Policies of Culminating Experience

Graduate Program

Department of Computer Science

Version 3

Approved by graduate committee on August 28, 2018

I. Background:

Starting Academic Year 2016-2017, the Department of Computer Science will offer three options of culminating experience, i.e., CSci 297 (Graduate Synthesis), CSci 298 (Research Project), and CSci 299 (Master's thesis). The following paragraphs state the policies of each option and how to switch between them.

II. CSci 297 Graduate Synthesis

Prerequisite: advancement to candidacy and CSci 201 See Criteria of Thesis and Project. Independent investigation of an advanced topic as the culminating requirement for the master's degree. Approved for RP grading.
Units: 3

Deadline of choosing CSci 297

When students submit their advancement to candidacy form, they need to list CSci 297 as their culminating experience. Candidacy deadline is the 6th week a semester **before** taking CSci 297. Students may refer to the webpage of the Division of Graduate Studies for the deadline. Students miss the deadline may result in postponing culminating experience and thus graduation.

Requirements:

- Students shall take comprehensive exam (CE) along with CSci 297. CSci 297's grade will be determined by student's CE grade.
- Before taking CSci 297, students shall choose 5 courses that will be covered in their CE. The deadline of choosing 5 courses will be **before the end of prior semester (same semester as submission of candidacy form)**. Students fail to do so may result in no course to choose.
- Among 5 courses, 3 are required one:
    a. Algorithms and Theories of Computations (i.e., CSci 174)
    b. Programming Languages Principles (i.e., CSci 217)
    c. Computer Organization and Architectures (i.e., CSci 246)
- Students shall choose 2 elective courses from the following list. Please note 2 elective courses must be from 2 different areas listed below. For example, students cannot choose CSci 250 and CSci 253 **together** as their elective courses since they are in the same area. *Please contact the coordinator for the availability of the courses listed below (especially "Others") before making decision.*

a. Data and Information Science (e.g., CSci 226, 264)
b. Software Engineering (e.g., CSci 250, 252, 253)
c. Systems (e.g., CSci 176/177, 244, 256)
d. Scientific Computing (e.g., CSci 291T Bioinformatics)
e. Others that are not listed above (e.g., CSci 230, 272 etc.).

- During semester, students shall follow syllabus to meet all the requirements requested by instructors. **Also, students shall attend all lecture/review/QA sections organized by the department**. **Students do not meet minimum attendance rate determined by the department will not be eligible to take comprehensive exam.**
- To pass CSci 297, students shall fulfill the following requirements:
    a. Students shall obtain an average of A or B from all subjects. **And**, the maximum number of Cs that students are allowed is 1. If students obtain more than 1 C from all subjects, students are required to retake CSci 297 via Graduation continuation. Also, any grade lower than a C causes immediate failure.
    b. If students fulfill requirement (a), student's final grade for CSci 297 will be the average of the grades for all their questions.
    c. If students fail requirements (a), students fail the CE. An incomplete (RP) letter mark will be given to CSci 297. Students then are required to continue to take Graduation Continuation in the subsequent semester again and retake CE (*only* the course(s) that students failed previously).
    d. If students fail CE for 3 or more times, students are required to submit a petition to the Dean of Division of Research and Graduate Studies for the approval of taking CE again.
- Comprehensive Exam date will be on consultation day(s).

III. CSci 298 Research Project and CSci 299 Master's Thesis

CSci 298 Research Project
Prerequisite: advancement to candidacy and CSci 201 See Criteria of Thesis and Project. Independent investigation of an advanced topic as the culminating requirement for the master's degree. Approved for RP grading.
Units: 3

CSCI 299. Master's Thesis
Prerequisite: advancement to candidacy and CSci 201. See. Criteria for Thesis and Project. Preparation, completion, and submission of an acceptable thesis for the master's degree. Approved for RP grading.
Units: 3 or 6

Deadline of choosing CSci 298/299
Same deadline as CSci 297. Students may refer to the webpage of the Division of Graduate Studies for the deadline. Students miss the deadline may result in postponing culminating experience and thus graduation.

Requirements:

1. Prior the deadline of advancement to candidacy, students shall look for advisor and work with him/her for potential topic(s) and proposal preparation.
2. Project/thesis proposal shall be submitted by the 2/3 of the semester (deadline of each semester may vary.
3. The department will provide a form of proposal. Project/thesis proposal shall summarize motivations of the project (i.e., problem statements), proposed approach, related work and expected results. Graduate Committee will review student's proposal and inform the decision along with comments to student. If student's proposal is rejected, student shall:
    a. Switch to CE option.
4. To pass project/thesis, students shall fulfill the following requirements:
    a. Students shall submit **a completed draft** by the following deadlines
        i. CSci 298 completed draft should be turned in **to the department office 3 weeks before consultation day**. Failure to do so will result in **postponing CSci 298 presentation to next semester**.
        ii. CSci 299 completed draft should be turned in **to the department office 3 weeks before thesis submission deadline to division of graduate studies (namely, early Oct./March).** Failure to do so will result in **postponing CSci 299 presentation to next semester**.
    b. Average B of programming, technical writing, *and* oral presentation rubric evaluations.
    c. If students fail the requirement above, students fail CSci 298/299. An incomplete (RP) letter mark will be given to CSci 298/299. Students then are required to continue to take CSci 298C/299C (Continuation) in the subsequent semester again. Students shall update their program, technical writing and present the project again in that semester.
    d. If students pass CSci 298C/299C, the letter mark of the second 298C/299C will be assigned.
    e. If students fail CSci 298C/299C again, a C/D/F grade will be assigned. **No degree will be awarded.** Instead, a certificate will be issued to students stating the number of units completed in Computer Science Master Program.

IV. Switching Between Options

When switching options is NOT possible

Under the situations listed, students may *not* request to switch to another option.

1. Switching culminating experience options in the middle of the semester of CSCI 297/298/299.

2. If advancement to candidacy form is approved **at the end of semester**, students may not switch culminating experience options a few days/weeks prior taking CSci 297/298/299.
3. Students who fail CSci 297 shall not switch to CSci 298/299 in the following semester. Exception will be to those students submitting proposal to the Department at the semester of taking CSci 297 (please refer to the schedule of project/thesis proposal) and getting approved at the end of that semester.
4. Any situation that is not listed here may be reviewed by Graduate Committee for final decision.

When switching options IS possible

Under the following situations, students may request to switch to another option.

1. Switching option ***after*** candidacy form is submitted **and before** taking culminating experience:
    a. CE to project/thesis: Students shall submit a project/thesis proposal to the Department **before proposal deadline**. Graduate Committee will inform the final decision along with comments to student before the end of semester.
        i. If proposal is accepted, students shall submit Program Adjustment form to Division of Graduate Studies (DGS). The department will also update student's culminating experience option.
        ii. If proposal is rejected, no rebuttal is allowed under this situation.
    b. Project/thesis to CE: Students shall submit a request of culminating experience option change to the Department with the signature of advisor **before proposal deadline.** Graduate Committee will inform the final decision along with comments to student before the end of semester.
        i. If request is accepted, students shall submit Program Adjustment form to DGS. The department will also update student's culminating experience option. Student shall also follow the deadlines of CSci 297 listed above to choose the courses to be covered in CE.
        ii. If request is rejected, no rebuttal is allowed under this situation.
    c. Students are only allowed to submit option change at most one time.
2. Students who fail CSci 298/299 may request to switch to CSci 297 in the following semester with the signature of advisor **at the end of the semester taking CSci 298/299**. Graduate Committee shall inform the final decision along with comments to student. Once approved, students shall choose 5 topics/courses following the deadlines of CSci 297. Please note **CSci 297's grade cannot overwrite CSci 298/299's grade**.
3. Similarly students who fail CSci 297 may request to switch to CSci 298/299 in the following semester. Students need to submit proposals before deadline. Only if CSci 298/299 proposals are approved, switch can be approved. Please note CSci **298/299's grade cannot overwrite CSci 297's grade**.
4. Any situation that is not listed here may be reviewed by Graduate Committee for final decision.
5. Once students start taking CSci 297/298/299, students may request for option change at most one time.

6. Once option change is approved by the Department, students shall submit a Program Adjustment Form to DGS.

V. Appealing process of Culminating Experience

- Student contacts graduate coordinator and bring in any materials relevant to appeal. Graduate coordinator collects the materials and write an email to instructor involved in grade appealing. Instructor reviews student's paper and then provides an email response within 3 working days.
- If student is not satisfied with the email result, student can either (a) appeal to university grade appeal committee directly or (b) have one more round with department chair, graduate coordinator, instructor, and student to go over paper.
- If (b) is not satisfied, student can go ahead to appeal to university level.