.

Leaves: Internship, Personal, Medical, and Parental

Personal, medical and parental leaves: Students requiring immediate time away from their studies for personal, medical, or parental leave should notify the Graduate Office as soon as possible.

Paid parental leave: (1) If your supervisor is supporting you from an NSERC, CIHR, or SSHRC grant, you may be entitled to continued support for up to 12 months while on parental leave (in addition to your guaranteed funding period); see the Tri-Agency Financial Administration guide for details. To apply for this support, contact the Graduate Office. (2) Alternatively, you may be eligible for an SGS Parental Grant for two or three sessions; the SGS Parental Grant application for details.
**Internship leave:** Internships are not a component of the research programs in the Department of Computer Science. However, they are recognized as an important experience for our graduate students.

It is important to notify the Graduate Office well in advance of taking up an internship (see table below). Failure to meet these deadlines ends up costing the department money, and this charge could be passed on to you. If there is a substantive reason why you are unable to meet the notification deadline, contact the Graduate Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Notify the Grad Office of intention to take leave by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer (May–August)</td>
<td>10 February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall (September–December)</td>
<td>30 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter (January–April)</td>
<td>15 October</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How to request a leave:** Students must request an official leave of one to three terms by completing an SGS [Request for Leave of Absence form](#), and submitting it to the Computer Science Graduate Office with a brief statement of the reasons that the leave is requested. The statement must be signed by the student and the supervisor, or the supervisor must be cc’d in an emailed statement. If you are applying for a parental leave and want to be considered for an SGS Parental Grant, you should also submit an [SGS Parental Grant application](#).

**Note:** SGS does not distinguish between personal and internship leaves. Leaves are always granted for an entire term and cannot be prorated to months or weeks. If you require a leave outside of a normal academic term, please consult with the Graduate Office. If you take a leave without approval from the Graduate Office, you will not be protected from the financial and program progress implications.

**How is time to completion affected by a leave of absence?** For approved leaves, the remaining funding, the remaining components of your program, and the time-to-completion for your degree will be extended by the amount of time (number of terms) taken for the leave. This is calculated per term and cannot be prorated by weeks or days.

**How are tuition fees affected by a leave of absence?** Graduate School tuition fees are assessed on a program basis rather than on the number of courses taken or the number of sessions per year. Students are permitted to pay their program tuition fees in two parts, payable in the Fall and Winter Sessions. Graduate students who have paid tuition for the full year do not, in effect, pay tuition for the summer months but remain registered for that period. When a student takes a leave for any purpose, they will not be registered in the program for the duration of the leave.
How are funding and scholarships affected by a leave of absence? Student funding will be put on hold for the duration of an official leave. Students must notify the Graduate Office when they return from leave so that registration and funding can resume.

Agencies such as OGS and NSERC will allow for medical leave. However, students on personal or internship leave must check the regulations of any scholarships that they are receiving to make sure that the agency will allow a break for work experience and deferral of payments.

A break in registration may also impact your income tax calculations. Further, it may mean that any student loans you have will be immediately payable! You should check with your loan agency about repayment regulations. International students should ensure that they have an appropriate visa that will allow them to not be registered as a student while they work at an internship.

Effect of a leave on international students in the funded cohort: International students in the funded cohort receive an international fee differential that pays the difference between domestic and international tuition fees. Since tuition is not charged in the summer session, a fee differential is not paid for summer term. International M.Sc. students receive three such payments and Ph.D. students receive seven or eight. Students who take a leave in the summer term will find themselves in a situation where they are short a fee differential because taking a summer leave means that they will be registered for an additional fall or winter term.

To illustrate: An international M.Sc. student who starts in September 2020 is entitled to three fee differentials to pay their international tuition fees in September 2020, January 2021, and September 2021. If the student is registered in the Summer 2021 term and making progress towards degree completion, they do not pay fees. However, if this student instead takes a leave in Summer 2021, and therefore requires an additional term to complete their program in January 2022, they will be responsible for paying the international fees in the additional term — a very large amount!

Unsatisfactory Academic Progress

Being considered to be making unsatisfactory academic progress can have serious consequences. For example, if a student fails a subsequent qualifying oral or supervisory committee meeting while they have this status, or if the student misses a second consecutive deadline, then they will be offered the option to either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated. (see SGS information on termination).

Dropping Down to the M.Sc. Program from the Ph.D. Program

Students in the Ph.D.-Direct program may choose to drop down to the M.Sc. program, in which case they will be required to complete the standard M.Sc. program requirements (namely, the M.Sc. course breadth requirements along with the M.Sc. research paper). Similarly, students in the Ph.D. program whose previous M.Sc. degree is not in Computer
Science can drop down to the M.Sc. program. In either case, the student's guaranteed funding period will be reduced to 17 months, the limit for the M.Sc. program. If the student has been funded for more than 17 months, their funding will be terminated. A Program Transfer form must be submitted to make the switchover official.

**Appeals**

Graduate students may appeal the decisions made by their Ph.D. supervisory committee, or by a course instructor. The procedures for such an appeal are described in the SGS Calendar (see SGS Academic Appeals Policy).