

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the typical student timeline?

Our students typically complete two years of coursework, including two rotations with active faculty research teams at UCSF or elsewhere in the Bay Area. At the conclusion of coursework, students take a qualifying exam to advance to “doctoral candidacy,” at which point they launch their dissertation research. Completing dissertation research usually takes 1–2 years, depending on the student and the project.

### What are the topics of students’ dissertation research projects?

Our students pursue diverse research topics at the intersection of epidemiology and translational science. Some recent dissertation topics include:

- Diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease and cognitive decline in elderly populations
- The effects of air pollution on asthma in Latino and African American children
- Substance use and alcohol among key populations at risk for HIV: Novel approaches in intervention development
- Physical education time in San Francisco public schools

### What kind of students are you looking for?

The PhD Degree Program in Epidemiology and Translational Science is a 3–5 year course of study for individuals who wish to pursue independent research careers in epidemiology and translational science and who have completed training at the Master’s level in epidemiology, public health or related fields. We seek applicants who have a commitment to public health research and a passion to use rigorous scientific tools to improve health for all people. Our admissions process prioritizes candidates with a strong background and interest in pursuing research in the broad range of epidemiology and translational science including epidemiologic and biostatistical methods, genetic, social, and clinical epidemiology, and disease-specific training in cancer, infectious, neurologic (Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias), cardiovascular or stroke, musculoskeletal and other diseases. We also value evidence of a strong quantitative background, for example in statistics or computation, linked to commitment to health research. Because of the importance of a close mentoring relationship

between faculty advisors and PhD students, we particularly invite applications from candidates whose interest mesh closely with the areas of expertise of our faculty.

### My background is different. Would I be competitive for admission?

We won’t know unless you apply! Public health research is challenging, and we need people with diverse perspectives and skill sets to most effectively address these challenges. What is important in the application process is that you articulate how your experiences prepare you to excel in the training program and emerge with the skills and insights to lead high-impact projects. We will have an information session for potential applicants in the fall (date to be determined) and you are invited to join us with any specific questions.

### What are some examples of career outcomes for the ETS PhD program?

The PhD Program in Epidemiology and Translational Science will welcome its 8<sup>th</sup> entering cohort in 2017–18. To date, our graduates have had excellent professional outcomes, including post-doctoral and faculty research positions at UCSF, Berkeley, the CDC, and the San Francisco Department of Health. Our graduates are prepared to seek research and leadership positions in the public/private sector in public health, pharmaceutical research, and other related health industries.

### When can I apply?

Online applications will be available for the 2018–19 entering class starting in late September via the Graduate Division online application system. The application deadline for entering Fall 2018 is December 1, 2017.

### Can I receive an application fee waiver?

Certain applicants may qualify to have their application fee waived if they are participants in specific programs or can demonstrate financial need. Requesting the Application Fee Waiver is done by selecting the Application Fee Waiver option in the Payment Area of the online application. Please see [graduate.ucsf.edu/application-fee-waivers](http://graduate.ucsf.edu/application-fee-waivers) to check your eligibility for this exemption.

## What are the selection factors?

Final admissions decisions will be based on a composite evaluation of interviews, academic record, interest and potential in Epidemiology and Translational Science, letters of recommendation, research focus, and common interests with department faculty members.

## What are the admission requirements?

- Prior education must include a **bachelor's degree** (BA/BS), or the equivalent, from an accredited institution, with a GPA of 3.0. We will consider applicants with a GPA of less than 3.0 if the circumstances are explained in the Statement of Purpose.
- A **Masters degree** in epidemiology, public health, clinical research, or a related field is typically required for admission to the PhD program, although we make rare exceptions for individuals with exceptionally strong research backgrounds. These students will be required to complete the first year of departmental based Training in Clinical Research (TICR) courses or their equivalent. Continuing enrollment in the PhD Program will be contingent on successful completion of this year of didactic training.
- **GRE Scores** (either General or Subject test) **or MCAT scores** are required. The tests must have been taken within the last **5 years** from the time of submitting application. We value strong GRE or MCAT scores but there is no minimum requirement for admission. We consider test scores within the context of each applicant's experience, prior training, and scientific potential. If you are concerned that your test scores do not reflect your potential, you may wish to retake the test or explain the circumstances of the test in your application.

We also ask for three letters of recommendation, essays that reflect your personal experiences, career goals and reasons for choosing this degree program. The essays serve as an example of your writing skills and allow us to assess whether UCSF ETS is a good fit given your interests and goals.

## What percentage of applicants do you accept?

We select approximately 30% of applicants to interview and offer admission to about 15% of the total applicant pool. We anticipate the 2018–19 entering cohort to be 4–5 students.

## Can I defer my admission?

We do not defer admission. If you decide not to join our program after accepting our offer, you will have to reapply and pay the fee; we cannot guarantee admission on the

next round. If you reapply within one year, you will not have to resend your transcripts, resume, statement of purpose or reference letters unless significant changes have occurred.

## Are there additional requirements for international students?

International applicants from non-English speaking countries must demonstrate English language proficiency by completing one year of study with a minimum GPA of 3.00 at an accredited college or university in the United States, OR by obtaining the following minimum scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). You must have taken the TOEFL within the last five years from the date of application. Please request that scores are sent to UCSF (code 4840).

Test Type	Minimum Score
TOEFL Paper Based Test	570
TOEFL Computer Based Test	230
TOEFL iBT (Internet Based Test)	80
IELTS	7

## What Is the cost of the program?

Total CA resident tuition + fees for FY 2017–2018 will be approximately \$18,000. (For non-resident applicants, the annual tuition + fees, in the first year of the program before CA residence is established, total approximately \$33,000). This is an estimate and is subject to change. It does not include the cost of books, housing, or personal costs. Graduate student stipends are currently \$37,000, with the expectation of approximately half time work with a faculty member. Students use a range of sources to support their training, including our institutional training grant in aging and chronic diseases ([epibiostat.ucsf.edu/training-research-aging-and-chronic-disease](http://epibiostat.ucsf.edu/training-research-aging-and-chronic-disease)), departmental support, UCSF Graduate Division fellowships ([finaid.ucsf.edu](http://finaid.ucsf.edu)), federal and foundation research/dissertation grants, and part-time work as graduate student researchers with current faculty. Our students have over a 90% success rate in their applications for federal training grants. We will work with accepted students to try to find sources of funding and we encourage applicants to alert us to potential faculty mentors. To date, our students have a very strong track record of successful funding, with nearly all receiving full tuition and stipend.

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### For more information

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