

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROGRAM**

### **PURPOSES OF THE PROGRAM**

The Doctor of Philosophy in Library and Information Science program prepares students for careers in research and education. The primary purpose of the Ph.D. program is to develop an understanding of library and information science beyond the Master's degree, with particular emphasis on the conduct of original research, the production of significant research findings, and the contribution of such findings to public knowledge.

### **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

The following are requirements for admission to the Ph.D./LIS Program:

1. A master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association, a recognized international program, or the equivalent in a closely related field of study. Students must submit official transcripts as evidence.
2. Attainment in previous graduate work of a minimum quality point average of 3.50 (on a scale with A having a value of 4 points per credit). An international student's quality point average will be calculated on the basis of equivalency from universities that use a different scale.
3. Submission of scores from a predictor test such as the Graduate Record Examination or the Miller Analogy Test, taken within the last five years.
4. At least three references from persons in the academic and professional communities. The Committee on Doctoral Studies may, on occasion, require additional references.
5. Submission of an application fee of \$30 (\$40 for international students).

As evidence of the ability to undertake doctoral work, the student's application must be accompanied by:

1. An essay (not exceeding 1,500 words) indicating, as specifically as possible, the student's detailed academic and professional goals in relation to the Department of Library and Information Science doctoral program and discussing in detail potential areas and/or topics in which the student expects to pursue dissertation research. Students should identify one or more DLIS faculty members with whom they want to work.
2. A complete curriculum vitae that provides an overview of education, publications,

work, and other activities.

3. At least one example of scholarly research or professional writing in any format (print or electronic). The student should describe fully any published or unpublished research, thesis, contributions to the professional or scholarly literature, and other professional or academic experience relevant to an assessment of his or her capacity to pursue research successfully.

An interview (in person, or in exceptional circumstances, by telephone) is required as part of the admissions process for selected candidates, after an initial screening of their application materials.

All admissions materials must be submitted by January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year for beginning studies in the forthcoming fall term and for consideration for financial aid.

Applications from all individuals, regardless of citizenship, who have a degree from a non-U.S. institution must be reviewed by the University Office of International Services (OIS) prior to their review by the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies.

International students must submit evidence of competence in the English language. The status of English in the country of origin may constitute such evidence. A minimum score of 575 on the paper-based TOEFL (or an equivalent score of 231 on the computer-based TOEFL) is required for international students. In addition, University policy requires that all international students be retested on English language abilities upon arrival at the University of Pittsburgh. (See APPENDIX A.)

Credentials of prospective students are reviewed by the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies. However, students who are applying for financial aid should be aware that they must be admitted and meet financial aid deadlines to ensure consideration for funding.

Ph.D. students may begin their studies only in the Fall Term in order to ensure a coherent program of study.

## **ACADEMIC ADVISING AND PLAN OF STUDIES**

An advisor will be assigned to the student upon entering the program but the student is free to select a different advisor for subsequent advising and registration. The Ph.D. student should seek a faculty Program Advisor who is knowledgeable in the student's major area of study. The advisor must be a member of the graduate faculty in the Department of Library and Information Science who is able to spend the time and effort necessary for the advising role, will be available for examinations, and with whom a productive and comfortable working relationship can be established. The advisor selected by the student for the period prior to the dissertation stage of the program is the Program Advisor. The Program Advisor and the Dissertation Advisor may be the same person, but the student has the option to select a different advisor for the dissertation.

### **PROGRAM ADVISOR**

Upon agreement of the faculty member to act as the student's advisor, the signed agreement is placed in the student's folder. Any subsequent change of Program Advisor should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies and placed on record in the student's folder.

Doctoral students are ultimately responsible for their own direction and progress through the program and are encouraged to seek advice from any member of the SIS faculty or other University faculty in this endeavor. The Program Advisor, however, is the one primarily responsible for providing guidance, insight, advice, information, explanation of University and School policies, and general assistance in the pursuit of the Ph.D. degree. The Program Advisor will also approve those actions requiring a faculty signature.

The Program Advisor assists the student in 1) developing a plan for the program of studies and 2) arranging for the preliminary and the comprehensive examinations.

### **DISSERTATION ADVISOR**

Students must gain the agreement of a member of the DLIS graduate faculty to Chair the Dissertation Committee that will advise on the area of research and the design of the study. The advisor's agreement is recorded in the student's file. This agreement must be obtained and recorded before the end of the term in which the comprehensive examinations are passed. Any request to change the Dissertation Advisor must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies after discussion with the Dissertation Advisor. Students retain the right to change advisors with impunity. It is important for them to be aware of and sensitive to various issues, including: 1) the importance of mutual consideration in the relationship between advisor and advisee; and 2) the academic benefits of continuity in the relationship with a major advisor and other members of the dissertation committee. Approval for the change and the selection of another

Dissertation Advisor is filed in the student's folder.

The student's dissertation advisor:

- assists in choosing the Dissertation Committee and in confirming the eligibility of all members selected;
- arranges with the DLIS support staff to schedule the dissertation proposal presentation;
- reviews progress toward completion of the research;
- arranges with support staff to schedule the dissertation defense;
- chairs the dissertation defense;
- secures appropriate signatures from Dissertation Committee members and assures that all required paperwork is submitted in accordance with the DLIS, SIS, and University procedures.

## **DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Credit Requirement**

The Ph.D./LIS program requires a minimum of 54 credits beyond the master's degree. A minimum of 36 credits must be taken in advanced course work. The student must receive a letter grade in each course taken in this 36-credit requirement, *except the Teaching Practicum*.

An additional 18 credits are required which must be applied to dissertation research and writing; however, regardless of the number of credits taken, no more than 18 credits for dissertation research and writing may be applied toward graduation. The grade for these credits will appear as an "S" on the student's transcript. In order to register for, and successfully complete, dissertation credits, students must show evidence of work toward the dissertation by completing a "Dissertation Credit Status Form" (see Appendix B) when registering and updating it at the end of the term.

The minimum of 36 credits of course work, all of which must be on the graduate level, must be distributed as follows:

3 credits: LIS3000: Introduction to Doctoral Studies

9 credits: 3000 level doctoral seminars in SIS

- 3 credits: LIS 3950: Teaching Practicum
- 6 credits: courses in research methodology and statistics
- 6 credits: courses in a cognate field
- 9 credits: which may be
- 2000 level courses in SIS (with the expectation that doctoral level work will be conducted)
  - 3000 level independent studies in SIS
  - additional cognate courses
  - additional research methodology courses
  - additional 3000 level doctoral seminars in SIS

Graduate degrees are conferred only on those students who have completed all courses required for the degree with at least a 3.5 QPA.

### **Cognate Field**

Doctoral students are required to devote some portion of their studies to work on other disciplines in order to broaden their perspectives and deepen their understanding of library and information science. To fulfill the cognate requirement, students are required to take a minimum of 6 credits and a maximum of 12 credits in some area of graduate study outside the field of library and information science. These credits may be from more than one department or school.

Students may enroll for all or part of their cognate course work at institutions other than the University of Pittsburgh, but only when prior approval has been obtained from the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies. Courses in DIST cannot be used to fulfill the cognate requirement. Cross listed courses may be counted as cognates if they originate outside the School. Cognate areas and courses shall be selected with consultation and approval by the student's advisor.

If a student has significant course work at the graduate level or an advanced degree in another discipline and desires that it be considered as the cognate field, the student has the right to petition the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies for exemption from the cognate requirement. A minimum of 36 course credits will still be required for the Ph.D. Students who opt to petition for exemption from the cognate requirement should do so as early as possible, preferably in their first term, in order to plan coherently for their program of study.

All students who are candidates for doctoral degrees are governed by the regulations of the University Council on Graduate Study, which establishes minimum standards for graduate work

throughout the University, as well as by those regulations established by the DLIS faculty.

### **Research Methodology Courses**

Research methodology courses may include courses in statistical analysis, general research methodology, and specific research methods or research methods used in specific fields of study, for instance, historiography, ethnography, or case and field study. A list of candidate courses will be made available by the Doctoral Studies Committee.

Research methodology courses may be taken within SIS or in another School. Research methodology courses taken from schools outside SIS cannot be used to fulfill the cognate requirement.

The research methodology course requirement must be fulfilled prior to taking the Preliminary Examination.

### **Teaching Practicum**

A three-credit teaching practicum is required for all doctoral students in order to provide the student with teaching experience that may become part of the student's professional dossier. The teaching practicum is usually taken after completion of two terms of study. The student is responsible for identifying an appropriate course related to his or her area of interest, and obtaining the agreement of the instructor of record. Appropriate activities as part of the teaching practicum include involvement in course design, attendance at all class sessions, presentation of some course materials, office or tutorial hours, and involvement in grading. The student's teaching responsibility should involve preparation and presentation of specific topics throughout the term, and sole responsibility for at least one class session. The teaching practicum is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Doctoral students fulfill this requirement by completing the University Teaching Practicum course offered through the Faculty of Arts and Science. The course, FACDEV 2200, is a graduate seminar designed for teaching assistants and teaching fellows who will be teaching a class independently for the first time. A description of the course can be found at [http://www.pitt.edu/~ciddeweb/fds/ta\\_practicum.htm](http://www.pitt.edu/~ciddeweb/fds/ta_practicum.htm).

### **Residence and Registration Requirements: Doctoral Students and Candidates**

Doctoral students must register for at least 3 credits in each term until they have achieved candidacy.

To maintain active status, all doctoral candidates must be registered for a minimum of 3 credits in each 12-month period (3 credits in 1 term or 1 credit in each of 3 terms) from the time of admission to candidacy until receipt of degree.

In keeping with University policy, all graduate students must be enrolled for a minimum of 1 credit in the term in which the student graduates.

Doctoral students who have completed all credit requirements for the Ph.D. degree, including minimum dissertation credit requirements, and are working full time on their dissertations, should register for a fixed-fee registration of \$500 per term for both Pennsylvania residents and nonresidents. Enrollment in this course fulfills the University requirements for registration in the term of graduation and for 3 credits in the year of graduation.

### **Transfer of Credits**

Upon petition to the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies and with the consent of the Program Advisor, a student may be granted up to 6 credits of advanced standing. This credit for graduate course work completed at another institution may be granted if the credit has not been applied to a previous degree, has been earned within the 6-year statute of limitations, and is relevant to the student's doctoral studies in the Department of Library and Information Science.

### **Language Requirement**

Any language requirement relates to proficiencies necessary for successful completion of doctoral research. Depending upon the student's program, proficiencies in modern languages, linguistics, and/or computer languages may be specified. The student's Dissertation Advisor will determine the language requirement in consultation with the Dissertation Committee at the time the proposal is accepted.

### **Colloquium Requirement**

During the course of the Ph.D. program, the student is required to present a colloquium to faculty and students in the School. This colloquium may be on a research project the student is engaged in, or on preliminary results of the dissertation project.

Attendance at colloquia is required of students in their term of residence, and is recommended through the Ph.D. program.

### **Preliminary Examination**

The Preliminary Examination, according to *Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh*<sup>1</sup>, is held:

...to assess the breadth of the student's knowledge of the discipline, the student's

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html>

achievement during the first year of graduate study, and the potential to apply research methods independently... The evaluation is used to identify those students who may be expected to complete a doctoral program successfully and also to reveal areas of weakness in the student's preparation.

Upon completion of 24 hours of coursework the student will submit to faculty for review a portfolio comprising the best representation of work completed thus far. Each student will also be required to present this portfolio to the Doctoral Studies Committee as a whole and the whole will vote on whether or not the portfolio is acceptable. A date for the portfolio presentation for the Preliminary Examination will be set at the beginning of each term.

The preliminary evaluation will be based on breadth and depth of knowledge as addressed through coursework, as well as whether the coursework taken will support the research plan of the student. This portfolio will minimally consist of the following elements:

- Course plan
  - List of courses completed
  - Projected list of remaining courses
  - Notations concerning how all course requirements are to be met
- Research prospectus or plan and how this relates to coursework (taken and planned). This section will consist of a proposed area of concentration for the dissertation, justification for the research, and describe the methodological approach in some detail. It will also include an analysis of what types of education and / or support will be needed to carry out the plan and / or support the student through completion of the dissertation.
- Two examples of major work completed while working towards the Ph. D. At least one of these should be a significant piece of writing. The other can also be a paper or could be another type of work demonstrating depth of knowledge and research in an area.
- Other
  - Professional activities (papers presented at conferences)
  - Awards

The Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committee will respond to the presentation with an evaluation memo to the student either noting the acceptability of the portfolio or noting the areas in which the student is deficient. The memo may be very specific and prescribe specific types of courses, work products, or other elements necessary for the student to complete their research plan or the required course work. If a portfolio is not passed by a majority of those hearing the case, the student may make a second attempt in a later term.

## **Comprehensive Examination**

The University's *Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh* state the purpose of this examination:

The Comprehensive Examination should be designed to assess the student's mastery of the general field of doctoral study, the student's acquisition of both depth and breadth in the area of specialization within the general field, and the ability to use the research methods of the discipline. ... It should be administered at approximately the time of the completion of the formal course requirements and should be passed at least eight months before the scheduling of the final oral examination and dissertation defense. In no case may the Comprehensive Examination be taken in the same term in which the student is graduated.<sup>2</sup>

In the Department of Library and Information Science, the following procedures apply:

- The examination will be conducted by a 3-person committee: the student's advisor, 1 faculty member chosen by the student with the agreement of the faculty member; 1 faculty member chosen by the Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committee.
- The examination will consist of two parts: a written take-home exam over 2 weeks (3 weekends) and an oral examination conducted by the student's committee.
- The take-home exam will have two parts: a broad perspective on current issues in the field of library science, information science, or archives, depending on the student's general area; and the area of research specialization, as designated by the student.
- The examination will be tailored to the student, who will choose one question in each part from a choice of two.

A more detailed explanation of the procedure is found in Appendix C.

Failure to pass the Comprehensive Examination on the second attempt will mandate withdrawal from the doctoral program.

## **Candidacy**

For admission to formal candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, a student must have fulfilled the following requirements:

- passed the Preliminary Examination;
- completed a minimum of 36 credits beyond the master's degree with a QPA of 3.5 or higher;

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html>

- passed the Comprehensive Examination;
- successfully defended the dissertation proposal and received permission from the Dissertation Committee to begin research. Students conducting experimental dissertations requiring the use of human subjects must adhere to the University's policies.

When these steps have been taken, the chairperson of the student's Dissertation Committee will notify the Chair of the Committee on Doctoral Studies, the Chair of the Department of Library and Information Science, and the Dean of SIS that the student has achieved formal candidacy.

### **Dissertation**

Students demonstrate their ability to complete a sound project of original research by presenting and defending the dissertation proposal to their Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee must unanimously approve the dissertation topic and research plan before the student may be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree. Approval of the proposal does not imply either the acceptance of a dissertation prepared in accord with the proposal or the restriction of the dissertation to this original proposal.

Originality may be reflected in a number of ways. For example, a candidate may pose an important new problem or formulate an existing problem in a novel and useful way. A candidate may investigate previously ignored material or develop new techniques for investigating issues. Replication of previous investigations are acceptable provided they incorporate important new elements in the design or execution of the research.

Normally, a satisfactory dissertation will form the basis for one or more publishable articles. The Dissertation Committee may offer an opinion on the publishable content of the proposed research.

### **Committee and Procedure**

The Dissertation Committee, selected by the student and major dissertation advisor, shall consist of at least four members, with the majority being from the graduate faculty of the University of Pittsburgh. At least one, and not more than two, should be from another School of the University. Work in the cognate area may provide the student with the opportunity to select an appropriate outside member for the Dissertation Committee from a discipline related to the student's area of specialization. Upon the recommendation of the Dissertation Advisor, and with the agreement of the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies, a member may be appointed from outside the University. If an outside person from another University or agency is invited to serve, the student is obligated to bear the expenses involved in the attendance of the outside person at meetings. Finally, the major advisor proposes the members of the committee for approval to the Department Chair and the Dean.

The student must submit the proposal to the committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. The Dissertation Committee must unanimously approve the dissertation topic and research plan before the student may be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

Meetings of the doctoral candidate and the Dissertation Committee must occur at least annually from the time the student gains admission to Doctoral Candidacy. During these meetings, the committee should assess the student's progress toward the degree, discuss objectives for the following year, and project a timetable for completing degree requirements.

### **Procedural Requirements**

The student must submit all forms, letters, and questionnaires related to the dissertation research to the departmental members of the Dissertation Committee for approval before any such documents are publicly distributed.

The student is also responsible for meeting University requirements when human subjects are used in research. These requirements are found in the University of Pittsburgh's Institutional Review Board (IRB) *Reference Manual for the Use of Human Subjects in Research*, which can be found on the IRB website at <http://www.ofres-hs.upmc.edu/irb/irb.htm>. The School of Information Sciences has a faculty representative on the Institutional Review Board who may be contacted with questions of procedure.

The student must prepare a fair copy of the dissertation conforming to the *Style and Form Manual for Graduate Thesis and Dissertation Preparation at the University of Pittsburgh* for the format of the dissertation, which can be found at <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/style.html>. Since the bibliographic style is best determined by the subject of the dissertation, a style manual of the student's choice may be used for the content of the dissertation and must be applied consistently throughout.

### **Proposal Defense**

After the student has prepared a proposal for dissertation research that has been reviewed by the Dissertation Advisor, the student must successfully defend the proposal and receive permission from the Dissertation Committee to begin research. The proposal must be submitted to the members of the Dissertation Committee at least two weeks prior to the time of the proposal meeting.

The Dissertation Committee must unanimously approve the dissertation topic and research plan before the student may be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree. When the proposal has been successfully defended, the chair of the student's Dissertation Committee shall notify the Chair of the Committee on Doctoral Studies, the Chair of the Department of Library and Information Science, and the Dean of SIS that the student has achieved formal candidacy.

## Dissertation Defense and Graduation

Students must be registered for at least one credit in the term of the graduation.

The student is responsible for presenting one copy of the dissertation in final form to each member of the Dissertation Committee at least two weeks prior to the date of the defense. The student should consult the Dean's Office about appropriate distribution of other final copies; one final copy must be given to the SIS Library. (A copy of any publication that results from the dissertation should be donated to the Information Sciences Library.)

The date, time, location, and subject of the dissertation defense shall be publicized before the defense is held. All members of the Dissertation Committee and such other persons as are interested may attend the final defense, but acceptance of the dissertation is determined by a vote of members of the Dissertation Committee. Only members of the Dissertation Committee may be present during the final deliberations and may vote on the passing of the candidate. A report of this examination, signed by all the members of the Dissertation Committee, must be sent to the Dean. If the decision of the committee is not unanimous, the case is referred to the Dean for resolution. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee should ensure that the dissertation is in final form before requesting signatures of the members of the committee.

### STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

All requirements for the Ph.D. degree must be completed in not more than 6 calendar years from the time of first registration. Students may, in extenuating circumstances, submit a formal request for extension of their statute of limitations or for a leave of absence from the program. The request must be submitted to the advisor and then presented to the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies for a decision.

<p>In all other matters of policy, refer to the University publication, <i>Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh</i>. The current version is posted at <a href="http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html">http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/regtoc.html</a>)</p>
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21 September 1999

## **APPENDIX A**

### **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

In accordance with University policy, all international graduate students are required to be registered for a full course of study which is 9 credits per term for 2 consecutive terms. (The third term may be for fewer credits.) After completion of all required courses (36 credits minimum), all international students must be registered for at least 1 credit per term until completion of their degree in order to maintain active status.

New international students **MAY NOT BE REGISTERED** until they have taken the required TOEFL or Michigan test, administered by the English Language Institute in cooperation with the Office of International Services (OIS), and the results are available and have been reviewed by the DLIS Committee on Doctoral Studies.

New international students must take their signed registration documents to OIS for verification before submission to the Registrar's Office. Passports should be presented to OIS at this time.

**APPENDIX B**

**DISSERTATION CREDIT FORM**

**University of Pittsburgh  
School of Information Sciences  
Department of Library and Information Science  
Doctoral Program**

**Report on Dissertation Credit**

Term: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Part I: To be completed by the student at the beginning of the term.

1. What are your goals for this semester? Please itemize:

Part II: To be completed by the student at the end of the term.

2. What progress have you made towards your dissertation during this semester? Please explain any departures from goals state on the first page of this form.

3. Itemize the remaining requirements for your doctorate. Give your projected date for

completion of each requirement.

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Date for Completion</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Preliminary Examination		
Completion of course work		
Comprehensive Examination		
Proposal Defense		
Dissertation Defense		

4. Comment on your goals for the next stage in your progress toward completion of requirements.

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Student's Signature

Date

Part III: To be completed by the advisor.

1. Comments on the student's progress on the dissertation during this term:
  
2. Comments on the student's next goals and timetable (if any).

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Advisor's Signature

Date

Attachment: Evidence of work completed during the term (e.g. annotated bibliography, literature review, etc.)

## APPENDIX C

### STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

In the Department of Library and Information Science, the Comprehensive Examination will have written and oral components, and will normally be offered in the Fall and Spring terms. Students will notify their advisor and the Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committee of their interest in taking the Comprehensive Examination at least six weeks prior to the examination date. "The dates for each student will be determined in consultation with the student and the student's comprehensive examination committee".

1. a broad perspective in current issues in library and information science, or archival studies, and
2. the student's designated research focus.

The second part of the examination will be an oral examination expanding on any points from the written work that the committee wishes to address or any questions arising from the broad, general area of interest. The student will be given two weeks (including three weekends) to complete the written examination. The oral examination (approximately two hours) will take place as soon as possible after the written component has been evaluated.

The Comprehensive Examination Committee will consist of three faculty in the Department of Library and Information Science: the student's advisor, a faculty member chosen by the student with the agreement of the faculty member, and a faculty member chosen by the Chair of Doctoral Studies. The student's committee will prepare the examination and evaluate both the written and oral components. If the committee decides that the student has not completed either the written or oral examination satisfactorily, the student will be allowed one additional opportunity to retake the entire examination.

The written examination will consist of four questions, two in each of the areas of the examination. The student will choose one of the two questions in each area. The first area of the examination will consider the broad perspective in current issues in the field. The second area will represent the student's declared area of interest. Questions in the broad area will be designed by the student's committee and reviewed by the Doctoral Studies Committee. The questions in the student's area of interest will be developed by the student's committee and reviewed by the Doctoral Studies Committee.

The examination will be tailored to the student's research interest. Each student will identify the broad general area of interest and, in three of four sentences, the more particularized area of research focus. These statements will be developed with the student's advisor and reviewed by the Chair of Doctoral Studies (a sample form is attached).

Though the student is required to answer only two questions, there is the expectation that the response will be comprehensive and include some level of analysis of the material. In terms of length, 12-15 p. would constitute a minimal answer for each question though longer papers are welcome.

**APPLICATION TO SIT FOR THE  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FACULTY ADVISOR: \_\_\_\_\_

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (faculty advisor)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (student selection)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (to be added by Chair of DS)

AREAS TO BE EXAMINED:

1. Broad area of interest (Library and Information Science or Archival Studies)
2. Focus of Research (one or two sentence description)

Reviewed by Chair of Doctoral Studies \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX D**

### **SUGGESTIONS ON CHOOSING A DISSERTATION ADVISOR FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH<sup>3</sup>**

(Prepared Under the Auspices of the University Council on Graduate Study)

Before starting dissertation research, you must have a major advisor who agrees to supervise your work. In addition, you must form a complete doctoral committee, subject to approval by the department chair and the dean, and be admitted to doctoral candidacy. But the first step is the choice of your major advisor. You and your advisor must mutually agree on the advising arrangement and the research topic. Both of you should enter the relationship as well informed as possible about the other. In advising relationships, "divorces" are possible, but they upset the timely progress toward degree and are emotionally draining.

Trade-offs and compromises are to be expected in selecting an advisor. For instance, it might be preferable to choose an advisor whose students take a slightly longer time to complete their degrees if they usually gain better jobs than those of a different faculty member. While some students may be eager to work with a famous full professor, others might fear that the busiest advisors would have the least time for their students. Finally, be aware that procedures for matching students and advisors may vary by program or department.

To select the best advisor, you might meet with all the faculty members of your program and talk with other graduate students in the program about the qualities of the faculty members eligible to direct dissertations. Be cautious about making assumptions, and ask questions covering a range of topics. Some questions should best be discussed with the faculty member in question, others might better be asked of advanced graduate students. To help you, consider the attached list of questions in selecting a dissertation advisor; the list is not intended to be a list of mandatory qualities that advisors should possess. Some items pertain more to specific disciplines than to others. Remember, too, that faculty members will have a number of questions to ask about you.

#### **Questions To Consider In Selecting A Dissertation Advisor**

These questions have been adapted from a document prepared by the Graduate School, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

- Is the advisor an expert in the area of research or scholarship that you intend to pursue? Is his/her critical or theoretical orientation consistent with yours?
- How much freedom will you have in your choice of dissertation topic with this advisor?
- What is the reputation of the advisor within the discipline?
- How responsive is the advisor? How long does it take him/her to return written material with comments?

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pitt.edu/~graduate/dissadvisor.html>

- How accessible is the advisor for discussion?
- Is the advisor likely to remain on the faculty for the duration of your degree work?
- How many students does he/she advise? If none, why? If a large number, does this affect the attention that he/she pays to individual students?
- How much time does he/she spend away from campus? Is he/she available during the summer?
- How long do students take to complete their degrees with this advisor?
- What proportion of this advisor's students successfully complete the program?
- What is the placement record of this advisor's students? Where do they get jobs?
- Does the advisor publish with his/her students as first author?
- How many publications does the typical student accumulate with this advisor?
- Do the advisor's students go to disciplinary or professional conferences?
- Do the advisor's students make presentations of their own work at conferences? Do they make presentations of joint work with the advisor?
- How much interaction is there with other advisees of this faculty member? Does he/she direct a research group or rather a series of individuals?
- How much of the research is collaborative with the advisor and/or other advisees?
- How much involvement is expected in "group" research projects that are not appropriate for inclusion in your dissertation? How much of this contributes to your professional development and marketability?
- How is credit for collaborative work assigned?
- Is the advisor engaged in patentable or saleable work? If so, how does he/she assign credit to the student? Does this work get published promptly?
- Is the advisor's work funded? What are the guarantees of funding for the advisor's students? Do the advisor's students get summer support?
- Does the advisor assist his/her students in obtaining their own funding from outside sources such as fellowship programs?
- Does the advisor have good relations with other faculty in the program?
- Does the advisor have a reputation for ethical behavior?
- Are the advisor's work habits compatible with your own?