

SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE GUIDE

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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 the Graduate School 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 supercede 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 advisor (see "Advisors 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 (Terry McDonnell, 2019-2022).

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) focuses its research on basic and applied educational topics.
- The Center for Social Research (CSR) supports quantitative research design, survey design and implementation, mobile data collection, GIS, and statistical analysis.
- The Center for the Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) 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 action.
- iCeNSA is an interdisciplinary research center organized around network and data science problems in social, biological, physical, environmental, financial, business, and defense systems.
- The Institute of Latino Studies aims to promote greater understanding of the U.S. Latino experience through research, teaching, and community outreach.
- The Kaneb Center for Excellence in Teaching provides information, training, awards, and other support for instruction and learning to graduate students and faculty members.
- The Kellogg Institute for International Studies supports research in international studies, focusing on themes of democracy and development.
- The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies promotes research, teaching, and public education in the areas of war prevention, conflict resolution, human rights, and social justice.
- Nanovic Institute for European Studies works to enrich the intellectual culture of Notre Dame by creating an integrated, interdisciplinary home for students and faculty to explore the evolving ideas, cultures, beliefs, and institutions that shape Europe today.
- 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 methodologies reliant on advanced digital technologies.

More information about these organizations is available on the Notre Dame and sociology department 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 for 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 maintain full-time status. The Department of Sociology will not accept part-time students unless special arrangements are formally approved the DGS and Graduate School.

- **Maximal Registration**
 - **Changes in Student Class Schedule**
- II.D Course Numbers**
- **Graduate Grades**
 - **Examinations**
 - **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, grades earned in formal courses, performance on area examinations, progress on the M.A. thesis or 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. Note that in addition to assessing students' progress

on program-related goals, faculty evaluation will also take into account work towards professional goals (e.g. presenting at conferences, sending manuscripts out for review, and applying for external funding) However, program goals are paramount.

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 of probation, 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 following the full faculty meeting.

In addition to the end of year evaluation of students, the Graduate Studies Committee will meet every September and January to review students who may be struggling in the program. There are two mechanisms to identify students who need additional assessment. First, any student who is behind on program goals will be discussed. Second, the Director of Graduate Studies will circulate a survey to the faculty in advance of the Graduate Studies Committee meeting. That survey will ask faculty to assess student performance, and to identify students that the committee should review. Any student who is flagged by faculty for assessment will be reviewed by the committee. In addition, if the survey produced no responses for a student, that student will also be reviewed. Such cases suggest the student is out of contact with mentors and may require review.

The graduate studies committee may recommend to the Director of Graduate Studies and the student’s chair/advisor specific actions to support the student and help the student improve and succeed. It may also recommend directing students to university resources for additional support. Recommendations to withdraw funding or terminate from the program will go to a vote by the Graduate Studies Committee, Director of Graduate Studies, the Department Chair and the student’s advisor. Decisions are determined by a majority vote.

See Appendix One for the Sociology Graduate Program template of progress to program goals.

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, in the judgment of the faculty, they 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

- completed the Master’s degree by May of the second year,
- finished all required coursework by May of the second year,
- passed both area exams by December of the third year, passed the oral candidacy exam by August beginning their fourth year.
- finished all requirements for the PhD by the August ending their fifth year.

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

Students who do not complete course requirements, area exams, and oral candidacy before the beginning of their fourth year in the program will not be allowed to continue in the program, except with special permission to complete their oral candidacy exam in the seventh semester.

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

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

Among students with an approved MA thesis, students who do not complete course requirements, area exams, and oral candidacy before the end of their sixth semester in the program will not be allowed to continue in the program, except with special 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.

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, and departmental fellowships. 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. Most of the awards are renewable annually, but renewal is contingent upon the diligent performance of work obligations and acceptable academic progress.

Summers are service-free and should be devoted to making progress on program requirements (MA research, area exams, PhD proposal, PhD research). 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 per week (including the 18 in assistantships).

For students in good standing, a stipend is offered only for the first five years in the program. Stipend support in the sixth year is only provided in exceptional circumstances, if the Dean of Arts and Letters agrees to a request from the Director of Graduate Studies and the chair of the student's dissertation committee.

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.

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 FOUR 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 admitted to the program.

Our goal is to train students in sociological theory and methods and foster competence as professionals in specific subfields within sociology. Students should develop 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 minimum 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 seventh 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 requesting transfer 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 (Soc 63997)	3
Statistics II: Categorical Data Analysis (Soc 73994)	3
Research Methods (Soc 63913)	3
Advanced Methods*	3
Elective 1 **	3
Elective 2	3
Elective 3	3
Elective 4	3
Elective 5	3
Elective 6	3

Subtotal

39

* Any of the following courses will meet this requirement; students may also request approval for advanced quantitative methods classes offered in other departments:

Survey Research Methods (Soc 63902), Qualitative Research Design (Soc 63915), 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), or Ethnographic Methods I (63995).

** “Elective” classes include courses on specific sub-fields that may also prepare students for area exams or research on those topics. We strongly encourage students to take our “foundational” electives. Foundations expose students to theories and research that are widely applicable across many different sociological subfields. Foundational electives will be offered on a regular basis. Foundational electives include: Cultural Sociology (Soc 63125), Sociology of Gender (Soc 63800), Organizations (Soc 63820), Political Sociology (Soc 63515), Race & Ethnicity (Soc 63806), Stratification (Soc 63826).

Elective courses are offered based on matching student interest and faculty availability.

The above courses constitute 39 of the required 60 credit hours for completion of the doctoral program. Students can earn the remaining 21 credits required for their degree by enrolling in any combination of the following course offerings:

- Master’s thesis research credits (a maximum of 9 credits can be applied toward the required total of 60)
- Dissertation research credits (a maximum of 21 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 6 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. Every effort will be made to offer two “Foundations” classes each

semester on a rotating schedule, subject to faculty availability. 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.

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 should have the form 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 DGS and approved by the Graduate School.

Timing:

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

Transfer Limits:

- o Unfinished MA: **Six** credit maximum
- o Completed MA or Ph.D. program: **Nine** credit maximum toward an MA; **eighteen** credit maximum towards a Ph.D.
- o 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. Only classes that are roughly equivalent in the quality and rigor of classes offered by our department will be considered. 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 to 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 waivers are evaluated by the Director of Graduate Studies, who may consult with the Graduate Studies Committee or with faculty members responsible for related classes. The DGS renders decisions about requested waivers at his or her discretion. Petitions for a waiver of requirements must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in writing, usually at the beginning of the student's second semester in the Program. 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 and syllabi for previous coursework) should accompany the petition.

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

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

- a. Have completed the following course requirements: Classical Sociological Theory; Contemporary Social Theory; Sociological Research Methods; Linear Regression; Categorical Data Analysis; Proseminar I and II.
- b. Have 30 or more hours of coursework within the program.

- c. Have held an “M.A. Proposal Hearing” with their committee members.
- d. Successfully defend the completed 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.

All students are required to complete an M.A. thesis as part of their doctoral training.

MA Thesis Proposal and Hearing:

Students should meet with their advisor to discuss plans for the MA thesis at the beginning of their second semester. Students are strongly encouraged to use coursework to develop background for the MA proposal. **Students must hold a hearing with their M.A. committee to discuss the proposal by the end of April of their second semester.** This permits students to proceed in earnest on their M.A. research during their first summer. Students who do not hold an MA proposal hearing by April of their second semester will not be considered to be making satisfactory progress. The brief proposal (10-15 double-spaced pages) should describe prior research on the topic, state the research questions, describe the data to be collected and/or analyzed, discuss methodological techniques for analyses, present preliminary results (optional), and discuss 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 committee should receive a final draft of the M.A. proposal **at least two weeks before the scheduled hearing date.** The M.A. Proposal hearing gives 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.

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 thesis 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.

Nine 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 advisors 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.

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) invite committee members to pose any remaining questions to examinee before the discussion and voting begins.

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.

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. M.A. Thesis Presentation Requirement

During September of the third year, students in the third-year cohort will present their MA thesis research results. The format will resemble an American Sociological Association-style "conference panel." The Director of Graduate Studies will organize the schedule for these panels. The entire department is encouraged to attend. These formal presentations will be 12-15 minutes long and aimed at a general sociology audience.

Students in their third year who have waived their MA requirement are also expected to present research, either their MA thesis from their previous institution or the results of a research project started here at Notre Dame.

I.F. 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.G. Advisors 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 advisor 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 advisors if there is another faculty member who is willing to serve in that capacity.

Once officially selected, the advisor'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).

Advisors 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 a 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.H. 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.

Students must have completed their M.A. thesis and defense hearing before taking candidacy exams (area exams and dissertation proposal oral defense). A student may petition the DGS to waive that rule that M.A. defense must precede the area exams in exceptional circumstances and only when that student is well ahead of program milestones.

I.I. Written Area Examinations

In their third year, students must complete exams in two areas of Sociology. Students may substitute one of their area exams with the successful completion of the Graduate Minor in Quantitative Methods.

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

I.J. 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 may be in a format that would be beneficial for applying for external support as well (e.g. NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant). Students should work closely with their advisor 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 summer of a student's third 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).

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) invite committee members to pose any remaining questions to examinee before the discussion and voting begins.

I.K. Submission of Two Manuscripts to Peer-Reviewed Journals

Students are required to prepare two article-length papers suitable for publication in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. One must be completed by May of the student's third year in the program (preferably earlier), and the second prior to the defense of the dissertation itself (preferably a year before their defense). Each paper must be approved by the student's thesis/dissertation chair or advisor (who is also a member of the T&R faculty in Sociology) who will confirm that the paper meets the criteria of suitability for submission to a peer-reviewed journal and advise the student on which journal might be appropriate. Students are required to submit each article to an appropriate peer-reviewed journal. This requirement is fulfilled only when students provide a report on their submission, with faculty approval, and evidence of submission, to the graduate program administrative assistant. The articles submitted must be single-authored or first authored.

I.L. Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

I.M. The Doctoral Dissertation

I.N. Defense of Dissertation

I.O. Submitting the Dissertation

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

APPENDIX ONE: Sociology Graduate Program: Five-Year Plan Template

Year 1 Fall 1	Class Requirements: Proseminar I, Classical Theory, Linear Regression, Elective 1, Apply for NSF GRFP or other fellowships Choose advisor (may change later)
Spring 1	Class Requirements: Proseminar II, CDA, Research Methods, Elective 2, MA thesis proposal hearing by end of April (Apply for MA research grants if necessary)
Summer 1	MA research
Year 2 Fall 2	Class Requirements: Contemporary Theory, Elective 3, Elective 4 MA Research and Writing
Spring 2	Class Requirements: Advanced Methods, Elective 5, Elective 6 Defend MA thesis by May Year 2
Summer 2	Complete coursework audit; Prepare for Area Exams Revise MA or other manuscript to submit to a journal
Year 3 Fall 3	MA Presentation in September Area Exams Complete MA/article revisions and submit to a journal Conference presentation (Fall or Spring)
Spring 3	Dissertation proposal defense Grant applications for Diss. Research (if necessary)
Summer 3	Dissertation research Prepare a class to teach
Year 4 Fall 4	Dissertation research Prepare and submit second article (Diss. or other) Fall or Spring
Spring 4	Dissertation research Teach a class (Fall or spring)
Summer 4	Dissertation research and writing Prepare job market materials
Year 5 Fall 5	Dissertation research and writing Job applications
Spring 5	Dissertation writing
Summer 5	Dissertation defense

APPENDIX TWO: GUIDE TO AREA EXAMS

EXAM OBJECTIVES

Area exams provide students the opportunity to develop a broad expertise in two subfields of sociology. To pass their exams, the student must demonstrate the knowledge necessary for a literature review in their chosen subfields, but also the mastery of an independent voice within those subfields.

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:

- (a) the ability to interact with professional peers on the basis of shared knowledge and understanding;
- (b) the ability to teach in the field and to organize a new syllabus;
- (c) 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 TIMING

Sociology graduate students are expected to take both of their two area exams during the same week in the Fall of their third year (fifth semester of the program).

The department offers two exam periods per academic year: one week in Fall semester and one week in the Spring semester. The Fall exam period is typically held during the last full week of October. The Spring exam period is typically held during the last full week of January. The spring exam period is reserved for special circumstances, including: 1) students who have the MA requirement waived may want to take their exams in the spring of second year; 2) if a student fails one or both of their exams in the Fall, they will have an opportunity to retake one or both in during the spring date, 3) students in the Peace Studies joint program may take their sociology area exam in either Fall or Spring; 4) students with circumstances that delay their progress by a semester (e.g. childbirth accommodation) may also take exams in the spring.

The official exam weeks will be announced well in advance of each academic year. Coordinating which exams will be offered on which days depends on the configuration of students taking different area exams. The specific day each specific area exam will be offered will be announced at least two months before the exams.

Students will have six hours on one day to complete a single exam. Exams begin at 8 a.m. and end at 3 p.m., with a one-hour lunch break from noon – 1 p.m. We will make every effort to give students a gap of one to two days between their first and second exams that week.

Students must inform the Administrative Assistant for Graduate Studies of the exams they intend to take by the first week of May of their second year. This advanced notice will ensure that adequate space is reserved for examinees and allow for exam planning.

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 in the Spring of their second year 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.

** Students may substitute one of their area exams with the successful completion of the Graduate Minor in Quantitative Methods. To count toward the exam requirement, the minor must be completed by the student's sixth semester in the program.

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, at least 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 and posted in late May.

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 by the first week of March, in the Spring semester before the Fall 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

Each exam committee will set expectations for their area's exam outlining the main foci or guiding principle of the area, how the area is organized, and expectations for the preparation process, the format of the exam questions, 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 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. Students may have two items in the exam: 1) the committee approved reading list and 2) two pages of approved student-authored notes. These notes may be single spaced, but no smaller than 11-point font. Attempting to pre-draft an exam answer in these notes violates the spirit of the exam. Therefore, notes will not include full paragraphs or essay outlines. Any notes must be approved by the respective area exam committees one week in advance of the exam. Approved lists and notes will be given to the Graduate Studies Coordinator, who will print out these materials for the student to have on the day of the exam.

2. Students will write exam answers using software or storage methods as determined by the DGS. **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 six hours to complete one area exam. After the end of the 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.
4. Non-native English speakers are permitted an additional 30 minutes exam time each day to revise grammar and spelling.

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 (available at <http://graduateschool.nd.edu>). For the purposes of preliminary examinations, the most relevant section of this academic integrity code is:

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. As students prepare their in-exam notes they should therefore take extreme caution to mark out quotations so they do not forget to treat those as quotes in their essay writing. 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 one of two grades to exams: pass, and fail. 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.

Consequences of Failures

If a student fails any area exam twice, or fails exams on two separate exam periods, the student 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 one or both area exams will have to retake the exam(s) in the following semester. For example, a student who passed Area A but failed Area B in the Fall exam week would retake only Area B in during the Spring exam week. If they passed Area B in the Spring they would have passed exams. If they failed Area B a second time in the Spring they would be terminated from the program. A student who failed both Areas A and B in the Fall will have the opportunity to retake both areas in Spring; failing either of the areas a second time would result in termination from the program.

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 by the end of April of the first 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. The defense of the MA thesis should be held by the end of Spring of the second year, the end of the fourth semester.

Ph.D. Proposal Defense

Dissertation committees must have a minimum of four T&R faculty members. You may petition to the DGS to include a faculty person outside the department or University as a 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. The Ph.D. proposal defense should be held by the end of Summer of the third year.

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 graduate 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:

- a) Except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the DGS, for all four 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.
- b) Be sure to check Graduate School deadlines for graduation for the MA and PhD defenses before scheduling your exam.

- c) 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 <https://dulac.nd.edu/campus-life/wellness/>.

An appeal is a two-step process; the first is through the program. If a graduate student decides to formally appeal a program’s decision resolving the student’s grievance, the student must submit a written request for appeal to the Graduate School’s Associate Dean for Academic Affairs as set forth below. The only grounds upon which an appeal may be based are:

1. A procedural error within the program’s stated grievance procedure which may have substantially affected the fairness or outcome of the grievance procedure.
2. New evidence that becomes available only after the conclusion of the program’s grievance procedure which reasonably may have impacted the fairness or outcome of the grievance procedure.
3. An inappropriate sanction which is grossly disproportionate to the conduct initiating the sanction, considering the relevant aggravating and/or mitigating factors.

Dissatisfaction or disagreement with a decision is not grounds for appeal. 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., completion of the MA thesis, comprehensive examinations—or through sustained 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 ten 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.