Timeline for Degree Completion for Health Services Research and Policy PhD Students

The target time for completing the PhD in a health 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 comprehensive 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
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Receive 1st year evaluation (rubric) from the Program Director
- Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Attend relevant professional development seminars

Year 2
- Core and elective coursework
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Comprehensive Examination
- Attend relevant professional development seminars

Years 3-4
- Complete any remaining coursework (year 3)
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Pass Qualifying Exam (i.e. pass Dissertation proposal exam and advance to candidacy) by June 30th of academic year 4
- Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Teaching Assistantships (2 semesters as TA)
- Write a fellowship or dissertation grant application (if applicable)
- Publish academic research as first author or co-author
- Attend and present research at scientific conferences
- Attend relevant professional development seminars

Years 5-6
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Annual committee meetings (if necessary)
- Publish academic research as first author or co-author
• Attend and present research at scientific conferences
• Attend relevant professional development seminars
• 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 Thesis Advisor and Dissertation Committee
All students are expected to select a thesis research advisor and an advisory committee following University and SMD guidelines for the composition of members during the period of their third and fourth years. The full thesis committee is required in order to schedule the qualifying exam (i.e. the thesis proposal).

Annual Evaluation
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 Expectations
All students are expected to be the primary author on a manuscript submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal prior to defending their PhD research.

Qualifying Examination Requirement
All students are required to pass a Qualifying Examination to advance to doctoral candidacy as early as possible during the period of their third or fourth years. 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 two semesters as a Teaching Assistant (TA). The duties of a TA may include, but are not limited to, tutoring students, conducting problem solving sessions, preparing and supervising laboratory sessions, grading, and lecturing.

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 and expectations, the 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).