

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
REQUEST FOR DECISION

PRESENTED BY: Terry Wotherspoon; Chair, Academic Programs Committee

DATE OF MEETING: February 15, 2018

SUBJECT: Admissions Qualifications Change – Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Biostatistics

DECISION REQUESTED: *It is recommended:*

That Council approve the change in admissions qualifications for the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program in Biostatistics, effective September 2018.

PURPOSE:
Changes to admissions qualifications require approval by University Council.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:
The School of Public Health is proposing that an additional requirement be added to the qualifications for admission to the Ph.D. Program in Biostatistics, namely, that applicants will be required to have completed course content in Mathematical Statistics, Statistical Inference or equivalent courses at the senior undergraduate level.

This proposed change in admissions qualifications were considered at the Graduate Programs committee on December 7, 2017 and at the Executive committee of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at its January 26, 2018 meeting. The Academic Programs Committee considered the proposal at its January 31, 2018 meeting and is recommending Council's approval.

FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED:

University Senate will be asked to confirm this decision at their April 2018 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Request for Change to Admission Requirements for the Ph.D. in Biostatistics

Memorandum

To: Terry Wotherspoon, Chair, Academic Programs Committee of University Council

CC: Steven Jones, Executive Director, School of Public Health

From: Office of the Associate Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS)

Date: January 24, 2018

Re: Change to Admission Requirements for the Ph.D. in Biostatistics

In June 2017, the Graduate Programs Committee of CGPS reviewed and supported changes to the admission requirements for the Ph.D. program in Biostatistics to include a requirement for background statistical knowledge. In September 2017, the Executive Committee reviewed the proposal and returned it to the Graduate Programs Committee requesting further clarification in the proposed language.

In December 2017, the Graduate Programs Committee considered a revised proposal for changes to the admission requirements for the Ph.D. program in Biostatistics. The committee supported the revised proposal and passed a motion in support of the changes. In January 2018, the Executive Committee was also satisfied with the revised proposal passing a motion to change the admission requirements for the Ph.D. program in Biostatistics.

During the review process by the CGPS committees, members indicated they would like to see specific preparatory courses indicated; however, given the international applicant pool, the committees ultimately were satisfied that the proposed language reflected the background knowledge required.

Attached please find:

- A copy of the memo from the Executive Committee of CGPS recommending the proposal
- A copy of the memo from the Graduate Programs Committee of CGPS recommending the proposal
- The proposal from the School of Public Health

If you have any questions, please contact kelly.clement@usask.ca (306-966-2229).

:kc



Memorandum

To: Dr. Terry Wotherspoon, Chair, APC (of University Council)

Copies: Dr. Bruce Eglington, Chair, GPC CGPS
Dr. Steven Jones, Executive Director, SPH

From: Trever Crowe, Chair, Executive Committee CGPS

Date: January 17, 2018

Re: Proposal to revise the admission requirements for PhD program in Biostatistics

On January 17, 2018, the Executive Committee of CGPS (EC) reviewed the following from the Graduate Programs Committee of CGPS:

On January 16, 2018, the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) submitted a proposal to the EC to revise admission requirements for the PhD degree in the Collaborative Biostatistics Program. The program committee recommended that the entrance requirements for the PhD program be revised to include “To be eligible the student must have completed course content in Mathematical Statistics, Statistical Inference or equivalent courses at the senior undergraduate level”.

The GPC passed the following motion: “To approve the revised admission requirements for the PhD program in Biostatistics”. Pollak/Simonson

The CGPS Executive Committee (EC) had the following discussion on January 17, 2018:

- *Through this proposal, the revision “to be eligible the student must have completed course content in Mathematical Statistics...” speaks to having flexibility that would allow admission decisions to be probationary until the student satisfies the U of S requirement.*
- *This is a collaborative program; unfortunately the proposal does not have any information on how a collaborative program like this works.*
- *A member spoke to the administration of this program in that every two years the chair changes; regardless of who serves as the chair, the program is managed by the Executive Director of SPH*
- *This is a thesis-based program; so, it would follow the typical admission process and a supervisor would be identified*
- *Senior-level course work, for the purpose of graduate studies, are both 300 and 400-level undergraduate courses (NOT 200-level)*

- *With respect to acceptable International coursework; the unit would have to determine if that previous work is sufficient and make a recommendation based on that determination*

The EC made a motion that the admission requirements for the PhD program in Biostatistics be revised as proposed. Walker/Westbrook CARRIED

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the recommended please contact lori.lisitza@usask.ca on behalf of the Executive Committee.

/lal

Memorandum

To: Executive Committee of CGPS

From: Graduate Programs Committee of CGPS

Date: January 11, 2018

Re: Admission requirements for Ph.D. program in Biostatistics

At the December 7, 2017, meeting of the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC), a revised proposal to amend the admission requirements for the Ph.D. program in Biostatistics was considered.

While members found the proposed language to be a bit vague, it was noted that much of the applicant pool might not have an undergraduate degree from the UofS, so specifying acceptable UofS courses did not seem necessary. Faculty administering the program would be best-prepared to assess applicants background preparation for admission.

It was noted that if an applicant's background preparation was difficult to assess, the applicant could be admitted on probation with a requirement to complete preparatory courses prior to beginning the doctoral program coursework.

The Graduate Programs Committee passed the following motion unanimously:

To approve the revised admission requirements for the Ph.D. program in Biostatistics. Pollak/Simonson
CARRIED

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Clement at kelly.clement@usask.ca or 306-966-2229.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Programs Committee, CGPS

FROM: Dr. Steven Jones, Executive Director, SPH

C.C.: Kelly Clement, CGPS

DATE: November 30, 2017

RE: **Admission requirements for PhD degree in the Collaborative Biostatistics Program**

The School of Public Health would like to propose changes to the **PhD program** in the Collaborative Biostatistics Program. The change is with respect to the program entrance requirements.

The program committee recommends that the entrance requirements for the PhD program be changed to include “To be eligible the student must have completed course content in Mathematical Statistics, Statistical Inference or equivalent courses at the senior undergraduate level”. This is to be added to the Course and Program Catalogue as follows:

Biostatistics - Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Admission Requirements

- Master's degree, or equivalent, from a recognized university in a relevant academic discipline
- a cumulative weighted average of at least a 75% (U of S grade system equivalent) in the last two years of study (i.e. coursework required in Master's program)
- Language Proficiency Requirements: Proof of English proficiency may be required for international applicants and for applicants whose first language is not English. See the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Academic Information and Policies in this Catalogue for more information
- **completed course content in Mathematical Statistics, Statistical Inference or equivalent courses at the senior undergraduate level**

These recommendations have been approved by the Heads of all three departments (SPH, CH&E & Math & Stats). We also received a vote in favour of the recommendation by the core faculty in the Collaborative Biostatistics Program.

Please let me know if you have any questions.