

Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science

Graduate Student Orientation

Fall 2025

IOWA

Agenda

9:00-9:15am	Self-introductions
9:15-10:00am	Information
10:00-10:15am	Group picture outside

DGS Information

Boxiang Wang

Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Studies

boxiang-wang@uiowa.edu; Office (261 SH)

1. Resources

- SH = Schaeffer Hall
- DGS = Director of Graduate Studies: Boxiang Wang
- Advisor for Statistics and for Data Science: Boxiang Wang
- Advisor for Actuarial Science: Zhiwei Tong
- Office Staff (241 SH): Heather Roth and Tammy Siegel
Email: stat-staff@team.uiowa.edu

The Main office (241 SH) is where you pick up mail, printing requests, etc. Hours are posted on the door. More details can be found in the Appendix.

- DEO: Professor Kung-Sik Chan
- Department Web Page: <http://www.stat.uiowa.edu> (click on resources)
- Computing: Linux Lab 346 SH, PC Lab 41 SH; unlocked during normal business hours; if labs are reserved a note will be on the door <https://stat.uiowa.edu/resources/computing-support>
- Main Library (includes Math collection) <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/>
 - Research Study Room and Graduate Study Room Lockers
 - <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/about/studyspaces/>
- Courses, registration etc: <https://myui.uiowa.edu/>
- Course descriptions, past and current syllabi: <https://stat.uiowa.edu/resources/course-descriptions-syllabi> (Or use the Search button in the top right corner of stat.uiowa.edu.)
- Course websites: <https://icon.uiowa.edu/>
- Handshake is the University's primary online recruiting system. Full-time positions, internships, on-campus interviews, mock interviews, volunteer opportunities, mentors and other resources are available within the system. For more information on The Pomerantz Career Center can be found here: <https://careers.uiowa.edu/handshake>

2. Means of Communication

- **Email — We will use your uiowa account, so check daily and reply promptly (when applicable)**
- Mail boxes for all grad students in SH 241 — check weekly at the least. Please do not send personal mail to these boxes, unless you are expecting a package and you want it delivered to campus due to safety concerns.
- Our web page and calendar are updated often
- Bulletin boards in SH
- Keep MyUI up-to-date with your local mailing address

3. Expectations

- Attendance policy: especially for graduate assistants and international students (e.g. GAs must arrive **3 days before start of the semester, in both Fall and Spring**, and plan to stay until the Tuesday after the finals week. Main instructor's permission is needed if you plan otherwise.)
- International students and minimum number of semester hours: 9 s.h. each semester to qualify as a full-time student, there are exceptions (e.g. for the final semester before degree).
- Maximum number of semester hours: 15 s.h., possible exceptions
<https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-program/section-ii-registration>
- Regularly attend department colloquia (usually on Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm, see our calendar for updates) and social functions

Additions due to our discussion today (Aug 18 10am):

Check out <https://stat.uiowa.edu/colloquia/events>

4. Policies and Other Resources

- University and Grad College Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College
<https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/graduate-college-manual>
- Registrar questions: <http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/>
- Union representing UI GA's: COGS (Campaign to Organize Graduate Students)
<https://cogs.org/about-cogs/union-structure>

Departmental policies, some requirements are higher than that of the Graduate College

- Policies for each of our graduate programs <https://stat.uiowa.edu/graduate-programs/graduate-programs-study>
- MS students in Statistics must **maintain a g.p.a. of at least 3.00** in all work toward the degree and in additional relevant course work.
- MS students in Statistics must pass a two-part graduate final examination.
- The Graduate College requires a minimum g.p.a. of 3.00 to graduate with a PhD degree; however, **the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science requires a higher g.p.a. of at least 3.40 to earn the PhD in statistics.** This includes all courses used to meet degree requirements plus additional courses that are relevant to a student's program.

English requirements for non-native speakers:

There are two different series of tests

- a) **English Proficiency Tests** (meant for the success of your own study.)
<https://grad.admissions.uiowa.edu/international/english-proficiency-evaluation>

If you are asked to take an English (ESL) course after your English Proficiency evaluation, you are required to take one. If you don't, you will not graduate.

- b) **SPEC Test and TAPE program** (meant for preparation to become successful teaching assistants)
<https://esl.uiowa.edu/programs/teaching-assistant-preparation-english>

All students for whom English is not a first language (as self-reported on their admissions application) and who have first-time appointments as graduate teaching assistants (TAs) are required to go through a testing process to assess their effectiveness in speaking English before they are assigned assistantship responsibilities.

Graduate assistants risk losing their support if they do not achieve at least a B grade in their second year.

All unsupported students are also encouraged to take the SPEC test. While passing the test does not guarantee a TA position, it does qualify students with sufficient English proficiency to be considered when positions become available.

5. Miscellaneous

- **All graduate students in the department are automatically members of the Statistics Student Organization (SSO).** The purpose of this organization shall be to facilitate connections among graduate students who are majoring in statistics and improve post-graduate outcomes. In addition to social-wise events, SSO will host a series of academic/educational/career development events throughout the school year, including but not limited to a monthly department lunch (inviting speakers with relevant backgrounds), statistics/data science specific career fair, paper reading discussion, etc.
The current chair is Shamriddha De. The current treasurer is Sreya Sarkar. Both of them are in the 5th year at U Iowa, admitted to the PhD in Statistics program in 23 Spring.
- **All graduate students in the department majoring in Actuarial Science are automatically members of the Actuarial Science Club.** Elections are held every December for a one year commitment. We encourage graduate students to get involved too!
- Links to student organizations, Emails of students and professors, information of alumni etc:
<https://stat.uiowa.edu/people>
- Students who are presenting papers at professional conferences should first exhaust any travel funds available through the university, including the Graduate Student Senate:
<https://gss.grad.uiowa.edu/home> Students should be prepared to give a report on the benefits of their trips.

6. Appendix

THE MAIN OFFICE (241 SH)

- a) The main office is open from 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. If you need us after hours, please use this email: stat-staff@team.uiowa.edu. We are closed on the weekends and on university holidays.
- b) Our administrative office staff includes Heather Roth and Tammy Siegel. Their primary duties include:
 - i) Heather: Room Reservations, Supplies, Inventory, Colloquium, and Webmaster.
 - ii) Tammy: Assistant for Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, and Course Schedules.
- c) All graduate students, faculty and staff have mailboxes in 241 SH. Personal mail should be sent to your home address, however if you need something to be sent to you and you worry about it being safely delivered to your home or apartment (i.e. a new computer, medication, etc.) just let Heather know to expect it.
- d) To protect the security of student records and exams, and other sensitive materials, students are not permitted past the front desk.
- e) Manila folders, index cards, and grade books are available, just ask at the front desk for these.
- f) Often mail or books from the library that you have checked out, will come in a campus mail envelope. They are designed to be reused. If you need a campus mail envelope they are in the cupboard above the paper cutter. You can put envelopes you do not need back in the cupboard.
- g) The outgoing mailbox can be found on the desk opposite the mailboxes. You can place stamped envelopes and campus mail in this outbox.
- h) We do not have a break room in Schaeffer Hall.
- i) Books from the departmental library in 241-B SH may not be checked out, but you are welcome to read them in the room when available.
- j) Remember to check your University of Iowa e-mail **FREQUENTLY**. We often send you valuable information on activities and last-minute special announcements.
- k) Graduate Assistants (TA's, RA's, and Graders) will have limited supplies, just ask Heather what is available.
- l) Graduate Assistants may reserve classrooms for study session. Email stat-staff@team.uiowa.edu for class reservations. (It takes up to a week to reserve a room, so plan ahead.) Our library, 241-B SH, is often available too, so check with the staff if you need to use this room, at the last minute.
- m) Students are not permitted to use the copier, however if you need copies made for teaching materials, please send your pdf to stat-staff@team.uiowa.edu. We appreciate at least 24-hour notice. State which class it is for, how many copies you need, and if they need to be collated and stapled.