Expected Outcomes: Research Experience

Our students will extend the state-of-the-art of an area of computer science and software engineering.

Assessment methods

Method: Dissertation Research Process

To earn the PhD degree in computer science and software engineering, all students must 1) propose an original, novel research endeavor; 2) document the research and findings through via an academic dissertation; and 3) defend the research to a committee consisting of involved faculty and an objective reader.

Findings:

1) Doctoral students become so focused on their research that they seldom have opportunities to explain it to an audience that isn’t as familiar with the area as they are. 2) Doctoral students are generally unaware of the scope of what is expected of them with regard to dissertation research. 3) Doctoral students seldom know what research other students are conducting.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We started a seminar series in which students present their research ideas. This has provided a forum for communicating research in understandable terms, for allowing students to see research expectations, and for familiarizing students with what research is being conducted in the department.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Communication

Our graduates will demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication skills.

Assessment methods

Method: Evidence of Publication

All students must publish at least two papers in academic journals, in addition to completing their dissertation.

Findings:

Although the requirement to publish is a departmental policy, it is up to the various major professors to enforce it. This is being done inconsistently. Further, the quality of the journals in which publications appear varies in quality.

How did you use findings for improvement?

We are putting in place a yearly student evaluation, where students submit a report of their research activities and publications. The evaluations are assessed by a committee and feedback is given to the students as the quality of the research and publications. The GPO will...
keep the evaluations on file and enforce the publication requirement. To date, we have planned a pilot evaluation process that will involve a limited number of students. We will expand the program to all of our doctoral students once the pilot effort has been evaluated at the end of the Spring 2013 semester.

Additional comments:

None