

SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE GUIDE
(Last Revised – September 2016)

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SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE GUIDE

Part 1: Introduction

I. UNDERSTANDING THESE GUIDELINES

This guide describes the policies of the Sociology Department's graduate program. Part 1 provides a brief overview of the guidelines and the program. Part 2 discusses academic policies. Part 3 describes the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Graduate programs at Notre Dame are bound by rules determined by the Graduate School. These rules are described in the "Academic Regulations" section of the Graduate School Bulletin of Information, found on the Graduate School's web site. To ensure that this guide is fully up to date, we refer the reader to Graduate Guide for those policies and regulations (see sections shaded in gray). The Graduate School gives each department a good deal of discretion in organizing and running its program. The policies in this guide describe policies specific to our department and program. If there is a conflict, the rules in the Graduate School Bulletin supersede the rules of the department. The Bulletin also contains important information that is not covered in this Guide. Students are responsible for knowing the requirements and expectations in both this Guide and the Bulletin.

Questions about the applicability of particular regulations to any individual case should be addressed to the student's adviser (see "Advisers and Dissertation Directors," below). In all cases, the Committee for Graduate Studies (see "Administration of the Program," below), including the Director of Graduate Studies, furnishes authoritative interpretations of academic rules, often after direct consultation with administrators of the Graduate School.

Ordinarily, changes in the Department's graduate program are not imposed retroactively. Students who enter the program under a given set of regulations have the option of completing their work under those original rules if department regulations change. However, students may also be allowed to elect, as a complete set, the provisions of any program updates that are put in place during their enrollment.

II. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

The chief administrator of academic affairs in the Department of Sociology is the Chairperson. However, supervision of the graduate program is the specific responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies (Jessica L. Collett, 2013-16).

The Director is a faculty member who is appointed by the Chairperson and assisted by the members of the Graduate Studies Committee. This committee is composed of the Director of Graduate Studies (who serves as its Chair), four additional faculty members in sociology (who are chosen by the Department's Chairperson), and two student representatives (who are selected each summer between spring and fall semesters). The student representatives participate in all deliberations of the Committee, except those relating to individual students in the program.

III. SPECIAL UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

Students in our program should become familiar with following Centers, Institutes, and facilities:

- The Center for Research on Educational Opportunities (CREO), located on the tenth floor of Flanner Hall, focuses its research on basic and applied educational topics.
- The Center for the Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) located on the eighth floor of Flanner Hall, is dedicated to advancing social scientific understanding of religion in society through scholarly research, training, and publications.
- The Center for the Study of Social Movements and Social Change provides an interdisciplinary emphasis on the study of collective political challenges expressed via protest, collective violence, and other extra-institutional collective
- The Institute of Latino Studies, located in McKenna Hall, aims to promote greater understanding of the U.S. Latino experience through research, teaching, and community outreach.
- The Kaneb Center for Excellence in Teaching, located in DeBartolo Hall, provides information, training, awards, and other support for instruction and learning to graduate students and faculty members.
- The Kellogg Institute for International Studies, located in Hesburgh Center, supports research in international studies, with a special (but not exclusive) emphasis on the nations of Latin America.
- The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, located in Hesburgh Center, promotes research, teaching, and public education in the areas of war prevention, conflict resolution, human rights, and social justice.
- Facilities of the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) are open to all graduate students.
- The Center for Digital Scholarship, located in Hesburgh Library, offers training and assistance with teaching, learning, and research related to technology and complex methodologies.

More information about these organizations is available on the Notre Dame and sociology departmental web sites.

PART 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES

I. ENROLLMENT

I.A. Continuous Enrollment

I.B. Leave of Absence

I.C. Withdrawal from the Program

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

II. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

II.A. Full-time and Part-time Status

The Graduate School requires all students to maintain full-time status during the duration of their time in the program. Full-time students must enroll for at least 9 credits per semester to be considered full time. These credits can consist entirely of course work (e.g., three 3 credit classes), all research (e.g., nine credits of dissertation research) or any combination of the two (e.g., one three credit class and six dissertation research credits) to reach a minimum of nine credits.

A part-time student is any enrolled graduate student who does not fall within either of the preceding categories. The Department of Sociology will not accept part-time students unless special arrangements are formally approved the DGS and Graduate School.

II.B. Maximal Registration

II.C. Changes in Student Class Schedule

II.D Course Numbers

II.E. Graduate Grades

II.F. Examinations

II.G. Academic Good Standing

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

II.H. Departmental Policies Regarding Good Standing

An adequate G.P.A. (3.0 or higher) is **only one factor** taken into consideration in determining a student's qualifications for an advanced degree. At the end of each year, the full faculty will meet to evaluate the progress of every student in the program. As part of the process, the DGS will gather information from a variety of sources regarding each student's progress in the program. Information collected typically includes: a current student CV (pulled from Academic iNDex), grades earned in formal courses, performance on area examinations, progress on the thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, work on research projects and publications, teaching experiences, and assessments conveyed in comments (both written and oral) from members of the faculty with whom the student has had contact.

The faculty will identify both exemplary and problematic cases that require further discussion and evaluation. For each student, the faculty may pursue one of the following five options: (1) commend the student for his/her outstanding performance; (2) indicate that the student is doing satisfactory work; (3) issue a formal warning that better performance is expected, along with a description of potential future consequences and suggestions for improvement; (4) withdrawal of funding for the coming academic year (see "Financial Support" below); or (5) terminate the student from the program. These decisions will be communicated in a letter to the student in May.

A student must be in academic good standing, making "satisfactory progress" as outlined below, to be eligible for new or continued financial support. Students who have lost funding may receive funding again in the future if they, in the judgment of the faculty, have performed satisfactorily in the program.

For students who enter the program without an approved M.A. degree, "satisfactory progress" is defined according to the following benchmarks:¹

- a. completed the Master's degree by May of the second year,
- b. finished all required coursework by May of the third year,
- c. passed one area exam by May of the third year,
- d. passed both area exams by December of the fourth year,
- e. passed the oral candidacy exam by May of the fourth year.
- f. finished all requirements for the PhD by May of the sixth year.

Students who do not complete requirements (a) through (e) before the end of their eighth semester in the program (i.e., the last day of classes in the eighth semester) will not be allowed to continue in the program, unless the graduate school grants them permission to complete their oral candidacy exam in the summer.

Students who have an approved M.A. thesis (thereby waiving the M.A. thesis requirement) will be judged on accelerated time frame:

- a. finished all course work by May of the second year,
- b. passed one area exam by May of the second year,
- c. passed both area exams by December of the third year,
- d. passed the oral candidacy exam by May of the third year,
- e. finished all requirements for the Ph.D. by May of the fifth year.

Among students with an approved MA thesis, requirements (a) through (e) before the end of their sixth semester in the program (i.e., the last day of classes in the sixth semester) will not be allowed to continue in the program, unless the graduate school grants them permission to complete their oral candidacy exam in the summer.

If any of the above deadlines have not been met, the student and his or her faculty advisor must write to the Director of Graduate Studies indicating what has created the delay and setting a firm date before the next semester, understanding that funding is in jeopardy.

In addition to judging students' progress on program-related goals for funding, students will be expected to actively work toward professional goals to remain eligible for funding (e.g., present at a conference,

¹ Please note that "December" and "May" denote the last day of classes in the Fall and Spring semesters (respectively).

send a manuscript out for review, and apply for external funding). See Appendix One for a schedule of program requirements.

A student who does not complete all requirements for the Ph.D. by the eighth year of study will be terminated from the program. Students may apply for a single two-year extension of degree eligibility in their eighth year, if they anticipate that they will not earn their Ph.D. by the end of that academic year. This request must be approved first by the student's advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and finally by the Graduate School.

III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Full-time, degree-seeking graduate students in good academic standing may be eligible for financial support supplied by the University. Financial support allotted by the Graduate School for distribution by the department includes: academic year tuition scholarships, graduate assistantships, departmental fellowships, and research fellowships for the summer session. A tuition scholarship entitles the recipient to the remission of tuition charges for a fixed number of credit hours in a given semester. An assistantship carries a cash stipend that is paid to the student in return for his or her service (not to exceed 18 hours per week) in the research of faculty members or in the instructional activities of the Department. Some University fellowships provide "service free" semesters to students, in which there is no work obligation in exchange for stipend support. Students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies regarding when these service free semesters are used. During service free semesters students are encouraged to stay involved with faculty members' on-going research projects. In all cases, students are encouraged to develop a close working relationship with faculty members in the Department, because these relationships are vital for students' acquisition of research and teaching skills.

Work assignments for students with graduate assistantships are determined before the start of each academic year by the Director of Graduate Studies. While every effort is made to match students to tasks in their own areas of interest, an exact correspondence cannot be guaranteed. Although some shifts in assignments may be permitted during the course of the year, it is customary for students to hold the same job for two semesters at a time. Assistants and fellows who receive a full stipend cannot be employed elsewhere on campus without approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. For tax reasons, total hours of paid work on campus may not exceed 20 hours (including the 18 in assistantships).

Most of the awards are renewable annually, but renewal is contingent upon the diligent performance of work obligations and/or acceptable academic progress. Priority for all forms of aid is given to full-time students who are enrolled in the first through the fourth years of study. A limited number of dissertation semester fellowships and teaching ("instructor") positions are available each year on a competitive basis to support students in their fifth or sixth year of residency. All students are strongly encouraged to apply for grants and fellowships from funding sources outside of the University in order to secure financial support after the fourth year of study. Students who are seeking support from the department for their sixth year must submit at least one external fellowship to be eligible for departmental funding. Students in their seventh year and beyond cannot be supported through the department, unless their stipend support comes from an external grant (or some internal source other than the Department).

Summer research stipends may be available from the Department, and also from other sources on campus or elsewhere. Graduate students are encouraged to apply for such opportunities, in accordance with

published eligibility requirements. In allocating summer stipends, preference is given to those students who are making “satisfactory progress” in the program (see guidelines above).

IV. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students in our department are expected to be knowledgeable of the detailed regulations and procedures for maintaining academic integrity that are specified in the Graduate School’s Bulletin.

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE BULLETIN)

V. POLICIES ON HARASSMENT AND OTHER ASPECTS OF STUDENT LIFE

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

VI. GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

If a student has a grievance with respect to academic issues (e.g., academic honesty, departmental decisions that terminate or impede progress toward the degree) the student should first notify the Director of Graduate Studies of the circumstances. If the matter cannot be resolved to the student’s satisfaction, the Director of Graduate Studies will inform the Chair of the Department, who will impanel an ad hoc Grievance Committee of faculty to adjudicate the case.

(PLEASE SEE APPENDIX THREE FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE PROCESS)

PART 3: DEGREE PROGRAMS

The Department of Sociology offers training leading to the conferral of two graduate degrees: the Master of Arts (M.A.) and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Students seeking a terminal M.A. degree are not allowed to enter the program.

Our goal is to train students in sociological theory and methods and foster a competence as professionals in specific subfields within sociology. We hope that our students will have a strong foundation in the core areas of sociology, as well as specialized knowledge and skill in their specific subfield.

I. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

I.A. Course Work Requirements

Credit Hours

A total of **60 credit hours** in specified courses are required for completion of the Ph.D. Students should earn these credit hours by the end of their sixth semester in the graduate program. Courses with a grade lower than a “C” do not count to the fulfillment of course requirements. “Incompletes” are only granted at the discretion of the course instructor. Please consult the Graduate Bulletin regarding the rules governing completion of “Incomplete” classes.

The Curriculum: Required Courses

The following courses are required of all students who enter in our program. Students with prior graduate level coursework may only bypass these requirements by transferring credits or requesting a waiver (see below).

| REQUIRED COURSES | Credits |
|---|----------------|
| Classical Sociological Theory (Soc 63911) | 3 |
| Contemporary Sociological Theory (Soc 63922) | 3 |
| Proseminar I: Professionalization (Soc 63091) | 2 |
| Proseminar II: Survey of Departmental Subfields (Soc 63092) | 1 |
| Statistics I (Linear Regression) | 3 |
| Statistics II (Categorical Data Analysis) | 3 |
| Research Methods (Soc 63913) | 3 |
| Advanced Methods* | 3 |
| Foundation 1** | 3 |
| Foundation 2 | 3 |
| Foundation 3 | 3 |
| Elective 1*** | 3 |
| Elective 2 | 3 |
| Elective 3 | 3 |
| Elective 4 | 3 |
| Elective 5 | 3 |
| Elective 6 | 3 |

Subtotal:

48

* Any of the following courses will meet this requirement; other courses may satisfy this requirement, pending approval of DGS:

Survey Research Methods (Soc 63902), Qualitative Methodology (Soc 63980), Historical and Comparative Sociology (Soc 63957), Causal Inference (Soc 73997), Multilevel Modeling (Soc 73996), Social Networks (63901), Qualitative Cultural Methods (63919)

** “Foundational” courses offer students broad theories and seminal research that is widely applicable across many different Sociological sub-fields. The following six classes are classified as “foundational” courses:

Cultural Sociology (Soc 63125), Sociology of Gender (Soc 63800), Organizations (Soc 63820), Political Sociology (Soc 63515), Social Psychology (Soc 63740), Stratification (Soc 63826)

*** “Elective” classes include courses that are broad survey classes that are designed to prepare students for area exams in particular subfields. Examples include: Sociology of Education I and II (Soc 63239 and Soc 63242), Social Movements and Collective Behavior (Soc 63572), Sociology of Emotions (Soc 63701), Sociology of Religion (63651), Religion, Gender and Development (63685),etc.

All students entering the program in **August 2015 or later** must meet these requirements. Any students enrolled **prior to August 2015** will be asked to complete the course requirements that were in place upon their first semester in the program.

The above courses constitute 48 of the required 60 credit hours for completion of the doctoral program. Students can earn the remaining 12 credits required for their degree by enrolling in any combination of the following course offerings:

- Master’s thesis research credits (a maximum of 6 credits can be applied toward the required total of 60)
- Dissertation research credits (a maximum of 18 credits can be applied toward the required total of 60)
- Graduate seminars offered by the Sociology Department above and beyond the required courses
- 1-credit training seminars offered by the Sociology Department
- Graduate courses offered by other Notre Dame departments
- Advanced undergraduate Sociology courses at the 40000 level (not to exceed 10 credit hours)
- Directed Readings (not to exceed three credit hours per semester and six credit hours total)

Directed Readings should be confined to reading and research on highly specialized topics that are immediately relevant to the student's interests but are not covered by the department’s regular course offerings. These courses are **not** to be employed as substitutes for readily accessible forms of classroom training. To schedule a Directed Readings course, the student should obtain the permission of the cooperating faculty member and complete the appropriate form, copies of which are available in the departmental office. On this form, the student must explain the reasons for this unusual arrangement as well as list the materials to be explored. Forms signed by the cooperating faculty member are to be returned to the departmental office, where they are retained in the student's personal file.

Course Scheduling and Planning

Each semester, the DGS and department chair will assign faculty to teach the required courses for the coming semester. Selections will be made based both prior performance and a willingness to adhere to the “standard” curriculum for the class. Faculty will also be asked to propose “elective” classes for the coming semester, and student preferences will be “polled” via a survey conducted by the DGS. Elective courses will only be offered if sufficient student demand is apparent from the survey responses.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- i. *First Year Progress Report on the MA Thesis:* Students are required to submit a brief progress report on their M.A. thesis at the end of their first year in the program (a template for the report is available on the departmental web page). The report requires students to describe their progress on the project for the year. Students are asked to meet with their advisor to discuss the progress report, and the advisor will be asked to briefly report back to the DGS on the students’ progress.
- ii. *M.A. Proposal Hearing:* In the fall of their second year in the program, students should hold an “M.A. Proposal Hearing” with their advisor and committee members. The student will write a brief proposal (10-15 double-spaced pages) that: describes prior research on the topic; states the research questions; describes the data to be collected and/or analyzed; discusses methodological techniques for analyses; presents preliminary results (optional); and discusses potential implications of the research project. This should be written at the early stages of data collection and should not be a complete paper. The “M.A. Proposal Hearing” will give the committee an opportunity to meet with the candidate for sixty to ninety minutes and provide feedback to help the candidate improve their project before they undertake it.
- iii. *Course-Work Audit:* When students have completed their required course work, they must perform a “course-work audit.” The form is available on the department web site. Students are encouraged to use this form to plan their course work, and also help clarify that they have completed the department’s required coursework. Students must fill this form out and have it approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Transfer Credits

Students may request that prior graduate level course work be counted towards department’s degree requirements. Before requesting a transfer of credits, students should consult the Graduate School Bulletin for the official guidelines and requirements for transferring credits. What follows is a summary of the most salient issues to be aware of:

Eligible Coursework: A student may transfer credits earned at another accredited university only if: 1) the student is in degree status at Notre Dame; 2) the courses taken are graduate courses appropriate to the Notre Dame graduate program and the student had graduate student status when he or she took these courses; 3) the courses were completed within a five-year period prior to admission to a graduate degree program at Notre Dame or while enrolled in a graduate degree program at Notre Dame; 4) grades of “B” (3.0 on 4.0 scale) or better were achieved; and 5) the transfer is recommended by the Department Chair and approved by the Graduate School.

Timing: The University will only consider requests for credit transfer after the student has been completed one semester in the program. Credit transfers must occur one semester prior to graduation in order to count toward that degree.

Transfer Limits

- Unfinished MA: **Six** credit maximum
- Completed MA or Ph.D. program: **Nine** credit maximum toward an MA; **eighteen** credit maximum towards a Ph.D.
- Coursework completed at another University while enrolled as a Notre Dame student: **Eighteen** credit maximum towards a Ph.D.

Grades: Grades from transferred courses are not counted toward the students' official Grade Point Average.

Transfers are handled on a case-by-case basis and are adjudicated by the Director of Graduate Studies. In some cases, students are not always well-served by getting the maximum credits transferred. By taking courses in our department, students can build important relationships with our faculty and their fellow students. Also, many classes offer valuable opportunities to initiate and/or become involved in research projects that lead to publications. In addition, students who are new to the field of sociology are *often well-served transferring fewer credits and taking more coursework in the department*. Thus, there are many good reasons that the DGS may decide approve fewer transfer credits than the maximum.

Waivers of Requirements

All sociology graduate students are expected to complete the required coursework and other requirements. However, either by virtue of extenuating circumstances, or prior training and experience, a waiver of certain requirements is sometimes appropriate. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the process.

Petitions for a waiver of requirements must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in writing. The petition should indicate precisely which requirement(s) the student wishes to have waived in his or her case, and the reasons why such action is necessary and appropriate. Copies of any supporting documentation in the student's possession (such as transcripts of previous coursework) should accompany the petition.

Petitions for waivers are evaluated periodically by the faculty members of the Committee for Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies may render decisions about requested waivers at his/her discretion. Students will be notified by e-mail or letter.

It is important to note that classes that are "waived" do not count toward a student's credit total toward their degree. Students must still complete the required credits to attain their degree. For example, if the "Classical Sociological Theory" course is waived for a student, s/he must still earn three credits to replace this required class. The DGS will help students determine how these credit requirements will be met.

I.B. Foreign Language Requirement

Neither the Department nor the Graduate School requires that students demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language. However, there are certain cases when learning a new language is beneficial (or even essential) for students' research. Students should consult their academic advisors in these cases.

I.C. Residency

The minimum residency requirement for the Ph.D. degree is full-time status for four consecutive semesters (including the summer session).

I.D. Master's Thesis

All students are required to complete an M.A. thesis as part of their doctoral training. Students may ask to have this requirement waived if they have completed an M.A. thesis in another program. The M.A. thesis need not be in sociology, but it must satisfy the requirement described below. The Director of Graduate Studies will decide or consult with faculty members of the Committee for Graduate Studies to assess whether the M.A. requirement may be waived on the basis of prior work.

The M.A. Thesis must be approved by the end of the spring semester of a student's second year. This means that students should turn in their finished papers by the beginning of April to allow for any changes that the committee may require. The student should submit drafts to their advisor throughout the year. It is also desirable that the student be far enough along to submit a version of the paper to be presented at the American Sociological Association by its submission deadline in January. If the paper has not been completed and approved by the end of the spring semester, the student and his or her faculty advisor must write to the Director of Graduate Studies indicating what has created the delay and setting a firm due date in the summer.

Six hours of graduate credit may be earned for work on a master's thesis. The definition of a thesis provided below is intended to guide students and their advisers in their efforts to meet this requirement:

A master's thesis ordinarily resembles (in terms of length, quality, and scope) a manuscript that would be *submitted* to a peer-reviewed academic journal. Typical journal submissions range from 9,000-15,000 words, would still benefit from the input of skilled peer-reviewers, yet make an important addition to knowledge by satisfying the following criteria:

- a) Theoretically motivated: the thesis should utilize one or more commonly recognized theoretical framework in the field of sociology to motivate the research questions, and interpret the findings.
- b) Original Contribution that is Situated within a Literature: the author must demonstrate s/he has thoroughly reviewed prior research on the topic, and identified a novel question for study. The contribution of the study's findings to the literature should be clear to the reader.
- c) Empirical: the project should entail some type of data analysis. The data analyzed should meet commonly accepted standards for data quality in the field of sociology.

- d) **Methodologically Rigorous:** the thesis should meet commonly accepted methodological standards in the field of sociology.

Students may seek a waiver of the MA thesis, based on either a completed sociology thesis from another program, or a completed thesis in another social scientific field. The key question is whether the student's thesis **reasonably approximates** a thesis produced in our program, in terms of scope, topic, and quality. For a sociology thesis (from another program), a waiver will be granted **ONLY** when criteria a) through d) are satisfied (as judged by the DGS or Graduate Studies Committee). For non-sociology theses, a waiver will be granted **ONLY** when criteria b) through d) are satisfied, **AND**, for criterion a), the student makes the case that the theoretical framing of the paper could reasonably have been recast within a sociological framework.

The Master of Arts (M.A.) degree will be awarded to students who:

- A. Have completed the following course requirements: Classical Sociological Theory; Sociological Research Methods; Social Statistics I and II; Proseminar I and II.
- B. Have 30 or more hours of coursework within the program.
- C. Have held a "M.A. Proposal Hearing" with their committee members.
- D. Successfully defend the thesis in an oral examination administered by the thesis director and two readers.
- E. Make final corrections to thesis and submit the final version to the Graduate School.

Typically, the MA Thesis defense begins with the candidate presenting a brief summary of his or her work. The MA Thesis advisor and other committee members will then each have ten minutes to question the candidate (traditionally, the thesis advisor goes last). A second round of questions, of up to five minutes per committee member, will follow. After the second round, the chair may either (a) ask the candidate to leave so that the committee may discuss and vote on the outcomes, or (b) s/he may invite committee members to pose any remaining questions to examinee before the discussion and voting begins.

Students who have the MA Thesis requirement waived may **NOT** earn an MA degree from our program.

Please consult the Graduate School Bulletin for additional information about the MA thesis.

I.E. Degree Eligibility

The student must fulfill all doctoral requirements, including the dissertation and its defense, within eight years from the time of matriculation. Failure to complete any of the Graduate School or Departmental requirements within the prescribed period results in forfeiture of degree eligibility.

I.F. Advisers and Dissertation Directors

Forming a strong mentoring relationship with a faculty advisor is an extremely important part of a students' intellectual and professional development. All incoming students are expected to find an advisor **by the end of their first semester in the program**. Ideally, the person who is selected should be someone with compatible research interests, for the adviser might later function as a thesis or dissertation director. The student and their advisor should discuss their expectations for one another when formalizing this relationship. Students are always free to change advisers if there is another faculty member who is willing to serve in that capacity.

Once officially selected, the adviser's job is to: (1) regularly review grades and other indicators of progress for each student under his or her direction, (2) assist students in planning work toward the completion of their goals in the program, and (3) insure that students' written examinations are in broad, recognizable areas of the discipline (both to avoid overspecialization and to prepare students for future teaching responsibilities).

Advisers and dissertation directors are chosen from the department's regular teaching and research faculty. Although a student's dissertation director is typically their advisor, this need not be the case. Students may also choose to have member of the faculty serve as co-director of their dissertation. A co-director may be chosen from the faculty outside the student's department, but such arrangements must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

I.G. Candidacy Examination

The candidacy examination consists of two parts: a written component and an oral component.

Sociology graduate students must take and pass two written area exams. The oral component entails a defense of the student's dissertation proposal. Both components are discussed below.

Written Area Examinations

Written examinations, eight hours in duration, must be completed in two areas of Sociology chosen by the student and approved by the faculty membership of the Committee for Graduate Studies.

Please consult the Appendix Two ("Guide to Area Exams") for additional information about exam objectives, procedures, and all other relevant issues.

Dissertation Proposal and the Oral Candidacy Examination

After passing their written area examinations, all students are expected to prepare a dissertation proposal. This proposal should outline the major theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues that will be addressed in the student's dissertation. It should be in a format that would be beneficial in applying for external support as well (e.g., NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant). Students should work closely with their adviser and other faculty members when preparing their proposal. All students must then pass an oral candidacy examination which includes, but is not limited to, a defense of the dissertation proposal. This examination and defense of the dissertation proposal must occur no later than the end of the second semester of a student's fourth year. No student may sit for such an examination until he or she has satisfied all prior Departmental requirements. It is the responsibility of

the student to seek out faculty members who will consent to serve as examiners in each instance. The composition of the committees for these events should be reported to the Director of Graduate Studies at least one month in advance of the date proposed for the session, in order for the roster to gain the approval of the Committee for Graduate Studies. No last-minute requests will be processed (see Appendix Three for more information about scheduling the PhD Proposal Defense).

I.H. Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

I.I. The Doctoral Dissertation

I.J. Defense of Dissertation

I.J. Submitting the Dissertation

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

The dissertation proposal defense and the dissertation defense follow a similar format. Typically, the defense begins with the doctoral candidate presenting a brief summary of his or her work. The dissertation director and readers will then each have ten minutes to question the candidate (traditionally, the director goes last). A second round of questions, of up to five minutes per committee member, will follow. After the second round, the chair may either (a) ask the candidate to leave so that the committee may discuss and vote on the outcomes, or (b) s/he may invite committee members to pose any remaining questions to examinee before the discussion and voting begins.

APPENDIX ONE: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR GOOD STANDING

| | Program Deadlines | Professional Recommendations |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Fall First Year | Select Advisor | |
| Spring First Year | M.A. Progress Report | |
| Fall Second Year | | |
| Spring Second Year | M.A. Thesis | Submit Paper to Conference |
| Fall Third Year | | Send Paper Out for Review |
| Spring Third Year | Exam I | |
| Fall Fourth Year | Exam II | Apply for External Funding |
| Spring Fourth Year | Dissertation Proposal | |
| Fall Fifth Year | | Teach Class |
| Spring Fifth Year | | |

APPENDIX TWO: GUIDE TO AREA EXAMS

EXAM OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the area exam is to provide the opportunity and basis for the student to develop a broad expertise in a subfield of sociology, and to recognize that expertise. Having passed the exam, the student will have demonstrated familiarity with the subfield, including a basic knowledge and understanding of its core issues, important literature, and key questions. This demonstration will involve not only the basic knowledge necessary for a literature review, but also the mastery of an independent voice within the subfield.

Three specific goals provide indicators of this mastery. The student's performance in preparation for the exam and upon completion of the exam should demonstrate:

- the ability to interact with professional peers on the basis of shared knowledge and understanding;
- the ability to teach in the field and to organize a new syllabus;
- the ability to develop original research questions.

While the exam should help students prepare for conceiving and writing their dissertation, the exam should stretch the student to go well beyond this narrow (albeit important) objective.

EXAM PREPARATION

It is the student's responsibility to contact the Area Exam committee in their chosen area. Students should schedule a meeting with the Area Exam chair to discuss procedures and expectations regarding preparations for the area exam, since they vary by area (and also change from year to year). The department will also compile and make available a brief description of the basic procedures and requirements for each area.

SELECTION AND FORMATION OF AREA EXAM COMMITTEES

Standing area exam committees will be selected by the department chair at the end of each academic year. Each committee will consist of three faculty members, two of whom must be from the sociology department. Committees will be formed in areas for which there is the greatest student demand and faculty expertise. Standing committees may be disbanded by the Department Chair if the department lacks a critical mass of faculty or students necessary to support regular exams in a given area. Information regarding area exam committees is available on the department web site, and will be updated at the beginning of each academic year.

The formation of ad hoc area exam committees in other areas may be initiated by student petition to the Director of Graduate Studies. The petition must include information indicating: the title of the area, the examinee's name, and the composition of the committee (including the designation of a Chair), all of whom have agreed to serve. The student must also explain why their needs are not being adequately addressed by the array of standing area exams offered in the department, as well as why s/he would benefit by preparing for the proposed ad hoc area exam. The DGS will render a judgment regarding the petition based on (a) whether the department has the necessary expertise and resources to support the proposed exam, and (b) whether the proposed exam is in the long-term interests of the student. The committee must be approved by the DGS before students may proceed with any exam preparations. If

approved, the student and the committee members must create an “area exam guide” that describes the exam objectives, etc. (see the department web site for examples and a template). This document must be submitted and approved by the DGS at least one month before the student can sit for the exam.

New standing area exam committees may be formed at the request of either faculty members or students in the department. A petition should be submitted to the DGS and Department Chair, and it should include the following information: (1) an explanation of why a new standing area exam committee is needed, (2) a listing of faculty members who are qualified and willing to serve on the committee on a regular basis, and (3) an “area exam guide” that describes the exam objectives, requirements (e.g., coursework, etc.), exam preparation, and a suggested or required reading list. The DGS and Department Chair will reach a decision based on (a) whether the department has the necessary expertise and resources to support the proposed exam, (b) whether there is sufficient student demand for an exam in this area, and (c) whether a new exam would be in the long-term interest of our students and our program.

After the exam committees are formed, the committee chair will be responsible for reviewing and (if necessary) revising a document (the “area exam guide” – see the department web site for examples) that explains procedures specific to their particular area. This document will be submitted to the DGS, and posted on the department web site for interested students.

READING LISTS

Exam committees will choose whether or not to have a standard, publicized reading list for students. If lists are used, such lists can vary from simple starting points for students or a nearly exhaustive list for students to read. However, the purpose of the list should be made clear to students before they begin actively reading for an exam.

EXPECTATIONS

Whether or not there is a list, each exam committee will create a short introduction to their area’s exam outlining the main foci or guiding principle of the area, how the area is organized, and expectations for both the process and the outcome of the exam. The information will be available on the sociology department’s web site.

WRITING AND ACCESS TO AREA EXAM QUESTIONS

It is acceptable and desirable for faculty to have a great deal of discretion in authoring area exam questions. Possible formats include: long essays, short essays, author and/or term identifications, etc. Exam questions may be written either by faculty or students. Faculty may also choose to re-use questions from prior exams on future exams.

However, it should be emphasized that the area exam should NOT be an exercise in memorization and recall. Thus, exams should be constructed in a way that ensures that students go beyond “cramming and purging” material for the majority of the exam.

Area exams from three exams prior will be made available to all students in the sociology office. Limiting the availability of past exams to a five year window will give exam committees more latitude in selecting topics and writing questions, while also helping students focus their attention on more recent directions in the field. Exam answers will **not** be made available to students. Students may only gain access to exam answers if they get permission DIRECTLY from the student. Thus, if I share my exam

answers with student A, s/he should not give my answers to student B; rather, student B should ask my permission directly.

EXAM SCHEDULING

We will have three opportunities each year when area exams may be taken. These dates will be announced well in advance of each academic year (the week after classes start, the week after fall break, and the week after spring break). Exams will begin at 8am and end at 12pm on two consecutive days.

Students who are interested in signing up to take an exam must inform Becky Overmyer at least four weeks in advance of their intentions. This advanced notice will ensure that the computer lab we use is reserved for exam takers, and other students who use the lab can make alternative arrangements.

EXAM CONDITIONS

As a matter of fairness to all students, the exam conditions and format should be fairly similar across all areas in the department. All students will be asked to complete the exam under three conditions:

1. There will be **no access** to books, articles or any printed or electronic material that has not been authored by the student during the examination. This means that the exam will be of a “closed book” format. The above includes *all* material that is written by the student prior to taking the exam, such as notes taken after reading the assigned material. This means that student-written notes will *not be allowed* into the examination room. Bringing student-authored notes into the exam will be considered a violation of the code of conduct. However, students may use reading lists provided by area exam committees as a reference to help remember names, years, of articles/books during the examination.
2. Students will save all of their work to a flash drive and return the flash drive to Becky Overmyer after the exam has ended. **Examinations may not be administered in student offices, or in non-designated faculty offices. This means that “take-home” exams, in which the student is given the questions and is allowed to complete them outside of the department do not correspond to the expected exam format. Also, this means that exams for all areas will take place in a similar setting under similar circumstances as outlined above.**
3. The student will have a total of eight (8) hours to complete the exam. The exam will take place in **two days**, with the student being allotted four (4) hours to complete two of the exam questions for that day. After the end of the each time period, the student may no longer have access to those answers and the student is **not allowed** to further edit and revise those answers.

GUIDELINES REGARDING CITATIONS, PLAGIARISM

Students taking any area exam are expected to abide by the University’s Graduate Student Academic Integrity code of conduct in its entirety.¹ For the purposes of preliminary examinations, the most relevant section of this academic integrity code is:

¹ Available at: http://graduateschool.nd.edu/html/policies/#academic_integrity

Violations of academic integrity may occur in classroom work and related academic functions or in research/scholarship endeavors. Classroom-type misconduct includes the use of information obtained from another student's paper during an examination, plagiarism, submission of work written by someone else, falsification of data, etc. Violation of integrity in research/scholarship is deliberate fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reporting research or other deliberate misrepresentation in proposing, conducting, reporting, or reviewing research. Misconduct does not include errors of judgment, errors in recording, selection, or analysis of data, differences in opinions involving interpretation, or conduct unrelated to the research process. Misconduct includes practices that materially and adversely affect the integrity of scholarship and research.

This means that all material included in answer to an area exam question must be original work by the student. The student's answer may not contain any passages or material not written by the student on site and may also not contain any third party material which is not given proper credit using expected citation standards in sociology. The chair of each exam committee must make explicit to each student what those citation standards are. **Inclusion of any outside material not directly authored by the student without any indication that this material has been written by somebody else will be considered plagiarism and may result in severe penalties including exam failure and possibly expulsion from the graduate program.**

Expectations regarding the thoroughness of citations will vary by areas, and students should consult the area exam chair for clear guidelines on this topic.

EXAM RESULTS

Time for Decision

Students should expect to get the results of their exam no more than two weeks after their exam date. The area exam chair should check with committee members to be sure that this time frame is feasible before scheduling exams.

Exam Results

Faculty can assign three grades to exams: pass with distinction, pass, and fail. "Pass with re-writes" and "conditional passes" are strongly discouraged because the revision/re-writing process does not match the original exam conditions and format. It also becomes rather difficult to adjudicate how much revision is acceptable to fall into this gray area between passing and failing. If a student did poorly on the exam, s/he should fail and be asked to re-take it because that is in his/her best interest. It also ensures that the department maintains high standards and communicates these expectations to our students. If the committee was unhappy with part of the exam, but ultimately thinks that the exam is a "pass," they may ask him/her to rewrite an answer. However, this should be optional, and not connected to the decision to pass or fail the student.

Consequences of Failures

If a student fails two area exams, s/he will be terminated from the program (N.B., this will take effect immediately after the DGS learns the exam results, which may be mid-semester). Students who fail an area exam will not get preferential treatment in re-scheduling exams; they will have to wait until the next semester to re-take the exam, along with other students in that area.

Feedback for Students

Students are entitled to receive detailed feedback on their performance. Area exam committee chairs should schedule a brief meeting to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the student's exam answers. Preferably, students should receive some general feedback on the strength of their writing and thinking, as well as specific feedback on the quality of particular questions. All committee members should provide feedback either directly to each student (in writing or in a meeting) or to the area exam chair.

APPENDIX THREE: PROCEDURES FOR FORMING COMMITTEES AND SCHEDULING DEFENSES

This section describes the timing/scheduling defenses for MA theses and Ph.D. defenses. In general, it is a good idea to double-check with our office staff well ahead of time to be sure that proper procedures are followed and the necessary paperwork is completed.

MA Proposal Hearing

This hearing should occur during the fall semester of the second year. It is an informal meeting that includes the student, thesis director, and the other two committee members. After the hearing, the thesis director must sign a form that indicates that the exam took place and the student has met the requirement.

MA Thesis Defense

The committee should get a FINAL draft of the MA thesis at least two weeks before the scheduled defense date. Preliminary drafts may be circulated to committee members well before the defense -- but that is not required. A minimum of three faculty members from the department must serve an MA committee.

Ph.D. Proposal Defense

Dissertation committees must have a minimum of four faculty members on your committee. You may petition to the DGS to include a faculty person outside the department or University as member of your committee. Your request should describe the specific skills and expertise that this person will provide, and explain your reason for including him/her on the committee. This request should be discussed and approved by the dissertation director before it is sent to the DGS. Committee members should receive a final draft of the Ph.D. proposal at least two weeks before the scheduled defense date.

Ph.D. Defense

Committee members should receive a final draft of the dissertation at least FOUR weeks before the anticipated defense date. Each committee member has two weeks to read the dissertation draft and submit a "reader's report" to the grad school. This report requires each committee member to affirm that the dissertation submitted by the student is defensible.

There are some additional rules and procedures to keep in mind:

- For all three types of exams, only ONE committee member may be "long distance" (i.e., teleconferencing). The department will not pay any expenses related to travel for committee members outside Notre Dame to travel to defenses. They are welcome to do so, but only at their own expense.
- Be sure to check Graduate School deadlines for graduation for the MA and PhD defenses before scheduling your exam.
- Due to scheduling conflicts, pressing deadlines, and/or other intangible factors, some faculty members may need more than two weeks to read an MA/PhD proposal/dissertation draft. Please check with committee members well ahead of time to be sure that two weeks is enough time to read the document and complete the necessary paperwork. This is especially important for dissertations, and for defenses that take place during the summer.

APPENDIX FOUR: GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

Rationale

This section on “Grievance and Appeals Procedures” is restricted to academic issues; issues of personal misconduct are handled by Student Affairs. For issues of sexual or discriminatory harassment or disability-related grievances please consult du Lac: A Guide to Student Life at <http://orlh.nd.edu/dulac/>.

An appeal is a two-step process; the first is through the program. If the student does not agree with the program’s decision, she or he may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School, who makes the final determination. The Graduate School’s grievance process can be found at: <http://graduateschool.nd.edu>.

The following is intended to provide guidance for the appeal process within the department.

Violations of Academic Integrity

A commitment to honesty is expected in all academic endeavors, and this should be continuously emphasized to students, research assistants, associates, and colleagues by mentors and academic leaders.

Violations of academic integrity may occur in classroom work and related academic functions or in research/scholarship endeavors. Classroom-type misconduct includes the use of information obtained from another student’s paper during an examination, plagiarism, submission of work written by someone else, falsification of data, etc. Violation of integrity in research/scholarship is deliberate fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reporting research or other deliberate misrepresentation in proposing, conducting, reporting, or reviewing research. Misconduct does not include errors of judgment, errors in recording, selection, or analysis of data, differences in opinions involving interpretation, or conduct unrelated to the research process. Misconduct includes practices that materially and adversely affect the integrity of scholarship and research.

A violation of academic integrity is a serious accusation. The punishment of a student who is found to be in violation should be determined by graduate committee of a student’s program. If a student is charged with a violation of academic integrity, he or she may appeal the program’s decision.

Academic Integrity Appeal Process

Any person who has reason to believe that a violation of this policy has occurred shall discuss it on a confidential basis with the department chair or director of the appropriate institute. If a perceived conflict of interest exists between the chair/director and the accused, the next highest academic officer shall be notified of the charge.

The chair/director shall evaluate the allegation promptly. If it is determined that there is no substantial basis for the charge, then the matter may be dismissed with the fact of dismissal being made known to the complainant and to the accused if he or she is aware of the accusation. A written summary of charges, findings, and actions shall be forwarded to the dean of the Graduate School as a matter of documentation. Otherwise, the chair will select an impartial panel consisting of three members, one of whom may be a graduate student, to investigate the matter.

The chair will inform the accused of the charges. The panel will determine initially whether to proceed directly to a hearing to further investigate the case, or to dismiss the charges. If the panel decides to proceed directly to a hearing, the hearing will be held within 10 business days of the original notification. If the panel decides that further investigation is necessary, it shall immediately notify the chair. If it decides that a hearing is not warranted, all information gathered for this investigation will be destroyed. The utmost care will be taken to minimize any negative consequence to the accused.

The accused party must be given the opportunity to respond to any and all allegations and supporting evidence at the hearing. The response will be made to the appointed panel. The panel will make a final judgment, recommend appropriate disciplinary action, and report to the chair in writing. The report will include all of the pertinent documentation and will be presented within 30 days after meeting with the accused. Copies of the report are to be made available to the accused, the chair, and the dean of the Graduate School. If a violation is judged to have occurred, this might be grounds for dismissal from the University; research/scholarship violations might be reported to the sponsor of the research effort (e.g., NSF, NIH, Lilly Foundation, etc.), if appropriate.

Dismissal

Students may be dismissed at either a “gateway” that our department has established—e.g., comprehensive examinations—or through poor performance. It is critical for the program to communicate the standards to students in advance and in writing.

If a student fails to pass a program’s gateway, the Director of Graduate Studies should write the student informing him or her of the failure and provide information about any recourse of action that the student might have. If a student is performing poorly, the advisor or DGS should provide the student with a written notice about the poor performance; indicate the expectations necessary to remain in the program; and give the student a specific time when he or she will be re-evaluated.

Dismissal Appeal Process

If a student is dismissed for academic reasons, he or she may appeal the program’s decision. Complaints must be initiated by a written statement from the student to the chair of the department within 10 business days from the time when the student is informed of dismissal. To hear the appeal, the department chair appoints an *ad hoc* committee composed of three members: him/herself and at least two faculty members unconnected factually with the case or the reasons for the appeal. If the department chair has been involved in the case, the appropriate associate dean of the college should appoint the committee and designate the person to serve as its chair.

The student’s statement should indicate details on the nature of the problem, the date(s) the problem occurred, the grounds upon which the appeal is based, background information that the student considers important and the relief requested.

The appeals committee will promptly and thoroughly investigate the appeal to determine whether the relief requested is warranted. The investigation may include interviews and/or

written statements from the student, any student witnesses, faculty or staff members who may be able to provide pertinent information about the facts, as well as a review of any pertinent documents.

In most situations, the appeals committee will complete the investigation in 30 business days. There may be some reports that cannot be investigated within 30 business days. In such cases, the chair of the appeals committee will communicate to the student that the investigation is going to take longer than 30 business days and will also include a statement indicating when the committee anticipates completing the investigation. The department chair will notify the student via a written letter of his/her decision. If the chair has been involved in the case, the decision will be made by the designated chair of the *ad hoc* committee.

If the student does not agree with the program's decision, s/he may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate School's grievance process can be found at: <http://graduateschool.nd.edu>.

Kroc Joint PhD Program

For appeals by students who are in the Kroc Joint PhD program (with sociology), the DGS's in sociology and Kroc will collaborate to decide whose jurisdiction the appeal should cover. For appeals related to sociology requirements and issues, the process will run through the sociology department. For appeals related to joint requirements, a Kroc faculty member should be included on the *ad hoc* grievance committee.