CIS Benchmarks for satisfactory progress towards the Ph.D.

- First year
  - Pass at least 2 of the 6 WPE 1 exams.
  - Students generally take at least one independent study with their potential research advisor(s).
  - Students must find a research advisor before the end of their second semester.

- Second year
  - Pass the required 4 of the 6 WPE 1 exams. (The four exams must include either 501 or 505, and either 502 or 511.)
  - Pass the WPE II – The WPE II committee, consisting of 3 faculty (chaired by someone other than the student’s advisor), will determine if the student’s contribution is sufficient based on a paper and a presentation. The WPE II may be passed based on either a WPE II paper or a Masters thesis.
  - The Teaching Practicum should be fulfilled; it may be postponed at the request of the advisor for students who have not passed all sections of the WPE 1.
  - Penn is required to certify to the English fluency of all students acting as teaching assistants whose native language is other than English. Penn’s English Language Program administers the English Fluency test.

- Third year
  - Students must assemble a thesis committee of at least 3 Penn faculty, (the dissertation advisor is not one of the 3), and one external committee member and present them a five page description of proposed research. (The external need not attend the meeting.) If needed the thesis committee may be changed prior to the thesis proposal.

- Fourth year
  - Students should defend a thesis proposal to their thesis committee.

- Further years
  - The student must meet annually with the thesis committee (minus the external). The thesis proposal must be defended to the thesis committee at least one year before the final defense. The external member of the thesis committee is only required to attend the thesis proposal and the final thesis defense.
  - Ph.D. students must take four seminar courses: CIS 600/level courses, CIS 800/PhD Special Topic Seminars or designated CIS 700/Special Topic courses.

Each doctoral student has a worksheet accessible through PennIntouch, which both the student and advisor can access.
Information on the above doctoral degree requirements can be found at http://www.cis.upenn.edu/current-students/graduate/phd/index.php