

PhD completion timeline:

Students typically graduate within 5 years of entering the BME Ph.D. program. However, the nature of some projects and methods require longer time commitments for full completion of dissertation work.

The official time limit for completing the Biomedical Engineering Ph.D. degree is 8 years. If a student in good standing has not completed the Ph.D. program within 8 years, a time limit extension may be requested with a letter of support from the student's Supervisory Committee Chair to the Department Chair and Graduate School, justifying reasons for the extension and including a forecast for student completion. Time limit extensions must be approved by the Department Director of Graduate Studies as well as the Dean of the Graduate School.

The following timeline is based on a five-year plan for students entering the Ph.D. program with Bachelor's degree. Please note that students entering with their master's degree will typically follow a more accelerated three- or four-year plan depending on their M.S. degree institution. (see the Tuition Benefit section)

First Year

- Begin the Core Curriculum courses
- Identify a Research Advisor (and typically Committee Chair) by the end of the first semester
- Begin dedicated Ph.D. research (BME 7970)
- Select an Area of Specialization/Track
- Establish full Ph.D. Supervisory Committee before the end of the second semester and convene first committee meeting to discuss research aims, expectations, timeline, course plan, etc.

Second Year

- Meet with Supervisory Committee to report progress, planned coursework, research aims, set goals, etc.
- Take advanced courses and specialized research track courses to fulfill course requirements
- Begin TA Mentorship requirement
- Begin Proposal Writing and Presentations Series (Spring)
- Submit Preliminary Program of Study by the end of the fourth semester
- Prepare for the Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations

Third Year

- Meet with Supervisory Committee to report progress and prepare for Research Proposal
- Take written Ph.D. Qualifying Exam (Fall)
- Complete Proposal Writing and Presentations Series (Fall)
- Fulfill TA Mentorship requirement
- Complete written Research Proposal

- Complete and present oral Ph.D. Qualifying Exam (Research Proposal)
- Report research at public seminar

Note: Failure to take the written Ph.D. Qualifying Exam in the fall semester and take the oral qualifying exam by the end of Year 3 may result in a loss of tuition benefit eligibility.

Fourth Year

- Meet with Supervisory Committee to report progress
- Complete any remaining course requirements, including TA Mentorship if needed
- Report research (podium presentation) at scientific meeting or seminar
- Identify External Reviewer (if applicable)
- Submit Final Program of Study for the Ph.D. degree to the Department

Fifth Year

- Meet with Supervisory Committee to report progress
- Apply for graduation
- Write and Defend Ph.D. Dissertation
- Submit Ph.D. Dissertation manuscript to the Thesis Office. See the Thesis Office website for policies