Milestones for a PhD in Information Systems (IS)

Coursework: At least 30 hours of graduate-level coursework during the first two years. Information Systems (IS) 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, including courses from related disciplines and advanced research method courses. Registration for coursework must be done in consultation with faculty advisor and/or IS doctoral program director.

Information Systems Required Course:

The information systems doctoral seminar. The seminar covers the major research streams in IS discipline and topics may vary based on faculty availability.

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Other courses for IS students are largely dependent upon the student's research interests. Students often take courses in psychology, economics, computer science, statistics, or other divisions in Leeds. Students are required to work closely with faculty advisor and/or IS doctoral program director to determine the most appropriate courses to take.

Specialization in a Related Discipline: Students are encouraged to obtain a specialization in a related discipline, depending on the research interests. Typically disciplines include psychology, economics, sociology, strategy, marketing, operations, and organizational behavior. Students who desire to obtain a specialization in other disciplines should consult with faculty advisor and/or IS doctoral program director.

Specialization in a Research Method: Students should obtain strong methodological skills. Depending on the intended specialization in research methods, students are recommended to take quantitative/qualitative method courses in the psychology or education department, econometrics courses in the economics department, and artificial intelligence or natural language processing courses in the computer science department. Students who desire to specialize in certain research methods by taking courses from other departments should consult with faculty advisor and/or IS doctoral program director.

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 coursework 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. This exam is an original research academic paper that should be independently completed by the student and be in a format ready for a top academic journal submission. This paper will be presented to the comprehensive exam committee at the end of the second year or the beginning of third year. Students must contact the IS 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.