STARTING FALL 2005
The comprehensive portfolio is intended to evaluate the understanding of core material
and the readiness of doctoral students to pursue research. It consists of the following
components:

1. Course performance,
2. Research statement,
3. Curriculum vita,
4. Copies of important publications (if any),
5. Two letters of support, one from the research mentor, one from another CSEE
   faculty member.
6. **Students who enter the program in Fall 2008 or later are also required to
   submit an independently produced written report.**

The CMSC Graduate Committee will make its decision about the student’s continuation
in the Ph.D. program based on evaluation of these materials. The student must submit the
final portfolio before the end of the fourth semester for full-time students, or the end of
the fifth semester for part-time students. Templates for the student research statement
and faculty letters of support are available on the CSEE website. While it is expected
that the portfolio will be strong across all areas, the portfolio will be evaluated as a
whole, with excellent performance in one area offsetting lower performance in another
area.

**Course Performance**

Demonstrated strong performance in graduate coursework is important for the foundation
of knowledge needed to conduct research in computer science. It is recommended that
Ph.D. students achieve a minimum of three As and one B in the core courses plus one
from the following list of electives: CMSC 626, 635, 651, 655, 661, 671, 681. The core
courses are CMSC 611, 621, and 641.

Should the student’s GPA in the selected four courses fall below the recommended 3.75,
this performance in coursework may be offset in the review of the overall portfolio with
evidence that reflects one or more of the following areas: high levels of achievement in
advanced coursework, strength in the written report, demonstrated superior proficiency in
preliminary research, or other evidence of potential research excellence provided by the
faculty or the student in the portfolio. Students may also repeat courses if necessary to
gain sufficient proficiency in these core areas.

**For Transfer Students:**

1. **For the core courses:** You may submit a request for course equivalency for courses
taken at other universities (with a minimum grade of B or equivalent). If the course
syllabi, exams/projects, and evaluation criteria are comparable to the UMBC course,
we will consider the grade in that course in the evaluation of the course requirement
portion of the portfolio.

2. **For non-core courses:** The current standard policy as outlined elsewhere in the
document applies.
**Written Report**  
*(applicable only to students who enter the program in Fall 2008 or later)*

The ability to analyze and synthesize ideas is critical for success in a doctoral program. All students must submit a written report on a topic approved by the research mentor. This can be a report from an independent study or independent project course, or it may come from preliminary research conducted by the student. The student must write the report independently. The report should demonstrate understanding of materials from more than one subfield in computer science and related disciplines. The student is encouraged but not required to include original results in the report.

The report can be up to 10 pages, single-spaced. It should be in double-column format with the font for the main text no smaller than 10pt. You may follow the format instruction of any major Computer Science conference for other formatting specifics. As an example, the LaTeX style file and Microsoft Word template for IJCAI are provided at the graduate website.

**Submission Details**

1. The completed portfolios must be submitted by January 31 or August 31.

2. **Preliminary:** Full-time students must submit a preliminary portfolio before the beginning of their second year in the Ph.D. program at UMBC (i.e. at the end of completing the first year). Part-time students must submit a preliminary portfolio before the beginning of their fourth semester in the Ph.D. program at UMBC. The preliminary portfolio is not required to include the written report. The support letter from the research mentor is required, additional letters are optional. Feedback will be provided on the preliminary portfolio so that students can strengthen the final submission.

3. **Final:** Full-time students must submit the final portfolio before the beginning of their third year at UMBC (i.e. after completing two years). Part-time student must submit the final portfolio before the beginning of their sixth semester (i.e. after completing the fifth semester). These deadlines are the same as that for passing the former comprehensive exams.

4. **The Graduate Committee will provide one of three decisions on the final portfolio:** Pass, Deficient (certain conditions will be imposed for continuation in the program), or Fail.

5. The final portfolio can be submitted ahead of schedule.