Proposal for Changing PhD Course Requirements

Currently, the department has the following PhD course requirements:

- 7 600-800 level courses over 5 areas, no more than 3 in one area
  - 5 A-’s and 2 B-’s in 5 semesters
  - These courses must be completed to advance to candidacy
- 2 600-800 level courses (electives) with at least B-’s
  - These courses may be completed at any time
- 1 credit How to Conduct Great Research course
  - This course should be completed in the first two years

Currently, getting an MS along the way requires:
- 4 600-800 level [MS qualifying] courses with B average

To help students get involved in research earlier, and perform more research during their PhD, it is proposed to change the PhD course requirements to the following:

- 4 600-700 level courses over 4 areas
  - 3 A-’s and 1 B- in 4 semesters
  - These courses must be completed to advance to candidacy
- 1 additional 600-700 level course in a 5th area with at least a B-
  - This course may be completed at any time
- 3 600-800 level courses (electives)
  - 1 A- and 2 B-’s
  - At least two electives must be CMSC courses
  - These courses may be completed at any time
- 1 credit How to Conduct Great Research course
  - This course should be completed in the first two years

For the MS, the qualifying requirement will be replaced by:
- 4 600-700 level courses with B average

Potential amendments:
1. Students may replace one 600-800 level elective with three 1-credit, 600-800-level seminars.
2. Students must take a 3-credit 798 or 898 research course during their first two years.
3. Students may not waive any course requirements.
Discussion points (not part of the proposal):

- Students can advance to candidacy with only 4 courses instead of 7, allowing them to spread out required courses more.
- PhD students can take CMSC 798 to make up the 6 extra credits required for the MS.
- Current 600-700 level courses (this is a link)
- The only optional 1-credit seminar we have now is CMSC798E, the fall research seminar.