

## SBHS PhD Program Timeline: Key Activities & Milestones

The key milestones of the SBHS PhD program are summarized below based on a 4-year timeline of degree completion for fulltime students. Please also see the funding policy for additional details on eligibility requirements.

### Year 1

- **Intake meeting with Program Director, student, and supervisor(s)** (no later than **November 15**).
- Student applies for **competitive awards, Research Assistant** positions, and **Teaching Assistant** positions for which they are eligible.
- Establish **supervisory committee** (no later than **May 15**).
- Complete **4 Required Courses**: 2.0/3.0 FCE (no later than **August 30**); *additional elective courses may also be taken*.
- Complete **Qualifying Examination (QE)** (writing period **May 15-June 30**; submitted by **June 30**).
- **Foundational dissertation and proposal work** (e.g., literature review, developing objectives/research questions).
- Have **at least one full committee meeting** to discuss key program milestones (no later than **August 30**).

### Year 2

- Student applies for **competitive awards, Research Assistant** positions, and **Teaching Assistant** positions for which they are eligible (*ongoing Y2-Y4*).
- Complete **SBHS proposal development course** (**September-December** - *starting September 2026*) - *optional but highly recommended*.
- **Complete coursework** if have any remaining (no later than **August 30**).
- Complete **student activity report** (**October/November**).
- **Draft and revise dissertation proposal** (submit defense version of the proposal to committee and external reviewer no later than **January 31**; schedule and hold proposal defense with committee no later than **February 28**).
- **Submit ethics application to REB** (submit no later than **March 31**); revise as needed to **receive REB approval**.
- **Begin intensive dissertation work** (e.g., data collection, preliminary analysis).
- Have **at least two full committee meetings**.

### Year 3

- Student applies for **competitive awards, Research Assistant** positions, and **Teaching Assistant** positions for which they are eligible (*ongoing Y3-Y4*).
- Complete **student activity report** (**October/November**).
- Continued **intensive dissertation work** (e.g., data collection, analysis, and writing).
- Additional coursework to support analysis and writing (*optional*).
- Have **at least two full committee meetings**.

### Year 4

- Student applies for **competitive awards, Research Assistant** positions, and **Teaching Assistant** positions for which they are eligible.
- **Complete dissertation writing** (e.g., writing and revisions based on committee feedback).
- Complete **student activity report** (**October/November**).
- Have **full committee meetings** as needed.
- Student will outline a **timeline for degree completion with the committee**, to help ensure the final writing, revision, and defense milestones are reached.
- Consider applications for **Postdoctoral Fellowships**.
- Schedule, prepare, and complete **Departmental Defense** (*optional*).
- **Schedule and prepare for Final Oral Examination (FOE)**.
- **Complete FOE** (no later than **August 30**).
- **Submit final revisions** to dissertation (*as required*; no later than **September 15**).
- **Celebrate the completion of your doctorate!**

**Links to Key Resources:** [PhD Student-Supervisor Conversation Checklist](#) [Supervision Guidelines from SGS](#) [Student Awards & Funding Opportunities](#) [PhD Supervisory Committee Composition Form](#) [Qualifying Examination \(QE\)](#) [PhD Supervisory Committee Meeting Report](#) [SBHS Proposal Guidelines](#) [Departmental Defense guidelines](#) [Academic Policies and Forms](#) (including updated funding policy)