

Summary: The Graduate Affairs Committee meeting March 21, 2013 considered the issue of graduate student applicants to DCS who do not have a previous degree in CS.

Should these students be rejected, asked to take CS courses as non-degree students, and then asked to reapply?

Alternatively, should the department dictate particular courses that must be taken as part of a special breadth requirement for each such student?

Last March the GAC requested that this latter proposal be fleshed out. No progress on this has been made.

Question: Does a faculty member on the GAC wish to take this on?

From the minutes of Graduate Affairs Committee meeting March 21, 2013:

Faith Ellen (as a member of the Graduate Admissions Committee) was invited to express her concerns about admitting MSc and PhD students to our program who do not have an undergraduate CS background. Two such students were admitted for 2013-14, both of whom were highly qualified in their proposed research areas. The admissions committee suggested that we need a policy on this.

Wayne Enright pointed out that in the past we have not admitted people without a CS background, and instead suggested that they enroll as a special student to take CS courses to fill in their background, and then reapply for admission.

Faith suggested that as a compromise between denying such people admission, and admitting them unconditionally, we could admit them on condition that they take certain specified courses as part of their breadth requirements. The committee requested that Faith come up with a more detailed proposal along these lines, specifying who would decide which breadth courses are necessary (perhaps a special breadth committee?) and what would be the basis for the decision.

Faith should send this draft proposal to the committee for discussion (perhaps via email). Ultimately such a proposal should come up for discussion at a faculty meeting (or Brown Bag meeting).