

## Progress Guidelines for Ph.D. Students in Decision Sciences

For each incoming doctoral student, a member of the decision sciences faculty will be initially assigned to be the student's advisor. Students may get a new advisor in each subsequent semester during the first two years of their doctoral studies. The role of the advisor is to provide advice on course selection and guidance on other aspects of the doctoral program. The advisors also provide guidance to the student regarding involvement in research and teaching assistantships and other matters as appropriate throughout the early semesters. Students are encouraged to meet often with their advisors to discuss progress in courses and research projects.

Throughout the Ph.D. program, students are expected to take full advantage of faculty expertise and the intellectual environment at Fuqua. Students are encouraged to meet with all Decision Sciences faculty members one-on-one to learn about different faculty members' research projects and interests. All students are also expected to **attend all the seminars in the Decision Sciences seminar series**. These seminars are a central feature of intellectual life here. If you have a class that conflicts with the seminar, please let your advisors know.

Students are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point average of "B" (3.00) or better by the end of the first year and throughout the rest of the program. Any student who receives an "F" or fails to exceed or meet a cumulative "B" average will be subject to a performance evaluation by the Decision Sciences Ph.D. Program Progress Committee that could result in dismissal or directing the student to pursue a terminal M.A. degree. In assessing performance, incompletes in coursework will not be viewed positively.

Under the graduate school requirements, an annual report needs to be submitted to the director of Fuqua Ph.D. program by April 15 each year.

Students' progress in the Decision Sciences Ph.D. program is evaluated by the Decision Sciences Ph.D. Program Progress Committee. This three-member committee is selected by and consists of the Decision Sciences faculty. Progress guidelines and milestones are listed below.

### First Year Performance and the First-Year Paper.

The Decision Sciences area faculty will gather information about each student's first year performance. Sources of information will include the student's advisors, instructors, and faculty for whom s/he has been a research or teaching assistant. In addition, the student must submit a **self-assessment and plans statement** to the Decision Sciences area Ph.D. coordinator. This document, roughly two pages in length, should discuss first year accomplishments, areas of interest, and areas that require further study. The statement should describe in detail the student's plans and objectives (including course work and research projects) for the second year. The student will also submit a one to two page **proposal for the first year paper** that identifies the Decision Sciences faculty member who will serve as the first-year paper advisor. The statement and the first year paper proposal should be submitted to the area's Ph.D. coordinator **by May 15**.

An important component of the first year is **the first-year paper**. This paper is due to the Decision Sciences area Ph.D. coordinator **on or before the first day of the fall semester of the second year**. Failure to hand in the paper by this date will be considered unsatisfactory progress towards the Ph.D. degree, and the student will be directed to pursue a terminal M.A. degree. The student's first-year paper advisor must approve the paper before it can be submitted. The paper may be a reworked paper handed in for a course or a new paper done over the summer. It may be an original work or a review. The important point is that it represents work that the student feels best demonstrates his or her capabilities at the point in time. Collaboration with the faculty is allowed with two stipulations: 1) the student should have played a major role in the generation and development of the core idea and 2) the student should do the writing of the first year paper. The student should provide a statement listing faculty help on the project, and the faculty involved should provide statements about their role and the student's role.

Students are required to **present the first year paper** in the Decision Sciences seminar **during the fall semester of the second year**. The Decision Sciences Ph.D. Program Progress Committee will examine the first-year paper, the student's statement, grades, and feedback from the student's first-year paper advisor, and other faculty who have had the student in class and/or have had the student as a research or teaching assistant. The committee will provide feedback to the student. If progress is not satisfactory, performance may be reassessed at a time determined by the area faculty. Poor performance may result in dismissal from the program or directing the student to pursue a terminal M.A degree.

#### Preliminary Examination and Second-Year Research Paper.

Students will continue regular meetings with academic advisors throughout their second year of graduate studies. As in the first year, academic advisors will guide the student on all academic issues. In addition, during the second year, the Preliminary Examination Committee will be formed. The student should find a decision sciences faculty member willing to serve as the committee chair. The student must notify the Decision Sciences area Ph.D. coordinator in writing regarding **the committee chair before the first day of the spring semester of the second year**. The committee chair will serve as the main academic advisor to the student during the spring semester and guide the student regarding committee formation. The Preliminary Examination Committee must meet the standard Graduate School requirement and include at least three faculty from the Decision Sciences area and at least one faculty that is not a member of the Decision Sciences area.

The **proposal for second-year research paper** should be submitted to the committee chair and the Decision Sciences area Ph.D. coordinator **by the end of the spring break**. The committee chair will provide feedback on the proposal. The final second-year paper proposal, the makeup of the entire Preliminary Examination Committee, as well as the student's statement of research interests and current activities, should be submitted to the Decision Sciences area Ph.D. coordinator by May 15.

The second-year paper should be a written piece of original research. The research may be done jointly with faculty; in fact, joint work with faculty is strongly encouraged. However, the student must have made clear and significant contributions to all phases of the project. The aim is to have a paper which is appropriate for submission to a journal. This paper is due to the Decision Sciences area Ph.D. program coordinator **on or before the first day of the fall semester of the third year**. Failure to hand in the paper by this date will be considered unsatisfactory progress towards the Ph.D. degree and student will be directed to pursue a terminal M.A. degree. The chair of the Preliminary Examination Committee must approve the paper before it can be submitted. The student is required to **present the paper in the Decision Sciences Seminar during the fall semester of the third year**.

**The Preliminary Examination Committee** will examine the second-year paper, the student's annual report, grades, and feedback from faculty who have had the student in class and/or have had the student as a research or teaching assistant. The Decision Sciences Ph.D. Program Progress Committee will follow recommendations and decision of The Preliminary Examination Committee and will initiate post-examination actions, if necessary. Such actions might include rewriting some or all of the paper, or granting a terminal M.A. degree.

### Dissertation Proposal

After the qualifying examination has been successfully completed, the student starts forming a dissertation committee and begins formulating a dissertation proposal. The student should notify the Decision Sciences area Ph.D. coordinator in writing regarding the Decision Sciences faculty member(s) who will (co-)chair the dissertation committee by the end of the semester in which s/he passed the qualifying examination. From this point forward, the dissertation committee chair monitors progress and provides feedback.

In most cases, we expect that the dissertation will be a natural outgrowth of the student's research to this point. The student should **defend the dissertation proposal by the end of the fall semester of the fourth year** of doctoral studies. Failure to defend the proposal within specified time frame could result in dismissal from the program with a terminal M.A. degree, unless the dissertation committee chair requests that the proposal defense be postponed.

### Dissertation

The final dissertation defense would typically occur within 18 months after the successful proposal defense.