



**Department of Sociology  
Graduate Program  
Policies & Procedures**

**University of Maryland,  
College Park  
2019-2020**



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## SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT GRADUATE MANUAL

This document contains department policies about the graduate program, applying primarily to students who are already in the Sociology Department Graduate Program. For information about applying for admission and/or funding for students not already in the program, consult the *Graduate Program Brochure* available from the Graduate Office. For information about the faculty, the specialty areas, and the strengths of the program, consult the *Graduate Program Brochure* (available from the Graduate Office) or the Department web page <http://www.socy.umd.edu>. Information about Graduate School policies can be found in the Graduate Catalog, available on the Web at <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/>. In case of conflict between any policy stated here and a Graduate School policy, the policy of the Graduate School prevails.

### I. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The graduate program is administered by the **Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)**, who is appointed by the **Department Chair**. The major duties of the DGS include chairing the meetings of the Graduate Studies Committee, recruiting new students, assigning new students to faculty advisors, deciding (with the Graduate Studies Committee) action to be taken on student petitions and requests, and generally overseeing the operation of the graduate program.

The **Graduate Studies Committee**, consisting of faculty appointed by the Department Chair and two elected representatives of the graduate students, is responsible for graduate student admissions, decisions regarding funding, and advising the Director of Graduate Studies. The Committee is responsible for making sure that the standards of each specialty are consistent. The graduate student members of the committee participate in all activities of the committee with the exception of those regarding other students in the program. At the discretion of the Department Chair, the Graduate Studies Committee may be divided into two sub-committees. One, the **Graduate Admissions and Funding Committee**, reviews and makes decisions regarding applications for admission and funding of new and continuing students. The other, the **Graduate Curriculum Committee**, makes decisions or recommendations about the requirements of the program, monitors the work of the specialty areas and the Ph.D. specialty examinations, and deals with other questions about graduate program policy that may arise.

Each **specialty area** has a **coordinator** who has the responsibility of (a) planning and scheduling graduate seminars in consultation with area faculty and the Director of Graduate faculty; (b) identifying the courses that are required from candidates for Ph. D. examinations in the specialty area; (c) determining whether students have satisfied the requirements of the specialty, and (d) developing and maintaining the specialty area examination reading lists. Courses ranging from the 400 level to the 800 level are offered in each specialty area, with the frequency and sequencing facilitating the progress of students through their program. The relationship between coursework and specialty examinations is further discussed in the section concerning doctoral program requirements.

Also important to graduate student progress are **faculty advisors, thesis and dissertation advisors, thesis and dissertation committees, and Ph.D. specialty examination committees**. (See sections below for more information).

## II. THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The sociology doctoral program is a focused program of study in which students not only receive training in theory, methodology, and statistics, but also develop in-depth knowledge in two specialty areas. The program is designed to provide a continuous, integrated sequence of courses, seminars, and research training that will afford the opportunity to develop both a breadth of sociological knowledge and specialized skills. The program can be viewed as completing a series of cumulative and sometimes overlapping tasks: completing course work, completing an original second-year research paper that contributes to sociological knowledge, passing specialty examinations, and completing a dissertation, an original research project that contributes to sociological knowledge.

The Sociology Department does not offer a terminal Master's Degree Program. Instead, students apply to the PhD program and are given the option to obtain the Master's Degree along the way. Students interested in obtaining the Master's degree en route to the PhD should be able to complete all the requirements in a 2 year period. Doctoral students may obtain a Master of Arts degree during their course of doctoral study by completing at least 30 credit hours, including:

1. One course in social theory (SOCY 620)
2. Two courses in statistics (SOCY601 and SOCY602)
3. One course in logics and methods of inquiry (SOCY699D)
4. A proseminar for first year students (SOCY616)
5. A second-year research paper which meets the approval of two faculty members
6. Additional credits of specialty area courses to meet the 30 credit hour threshold.

By the rules of the Graduate School, *successful completion* of courses requires a grade of C- or better; grades below C- do not earn credit toward graduate degrees and do not satisfy course requirements within the program. In addition, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better to remain in good standing; students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 are placed on academic probation by the Graduate School.

Approved M. A. Program. All prospective candidates for the Master's degree are required to submit a program of courses for the approval of the Registrar's Office. This can be done after a minimum of two semesters of residence and after all the required courses in the Master's program have been successfully completed. This form is used by the Registrar's Office to determine if the student has met all Graduate School requirements (minimally, an average grade of B or better in all course work taken in the program, no outstanding incompletes and a minimum of 30 credits of graduate courses). Approval by the department signifies that the program meets departmental requirements.

Students with Master's from Other Universities/Disciplines. No credit is transferred into a doctoral program. Students who enter the program with a Master's degree from another university must meet the requirements of the department's program. Students who have completed prior graduate coursework in sociology may submit a petition to the Graduate Director requesting a waiver of one or more courses in Social Theory, Statistics, or Research Methods. The Graduate Committee consults with pertinent faculty to determine which courses meet our departmental requirements.

Doctoral Program Requirements. Doctoral students must complete a minimum of 10 additional hours of graduate coursework beyond the Master's degree requirements. Doctoral students must complete a total of 40 credits of coursework, the second year paper, pass two Specialty Exams, complete 12 credits of Dissertation research, successfully defend the dissertation proposal, and successfully defend the dissertation. The program should be structured as follows.

Distribution of Courses. The 40 credits are distributed among required and elective courses as indicated below.

*Required courses.* Doctoral students must have successfully completed courses in theory, research methods, and statistics. The following must be successfully completed unless a waiver is granted by the Director of Graduate Studies:

1. Two courses in social theory (SOCY620 and an additional theory course from the current approved list)
2. Two courses in statistics (SOCY601 and SOCY602)
3. Two advanced research methods course in addition to SOCY699D from the current list of approved courses.
4. Proseminar SOCY616
5. 12 credit hours of dissertation research (SOCY899).

*Elective Courses.* A minimum of 18 graduate credits. Courses should be selected to satisfy requirements of the specialty chosen by the student. Approved courses are those recommended by the Coordinator of the Specialty Area and subsequently approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. Selection of courses should be done to ensure the nine credit hours required by Social Inequality and Mobility, Social Psychology, and States and Social Change areas and 12 credit hours for the Demography area. Each area requires completion of a foundational course and two additional area seminars. Demography also requires completion of the demographic methods course. The required seminars for each of the areas are:

- Demography: SOCY630 Population and Society, and SOCY611 Demographic Techniques
- Social Inequality and Mobility: SOCY661 Stratification
- Social Psychology: SOCY630 Theories of Social Psychology
- Social Change and States: SOCY699K States, Politics, and Social Change

Specific criteria applied in counting these courses are:

- A set of courses to support the student's second specialty exam drawn from several of the department's specialties. The coursework will be developed by the student with the

guidance of their examining committee.

- One publications course. Eligible after submitting 2<sup>nd</sup> year paper.
- One proposal writing course. Eligible after submitting 2<sup>nd</sup> year paper.
- Independent reading courses do not count as supporting specialty exams.
- If a course is approved for two specialty areas, it may be counted towards only one specialty exam. Students may not double count the same course for both exams unless they have approval from the examining committee for both specialty exams and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Second-year paper. Completion of the second-year paper is required to become eligible to sit for specialty examinations. The second year paper is required to be an original research project that contributes new sociological knowledge. The second year paper should be completed in the second semester of the second year. Students are expected to present their second year paper to the department in the second semester of their second year. The second year paper advisor and reader must be Sociology faculty members with graduate faculty status. Faculty from outside of the department who have graduate faculty status may be part of the committee as additional committee members. Students may choose to enroll in three credits of independent research (SOCY799) while completing their second-year paper. To register for these credits, contact the Graduate Office for the necessary electronic permission.

Advancing to Candidacy and Time Limits. The Graduate School’s policy states that “students must be advanced to candidacy within five years of admission to the doctoral program.” Students are eligible to advance to candidacy once they have met the following requirements:

- completion of all required coursework
- completion of the second-year paper, including approval of the paper by the department and presentation of the paper to the department
- completion of all coursework for the two specialty examinations;
- passing both specialty exams;
- Submitting and successfully defending the dissertation proposal.

Once admitted to candidacy for the doctorate, students have a maximum of 4 years to complete the dissertation. Extension of these limits is possible under some circumstances. Part-time students or students with deficiencies in their undergraduate or graduate preparation, however, will need one or more additional semesters to acquire the necessary training. Although part-time students will take proportionately longer to complete their coursework, the Graduate School maintains the same timeline policy as they do for full-time students.

**SEQUENCE OF DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

Below is a typical doctoral program sequence.

	Fall	Spring
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<p>First year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCY601 (Statistics for Sociological Research I)</li> <li>• SOCY620 (Development of European and American Sociological Theory)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCY602 (Statistics for Sociological Research II)</li> <li>• Two elective courses.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCY699D (Logic and Methods of Social Inquiry)</li> <li>• SOCY616 (Proseminar)</li> </ul>	
<p>Second year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCY602 (Statistics for Sociological Research II)</li> <li>• SOCY620 (Development of European &amp; American Sociological Theory- if not taken in Fall of first year)</li> <li>• two elective courses</li> <li>• One credit course or one credit SOCY799</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two elective courses</li> <li>• Four credits of SOCY799 (Second Year Research Credits with their advisor's section number) if a third elective course is not available</li> </ul>
<p>Third year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish specialty area courses and required methods, theory and statistics courses</li> <li>• May begin taking SOCY898 Pre-Candidacy credits if all required coursework is completed.</li> <li>• One or both specialty exams if requirements are met.</li> <li>• Option to take publications course</li> <li>• Option to take proposal writing course.</li> </ul>	
<p>Fourth year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish specialty exams if not taken in third year.</li> <li>• Option to take publications course.</li> <li>• Option to take proposal writing course.</li> <li>• Option to take additional theory, statistics, or area courses</li> <li>• Prepare dissertation proposal.</li> <li>• Defend dissertation proposal within one year of completing exams.</li> </ul>	

Selecting an Advisor. Students begin the program with an interim advisor, assigned by the Director of Graduate Studies. In cases where students have a strong interest in, or relationship with, a particular faculty member, we attempt to match them at the start of the first year. If, when the student identifies a second-year paper project, the interim advisor is not a good match, the

student may change advisors. The advisor for the second-year paper may or may not remain in that capacity as the student progresses to candidacy. Students do not need permission from their temporary advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies to change advisors. Before changing advisors, we strongly advise students to meet with the potential new advisor and discuss mutual expectations and obligations. Students are required to notify the Graduate Coordinator of any changes in their advisor.

## **SPECIALTY EXAMINATIONS**

Two specialty examinations are required. They may be taken in any semester following the completion of Ph.D. program course requirements. The specialty exam in one area is administered by the Graduate Office on the third and fifth weeks of the fall and spring semesters. The second specialty exam may be one of two types: 1) it may be the standard specialty exam in one of the department's other three areas; or 2) it may be an exam developed by the student in consultation with a committee of 3 people, one of whom must be their advisor. The latter type of exam is referred to as the "alternative specialization exam" throughout the remainder of this manual. Depending on prior training, course load carried, and so on, the student may be prepared for examinations as early as the fifth semester in the program.

Approval for Specialty Examinations. In the semester prior to the semester in which specialty examinations are to be taken, the student should formally apply to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval to take the specialty examinations. On receipt of the application, the Director of Graduate Studies will review the student's record, and if all necessary requirements have been met (or are likely to be met by the date of the examination), approve (or tentatively approve) the application. To receive approval to take the standard specialty exams, the student must have:

1. Successfully completed theory, methods, statistics and computer skills requirements, or be currently enrolled in the courses necessary to complete them.
2. Successfully completed three approved specialty area courses in each area, or be currently enrolled in the courses necessary to complete them, as approved by the specialty area coordinator. (\*Note that the demography area requires FOUR approved courses for the specialty area exam)
3. No incomplete grades in any of the above courses.
4. Advisor approval.

To receive approval to take the alternative specialization exam, the student must form a committee of three Sociology faculty members with graduate faculty status, one of whom must be their advisor, and in consultation with the committee develop an alternative specialization exam proposal. Faculty from outside of the department who have graduate faculty status may be part of the committee as additional committee members.

The proposal must include 1) a discussion of three graduate courses from several of the department's specialties inform the students' reading list and proposed content of the exam; 2) an argument supporting the materials included on the reading list, and 3) a detailed

Departmental expectations about the expected form of the exam is an *Annual Review* style article covering major themes, arguments, and limitations of existing work in the alternative specialization and presenting a unique perspective on the specialization's future directions. The alternative specialization exam should be no more than 40 double-spaced pages.

#### Guidelines for the Conduct of Standard Specialty Examinations

- Area Coordinators should submit their examinations to the Graduate Office the Wednesday before the first examination.
- Examinations will be administered by the Graduate Office on the third and fifth Monday of each semester at 10:00am.
- Completed examinations must be returned to the Graduate Office by 12:00pm on the following Wednesday.
- The Specialty Committees will report the outcomes of their examination to the Graduate Office no later than two weeks after the last examination is completed. Examination results will be reported to the students on the Friday two weeks after the last examination is returned to the Graduate Office.
- Students may turn in either a printed copy of their examination or email it as a Word or PDF file to the Graduate Office by the return deadline (12:00 pm the Wednesday following receiving their examination).
- Students are responsible for their word processing/computing needs. At their request the Graduate Office will arrange for a personal computer to be used on campus in a location determined by the Graduate Office.
- Students may use written materials to answer questions on their examinations that include books, journal articles, materials published electronically (e.g. from the internet), class notes, and notes developed for the examination (theirs or other students). Remember, the ideas you develop in collaboration with other students who have taken or are taking the examination require attribution. You must acknowledge their source. If you have any questions about attribution, please drop by the Graduate Office or call the *Student Honor Council* (301-314-8450) for more information. Examination committees may specify other materials that can be used or are restricted from use.
- Students with questions about the exam should direct them to the exam area coordinator, using the contact information provided with the exam. Beyond that, students may not communicate with any other people about their examination before the examination is returned to the Graduate Office.

Appointment of Specialty Examination Committees: The written examinations are prepared and evaluated by committees that are appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Studies Committee after consultation with the student, the student's advisor, and the coordinator of the specialty area.

The exam committee meets with students who will take the exam to provide preparation guidance and to answer questions at least four months prior to the exam.

Grades on Specialty Examinations. The committee assigns each exam an overall grade of

High Pass, Pass, or Fail. No conditional passes should be assigned, and Fail ought to be used in all cases where more than one of the answers is judged not to pass.

In the case of a failed exam. The expectation is students will retake the original specialty exam in the next semester. However, students may petition the Graduate Office to allow them to take a different area specialty exam or to write an alternative exam. For alternative exams, petitions will be considered only when students have already passed or are scheduled to take one of the other standard area specialty exams. A second fail, on either the original standard area specialty exam, a different standard area specialty exam, or the alternative exam will result in program dismissal.

Content of Specialty Examinations: Every examinee is expected to be able to answer questions in the specialty area concerning: (1) Materials included in the reading list provided by the coordinator of the specialty, (2) Research, theoretical issues, and problems that currently exist in the area, (3) The evaluation of existing theory and research methodology, as they apply to the area, and (4) History of concepts and methods. Additionally, the student should be able to indicate a potential for doing original research contributing to new knowledge in the discipline.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOLLOWING SPECIALTY EXAMINATIONS**

Advancement to Candidacy. After students have passed two specialty examinations and successfully defended their dissertation proposal, they may apply for candidacy. Students must be advanced to candidacy one year prior to defending the dissertation, and have four years to complete the dissertation once advanced to candidacy.

Dissertation. The doctoral dissertation is a monograph-length study – or, alternately, three article-length papers – of publishable quality that reflects the candidate's ability to do original independent research. Early in the doctoral program the student should start work on formulating a research problem for the dissertation so that by the time the student finishes the specialty examinations he or she is ready to submit a formal proposal to his or her advisory committee.

### Dissertation Advisory Committee.

When the student has progressed in the development of the dissertation topic and proposal to benefit from committee advice, he or she should, in consultation with the dissertation advisor, select an advisory committee. This committee will be the basis for the dissertation proposal defense and the oral examination committee as well. If necessary, the composition of this committee may be changed as the dissertation progresses. Nomination of the Dissertation Committee must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 6 weeks before the scheduled final defense. A Dissertation Committee consists of five members of the Graduate Faculty, three of whom must be Full Members. The committee must also have a Dean's Representative, a full member of the Graduate Faculty who is affiliated with a department other than sociology. For a complete description of the policy, refer to the Graduate Catalog's Doctoral Policies [http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/doctoral\\_degree\\_policies.htm](http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/doctoral_degree_policies.htm).

Special Member Students may petition the department and the Graduate School to have an individual from outside the University of Maryland serve on their dissertation committee. This person is in addition to the three full UMD faculty members. The department requires the

following documentation prior to submitting an official nomination to the Graduate School: (a) letter of support from the student's advisor stating how the student will benefit from having this person on his/her committee; (b) the nominee's current CV; (c) the nomination form signed by the student's advisor; (d) HR new appointment forms (to enter into ARS). The faculty will vote on the nomination during a faculty meeting. If the nomination is approved, the Department Chair will write a memo to the Graduate Office informing them of the decision.

This memo will be forwarded to the Graduate School, along with all pertinent paperwork for the final approval. Special appointments are valid for five years.

When the Graduate School has approved the committee, an official oral examination form is sent to the Graduate Office. The dissertation advisor keeps this form until the examination. Once the committee has signed the form, the advisor will return the form to the Graduate Coordinator, who will get the Graduate Director's signature, and forward the form to the Registrar's Office for processing.

Dissertation Proposal Defense. Students are required to write a dissertation proposal and successfully defend the proposal in an oral exam, referred to as the dissertation proposal defense. When the student and dissertation advisor feel the proposal is ready for presentation, the dissertation proposal defense is scheduled. This meeting is a formal requirement of the department, is open to all department graduate faculty (may be open to graduate students under the advisor's discretion), and is announced at least a week in advance. The dissertation proposal defense examining committee consists of the dissertation committee. At least two weeks prior to the dissertation proposal defense, the student should provide a copy of the dissertation proposal to the committee. During the dissertation defense, the student presents an overview of the proposed dissertation and responds to questions and recommendations from the dissertation committee, based on their careful evaluation of the proposal draft. The defense concludes with committee making recommendations to the student regarding necessary changes in the proposed research. Once the committee approves the proposal the student undertakes the research in close consultation with the faculty advisor.

Final Oral Examination. Each doctoral candidate is required to successfully defend his or her dissertation. The final oral examination is conducted by a committee of the Graduate Faculty that is approved by the Graduate School. The final oral examination must be announced at least a week in advance and is open to all members of the Graduate Faculty of The University of Maryland, College Park campus and other interested persons permitted by department policies. However, only members of the committee may participate and vote.

Submitting the Final Copy of the Dissertation. Once the dissertation has received final approval by the dissertation committee, all doctoral candidates must electronically submit a copy of the final dissertation. Check in the Graduate Office or The University of Maryland Graduate Catalog for details of format and quality of paper required (<http://www.etdadmin.com/cgi-bin/school?siteId=76>).

The last step is for the student to submit the finished and revised copy of the thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School. It must have the advisor's signature on a standard front page in order to be acceptable.

Summary of Requirements for Ph.D.

- Theory: two courses (620 and an additional course from an approved list)

- Statistics: two courses (SOCY601 and SOCY602)
- Methods: Three courses (699D, and two additional courses from the current approved list)
- Proseminar (616)
- An advanced statistics course or advanced methods course (with advisor's permission)
- Complete a second year paper and presentation
- Specialties: A minimum of three (Note: four required for specialization in demography) approved courses per specialty.
- Pass two specialty examinations
- Dissertation research (899): Twelve (12) credits
- Dissertation: (with proposal defense and dissertation oral examination)

#### IV. CONTINUANCE IN THE PROGRAM

Continuance in the graduate program is at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, in consultation with the student's advisor, and is contingent on making normal progress toward the degree. A number of circumstances may lead to termination of a student's participation in the graduate program. These include, but are not limited to:

Failure to make Normal Progress. Normal progress includes maintaining a B average, progressing through the required courses in a timely manner, receiving no grade lower than a grade of at least B- in all required courses, completing the second year paper by the end of the fourth semester (for full time students), having no incompletes of more than one semester standing, and for doctoral students taking and passing specialty examinations on a timely schedule.

Full-time students in the doctoral program should have all of the required courses completed by the end of the third year and the specialty examinations completed by Fall semester of the fourth year.

Failure to Actively Pursue the Degree. Students (except part-time students) are expected to register for and maintain sufficient coursework or research credit to qualify as full-time each semester (except summer) from time of admission until the degree has been obtained. Normally this means maintaining a minimum of 8 credits, but see the [Graduate School Catalog](#) for the method of determining "full-time."

Failure to remove deficiencies. Students must remove provisional admission status or Departmental probation status within the prescribed time period.

Department Policy Regarding Unsatisfactory Academic Progress. The Director of Graduate Studies, upon receipt of notification by the Graduate School that a student is making unsatisfactory academic progress will notify the student that he/she is on probation and must be making acceptable progress by the end of the current semester. If the student does not do this, the Graduate Studies Committee will meet with the student's advisor to review the student's program with the possible decisions being: (1) termination of the student's admission status or (2) placing the student on an additional semester of probation with specific criteria to be met, with the student's admission status to be terminated at the end of the semester if the criteria are not met and if so recommended by the advisor/Graduate Studies Committee.

Acceptable progress will mean maintaining a 3.0 or better GPA and/or meeting specific

criteria established in a provisional admission or probationary status. The review at the end of the first semester of probation will be conducted under the following guidelines: The student

has the right to be notified of all meetings regarding his/her continuation in the program, to present in writing his/her arguments for continuance in the program, and the option of appearing in person to present his/her case to a committee consisting of the Graduate Studies Committee and the student's advisor. In the context of this meeting the advisor, as well as the Graduate Studies Committee members, have a vote regarding the decision to terminate the student or continue the student on probation. Since recommending a student for termination is officially a decision of the DGS, the input of the advisor and the committee vote is advisory to them. In its deliberations the committee may take into account any explanatory factors of unsatisfactory performance such as illness, family emergencies, or other traumatic or disabling events.

## **V. EXCEPTIONS**

For any of the specific requirements of either the department program or the Graduate School, special or extenuating circumstances may warrant exemption. Students have the prerogative of requesting exemption. To obtain consideration of the waiver of a requirement, a formal petition must be made to the Director of Graduate Studies or to the Graduate School, depending on the requirement being petitioned. The Graduate School has a special form for this. See the Director of Graduate Studies regarding the petitioning of departmental requirements.

## **VI. MENTORING IN SOCIOLOGY**

We have identified three areas of advising for graduate students: 1) day-to-day department/ Graduate School/University advising; 2) research advising; and 3) professional socialization advising. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) has major responsibility for the first advising area. The faculty at large has the responsibility for the other two advising areas. We have several specific mentoring activities to assist the faculty and students that include:

- The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) examines the personal statements of all admitted students during the summer and makes initial assignments to faculty mentors based on common research interests. The first task confronted by faculty and student is to determine who should serve as the research advisor for the student.
- Before classes begin all incoming students participate in a two-day orientation workshop. Activities include meeting administrators, students, and faculty. Topics include program requirements, teaching undergraduates, introduction to Department specialty areas, meeting with advisors (see the point above), computer training, tours of the facilities (libraries, computer laboratories, research centers, etc.). This is coordinated with other orientation activities on campus (e.g. events for international students, first time teaching assistance, Graduate School orientation, etc.).
- All students participate in the first-year proseminar, which covers a variety of departmental and disciplinary professional norms, standards and practices.
- The Department encourages students to secure a major research advisor no later than after the completion of eighteen credit hours (typically the end of their second semester in the program for full-time students). Every student completes a yearly progress report that is evaluated by a faculty committee. Students receive a summary of this evaluation and may meet with the DGS.



- One of the best ways to become a professional sociologist is to publish and/or present research at professional meetings. Students are encouraged to submit their work and are informed about upcoming submission deadlines. Normally this task is fulfilled by research advisors. Research advisors expect to help students prepare their research project for presentation/publication, although others are often involved.
- It is normative for students to present their research at department sponsored brown bag lecture series.
- Students with papers accepted for presentation at professional meetings are expected to present their research to the department for practice.
- The department has offered brown bag type of meetings where faculty and students discuss professional socialization. The faculty and Graduate Office support this effort with their time and expertise. Past topics have been wide ranging and include writing a thesis, managing the job market, preparing presentations, comparing academic (large and small department) and non-academic (think tanks, private sector, government, etc.) employment, and others. These seminars are used to spark student curiosity about what faculty do outside of the classroom and to discuss the practice of teaching, research and service with the individual faculty.
- Normally each student teaches their own class, supervised by the undergraduate committee, sometime during their Ph.D. degree program. This experience is prefaced by completing the three credit course "Teaching Sociology" (SOCY699T). Professional development faculty rotation will teach.

## VII. SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THESIS AND DISSERTATION ADVISORS

Most of the following information can be found in the Graduate Catalog.

The major advisor for a second year paper or dissertation and the Graduate Director are responsible for certifying that the student has met certain formal requirements (and by implication, for helping the student meet those requirements). There are a series of forms that support this certification, and that must be filed if a student is to get a degree. The advisor signs off on the forms first, then the student drops the paperwork off in the Graduate Office for the Graduate Director to sign. A copy of each signed form will be placed in the students file for future reference.

## VIII. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND POLICIES

Departmentally administered financial assistance includes teaching and research assistantships as well as other types of employment opportunities and fellowships.

Funded Student Course Load. All students receiving Departmental or University financial aid must register for, and maintain a minimum of 9 credits of coursework except those admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree. (This does not apply to Assistant Instructors).

Funding Criteria. In general two criteria are considered in awarding financial assistance, merit and departmental needs. Merit is assessed by the criteria of rate of progress toward degree, grade point average, absence of incompletes, completion of required courses, excellent performance of previous assistantship or teaching duties, and other evidence of professional

development and accomplishment (see below, continuation of funding criteria). Departmental needs include needs for staffing courses and sections of courses, and requirements of funded research projects. The amount of money available for graduate student support varies from year to year, as does the number of continuing and new applicants for funds.

International Applicants. In addition to the major criteria indicated, teaching assistants with classroom duties must be competent to teach in English. Financial support in the form of a teaching assistantship may not be offered to international applicants who do not demonstrate the ability to conduct classes in English. A satisfactory score on the TOEFL is not sufficient for this certification as the applicant must pass an evaluation conducted by the Maryland English Institute (MEI).

Criteria for Continuation of Funding Decisions to continue financial aid are made on a year to year basis and in addition to the general funding criteria the criteria include the number of semesters of financial aid already provided from departmental resources. Students are typically given four years of funding, and are eligible for a fifth year of funding contingent on departmental needs and academic progress. Two years of funding is available while in the master's program and two-to-three additional years while in the doctoral program. Merit considerations include: The graduate grade point obtained by the student (for funding beyond a second year the minimum grade point is 3.25), the number of credits taken, the number of incompletes (for funding beyond a second year there should be no more than two incompletes of more than one semester standing), timely completion of required courses, MA thesis, and Ph.D. specialty exams, and evidence of professional activities such as presenting papers at professional meetings and/or publishing in professional journals. Considerations of departmental needs and how well the student has helped meet them include an evaluation of the work performed as an assistant. The decisions on continuation of financial aid are usually completed during the period from the last week of April through the second week of May.

Forms and supporting material. All currently enrolled students must complete an annual evaluation. Students may indicate on the evaluation whether or not they would like to be considered for funding for the next academic year. Complete evaluations, including an updated CV, letters for the students advisor and supervisor, are all due in the Graduate Office by April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Graduate Committee will review the evaluations and use them to make decisions on funding for the following academic year.

## **TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT THROUGH THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

Graduate Assistantships (GA) Minimum requirements: must be a full time student in Sociology Department MA or Ph.D. program. Students are selected for GA positions by the Graduate Committee. Students can serve as either a Teaching Assistant (TA), Research Assistant (RA), or teach their own course.

*General Information.* University rules about hiring, pay, work hours, etc. are described in the Graduate Catalog ([http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/assistantship\\_policies.htm](http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/assistantship_policies.htm)). Among the important items of information you will find there are: appointments, duties and time commitments, compensation, additional employment, tuition remission and benefits, and codes of conduct.

Sociology Department has the following policies:

*The Work Year:* GA contracts run from mid-August to mid-June. We expect assistants to be available for GA responsibilities from the week before classes begin to the week after final exams. During the other parts of the contract year, assistants should leave a phone number and address at which they can be contacted and may be asked to come in for a meeting or organizational session.

*Duties.* In general, GA's are expected to work an average of 20 hours a week. Each GA is assigned to an individual faculty member or members, who specify further duties. Usual assignments include:

*Teaching Assistants for Large Undergraduate Classes without Discussion Sections.* (Classes at the 100, 200 or 300 level with an enrollment of more than 100 students.) Duties for such assignments may include attending lectures, keeping up with the readings, proctoring exams, holding office hours, tutoring, grading exams and papers, developing teaching materials, making up exams and assignments, leading occasional review or discussion sessions, and one or two lectures per semester.

*Teaching Assistants for Large Undergraduate Classes with Discussion Sections.* TA's assigned to these courses are responsible for meeting weekly with several discussion sections. Duties may also include attending lectures, making up and grading exams, assignments, and papers, holding review sessions, developing teaching materials, and one or two lectures per semester. TA's who teach sections are expected to hold regular office hours.

*Statistics and Methods Labs (SOCY 201 and 202).* These assignments involve teaching three lab sections (usually scheduled for 2 hours each, with 20-25 students per lab). Duties may also include attending lectures, making up and grading exams, assignments, and papers, holding review sessions, developing teaching materials, and one or two lectures per semester. Lab instructors are expected to hold regular office hours. Completion of the first year statistics course is a normal pre-requisite for assignment to statistics labs.

*Ad Hoc and Special Assignments.* Other assignments may be made at the discretion of the Chair with advice of the Graduate Studies Committee. Examples include: assignment to a smaller undergraduate class for special needs or "enrichment", assignment to faculty for research activities supportive of research proposed by the Graduate Assistant, and assignment to coordinate department facilities such as the Data Lab or department computers. These assignments are made for one semester or year at a time. Any department member including faculty, graduate students, and administration may propose a "special" GA assignment. Such a proposal should be sent to the Graduate Studies Committee.

*Assignment of Students to Duties.* Students are assigned to faculty supervisors by the Associate Chair, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. The following policies affect assignments: (1) We try to honor individual faculty and student requests and (2) Students should be qualified to perform the duties for which they are assigned, or be able to learn them during the semester.

*Rotation.* Students should expect to be rotated into and out of the more "advanced" assignments such as 201 and 202 labs. Ideally, each student should acquire a variety of work

experiences including: assisting for a large undergraduate class, teaching stat or methods labs, a "research" position, and teaching his or her own courses as an assistant instructor or through University College. Although assignments are ultimately made on the basis of the needs of the teaching program, students who have already done a year of one kind of assignment may expect to have first priority at a different kind of assignment should they request it, and students should not expect to have the same assignment more than two years in a row. When possible, we try to keep students in the same assignment both Fall and Spring semester.

*Evaluation of Assistants.* Each faculty supervisor is expected to write an evaluation about the GA's who have worked for him/her during the semester or year. The evaluation should describe the duties assigned to the GA and (if the supervisor wishes) evaluate the level of performance. The evaluation becomes part of the student's file and may be seen by the student if s/he requests. Although duties and standards vary from one assignment to another, it is generally expected that the obligations to be in assigned places at assigned times (office hours, classes, appointments, picking up mail, etc.) and adhering to standards of academic honesty. Since GA assignments are considered part of graduate training, other standards for quality of performance are relative to what can be expected from students in view of their level.

Research Assistantships (RA's). These are funded by grants and contracts obtained from sources outside the department by individual faculty members. The pay scale, hours, and work year are the same as for TA's but otherwise the duties and requirements are determined by the Principal Investigator (faculty member in charge of the grant or contract). The number of Research Assistantships varies from semester to semester and is difficult to predict more than a few months in advance. Students are selected for RA positions by the Principal Investigator of the grant or contract.

Assistant Instructorships. These are temporary faculty positions, paid for out of funds budgeted for faculty salaries. Assistant Instructors teach sections of undergraduate courses, and are responsible for the organization of the courses they teach to include grading. The number of Assistant Instructorships available depends on the number of faculty on leave and/or on the number of unfilled faculty positions. The Department's policy is to offer Assistant Instructorships first to (qualified) graduate students in our program, and if courses remain unstaffed, to hire from outside the Department. Students are selected for Assistant Instructor positions by the Associate Chair, from a list of qualified candidates prepared by the Graduate Studies Committee and/or Director of Graduate Studies. The general criteria for selection of Assistant Instructorships are:

*Completion of Master's Degree Requirements* Although students are not required to receive the Master's Degree en route to the PhD, in order to be eligible for teaching a course, they must complete the requirements of the Master's Degree. Specifically, students must have successfully completed the Second Year Paper.

*Teaching Experience.* As many students as possible are given the opportunity for within-department teaching experience and therefore qualified students who have not yet had the opportunity are often given priority over those who have, particularly those who have had two semesters or more;

progress) receive first consideration. Students in their fourth year receive second consideration. Students beyond reasonable time limits for continued support are given lowest priority;

*Appropriate Background and Training for the Course Taught.* Students are appointed only for courses that are reasonably related to their areas of developing expertise. Those with the best training qualifications for specific courses are usually given priority. Priority is given to students making the best progress (grades, papers, publications, grants, and fellowships).

*Demonstrated Skills.* Appointees are not selected on assessments of their promise as teachers; rather, the teaching experience is to develop and test their teaching skills.

*Mentoring.* Each assistant instructor should have a close connection with a faculty or mentor. Wherever possible each teaching assignment consists of two sections of the same course.

#### Policies Applicable to GA's.

*Department Facilities.* GA's are entitled to office space in the department. Assignment of available rooms to students is the responsibility of the Graduate Student Forum. Students employed by the department may also use department supplies and services when necessary for the duties for which they have been hired, but not for their own studies or outside work. If you need paper, desk supplies, Xeroxing, etc., make sure the office staff knows who you are and the reasons for which you need the supplies or services.

#### *Possible Problems*

*Absence from Duties.* Graduate Assistants do not earn paid annual, personal, or sick leave. A student who must miss some regularly scheduled duty should: (1) inform the faculty supervisor and (2) attempt to arrange a substitute (for example, a trade with another GA or Instructor). In the case of an extended absence, the Department Chair or Director of Graduate Studies may arrange a change in assignments.

*Workload.* The workload is supposed to be an average of 20 hours a week. It is expected that for most assignments, some weeks will require more than 20 hours and some less. A student who finds him/herself consistently being asked to put in more than 20 hours, should talk to the supervisor first, and to the Director of Graduate Studies if the problem continues.

*Inappropriate Duties.* A student who is assigned to duties that seem inappropriate or for which she/he is not qualified, should talk to the supervisor and/or the Director of Graduate Studies.

*Employment as Necessary Professional Training.* The Sociology Department Graduate Program requirements state that experience in teaching and/or research is an essential part of graduate training, that all students should have some such experience either within the department or elsewhere. The tax status of financial aid should be constantly reevaluated with the Graduate School.

#### Employment Opportunities Outside the Department.

*University College Courses.* Graduate students with a Master's can apply to teach individual courses in University College, a separate division of the University of Maryland

system. The decision about whom to recommend for hiring is made by the University College and courses may be canceled if under-enrolled.

*Internships.* We have occasional internships with government agencies. Decisions about which students to recommend for these are made by the Graduate Studies Committee, with final decision up to the agency.

*Part-time and Hourly Work.* Faculty members with grants or contracts occasionally hire research assistants on an hourly basis. The total number of hours must not exceed full-time work. Decisions about hourly work are made by the Principal Investigator for grants contracts, or by the department chair for department funds.

*Work Study.* Graduate students may in some cases qualify for College Work-Study program funds. Pay per hour varies depending on the level of the student for on-campus assignments of up to 20 hours per week. Assignments are appropriate to graduate level education. To qualify, you must be able to demonstrate financial need. Apply through the Office of Student Financial Aid, Mitchell Building, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.

*Other Jobs.* There are a variety of other teaching and research positions that are not under direct control of the Department, but for which the Department acts as a clearinghouse. The Graduate Office keeps a file of announcements about these opportunities, and circulates memos describing some of the most interesting. Decisions about hiring and duties for these are made solely by the agency or person who is advertising for assistance.

#### Other Forms of Support.

*Graduate School Fellowships.* The Graduate School offers a select number of fellowships to graduate students at various stages in the program. Descriptions of each fellowship can be found on the Graduate School's website. Graduate School deadlines are announced in the fall semester. Each program must set their own deadline for students to submit their applications (see the Graduate Office for deadlines). Since each program is permitted to nominate two students per fellowship, the Graduate Committee has to review each application and decide which students to nominate for each fellowship.

*Outside Grant and Fellowship Support.* Some graduate student support is available from government and private sources. Students are encouraged to apply for support from appropriate outside programs. Students may visit the department's research page for a list of fellowships, or they may speak with the Director of Research. Information about student loans is available through the Director, Office of Student Aid, Mitchell Administration Building, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.

**IX. SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

Graduate Teaching Assistantship appointments ordinarily are for the academic year and do not carry over the summer months. Most graduate students find summer employment outside the university. The department does not offer graduate courses in the summer, but those students so inclined may use the summer to fulfill some requirements of their degree program through (a) completion of thesis or dissertation research credit or, (b) completion of elective courses in another Department or another University provided that the course is approved prior to its being taken (a syllabus of the course is usually the minimum information needed by the Director of Graduate Studies in determining whether or not the course may be used to meet departmental program requirements).

**X. GRADUATE STUDENT FORUM**

The Sociology Graduate Student Forum is an integral part of the graduate student experience at Maryland. The Forum members help acclimate the new students to the program and system, supplying information and/or support when needed, and publishing the newsletter *Imagine*. They also play an active part in department procedure with representation to faculty meetings and committees. The Forum is responsible for the maintenance of the C.W. Mills Lounge within the department for the use of the graduate students and faculty, and assigns graduate student offices. The social aspects of campus life are also incorporated into Forum participation.

## APPENDIX

### Annual Evaluation of Graduate Students

Evaluation of graduate student program is an indispensable component of our graduate program intended to cultivate and support graduate student development as productive scholars and junior colleagues. The goal of the evaluation process is to establish shared expectations and standards regarding the quality and timeliness of coursework, comprehensive exams, second year paper, research products, the dissertation, and professional development. A related goal is to provide information useful to developing your individual development plan informed by your career goals and understanding of the opportunity costs of decisions about areas of study, timing of course completion, paper submissions to conferences and journals, service, summer internships, and paid consultancies / employment outside the University. Hence, evaluation involves much more than ensuring timely progression of the course of graduate studies.

Graduate students receive timely and constructive evaluations from three groups.

- Annual substantive feedback from the Graduate Committee about:
  - Graduate seminar completion and performance
  - Graduate assistant performance
  - Program benchmark progress (required coursework completion, second year paper, comprehensive exams, dissertation proposal, progress on completing dissertation)
  - Professional development
- Ongoing, regular substantive guidance about coursework, research, professional development, and career plans from their advising team (the primary advisor, committee members, and other mentors)
- Substantive evaluation and guidance on course projects and seminar performance from faculty instructors

### Procedures

In March of Spring Semester, all students are required to submit the annual Graduate Student Progress Report. Regardless of your level in the program, students who do not submit the progress report will not be considered eligible for funding. Failure to submit the progress report may also result in a registration lock and negatively affect your academic standing in the department.

Faculty advisors and GA supervisors submit annual evaluations of advisees and graduate research assistants. The Director of Undergraduate Program is consulted about performance of TA responsibilities. Faculty instructors of foundational graduate program seminars are also consulted about performance.

In April of Spring Semester, the Graduate Committee reviews the records of all graduate



students, regardless of funding eligibility. Based on the annual evaluations, the Committee prepares recommendations regarding departmental funding for the subsequent year. Students who are recommended for funding are ranked based on the evaluation criteria below.

The department aims to fund all eligible students if they are making good progress on advancing through the graduate program (see Graduate Handbook, Good Progress Policy section) and their evaluation materials indicate research productivity and professional development. Students who are beyond funding eligibility are evaluated for funding as GAs or lecturers, depending on available positions and reasonable progress. The Graduate Committee considers extenuating circumstances (health and/or family issues, heavy teaching load, problems with committees and unexpected issues with course scheduling) when evaluating students.

The Graduate Director prepares and sends a letter to each student summarizing the Committee's assessment of the student's progress and offering constructive criticism and guidance moving forward. For students who are determined to be below expectations for making good progress, the letter includes specific actions that must be taken in the subsequent academic year to remain in good standing in the program.

### Evaluation Criteria

**Coursework.** Components include course requirement completion and performance. Course requirement completion criteria are timely completion of required program and area seminars to allow students to take comprehensive exams in the third year of the program. Performance criteria include overall GPA, distribution of grades across seminars, incompletes, and instructor evaluations of student contributions to seminar discussions and the quality of written coursework. Incompletes, as well as ongoing problems with completing coursework on time, raise concerns and may lead to a lower ranking for funding.

**Progress on Program Benchmarks.** Components include the quality of intellectual products (second year paper, comprehensive exams, dissertation) and the timeliness of completion. Factors such as the originality and rigor of student coursework and research, the breadth of the course of study, and ability to respond thoughtfully to faculty critiques and guidance are also considered.

**Professional Development.** Four components are assessed. First, initiative in seeking opportunities for research experiences, funding, conference presentations, and publications is considered. Second, regular engagement in department workshops, colloquia, and annual Rosenberg and Form lectures is assessed. Third, development of a teaching portfolio and attendance at TLTC events are considered. Fourth, service to the department through the Graduate Student Forum and department, BSOS, and University committees is considered.

## Reasonable progress

### 1<sup>st</sup> year

- Completion of at least 4 of the required M.A. courses with grades of "A"
- Identification of 2YP topic
- Selection of advisor and reader for 2YP
- Completion of NSF GRFP application materials
- Initiative in seeking out research opportunities and funding
- Regular attendance at department events

### 2<sup>nd</sup> year

- Completion of all required M.A. courses with grades of As
- Submission of NSF GRFP proposal if not submitted first year
- Completion & Presentation of 2YP
- Submission of work to academic conference
- Participation in collaborative research projects
- Regular attendance at department events

### Third Year / Pre-Candidacy

- Progress towards submitting 2YP for publication by fall semester 3<sup>rd</sup> year
- Completion of specialty exams by spring semester
- Dissertation topic identified & proposal draft prepared by fall semester of fourth year
- Completion and successful defense of dissertation proposal no later than spring semester of 4<sup>th</sup> year
- Enrollment in Teaching Sociology seminar (if interested in teaching independently)
- Submission of work to academic conferences and attendance if on program
- Submission of proposals to relevant UMD and external funding calls
- Participation in collaborative faculty and/or peer research projects
- Submission of journal manuscripts for publications
- Service to department, College, University and/or discipline
- Regular attendance at department events

### Post-Candidacy (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Years)

- Selection of dissertation committee by spring semester of fourth year
- Full dissertation draft written by end of spring semester of fifth year
- Development of documents required for going on the job market fall semester of sixth year (updated CV, writing sample, job talk, research statement, teaching portfolio)
- Presentations at academic conferences
- Submission of journal manuscripts for publications
- Engagement in collaborative research projects
- Service to department, College, University and/or discipline
- Regular attendance at department events