

Ph.D. Tracks in Cognitive Science

Center for Cognitive Science

State University of New York at Buffalo

(Effective Fall 2002)

1 Description

Ph.D. study of Cognitive Science at the University at Buffalo consists of a special Cognitive Science Track in the Ph.D. program of each of the participating departments. Participation in the track consists of five steps:

1. Admission as a Graduate Student Member of the Center for Cognitive Science;
2. Taking the prescribed set of Cognitive Science courses;
3. Attendance at colloquia of the Center for Cognitive Science
4. Submission of a progress report to the Director of the Cognitive Science Tracks Program at the end of each academic year.
5. Having an interdisciplinary, Cognitive Science dissertation committee.
6. Writing a Cognitive Science-related dissertation.

2 Admission

To become a Graduate Student Member of the Center for Cognitive Science (CCS), a student must be admitted into the graduate program of one of the participating departments. This will be the student's home department. In addition, the student must apply for admission to the Ph.D. Tracks of the CCS. You may obtain an application form from the CCS office, 652 Baldy, or request it by email at ccs-cogsci-contact@buffalo.edu. The following materials should be returned to the Center office:

- a. The application cover sheet
- b. A letter containing i) a statement of purpose stating your disciplinary interests in your home department, and your interdisciplinary interests in Cognitive Science; and ii) a list of courses to be taken in satisfaction of the tracks requirements. This letter should be endorsed by two faculty who are members of the CCS (they may be but need not be faculty in your department); Note that revisions to this original proposal in the course of studies are normal and expected.
- c. A letter of recommendation from a faculty member of the CCS (either your major professor or the Cognitive Science advisor in your department. The letter should be a brief statement of the advisor's confidence in you as a contributing participant in the Ph.D. Tracks in the CCS.

All graduate student members of the CCS are expected to elect the Cognitive Science track of their home departments.

3 Financial Aid

Financial aid, in the form of Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Assistantships, Research Assistantships, and Fellowships are available from the home department. In addition, each year, the Center for Cognitive Science has a

limited number of Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships. These are available only to students who have been admitted or who have been offered admission as a Graduate Student Member of the Center for Cognitive Science.

A call for Applications for financial aid will be issued near the beginning of Spring semester each year. To apply for a Cognitive Science Assistantship or Fellowship, supply the following two documents to the Center:

1. A letter from you describing a) your progress in the Graduate Tracks program as well as your Department's program, b) a statement regarding your intended plan of study and research for the year for which you are applying for funding, and c) your tentative time schedule until completion of your Ph.D. Your letter should include a sketch of the topics on which your studies and research are focused.
2. A letter from a faculty member of the Center, supporting your application.

NOTE: If you apply for Center membership and financial aid simultaneously, you may submit one letter from a faculty member supporting both.

4 Participating Departments

The currently participating departments are listed below. For changes to this list, consult the Center office or the office of your home department.

- o Anthropology
- o Linguistics
- o Psychology
- o Computer Science
- o Philosophy
- o Communicative Disorders and Sciences

5 Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee must satisfy the requirements of the home department. In addition the committee chair (major professor) must be a faculty member of the Center for Cognitive Science, and one other committee member must be a faculty member of the Center for Cognitive Science not from the home department. Satisfying this requirement might require a larger dissertation committee than is usual for the home department.

6 The Graduate Student Association for Cognitive Science

The Graduate Student Association for Cognitive Science provides an opportunity for graduate students interested in Cognitive Science to interact with each other. All Graduate Student Members of the Center for Cognitive Science are automatically members of the Graduate Student Association for Cognitive Science. Other interested graduate students may join.

7 Students in Non-Participating Departments

A graduate student whose home department is not one of the participating departments listed in Section 4 may still pursue a Ph.D. Track in Cognitive Science. The student must satisfy all of the requirements listed in this document with the following modifications.

Admission

The student's major professor need not be a faculty member of the Center for Cognitive Science. However, in addition to the materials listed in Section 2, the student must submit a letter from his/her department's Director of Graduate Studies approving the student's intention to pursue a Cognitive Science Ph.D. Track.

Dissertation Committee

The committee chair (major professor) need not be a faculty member of the Center for Cognitive Science, but two members of the dissertation committee must be, and they must be from different departments. Note that Graduate School rules allow Ph.D. candidates to have more than three members on their committee.

Course Requirements

In addition to the general requirements described below, the five Cognitive Science Courses (B) must be distributed across three different departments. Up to two of these may be from your home department if any are on the approved course list, and you may apply to the Center office concerning non-listed courses.

In addition to the requirements of the home department, each student in a Cognitive Science Track must take 6 Cognitive Science courses that carry at least 3 credit hours each.

- A. Introductory Cognitive Science Course 575, cross-listed in several different departments.
- B. Five additional Cognitive Science-approved courses. Three of these must be distributed across two departments outside your home department.
- C. The courses should reflect general coherence around a topic area of your choice. Typical areas are listed below.
- D. Topical Areas: At least 4 of the 6 Cognitive Science courses must form a coherent group. It is up to the student and the student's major professor to choose the 4 coherent courses according to the student's research interests. The following are examples of possible topical areas.
 - Cognitive Neuroscience
 - Comparative Cognitive Systems
 - Concepts and Categories
 - Formal and Computational Systems
 - Discourse
 - Spoken Language
 - Computational Linguistics
 - Vision

The CCS maintains and yearly updates a list of approved courses. There may be other relevant and qualified courses, such as topics seminars, which escape the attention of the Center office. You may apply to use such a non-listed course that coheres with your topical area. Contact the Center office for the approval procedure.

In general, a tracks member may request a modification of course or other requirements by application to the Center with substantive justification. Such requests can be informally checked with the director of graduate studies before formal application.