DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FIELD OF BIOSTATISTICS

Program Director and Academic Advisor: H. Liang (CCAS)

The PhD degree program in biostatistics provides doctoral training in the theory of probability, statistics focusing on biostatistical methodology. The 72-credit degree program is jointly administered by the Department of Statistics (https://statistics.columbian.gwu.edu/) in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Milken Institute School of Public Health (http://publichealth.gwu.edu/) (SPH) and its associated research facility, The Biostatistics Center. The program is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education through CCAS and by the Council on Education for Public Health through the Milken Institute SPH. Regulations and requirements for the graduate degree are compatible with policies and scholarship requirements of both CCAS and SPH. The degree is conferred by CCAS.

Visit the program website (https://publichealth.gwu.edu/programs/biostatistics-phd/) for additional program information.

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Programs (https://next.bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#degreeregulationstext).

The requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Program (https://next.bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#doctoraltext).

Required preparatory courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate course requirements (or equivalents to these GW courses) for admission consideration:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 1231</td>
<td>Single-Variable Calculus I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 1232</td>
<td>Single-Variable Calculus II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAT 2118</td>
<td>Regression Analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MATH 2233</td>
<td>Multivariable Calculus</td>
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Required courses

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<th>Code</th>
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<th>Credits</th>
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Additional course requirements* (or equivalents to these GW courses):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MATH 2184</td>
<td>Linear Algebra I</td>
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One of the following courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBH 6247</td>
<td>Design of Health Studies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBH 6299</td>
<td>Topics in Epidemiology and Biostatistics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBH 6007</td>
<td>Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>or PUBH 6006</td>
<td>Management and Policy Approaches to Public Health</td>
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**Electives**

9 credits in electives from the following approved lists of STAT and PUBH courses.

Approved statistics electives (at least 3 credits must be selected from among the first three courses below):

- STAT 6231 Categorical Data Analysis
- STAT 8262 Nonparametric Inference
- STAT 6214 Applied Linear Models
- STAT 6207 Methods of Statistical Computing I
- STAT 6208 Methods of Statistical Computing II
- STAT 6215 Applied Multivariate Analysis I
- STAT 6216 Applied Multivariate Analysis II
- STAT 6217 Design of Experiments
- STAT 6223 Bayesian Statistics: Theory and Applications
- STAT 6242 Modern Regression Analysis
- STAT 6287 Sample Surveys
- STAT 6289 Topics in Statistics
- STAT 8257 Probability
- STAT 8258 Distribution Theory
- STAT 8263 Advanced Statistical Theory I
- STAT 8264 Advanced Statistical Theory II
- STAT 8265 Multivariate Analysis
- STAT 8273 Stochastic Processes I
- STAT 8274 Stochastic Processes II
- STAT 8281 Advanced Time Series Analysis
- STAT 8288 Topics in Sample Surveys
- BIOS 8998 Advanced Reading and Research (see advisor)

**Consulting**

Consulting courses may be waived by the Biostatistics Program Director, based on written documentation of prior equivalent coursework or relevant work experience. Waiver of the consulting course increases the total number of elective to be taken by the number of consulting credits waived.

- PUBH 8283 Doctoral Biostatistics Consulting Practicum
- PUBH 8258 Advanced Topics in Biostatistical Consulting

**Dissertation research**

- BIOS 8999 Dissertation Research (taken for 6 to 24 credits )

**General and final examinations**

The general examination is given in two parts:

- Part I is the qualifying exam, a written comprehensive examination based on the course content of STAT 6201, STAT 6202 (administered by faculty of the Department of Statistics), and PUBH 8366 (administered by the faculty of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics).
- The qualifying examination is given over a two-day period in the beginning of the fall semester of every academic year and consists of one four-hour theory exam and one two-hour biostatistical methods/applications exam. Students are expected to take the comprehensive examination within 24 months from the date of enrollment in the program. A student who fails to pass the comprehensive examination may, with the approval of the faculty, repeat the examination the following year. Failure on the second attempt results in termination from the PhD program.
- All examination questions focus on material that a person seeking a PhD in biostatistics is expected to know, regardless of subsequent specialization. The examination encompasses material in core mathematical statistics—STAT 6201 and STAT 6202—and biostatistical methods courses—PUBH 8366—in the PhD program in biostatistics. Specifically,

  1. The theory portion of the exam—STAT 6201 and STAT 6202—is based on the first 10 chapters


- Part II, the research proposal, consists of an oral examination based on a written dissertation research proposal. As soon as feasible after successful completion of the comprehensive exam, students are encouraged to identify a dissertation advisor and a topic of research. The written dissertation proposal is then submitted to the student’s Dissertation Research Committee, and the student makes an oral presentation of their proposal to the Committee. The Committee determines the student’s readiness to pursue and successfully complete the proposed research, in addition to the appropriateness of the specific problem for dissertation-level research.

Upon successful completion of the required coursework and both parts of the general examination, the candidate is generally recommended to the Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) for promotion to PhD candidacy—the dissertation research. A candidate must file an approved dissertation research plan with CCAS before being admitted to PhD candidacy. Prior to completion of the general examination, a student may register for at most 6 credits of BIOS 8999.

Consult with the Biostatistics Program Director or academic advisor for dissertation guidelines.

**Professional enhancement requirement: 8 hours**

Professional enhancement activities supplement the academic curriculum and help prepare students to participate actively in the professional community. They enhance practical knowledge and awareness of public health issues—either in general or in a student’s specific area of study.

Students can fulfill this requirement by attending workshops, seminars, or other relevant professional meetings, which are often held at the Milken Institute School of Public Health (SPH) and in the metropolitan Washington, DC, area. Examples of conference sponsors include the National Academy for State Health Policy, the Pan American Health Organization, the American Public Health Association, the American College of Healthcare Executives, the Area Health Education Center, the American College of Sports Medicine, and the National Athletic Trainer’s Association. Opportunities for professional enhancement are regularly publicized via the SPH Listserv and through the department or the biostatistics academic advisor.

Students must submit documentation of professional enhancement activities to the biostatistics academic advisor, which includes a prior approval, a description of the program agenda, and proof of attendance before applying for graduation.