Graduate Admissions

The Department of Mathematics offers a PhD and several Master's degrees. We have about 90 graduate students, and we typically have 15-20 new students each year.

Here are some reasons to consider graduate study at the University of Washington:

- We offer PhD and MS degrees in most major fields of pure mathematics, as well as opportunities to collaborate with Microsoft Research and the departments of Statistics, Biostatistics, Applied Math, and Computer Science. There is also an Advanced Data Science Option for the PhD.
- Almost all of our grad students are supported through Teaching Assistantships, with competitive salaries and free health insurance. They receive extensive training and mentoring, and a wide variety of different assignments are available, including opportunities to teach one's own courses.
- We encourage collaboration, and our graduate program is deliberately structured so that students are not in any sense competing against each other. In a recent survey, the vast majority of our graduate students reported that the department provides a friendly, supportive, and respectful environment in which to pursue a graduate degree.
- Our students' success rate is high: over the past fifteen years or so, about 75% of our entering PhD students have graduated with PhDs. Most of those have obtained academic jobs, typically at very prestigious institutions, and the rest go into rewarding careers in industry, government, etc.
- Seattle is an attractive place to live, with abundant natural beauty, cultural events, and outdoor activities. The city is not as rainy as you think -- although many winter days are partly cloudy and drizzly, the average annual precipitation is less than in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and many other major cities, and temperatures are mild. Many people who move here decide they never want to leave.

Applying to the PhD and Master's Programs

Since all entry-level graduate courses are yearlong sequences beginning in the autumn, applications for admission are normally accepted only for Autumn Quarter. Applications for admission with financial support (Teaching Assistantships or Fellowships) must be complete by January 4 for admission the following autumn.

Follow the links below to read about admission requirements, required tests, and application procedures. All application materials can be obtained here.

- Admission Requirements
- How to Apply
- Required Tests
- International Applicants
- Visiting Graduate Students
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Funding and Housing
PhD or Master’s?

If you are not sure whether to apply for the PhD or the Master’s program, read our admission requirements, and be aware that most people should apply for the PhD program: if you apply for the PhD program, and you appear to have promise but to be underprepared for the PhD, the admissions committee will also consider you for the Master’s program. If you are still unsure, email us.

We do not accept applications for the Master of Arts in mathematics, only the Master of Science. Incoming Master’s students are admitted to the Master of Science degree program, and can decide after taking a few courses which of the degree options they wish to pursue (e.g., thesis or non-thesis).

The Master’s program is very small – one or two students entering per year – and mainly serves the following groups of people:

- Students who want a PhD and have mathematical talent, but whose background needs strengthening. These students are usually supported with Teaching Assistantships, and the goal is for them to transfer to the PhD program after one or two years in the Master’s program.
- Students who are enrolled in other graduate programs at the University of Washington and who also want training in mathematics. The department typically provides no financial support for these students.
- Students living in the Seattle area who want to explore graduate mathematics. The department typically provides no financial support for these students.

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