

COMPUTER SCIENCE (PHD IN COMPUTER SCIENCE)

Return to the Department of Computer Science

The total credit hour requirement for the Ph.D. in CS is 48 credits. Twenty-four credits must be accumulated by completing a program of courses approved by the Department. Twenty-four credits of CSCI 800 Dissertation are required as part of the 48 credits. No more than 24 credits of CSCI 800 Dissertation can be used to satisfy the requirement of 48 semester hours of graduate credit.

Course Requirements

Students seeking the Ph.D. in computer science must complete eight courses taken in the Computer Science Department at William & Mary.

Six courses must be chosen from 600 level courses, excluding CSCI 685 Colloquium CSCI 690 Readings in Computer Science, CSCI 666 Directed Studies, and all courses with numbers 6x8. The remaining two courses must be chosen from 700 level courses, excluding CSCI 700 Thesis, CSCI 708 Research Project in Computational Operations Research, CSCI 710 Research Project, CSCI 766 Directed Studies, CSCI 785 Colloquium, and CSCI 790 Readings in Computer Science.

After completing the first semester, a student may take CSCI 775 Research to replace up to one of the above courses (600 or 700 level). A maximum of two CSCI 775 Research courses may be taken but not in the same semester.

A student may not use courses taken in another department nor CSCI courses designated as Computational Operations Research courses (last digit in the course number is an 8), to satisfy degree requirements without prior written approval of the student's advisor and the Graduate Admissions Committee.

Qualifying Exam Requirement

In addition to required course work, doctoral students will identify a principal research advisor, form a doctoral advisory committee, and petition the department for acceptance into candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. After acceptance into candidacy, students must pass the thesis proposal exam, also referred to as the oral preliminary exam. This examination is oral, is conducted by the candidate's committee, and is open to the faculty and to whomever else the department may invite.

Dissertation Requirement

Candidates must submit and satisfactorily complete a pre-defense to a committee of four faculty from the department. Only after successfully completing the pre-defense may a candidate defend a dissertation to a committee of at least five members, with at least one member from outside the department. The dissertation is based on original research and should contribute to the discipline's body of knowledge. The defense is oral and is open to the faculty and to whomever else the department may invite.

Foreign Language Requirement

There is no foreign language requirement.

Satisfactory Progress

All courses must be completed with at least a 3.7 grade point average in seven of the eight courses, and with no individual grade lower than B-. To be eligible to graduate, all students must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in all courses undertaken for graduate credit at William & Mary after admission to a degree program. No credit toward a degree will be allowed for a course in which a student receives a grade below C (grade point = 2.0).

Each year, the faculty will review how well doctoral students have progressed toward completion of their Ph.D. degree. The department provides written guidance to help students judge their own progress.

All requirements for the Ph.D. must be completed within seven years from the first term of enrollment in the Ph.D. program, excluding periods of approved leave and military service. For a student enrolled in a master's program in the School of Computing, Data Sciences, and Physics who subsequently advances to candidacy in the doctoral program in the same field, the terms of enrollment in the master's program will count towards the seven-year limit for the doctoral degree unless otherwise stated in the letter of admission.

In Computer Science with a concentration in Computational Operations Research, students receiving admission to the M.S. program in Computational Operations Research must apply to the Ph.D. program in Computer Science after completing the M.S. degree requirements. Such students would have (7) seven years from the time of this second admission to complete the Ph.D. requirements.

In addition, the department provides more specific regulations than those conveyed in this catalog. Students are solely responsible for familiarizing themselves with all guidelines and regulations of the department.