Timeline for Degree Completion for Basic Science PhD Students

The target time for completing the PhD in a basic science discipline is 5-6 years, though the precise time will depend upon the details of the selected research project and the performance of the student. Beyond the qualifying exam at the end of the second year of study, it is expected that most students will dedicate 100% of effort towards research, completing all remaining courses and requirements of the degree program and professional development.

Year 1

- Core and elective coursework
- 3 lab rotations, selected from table below [full policy]
- 3 lab rotation evaluations from the student [form link]
- 3 lab rotation evaluations from the rotation lab mentor [form link]
- Receive 1st year evaluation (rubric) from the Program Director
- Selection of research advisor by June 30 of the first academic year
- Attend relevant professional development seminars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rotation Begins</th>
<th>Rotation Ends</th>
<th>Evaluation due to Senior Associate Dean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>December 20</td>
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<td>January 1</td>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>April 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>June 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>September 15</td>
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Year 2

- Core and elective coursework
- Start of research project
- Selection of dissertation advisory committee by July 1, after the 4th semester of study
- First committee meeting prior to the qualifying exam
- Develop and write thesis proposal
- Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Teaching Assistantship (TA)
- Attend relevant professional development seminars
- Write a fellowship application (strongly encouraged)

Years 3-4

- Qualifying Exam (advance to candidacy) by October 1 of the 5th semester of study
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Attend relevant professional development seminars
- Dissertation project
- Annual committee meetings
• Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
• Teaching Assistantship (TA), if not completed in Year 2
• Write a fellowship application (if applicable)
• Publish academic research as first author or co-author
• Attend and present research at a scientific conferences

Years 5-6
• Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
• Attend relevant professional development seminars
• Conclude experiments and begin writing thesis
• Annual committee meetings
• Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
• Publish academic research as first author or co-author
• Attend and present research at a scientific conferences
• Search and interview for postdoc/employment
• Complete thesis and final oral defense by 5.5-6 years
• Graduate with PhD

Related Policies and Standards

Time to Degree Standard
The School of Medicine and Dentistry Committee on Graduate Studies has adopted a 5-6 year time-to-degree standard for PhD degree completion to ensure that students make timely progress toward completion of their degree objectives. The stipend is not guaranteed beyond the end of the 6th year of study (starting with the incoming class of 2015).

Grades
The University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry requires satisfactory academic performance and accomplishment in research and coursework for all students. This satisfactory performance is mandatory for continuation in good academic standing in the graduate program.

[link to C or Below Grade Policy]

Selection of Advisor
All students are required to select a permanent research lab and thesis research advisor by June 30 of the first academic year.

Selection of Advisory Committee
All students are required to select an advisory committee following University and SMD guidelines for the composition of members, no later than July 1 of the second year of graduate study (after the 4th semester of study).

Lab Rotation and Annual Evaluation
Lab rotation evaluations are required for all biomedical science, including Translational Biomedical Science, PhD students. Evaluations are due to the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education no later than 5 days after the end date of the lab rotation period.
Annual evaluations are required for all PhD students in the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Evaluations are due to the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education no later than June 30 of each academic year.

(link to full policy)

Publication Requirement
All students are required to be the primary author on a peer-reviewed journal article submitted for publication prior to defending their PhD research.

Qualifying Examination Requirement
All students are required to hold a Qualifying Examination to advance to doctoral candidacy at the end of the second year of study (no later than October 1 of the third year of graduate study). Students should refer to their program-specific advancement to doctoral candidacy requirements in program handbooks published each admission year.

Teaching Assistant Requirement
The teaching requirement is to be fulfilled by serving for at least one semester as a Teaching Assistant (TA). The duties of a TA include but are not limited to tutoring students, conducting problem solving sessions, preparing and supervising laboratory sessions, and grading.

Performance Standard on Required Milestones and Exams
If a student fails to pass a qualifying examination, cannot find a thesis advisor, cannot form a thesis committee, or fails to meet other program, SMD or University standards, the Graduate Program Director may recommend academic probation or academic dismissal to the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

When considering academic probation or academic dismissal, the Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education expects documentation indicating that the student received substantial written feedback regarding his or her specific deficiencies. Students must be provided with sufficient opportunities to fulfill the unmet standard(s).