The DVSc degree is an advanced applied degree which requires the acquisition of applied skills and in-service training, and the submission of a thesis based on research investigations in an applied area. Depending upon the background of the individual student, the proportion of time devoted to investigational work normally will be no less than one-third of the total.

Prescribed Studies
The program committee may designate certain courses be taken as part of the student's background in the disciplinary area of specialization. Other courses may be designated because of the relationship to in-service training and applied skills. Such substantive courses comprise the prescribed courses in which the candidate must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 'B-' standing (see Establishment of Program (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/student-programs/establishment-program-study/) and Prescribed Studies (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/academic-standings/prescribed-studies/)). At least 2.5 credits of prescribed courses must be completed, of which no more than 1.0 credits may be in Special Topics courses. Students who are granted credit for previous graduate study may, with the approval of the DVSc Program Committee and the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies), have the credits from prescribed courses reduced to no fewer than 2.0.

Additional Courses
In addition to the prescribed courses, the student may complete ancillary courses supportive of the discipline and specialty fields.