PROGRAM MILESTONES

Coursework
- Coursework as outlined in the degree plan must be completed by the time of graduation. However, the more common option is to have it done in two to three years, then focus on research.
- Students must get a C+ or better in a course to earn credit towards their degree.

Qualifying Exam (Ph.D. Only)
- Eligibility
  - In order to qualify for the Qualifying Exam, a student must have completed all general core courses of the PhD program as well as a minimum of one (1) course from the core of their chosen research thrust area.
  - Doctoral students are eligible to sit for the Qualifying Exam after the second semester of graduate studies. Doctoral students MUST complete the Qualifying Exam by the end of their third semester.
  - Students must confirm with the Graduate Advisor that they plan to complete their Qualifying Exam in a given semester.
- Components of Exam
  - The Qualifying Exam is administered orally and students must submit two abstracts (1) current research and (2) future research, one week prior to the exam.
  - Notes, PowerPoint slides or electronic displays are prohibited.
- Committee
  - The Graduate Advisor will create the Qualifying Exam committee based on faculty availability and the student's schedule.
  - The committee will consist of at least four (4) members: candidate’s Research Advisor, Department Chair, and two (2) additional faculty members from the department. Additional faculty should represent the candidate’s research focus area and are primarily responsible for the examination of the candidate.
  - The Research Advisor may ask questions but is expected to fulfill the advocate role for the candidate as he/she prepares for the examination. The Chair’s primary function is to ensure that there is consistency across all candidate qualifying examinations.
- Overview
  - Qualifying Exam Committees are coordinated by the Graduate Advisor. Students will be notified of the date and time of their Exam via email.
  - Examinations are expected to span about 1 hour but may vary between 1 to 1.5 hours.
  - The oral component will start with a general overview provided by the candidate on their research thrust area and prospective research project.
  - Committee members will be given hard copies of the two abstracts supplied by the Doctoral student.
  - The Exam Committee will then ask questions and engage in discussions with the student for the remainder of the session. The following is the goal and scope of the oral exam:
    - Determine student’s depth of understanding of the Biomedical Engineering graduate core.
    - Assess student’s capacity to think critically and apply engineering tools to solve problems.
    - Assess student’s capacity to integrate skills in an area of research in biology and/or biomedical engineering.
    - A successful student will be knowledgeable, able to think critically, and demonstrate the ability to integrate and/or apply course information to topics pertinent to their research area.
  - Immediately following the oral examination session, the Exam Committee will meet in a closed session to discuss the student’s performance and determine the results of the exam. The following results are possible.
    - Pass: the candidate may continue in the PhD program, complete course work, and prepare to defend a prospectus.
- **Contingent Pass**: the candidate is allowed to continue in the PhD program only if they successfully fulfill a contingency plan recommended by the Exam Committee.
- **Fail**: the candidate will be removed from the PhD program. A contingent plan may be developed to enter the Masters program, either thesis or non-thesis. The candidate may petition to retake the qualifying exam during which time he/she may be retained in the PhD program until the petition is resolved. If the petition is not accepted, he/she will be removed from the PhD program. If the petition is accepted, a continuation in the PhD program will be contingent upon results of a re-examination.
  - The QUALIFYING EXAM SCORE SHEET will be filled out and turned into the Graduate Advisor, so the results can be put into the student's file.

### Form Thesis/Dissertation Committee
- The Thesis/Dissertation Committee members are determined by the student and their Advisor.
- The Committee members must fill out the COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT FORM with their acknowledgement that they will participate.
- If a Committee member is outside of the University of Houston, that member’s CV must be sent to the Graduate Advisor.
- **Doctoral Dissertation Committee formation Deadline**: The Committee must be formed at least six months after the Qualifying Exam but no more than two weeks prior to the Prospectus.
- **Masters Thesis Committee formation Deadline**: The Committee must be formed by the 12th school day/ORD of the semester the student plans to defend.

### Prospectus (Ph.D. Only)
- **Eligibility**
  - Doctoral students must complete their Prospectus at least one semester before Graduation.
- **Components**
  - A rough draft of a research proposal should be shown to the student’s research advisor for approval of content prior to scheduling the oral presentation.
  - The oral presentation of the dissertation prospectus is made to the student’s Dissertation committee. Other interested members of the faculty are invited to attend the presentation but are encouraged to leave prior to the questioning by the dissertation committee.
- **Overview**
  - The student’s presentation should take advantage of appropriate audio visual aids and should be limited to no more than 50 minutes.
  - Copies of the written dissertation prospectus must be distributed to all members of the student’s dissertation committee no later than one week prior to the oral presentation. In the oral examination, the student is expected to defend their prospectus and justify that the proposed research is of the acceptable quality and magnitude consistent with quality doctoral education.
  - Following the oral presentation of the research proposition, questions are welcomed from members of the departmental faculty. Following general questions, departmental faculty members other than those on the student’s dissertation committee are excused and the student’s dissertation committee and interested faculty from the student’s major will remain to ask questions of the candidate regarding his proposed research. Generally, the oral discussion of the dissertation prospectus is limited to three hours.
After questioning, the candidate is excused from the room while the dissertation committee conducts its deliberations.

**Committee**

- The Prospectus Committee is comprised of the Dissertation Committee members that were listed on the approved Committee form.
- The decision regarding whether or not the dissertation prospectus is acceptable is the decision of the dissertation committee alone.
- The student’s dissertation committee conveys its evaluation of the acceptability of the dissertation prospectus to the chair of the departmental graduate committee by signing the PROSPECTUS APPROVAL FORM.
- If the student’s dissertation prospectus is considered acceptable, the chair of the departmental graduate committee will recommend to the Graduate College that the student be advanced to PhD candidacy status.
- If the student’s dissertation prospectus is unacceptable, the chair of the dissertation committee formulates recommendations for future action and submits them to the chair of the departmental graduate committee and the chair of the department. Either of two recommendations is possible:
  - A re-examination may be scheduled and the entire process repeated, or
  - The student may be removed from the doctoral program. The results of the dissertation prospectus presentation are conveyed to the student by the chair of the departmental graduate committee.

**Dissertation/Thesis Defense**

- The student will coordinate their Defense date with their committee and Advisor.
- If a room needs to be reserved, the student can contact the Graduate Advisor.
- Results should be reported to the Graduate Advisor, either via email or in person.

**Dissertation/Thesis Defense Deadline**

- The Graduate School and Cullen College of Engineering has set a deadline for defending. All students must defend by the given date or they will not be able to graduate that semester. The deadline changes each semester; the Academic Calendar will note the date.
  - For example, in Fall 2014, all students planning to defend, had to have their defense completed by Friday, December 05.

**Dissertation Submission**

- All information necessary for submission can be found here: https://www.egr.uh.edu/academics/graduate-programs-policies/guide-preparation-thesesdissertations
- If there are questions or if clarification is needed regarding this two-step process, contact the College Graduate Coordinator located in E421 in the Dean’s Office of Engineering Bldg 2 (D3): Miranda Vernon-Harrison, phone 713-743-4219.

**Graduation**

- Students must apply for Graduation by the deadline or else they will not be able to graduate in that given semester. The Graduation Application deadline can be found in the Academic Calendar.
  - For example, in Fall 2014, the deadlines for graduation application were (1) October 3, 2014 with a $25 fee and (2) October 31, 2014 with a $50 fee.
  - After October 31, 2014, if students did not apply for graduation, they are NOT allowed to graduate in that semester.
• Steps for Graduation
  o Apply for Graduation via MyUH and pay fee ($25 if late, $50)
  o Complete final degree plan (get blank form from Graduate Advisor)
  o Complete Dissertation/Thesis
  o Submit Electronic Dissertation/Thesis into the Vireo website
  o Submit approved hard copy of Dissertation/Thesis to Miranda Vernon-Harrison (E-421)
  o Pay for binding ($40)
  o Attend Commencement
  o Make sure your address is updated and accurate in your MyUH account
  o For more information: https://www.egr.uh.edu/academics/graduate-programs-policies/graduation