Milestones Agreement Form
UTSA Doctoral Program in Computer Science

This form is provided for the purpose of informing students about the academic milestones that they will be expected to reach in order to earn their Ph.D. degree as well as when they are expected to complete these milestones. Students are expected to reach each milestone within the specified time period in order to be considered to be making satisfactory progress through the program. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may lose funding, be placed on academic probation, or be dismissed from the program.

Academic Advising

Upon entering the UTSA Doctoral program in Computer Science, each student will be assigned an advisor. The advisor will be a graduate council member of the program department. During the first year in the program the student's advisor will be the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) for the Computer Science Doctoral Program. In subsequent years, the student is required to select a Doctoral Advisor who will guide the student in the conduct of independent research and the completion of a doctoral dissertation. The GAR and the Computer Science Graduate Studies Committee (CSGSC) will continue to monitor the progress of all students in the program.

Academic advising includes the following elements that are designed to ensure that students remain in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress through the program. It is the responsibility of each student's advisor to do the following:

- Provide the student with guidance and mentoring and seek the assistance of other faculty and graduate school resources when necessary to support the student's academic and career development.

- Ensure that a mutually agreed upon set of expectations and goals for the student are in place and assessed periodically.

- Help the student assemble a dissertation committee.

- Provide career advice and links to information on previous graduate placement. Be accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals.

- Review the student's progress with input from the student prior to every semester, including the summer. The results of this review will be included in the program's annual doctoral progress report.

- Make suggestions on course selection.

- Review Program of Study to determine if modifications are necessary.

- Clarify the timetable for completing any remaining course requirements, examinations, and other requirements.

- Assist the student in understanding the requirements for successful completion of dissertation.

- Sign the student's completed registration form each semester.

Milestones to Be Completed by CS PhD Program Students

Full-time students entering the PhD degree program without a master's degree in computer science are expected to reach the milestones of the PhD program in accordance with the time-line indicated below. Part-time students and full-time students entering the program with a master's degree in computer science will be provided with appropriately adjusted time-lines for the completion of milestones. Additional adjustments to the time-lines can be made to accommodate special situations on a case-by-case basis. Such adjustments may be made, when necessary, by the student's advisor with the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee.

The achievement of each milestone within the period of time indicated by the appropriate time-line will be considered satisfactory progress in completion of the milestones. The time-lines given below, however, allow for a certain degree of uncertainty and variability, which is inherent in academic research. Students are encouraged to complete each milestone as early as possible. The determination of whether a student is making satisfactory progress in the PhD program will be based on annual evaluations by the student and the advisor. Completion of milestones in accordance with the student's time-line will be considered in that evaluation.

- *Completion of Courses*

  – Complete at least three required core courses by the end of the 2nd long semester.
  – Complete all required core courses and at least three additional required courses by the end of the 4th long semester.
  – Complete at least 24 credit hours of required courses* by the end of the third year.
  – Complete all required courses* by the end of the fifth year.

  *Up to 30 credit hours of course work can be substituted by transfer credits.

- *Pass the Qualifying Examination*

  – Pass the Qualifying Examination at the beginning of the 3rd long semester.

- *Select Doctoral Advisor(s)*

  – Select a Doctoral Advisor (or up to two Co-Advisors) at the beginning of the semester immediately after passing the qualifying examination.

- *Pass the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Examination*

  – Perform Doctoral Research (or Independent Study) with the Doctoral Advisor(s) for credits every semester, after passed the qualifying examination.
  – Convene a Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Examination Committee.
  – Present and defend a Doctoral Dissertation Proposal to the satisfaction of the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Examination Committee. The expected time to complete this milestone is at the end of the 4th year. However, students who have made satisfactory progress in previous years but are unable to complete this milestone at the end of the 4th year may be allowed to extend the time line to the end of the 5th year. Beyond that, the student in consultation with the Advisor must devise an action plan to complete the remaining milestones with an adjusted time line. This action plan must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

- *Complete the Doctoral Dissertation*

  – Convene a Doctoral Dissertation Committee after passing the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Examination.
  – Perform Doctoral Dissertation with Doctoral Advisor for credits every semester immediately after the passing of the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Examination.
  – Present and defend the Doctoral Dissertation to the satisfaction of the Doctoral Dissertation Committee. The

expected time to complete this milestone is before or at the end of the 5th year. However, students who have made satisfactory progress in previous years but are unable to complete this milestone at the end of the 5th year may be allowed to extend the time line to the end of the 6th year. Beyond that, the student in consultation with the Advisor must devise an action plan to complete this milestone with an adjusted time line. This action plan must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.
– Submit the dissertation to the Graduate School before designated deadline.
– Complete an Exit Interview and submit the same to the CS Department.

Annual Evaluation of Progress

The student will meet with their Advisor(s) at the end of each year to evaluate the progress according to the milestones, and submit the result to the Graduate Studies Committee in an Annual Progress Evaluation Form.

Degree Completion Checklist for Students

- Maintain active student status by registering for appropriate courses and for the minimum required credit hours every fall and spring semester.
- Submit a signed Milestones Agreement Form to the Computer Science Department before the end of 1st long semester.
- Complete all required organized coursework.
- Successfully pass required qualifying examinations.
- Convene a Dissertation Committee.
- Present and successfully defend a Dissertation Proposal.
- Enroll in required dissertation hours and complete the dissertation.
- Complete and successfully defend a Dissertation.
- Submit required documentation to the Graduate School for completion and graduation.

I have read this form and have had the opportunity to discuss the information contained in it with my advisor. I understand the academic milestones that I am expected to reach in order to successfully complete the Computer Science program, as well as the expected time-line for completing these milestones. I agree to follow the time-line and strive to make satisfactory progress while in the PhD program.

_____   _____
Signature of Student   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Advisor   Date