Milestones for a PhD in Operations Management and Information Management (OPIM)

**Coursework:** At least 30 hours of graduate-level coursework during the first two years. OPIM doctoral students must maintain a minimum cumulative 3.3 GPA. Beyond the required courses, coursework varies to some degree depending on the student’s research interests. Students generally take graduate-level courses foundations classes and advanced topic classes including classes from related disciplines. Registration for coursework must be done in consultation with the OPIM doctoral program director.

**OPIM Required Courses:** Required courses for OPIM is largely dependent upon the student’s research interests. Students often take courses in statistics, economics, and computer science. Students are required to work closely with the OPIM doctoral program director and/or advisor to determine the most appropriate courses to take.

**Research Papers:** The primary focus of a PhD is to complete and publish research that adds to the body of knowledge in the field. Research papers are required throughout the program and must be presented at division workshops and seminars. These papers may be part of course work or may be independent research projects. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the Hart Fellowship program to work with a faculty member over the summers to conduct publishable research.

**Comprehensive Examination:** A comprehensive examination is taken after satisfactory completion of necessary coursework. Students must also pass a comprehensive examination in OPIM, which has two parts: a written examination at the end of the second year and an oral examination at the start of the third year. This oral examination involves a presentation of original research that the student has completed on his or her own, along with a companion paper. Students must contact the OPIM doctoral program director in advance to know the requirements and the specific deadline. The comprehensive examination may be retaken once, but must be passed prior to advancement.

**Dissertation Proposal Defense:** An oral defense of a dissertation proposal takes the form of a presentation to the student’s dissertation committee. The proposal defense generally occurs in the third or fourth year prior to going on the job market. The proposal defense helps students receive formal feedback on their dissertation topic.

**Final Dissertation Defense:** A final defense of a dissertation is generally completed during the spring of the final year in the program. At the conclusion of
the dissertation defense, faculty may require minor changes to the student’s work, significant revision, or rejection.