

UMBC Computer Science Comprehensive Portfolio

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. An independently produced report
5. Two letters of support, one from the research mentor, once from another CSEE faculty member.

The CMSC Graduate Committee will make its decision about the student's continuation in the Ph.D. program based on evaluation of these materials. 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 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 A's and one B in the core courses: *CMSC 611, CMSC 621, and CMSC 641*, plus one from the following list of electives: *CMSC 626, 635, 651, 661, 671, and 681*.

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 the 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(s), 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.

Independently Produced Report

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 31st or August 31st.
2. **Preliminary:** Full-time students must submit a preliminary portfolio at the beginning of the 3rd semester in the Ph.D. program at UMBC. Part-time students must submit a preliminary portfolio at the beginning of their 4th 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 at the beginning of their 5th semester at UMBC. Part-time students must submit the final portfolio at the beginning of their 6th semester.
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. Submission dates are January 31st and August 31st.