

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICAL & ACTUARIAL SCIENCES

Graduate Orientation

2024

The University of Western Ontario



Graduate students & Faculty members

Facilities

Academic matters

Teaching Assistantship

Graduate students



M.Sc.

	Number of incoming students (31)
Actuarial Science	3
Financial Modeling	17
Statistics	11

Graduate students



M.Sc.

	Number of incoming students (31)
Actuarial Science	3
Financial Modeling	17
Statistics	11

Ph.D.

	Number of incoming students (9)	Total number of students (49)
Actuarial Science	2	13
Financial Modeling	3	15
Statistics	4	21

- ▶ **Faculty and Staff Members**

Graduate Affairs Committee

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

Offices

- ▶ entire 2nd floor, except for Room 240;
- ▶ WSC First Floor, Rooms: 164, 166, 168, 170, and 191.
- ▶ 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:

- ▶ Offices are shared, please show respect to everyone
- ▶ Office hours are to be arranged in Room WSC 250 preferably. If WSC 250 is not available, you may book WSC 256 or WSC 263 by contacting Thao.
- ▶ 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 256) – this room is available to all graduate students for individual or group studying. It is equipped with modular tables, chairs and white boards.
- ▶ Conference room (WSC 263) – you are welcome to book (by contacting Thao) 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 Computer lab(WSC256) can be accessed with a code.
- ▶ Please report any concerns to Phuong Thao Dang by e-mail (pdang9@uwo.ca).
- ▶ Contact Aron Downes (adownes3@uwo.ca) if you need any IT support.



- ▶ There is wireless internet (eudoram) in all university buildings. It is accessible with your UWO ID and password.
- ▶ There is an computer lab (WSC 256).
 - ▶ There are two printers/scanners in the lab. Food or drinks are not allowed 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. Please use your UWO email to correspond with your professors/administrative staffs.
- ▶ Check your mail slot in the lounge area daily (if on campus)
- ▶ For course work, check **OWL Brightspace** site

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



- ▶ Access information about your course via OWL
<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>
- ▶ The **Academic Support & Engagement** department has facilities to assist any student who requires special consideration.



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

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 Student Center or Course OWL Brightspace 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 students 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.

Academic matters

Ph.D. students



- ▶ First-year students take courses and prepare for the comprehensive exam.
- ▶ The comprehensive exam will take place in May after the 2nd semester.
- ▶ 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 upon approval by the GAC.
- ▶ At the discretion of the GAC, parts of the comp exam might be exempted based on performance in the corresponding courses. For example, if you obtain 85+ in Probability (SS9657), then that the Probability part of the CE is waived for you.
- ▶ The outcome of the comprehensive exam may be Pass/ Conditional Pass (Second Attempt) / Fail and is evaluated by the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC).



- ▶ 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.



- ▶ Colloquiums: 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.
- ▶ Grad students are required to attend colloquia and research talks. We will collect attendance by requesting you to swipe your ONEcard to attend.
- ▶ You are also welcome to attend Student thesis defenses.



Graduate students are also entitled to at least two weeks of vacation time from their studies per year

- ▶ must be arranged three weeks in advance in conjunction with supervisor and T.A. supervisor;
- ▶ must be recorded by the Graduate Coordinator.
- ▶ 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
- ▶ important information regarding TA are available at [Western SGPS Website](#)
- ▶ 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,
New TAs are required to attend:

- ▶ TA Day – <https://teaching.uwo.ca/programs/allprograms/ta-day.html>.
Wednesday, September 4th.

You are recommended to attend

- ▶ Teaching Assistant Training Program (TATP)
<https://teaching.uwo.ca/programs/allprograms/tatp.html>.

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
- ▶ Proctoring exams

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
- ▶ 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

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Thank you for your attention.
Questions?

The University of Western Ontario