

## **THESIS PROPOSALS (incorporating minor revisions approved at Department Meeting, Sept. 24, 1999)**

### **Guidelines for presentation of the thesis proposal**

All Ph.D. students must make an oral thesis proposal by April 15 of their third year, on a date to be arranged with the graduate coordinator. Faculty and Ph.D. students are expected to attend the presentation.

The proposal should include:

- a clear statement of the topic of research interest
- a synthesis of the major literature in the area and how the topic is related to the literature
- an indication of the major areas of research involved in the dissertation
- a sense of the direction the student plans to take in carrying out the research.

If the presentation does not meet these criteria, as determined by the faculty present, the student meets with the advisor and makes a second presentation no more than three months after the first, and in any case no later than June 15 of the third year. If the second presentation is judged by the faculty present to be unacceptable, the student will not be permitted to continue in the program.

### **Guidelines for the written proposal**

All Ph.D. students must submit a written thesis proposal before their oral presentation.

A supervisory committee, consisting of the advisor and two other faculty members chosen by the student and the advisor, evaluates the proposal, makes individual comments on it, and meets with the student to discuss it prior to the presentation. If the committee has serious difficulties with the proposal, it may request that the student rework it. If a student is asked to redo the proposal, the committee must indicate where the problems lie and what kinds of improvements are necessary. If the committee cannot reach agreement about the suitability of the proposal, the student, together with the advisor or the graduate coordinator, may choose a fourth person to evaluate the proposal. This person makes a written evaluation without consulting the committee. A final decision on the suitability of the proposal is made by the committee and the fourth person. The proposal must be approved by June 15 of the third year. A student may be not allowed to continue in the program if an acceptable proposal is not received.

The report should normally be between twenty and fifty pages long. It should contain:

- a clear statement of the major problem to be investigated in the thesis
- an outline of the major areas to be investigated, including discussion of the relationship between each topic and the overall problem
- a review of the appropriate literature
- substantial work in one area (e.g. a draft of one chapter)

It is recognized that the thesis will be an outgrowth of the report, and that it may deviate in certain ways from the topic outlined in the report. For this reason, copies of the proposals are not made publicly available, but are kept on file in the office of the graduate coordinator.

It should be noted that the dates above have been devised with the optimal progress of the student in mind. Funding is provided for no more than four years of the Ph.D. program, hence it is important for students to finish all requirements within their four-year period. If the deadlines are not met, the student will meet with the graduate coordinator and the advisor to discuss the reasons for delay.