Plan of Study

- Advisory committee: Advisor + 2 or more other faculty. The students must form their advisory committee by the end of their first year.
- Overall course requirement: at least nine graduate level courses (including the two core and one specialization course) with GPA >= 3.5. Other courses need to be 500 or 600 level courses.
  - A student receiving a grade lower than B- in a course on the plan of study will have to repeat or replace the course. If a course is repeated, only the last grade, even if lower, is used to compute all GPAs involving that course.
- Policy for transferring courses from MS degree:
  - The MS courses taken in the department as part of the MS degree within the department count towards Ph.D course requirement
  - Otherwise, the students can transfer up to 4 MS degree courses into the doctoral program. The courses on the plan of study cannot have been used to satisfy requirements for an undergraduate degree nor can they cause the student's doctoral plan of study to include courses from more than one master's program. Students who want to transfer courses from an MS degree, should petition the graduate committee and the transfer decision will be made on a case by case basis.

Preliminary exam

- Students must pass a preliminary examination that tests competence in the student’s research area and readiness for research on a specific problem. The content of the examination is at the discretion of the examining committee. The examination may include a presentation by the student of papers relevant to a chosen research topic, an oral examination over advanced material on the student’s research topic, a presentation by the student of the student’s preliminary research results, or a proposal of thesis research.
- The examining committee consists of the student's advisory committee, and of an additional member, who is not on the advisory committee, who is approved by the Graduate Committee.
- The examination must be taken at least two semesters before the final examination of the thesis.

Thesis and Final exam/Defense

- The thesis must present new results worthy of publication.
- The student must defend the thesis publicly and to the satisfaction of the Examining Committee.
- The Examining Committee consists of the Advisory Committee and one additional faculty member representing an area outside that of the thesis assigned by the Graduate Committee chair.
- The student can only defend their thesis after at least two semesters following the completion of the preliminary exam. The thesis defense should be completed by the end of the fourth semester following the one in which the student passes the preliminary examination. The Graduate Committee may grant extensions.

Annual Reviews

- Each doctoral student’s academic and research progress is evaluated annually by their advisory committee. Students receive written feedback and guidance to support their progress.