

Policy on granting an MA in Statistics option for Ph.D. Students in Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University

(Department of Statistics, Columbia University. Version: September 14, 2019)

Reviewed by the Department of Statistics (September 2019)

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The Department of Statistics welcomes applications from GSAS Ph.D. students who wish to pursue an MA in Statistics degree during their Ph.D. study, as a way to promote important interdisciplinary quantitative research. This document describes the policy and process for application, admission, and mentoring for a GSAS Ph.D. student to pursue an *MA in Statistics* degree while working on his/her Ph.D. dissertation.

The degree requirements (except for the requirement on resident units) and admissions standards would be the same as any other student who is admitted to the *MA in Statistics* program. Applications would be reviewed by the Admission Committee of the MA in Statistics department. The timeline for completing the degree is likely to be much longer than that for the full-time students in the stand-alone MA in Statistics program.

The *Faculty Director of the MA in Statistics Program* will monitor the performance of these Ph.D. students in the *MA in Statistics Program* and the overall advising and teaching burden due to these extra students. This information will be shared and discussed with the Advisory Committee of the MA in Statistics program for comments and potential suggestions on modifications of this policy document.

Application and review procedure

1) The Ph.D. student submits an *application for the MA in Statistics option* to the *Faculty Director of the MA in Statistics Program*.

Application materials include

- The applicant's up-to-date curriculum vitae;
- Current and prior transcripts;
- A short statement of purpose (up to two pages) that includes a proposed plan of study and a timeline to complete the program.
- A short recommendation letter, co-signed by the DGS of the Ph.D. student's home doctoral program and the Ph.D. student's advisor, that states how *the MA in Statistics option* is relevant to advance the applicant's research and future career objectives. It

should also state that the Ph.D. student is in good standing and that pursuing an MA in Statistics degree poses no concern on the Ph.D. student's dissertation progress.

The application will be reviewed by the Admission Committee of the MA in Statistics program and a decision rendered. In some cases, the Faculty Director of the MA in Statistics Program may suggest conditional admission, subject to the successful completion of preparatory courses.

2) Upon receiving approval to pursue the MA in Statistics option, the Ph.D. student will be advised by the *Faculty Director of the MA in Statistics Program* for their study in the MA in Statistics program.

In particular, the Ph.D. student should work out a formal plan of courses that would satisfy the requirements for the degree. This plan will be reviewed and approved by the *Faculty Director of the MA in Statistics Program*. By signing the document which contains this plan, the *Faculty Director of the MA in Statistics Program* will be agreeing that the student has met the standards for admissions and that the student would qualify for the degree upon successfully completing the courses. The student will also sign the document. The signed document will be officially approved by GSAS and filed with Statistics and the home department of the Ph.D. student.

3) Should there be a need to modify the plan because of course cancellations, or for other reasons, the student will create a revised document with a modified plan, take it to the *Faculty Director of the MA in Statistics Program*, and repeat Step 2).