Timeline for Degree Completion for Statistics PhD Students

The target time for completing the PhD in Statistics is approximately 5 years, though the precise time will depend upon the details of the selected research project and the performance of the student. Beyond the Advanced Examination at the end of the second year of study, it is expected that most students will dedicate 100% of their effort towards research, completing all remaining courses and requirements of the degree program, and professional development.

Year 1

- Core and elective coursework
- Teaching Assistantship (TA)
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Computing instruction (4 weeks in May/June)
- Receive 1st year evaluation (rubric) from the Program Director
- Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Basic Examination prior to the start of Year 2 coursework (August)
- Attend relevant professional development seminars

Year 2

- Core and elective coursework
- Reading courses with faculty to explore possible research topics
- Teaching Assistantship (TA)
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Annual evaluation, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Advanced Examination prior to the start of Year 3 coursework (August)
- Attend relevant professional development seminars

Years 3-4

- Complete remaining coursework
- Reading and research courses with faculty
- Research Assistantship (RA)
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Select dissertation topic and advisor by the end of Year 3
- Present research progress seminar in May of Year 3 (Annual PhD Student Workshop)
- Select dissertation committee by Spring of Year 4
- Qualifying Examination (dissertation proposal) by May of Year 4
- Annual evaluation from dissertation advisor, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Submit academic research papers for publication as first author or co-author
- Attend and present research at scientific conferences
- Attend relevant professional development seminars
- Summer internship (optional)
Year 5

- Conclude research and write thesis
- Research Assistantship (RA)
- Attend relevant professional development seminars
- Seminars and activities required by program and/or funding source
- Annual committee meeting (if necessary)
- Annual evaluation from dissertation advisor/committee, due each academic year no later than June 30 [form link]
- Submit academic research papers for publication as first author or co-author
- Attend and present research at scientific conferences
- Search and interview for postdoc/employment
- Complete thesis and final oral defense by end of Year 5
- 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 strongly encouraged to select a permanent dissertation advisor by June 30 of the third academic year.

Selection of Dissertation Committee
All students are required to select a dissertation committee, following University and SMD guidelines for the composition of members, at least one month prior to the Qualifying Examination (dissertation 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 peer-reviewed journal article submitted for publication prior to defending their PhD research.

Qualifying Examination Requirement
All students are required to pass a Qualifying Examination to advance to doctoral candidacy. Students are strongly encouraged to schedule their Qualifying Examination no later than May of Year 4. 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, and grading homework assignments and examinations.

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).