

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICAL & ACTUARIAL SCIENCES

Graduate Orientation

2023

The University of Western Ontario



Graduate students & Faculty members

Facilities

Academic matters

Teaching Assistantship

Graduate students



M.Sc.

	Number of incoming students (18)
Actuarial Science	0
Financial Modeling	9
Statistics	9

Graduate students



M.Sc.

	Number of incoming students (18)
Actuarial Science	0
Financial Modeling	9
Statistics	9

Ph.D.

	Number of incoming students (11)	Total number of students (49)
Actuarial Science	4	14
Financial Modeling	2	15
Statistics	3	20



- ▶ Faculty and Staff Members

Graduate Affairs Committee

- ▶ Phuong Thao Dang (Graduate Coordinator)
- ▶ Prof. Wenqing He, Prof. Shu Li, Prof. Ricardas Zitikis, Prof. Jiandong Ren

Offices

- ▶ entire 2nd floor, except for Room 240;
- ▶ WSC First Floor, Rooms: 164, 166, 168, 170.
- ▶ Office assignment can be found in this link
<https://www.uwo.ca/stats/graduate/graduate-directory/index.html>

UWO

- ▶ [UWO Student Experience](#)



Make your office/desk a pleasant and productive place:

- ▶ respect your officemates; follow the COVID-19 rules.
- ▶ if you hold office hours for a course, please choose hours that do not cause disruptions; alternatively, please hold them in Room 250 in WSC;
- ▶ if you meet friends and visitors, please make sure you are not disturbing your officemates.
- ▶ See **Policy 1.13** for online etiquette.

Facilities

Other features of the 2nd floor of WSC



- ▶ Kitchen with a refrigerator, a sink and a microwave – please be respectful to others by keeping the kitchen clean.
- ▶ Study space (WSC 250) – this room is available to all graduate students for individual or group studying. It is equipped with two modular tables, chairs and white boards.
- ▶ Conference room (WSC 263) – you are welcome to book (www.ipb.uwo.ca/reservations) the room for group studying, for example. There is a phone in the room that may be used for local calls. For long-distance calls you need a prepaid phone card.
- ▶ Student lounge (WSC 277) with a dining table, mail slots and a white board – please check your mail slot at least once a day.
- ▶ Phones in the hallways – these are installed for security reasons but can be used for any local calls.



- ▶ WSC is locked at night and on weekends but your university card will unlock the building doors and you will have a key to access your office.
- ▶ The undergraduate lab(WSC256) is locked after 4:30 p.m., but you can access it with a code.
- ▶ Please report any concerns to Phuong Thao Dang by e-mail (pdang9@uwo.ca).



- ▶ There is wireless internet (eudoram) in all university buildings. It is accessible with your UWO ID and password.
- ▶ There is an undergraduate computer lab (WSC 256).
 - ▶ Food or drinks are not allowed in the lab.
 - ▶ There are two printers/scanners in the lab.
- ▶ Computing Cluster
 - ▶ Please use it for large-scale simulations instead of tying up the computers in the labs. Contact Dr. Hao Yu for more information.



- ▶ Please read the "Code of behavior for use of computing resources and corporate data" (**Policy 1.13**).
- ▶ All computer resources must be used in an effective, ethical and lawful manner.
- ▶ All users agree to use the computing resources for authorized academic, administrative and/or incidental noncommercial personal use.



- ▶ Read your UWO e-mail daily - this is the official channel of communication from the Department, SGPS and University.
- ▶ Check your mail slot in the lounge area daily (if on campus)
- ▶ For course work, check **OWL** site

- ▶ Talk to:
 - ▶ your supervisor;
 - ▶ your instructors;
 - ▶ your TA supervisor.
 - ▶ your peers

Program requirements

Program requirements



- ▶ [MSc program requirements](#)
- ▶ [PhD program requirements](#)
- ▶ Your supervisor will help you select courses and make an academic plan.
- ▶ Recall you must fill up the course enrollment form.
Students can find their course timetable by logging into Draft My Schedule, Student Center or course OWL sites. For more information about graduate courses, please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator, Phuong Thao Dang (pdang9@uwo.ca)"



- ▶ All course requirements should be completed in Terms A (Fall) and B (Winter).
- ▶ Failure of a mandatory course (i.e., a grade below 60%) or a term average below 70% will result in a withdrawal from the program.
- ▶ a 78% average (per term) is required to maintain funding, and no failure on any course.
- ▶ NO EXCEPTIONS!



- ▶ Students work on a research project in the summer term. This could include quantitative projects developed during internships.
- ▶ Very few 2nd year thesis-based spots may be available if you are interested in a more comprehensive and theoretical project, talk to your supervisor about this in Winter term.
- ▶ MSc student who are interested in our PhD program need to apply before the deadline.



- ▶ Internship program, an initiative by SGPS to bridge the gap between academia and the workplace. See: [SGPS internship opportunities](#) or [Faculty of Science internship](#)
- ▶ Students must inform supervisor and graduate chair (end of April, the latest) before accepting an internship position during Summer term.



- ▶ First-year students take courses and prepare for the comprehensive exam.
- ▶ The comprehensive exam will take place in early May, 2021.
- ▶ Second-year students are required to prepare and defend a thesis proposal based on their research.
- ▶ Third-year students are required to give a presentation that reflects the progress of their research either at the department or at a conference.
- ▶ Completion of the Ph.D. degree is expected at the end of the fourth year.



PhD Comprehensive Exam

- ▶ The format of CE is three questions from five topics: probability, inference, regression, financial modeling (FM field) and actuarial sciences (AS field). Students shall decide the topics together with supervisor by January/2023.
- ▶ At the discretion of the GAC, parts of the comp exam might be exempted based on performance in the corresponding courses.
- ▶ The outcome of the comprehensive exam may be Pass/ Conditional Pass (Second Attempt) / Fail and is evaluated by the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC).
- ▶ Please see the department's graduate website for the exam syllabus and for a listing of old questions.



- ▶ Many graduate students in the department are funded or partially funded through scholarships, Teaching Assistantship and Research Assistantship.
- ▶ Funding is contingent on performance in your research and in your courses: a 78% average (per term) is required to maintain funding, and no failure on any course.
- ▶ MSc project-based going into a fourth term, thesis-based into third year or PhD students beyond four years are not funded.



- ▶ "Own your Future", an initiative by SGPS to prepare junior PhDs for their career. See <https://grad.uwo.ca/careerdevelopment/index.html> for other development opportunities.
- ▶ **External funding**



- ▶ Courses in Fall/2023 will be delivered in-person; Should any university-declared emergency require some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously or asynchronously, the course will adapt accordingly.
- ▶ Access information about your course via OWL
<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>
- ▶ The **Academic Support & Engagement** department has facilities to assist any student who requires special consideration.



- ▶ Colloquiums: Monthly colloquium in which PhD student give short research talks.
- ▶ Research Talks: Occasionally we have research talks given by our faculty members or visiting researchers.
- ▶ These provide important opportunity for you to learn about other aspects of statistics, financial modeling and actuarial science.
- ▶ Students are expected to attend colloquium and 80% of research talks.

- ▶ Ph.D. students
 - ▶ three weeks per year, usually in the summer;
 - ▶ must be arranged three weeks in advance in conjunction with supervisor and T.A. supervisor;
 - ▶ must be recorded by the Graduate Coordinator.

- ▶ M.Sc. students
 - ▶ one week, taken after your project is finished;
 - ▶ do not book flights before making arrangements with your supervisor.

If holidays are not prearranged, they are assumed to be taken in the last 3 weeks (the last week for M.Sc. students) of August. Holidays may not be accumulated.

TA Duties and Assignments



- ▶ A teaching assistantship is employment
- ▶ Be responsible
- ▶ Your TA employment gives you work experience which can be mentioned on your CV
- ▶ Work should average 10 hours weekly, but this will vary over the course of a term
- ▶ If any issues or concerns arise, talk to the course instructor, or Graduate Program Coordinator or the Graduate Chair



The following events are helpful as preparation for working at Western, you are highly encouraged to attend:

- ▶ Teaching Assistant Training Program (TATP)
<https://teaching.uwo.ca/programs/allprograms/tatp.html>.
- ▶ TA Day – <https://teaching.uwo.ca/programs/allprograms/ta-day.html>.
Wednesday, September 6th (9 am - 12 pm).

TA Duties and Assignments

General Duties and Assignments



- ▶ Course Support
 - ▶ Course preparation
 - ▶ Conducting Labs/Tutorials
 - ▶ Marking
 - ▶ Office hours
- ▶ General Course Administration
 - ▶ Department office assistance; for instance, photocopying exams
 - ▶ Instructor evaluations
- ▶ Help Centre
- ▶ Proctoring exams
- ▶ Other Administrative Assignments
 - ▶ You may be asked to assist with one time special projects such as outreach activities
 - ▶ Notices will generally be given to you by grad coordinator Thao or the course instructor

TA Duties and Assignments

Confidentiality



- ▶ As a TA you will have access to confidential material including grades and personal information such as student numbers and e-mail addresses.
- ▶ Student names and ID numbers should not be left in a public place or posted online; this includes your shared offices. Guard students' work, identity, marks, etc. (close browsers, electronic classlists, OWL, etc)

TA Duties and Assignments

Marking



- ▶ If you need further information on the solution of a given assignment or exam question, contact the course instructor
- ▶ Marking should be completed within the specified time frame
- ▶ Work should average 10 hours weekly
- ▶ Use coloured ink; report grades as "8/10", not just "8"
- ▶ If anything strikes you as irregular, inform the course instructor
- ▶ The instructor ought to let you how and where to record the grades
- ▶ Ask the instructor how they would like the assignments returned - maintaining privacy is important

Contract and Performance Evaluations

Contract, Evaluations and Awards



- ▶ Your TA contract will be given to you at the beginning of the term. You should contact your duty specific supervisor via e-mail to let them know you have received your contract
- ▶ The specific details of your duties will be provided in writing near the beginning of the term
- ▶ Ensure that you understand what they entail and carry out your duties to the best of your abilities. You are always welcomed to ask questions.
- ▶ Your performance as a TA will be monitored by your duty specific supervisor
- ▶ A Faculty of Science TA Award is awarded yearly to each department
- ▶ **GTA collective agreement**

Proctoring

Exam Supervision



- ▶ Proctors are present (online or in-person) to ensure the exam proceeds smoothly
- ▶ You must be available on 24 hour notice between the hours of 9:00 am to 4:00 pm daily. Check your UWO email at least once every 24 hours.
- ▶ If you have a conflict with one of your courses, you must notify the instructor asap
- ▶ Arrive to the exam room/zoom 15-20 min early,
- ▶ Be aware of what is permitted such as calculators, crib sheets, etc; cellphones or electronic devices are not allowed
- ▶ Outdoor coats and bags should be placed at the front of the room or away from the desk
- ▶ Take attendance, verify ID's, Be proactive and watch for cheating
- ▶ Consult the chief proctor about how to collect the exams
- ▶ Students are not allowed to leave within the last 15 min
- ▶ Collect the exam papers quickly and assertively. Count the number of exams
- ▶ Bring the exams back as instructed by the chief proctor

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICAL & ACTUARIAL SCIENCES

Thank you for your attention.
Questions?

The University of Western Ontario