

The University of Iowa  
Department of Sociology and Criminology

# Graduate Student Manual



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## **I. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Department rules and procedures described in this manual, together with the general University rules set forth in the University of Iowa Operations Manual and the rules of the Graduate College set forth in the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College, constitute the body of regulations which govern students pursuing an advanced degree in Sociology (see APPENDIX A: Relevant Links).

### **A. Objectives**

The Department of Sociology and Criminology has three goals:

1. To foster scientific research in the behavioral sciences and to disseminate it through scholarly publication;
2. To develop excellence in teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels through well-formulated curricula as well as individual teaching effort; and
3. To serve the larger community in the proper application of sociological knowledge.

The graduate program in the Department of Sociology and Criminology intends to train professionals who are qualified both to conduct research and teach. The Department's academic program has two major objectives:

1. The attainment of general competence in theory, methods, and the substantive literature of sociology and/or criminology; and
2. The attainment of special competence within an area of concentration or "major" plus substantial competence in a "minor" field.

### **B. Advising**

1. To facilitate the student's adjustment to the Department and to guide their professional training, Department policy is that every student selects a faculty advisor. Students new to the Department will utilize the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) as advisor until the student has time to select an advisor and M.A. committee chair. We encourage students to select an advisor by the end of the first year in the program. Students should submit an advising change form to the department's main office by the end of their first year. Students may change advisors at any time by submitting an advising change form to the departmental main office.
2. Prior to their first registration, each new graduate student will confer with the DGS to review the student's previous preparation in sociology and/or criminology. New students in the M.A. program must take all the theory and methods/statistics courses required for the M.A. degree.

## **II. ADMISSION TO THE M.A. AND PH.D. PROGRAMS**

### **A. Registration Requirement**

The doctorate is granted on the basis of achievement rather than on the accumulation of semester hours of credit. However, the University of Iowa expects a candidate to complete at least 39 semester hours while registered in the University of Iowa Graduate College. Part of this registration must be spent in full-time involvement in one's discipline at this University. Beyond the first 21 semester hours of graduate work students must complete and additional 18 semester hours to be taken as follows:

1. Enrollment as a full-time student (9 semester hours minimum) in each of two semesters;  
or
2. Enrollment for a minimum of 6 semester hours in each of three semesters.

The doctoral program will contain a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate work (see the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations; APPENDIX A: Relevant Links).

#### **B. Students with Disabilities**

Equal access to education is achieved when barriers to learning are removed and students with disabilities can compete solely based on their academic skills and abilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations should contact Student Disability Services (SDS). Students will need to submit a SDS Application form and the appropriate documentation to SDS. After determining what accommodations are judged reasonable, the SDS office provides the student with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). The student should also meet with their instructor (or exam committee chair, or dissertation committee chair, or the relevant faculty member) to provide them with a copy of the form and to make any necessary arrangements for the accommodations. Visit the Student Disability Services website (see APPENDIX A: Relevant Links) for more information.

#### **C. The M.A. Program**

Admission to the graduate program as a candidate for the M.A. degree is based on undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.25, evidence of research experience, background in social science, and experience with quantitative and qualitative research methodology. The Graduate Admissions Committee admits students who show strong evidence of graduate school potential.

#### **D. Students Entering with Previous Graduate Coursework in Sociology**

Persons entering with an M.A. degree who have written an empirical M.A. thesis may submit the thesis to a committee of three faculty. The student should first select a chairperson and review the thesis with them. The chairperson may request minor or major revisions or may determine that the student should consider an alternative research project. The M.A. committee chair will work with the student on any revisions. The thesis research paper is then submitted to the full M.A. committee and a Final Examination (oral) over the M.A. thesis and related matters is held. This procedure follows the M.A. with thesis and M.A. with research paper options described below.

### **III. THE M.A. DEGREE**

#### **A. General Requirements**

1. The M.A. requires 30 semester hours with thesis or research paper and 38 hours without thesis. A GPA of 3.25 or higher (in the major) is required over all courses applied to the M.A., and each of the following required courses must be passed with a grade of at least a B-:
  - a. SOC:5110, History of Sociological Theory
  - b. SOC:5160, Research Design and Methods
  - c. SOC:6170, Introduction to Sociological Data Analysis
  - d. SOC:6180, Linear Models in Sociological Research

M.A. students must also take SOC:7270 and SOC:7271 (Scholarly Professionalism and Integrity I and II).

2. Cohorts starting Fall 2022 and after are required to take elective courses as outlined below:
  - a.  $\geq 3$  course ( $\geq 9$ sh) for MA with thesis or research paper
  - b.  $\geq 4$  course ( $\geq 12$ sh) for MA with exam
3. The M.A. candidate should select a chairperson for their Examining Committee who is within their major field in the first year of residence. The chairperson and the candidate agree on two additional members for the M.A. Examining Committee. The three-person committee should ideally include two faculty members for the student's major and at least one person with methodological/statistical skills related to the person's major.

#### **B. The M.A. with Thesis (30 hours)**

1. It is important for students' Ph.D. programs that they integrate their M.A. course and thesis work and plan the scope and length of their theses to complete them within two years. The M.A. Thesis Paper should be of journal article length and should be viewed as a learning experience. Students who have not completed the M.A. degree requirements in five semesters will be placed on probation. If the M.A. degree is not completed after six semesters, the student may be terminated.
2. The M.A. student will have a Final Examination (oral) over the thesis and related matters. It may also include material for which the student has been told to prepare but will not merely duplicate course examinations. The student's M.A. Examining Committee decides whether the student passes or fails.

#### **C. Non-Thesis M.A. with Research Paper (30 hours)**

The same requirements as for a formal M.A. thesis will apply, but the student need not meet the Graduate College requirements or deadlines. The M.A. Research Paper should be of journal article length and should be viewed as a learning experience. The student should defend the Paper by the end of the 4th semester. Students who have not completed the M.A. degree requirements in five semesters will be placed on probation. If the M.A. degree is not completed after six semesters, the student may be terminated.

#### **D. The M.A. without Thesis OR Research Paper (38 hours)**

This degree is awarded to a candidate who completes 38 semester hours of course work and passes a Final Examination (oral) over the master's program of study conducted by their Examining Committee. This exam is not merely to duplicate course work but test a candidate's mastery of some subject matter and higher integrative abilities. The M.A without thesis does not qualify a student for the Ph.D. program.

#### **E. Admission to the Ph. D Program Following Completion of M.A. with Thesis or Research Paper**

Prior to the M.A. Final Examination, students should submit a departmental Request for Admission to the Ph.D. Program forms to their M.A. Committee Chair. At the Final Examination, the M.A. Committee will review the student's record, including performance in classes, the M.A. research, and Graduate Assistantship (Teaching/Research Assistant) assignments. The Committee has the following options and will make a written recommendation regarding admission to the Ph.D. program on the forms provided:

1. To advance the student into the Ph.D. program without the need for additional course work;

2. To postpone the decision concerning the Ph.D. program until additional course work (as specified by the committee) is completed;
3. To allow the student to complete a terminal M.A. (with no continuance in the Ph.D. program); or
4. To refuse the student further enrollment in the graduate program. If the student involved has an M.A. from another institution, the committee's choices normally will be limited to the first and fourth of the above alternatives.

This recommendation must be approved by the DGS.

#### **IV. THE PH.D. PROGRAM**

##### **A. General**

###### **For students who started the program in Fall 2021 or earlier:**

The Ph.D. requires a minimum of 72 semester hours total graduate credit and a minimum of 36 hours in addition to those credited toward the M.A. degree. These 36 hours may not include any credit for SOC:7090, Ph.D. Dissertation. A GPA of 3.25 is required over all courses applied to the Ph.D. and B- is required in each of these required courses:

1. A Ph.D. level theory course offered by the Sociology and Criminology Department (e.g. SOC:6110, Theory Construction and Analysis)
2. SOC:7010, Teaching Sociology (if the student wants to teach their own course)
3. Two courses (excluding SOC:7030 or any other independent reading or research course) of at least 3 semester hours in research methods or statistics selected by the student and their advisor

The Ph.D. candidate must also pass the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, and then write and make a successful defense of a dissertation.

###### **For students who started the program in Fall 2022 or later:**

The Ph.D. requires a minimum of 72 semester hours total graduate credit. A GPA of 3.25 is required over all courses applied to the Ph.D. and B- is required in each of these required courses:

1. A Ph.D. level theory course offered by the Sociology and Criminology Department (e.g. SOC:6110, Theory Construction and Analysis)
2. SOC:7010, Teaching Sociology (if the student wants to teach their own course)
3. Two courses (excluding SOC:7030 or any other independent reading or research course) of at least 3 semester hours in research methods or statistics selected by the student and their advisor.

In addition to the required courses, students are required to take a total of 6 elective courses (18 sh) or more.

A summary of requirements for cohorts starting before Fall 2022 versus in or after Fall 2022 is provided on the following page.

## Requirement Summary

		Cohorts Fall 2021 and earlier	Cohorts Fall 2022 and after
MA <sup>1</sup>	Required Classes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ProSem I (2sh)</li> <li>2. Prosem II (2sh)</li> <li>3. SOC:5110 History of Sociological Theory (B- or above) (3sh)</li> <li>4. SOC:5160 Research Design and Methods (B- or above) (3sh)</li> <li>5. SOC:6170 Intro to Sociological Data Analysis (B- or above) (3sh)</li> <li>6. SOC:6180 Linear Models (B- or above) (3sh)</li> </ol>	
	Elective Minimum <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≥3 courses (≥9sh) for MA w. thesis or research paper</li> <li>• ≥4 courses (≥12sh) for MA w. exam</li> </ul>
	SH Minimums	30 sh for MA w. thesis 38 sh for MA w. exam Combined 3.25 GPA	30 sh for MA w. thesis or research paper 38 sh for MA w. exam Combined 3.25 GPA
PhD	Required Classes	All MA required classes + Sociology PhD                  Criminology PhD <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Additional PhD level theory course (B- or above) (≥3 sh)</li> <li>8. Additional methods/stats course (B- or above) (≥3 sh)</li> <li>9. Additional methods/stats course (B-or above) (≥3 sh)</li> </ol>	
	Elective Minimum <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36 sh required post MA</li> <li>• PhD hours count towards 72 but not 36 post MA sh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≥6 courses (≥18sh) for PhD</li> <li>• ≥4 courses (≥12sh) for Criminology PhD [5]</li> </ul> EX: a SOC PhD student could take 3 electives before the MA and 3 after, or 4 before and 2 after; a CRIM PhD student could take 3 electives before the MA and 1 after.
	SH Minimum	72 sh for PhD Combined 3.25 GPA	72 sh for PhD Combined 3.25 GPA

<sup>1</sup> "MA w. thesis" means with a formal thesis -or- research paper.

<sup>2</sup> Readings and Research (CRIM:7030 or SOC:7030) and MA Hours (SOC:6080) do not count as electives.

<sup>3</sup> Readings and Research (CRIM:7030 or SOC:7030) and PhD Hours (CRIM:7090 or SOC:7090) do not count as electives.

<sup>4</sup> The majority of electives taken must be SOC. Courses outside the department are subject to approval.

<sup>5</sup> The majority of electives taken must be CRIM. Courses outside the department are subject to approval.

## **B. Advising and Planning a Ph.D. Program**

A Ph.D. advisor (in the student's major area) must be selected within one semester after a student enters the Ph.D. program.

## **C. The Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations**

1. **Background:** The Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is intended to determine whether the candidate is intellectually prepared to undertake the dissertation project and to assume professional status. The student should demonstrate mastery of the relevant research methods as well as the major, minor, and related fields of study for a given area. In the exam, the candidate should demonstrate professional competence. The comprehensive exam is the principal examination in the graduate career, and it is to be prepared for and passed expeditiously so that the dissertation project can be initiated; otherwise, the graduate career is unduly lengthened.
2. **Eligibility:** To be eligible to take the Comprehensive Exam, the student must have a 3.25 GPA or above and have successfully defended their M.A. Thesis or Research Paper. To qualify for candidacy to the Ph.D. program in Sociology, students will be required to pass a written qualifying examination that will be offered in January, May, and August. See 7 Process for further details.
4. **Timing:** Students should pass the Comprehensive Exam before the start of their fourth year in the program. Failure to complete the exam by this time jeopardizes a student's timely progress toward the Ph.D. and will be considered during departmental evaluations and funding decisions. Students who decide to take the August exam right before the start of their fourth year will be notified in their third-year evaluation that their academic standing moving forward is contingent on passing the exam in August. As noted in section VI (below), good academic standing is a prerequisite for obtaining funding.
5. **Committee:** Each student will form a Comprehensive Exam Committee made up of four faculty members. At least three of the members must be graduate faculty from the Department of Sociology and Criminology. The fourth member can be another graduate faculty from our department, a UI tenure-track faculty member from another department, or a recognized scholar of professorial rank from another peer academic institution. When inviting a faculty member from outside of UI, the scholar must be approved by the DGS as well as the Graduate College (see the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations for request instructions; APPENDIX A: Relevant Links). The student will select one member as Chair (or two members as co-chairs).
6. **Overview:** In research areas of their choosing, students will answer five questions prepared by the Exam Committee. Students should expect 2-3 questions that cover the broad debates and issues in the examination topic, and 2-3 questions that cover more specific topics related to the student's anticipated dissertation research within the broader area. At minimum, students will receive one question that focuses on theoretical issues and one question that pertains to methodology or research design. Each answer must be between 1500-2500 words (roughly 6-10 pages double spaced), not including the bibliography.

7. Process: See APPENDIX B: Two Example Exams; APPENDIX C: Example Exam Instructions; [APPENDIX D: Checklist after Student Declares Intent to Take Exam](#); and [APPENDIX E: Example Timeline from the Student's Perspective](#) for more information.
  - a. Choose one of three exam periods: January, May, or August.
  - b. Choose Areas and Committee Chair: The student should choose a broad area that prepares them to conduct their anticipated dissertation research and to teach undergraduate and graduate-level courses. The student should also choose a committee chair from the graduate faculty who is an expert in at least some part of the broad area.
    - i. Students will first anchor their exam to one of four broad, umbrella areas that correspond to the department's four main areas of expertise: criminology, organizations, social psychology, and stratification.
    - ii. Students will then elaborate on their interests by choosing a more specific area within the broad area that aligns closely with their anticipated dissertation research area, such as class, gender, race, political sociology, networks, medical sociology, culture, and sociology of education.
    - iii. The more specific area may or may not correspond to an official American Sociological Association (ASA) section but ideally, the exam has enough breadth to familiarize a student with the work of at least two ASA sections (see APPENDIX A: Relevant Links).
  - c. Declare Intent: Email the Director of Graduate Studies to declare your intent to take the comprehensive exam. In this email, students must name the chair, the topic area, two ASA sections or professional associations that the student is interested in becoming active (which we expect will be related to the exam topic area), and the proposed exam period (January, August, or May).
    - i. The Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee, will review the student's declaration of intent. Approval will be granted or denied within two weeks of submission. If denied, the Graduate Studies Committee will work with the student and their Comprehensive Exam Committee Chair to revise appropriately.
    - ii. Once approved, the Department Administrator will reach out to the student and Committee Chair with checklists and deadlines relevant to the intended exam period.
  - d. Develop Exam Scope Statement: In consultation initially with the Chair of the Comprehensive Exam Committee, and later with the other Committee members, each student will prepare a brief scope statement (2-3 pages) explaining their interest in their broad and specific research areas. The scope statement should also offer 4-8 example questions that the student will be well positioned to answer, and a list of representative readings (about 60-100 readings). The reading list should include both contemporary and classical literature and should evolve as a student prepares for the exam.
    - i. There are three purposes for the scope statement. First, the statement helps the student articulate research areas of interest in preparation for dissertation research. Second, the preparation of a statement ensures

that the committee approves the scope of the exam as sufficiently broad and the reading list as sufficiently rigorous and up to date. Third, in preparing the scope statement, the student has an opportunity to submit to the committee a short list of questions that they are prepared to answer. The committee members are responsible for writing the official exam questions, but a coherent scope statement with suggested questions will provide the committee with important guidance regarding the student's intended areas of expertise.

- ii. During this stage of the process, the committee is expected to help the student identify key topics within the areas the student has chosen to cover. In turn, the student should expect to revise their scope statement and their list of suggested questions based on committee feedback. Ultimately, the student and members of the committee need to collectively agree that the scope statement (1) contains an acceptable balance of breadth and depth in terms of area coverage, (2) aligns with the student's current research interests, and (3) offers acceptable guidance as to what types of questions could be covered in the exam.
- e. Obtain Approval: Once the committee has internally approved the scope statement, the student submits the statement for final approval by the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee. Students must submit for final approval by the following dates: July 1<sup>st</sup> for the August exam, December 1<sup>st</sup> for the January exam, and April 1<sup>st</sup> for the May exam. Approval will be granted or denied within two weeks of submission. If denied, the Graduate Studies Committee will work with the student and their Comprehensive Exam Committee to revise appropriately.
  - f. Schedule Exam: The Exam should be scheduled for a weeklong period mutually agreeable to the student and the Committee.
    - i. For the August exam, the weeklong exam period must fall between August 1<sup>st</sup> and the start of the Fall semester. For the January exam, the weeklong exam period must fall between January 1<sup>st</sup> and the start of the Spring semester. For the May exam period, the weeklong exam period must fall between May 1<sup>st</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup>.
    - ii. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Department Administrator at least two weeks in advance of the exam date so that the proper Comprehensive Exam paperwork can be filed with the Graduate College. Failure to notify as specified will result in a delay in terms of the official date of the comprehensive exam, which will affect the student's eligibility for post-comprehensive fellowships.
    - iii. Preparation of Exam Questions: The committee will prepare five questions based on the approved scope statement. The committee will send the student's exam to the Department Administrator and DGS five working days in advance of the exam for final approval. At the time that questions are submitted to the DGS, the committee may no longer discuss the exam with the student.

## 8. Exam Format and Logistics

- a. On the day of the scheduled exam, students will be sent the approved questions by the Department Administrator along with clear guidance on the exam due date and time. Students will have one week (seven days) to complete the exam from the time the exam was sent. As noted above, each answer must be no longer than 2,500 words (not including the bibliography). There is no minimum word count, but composing a passing answer under around 1,500 words is unlikely.
- b. Students may work at any site and are free to use any books and personal notes during the exam period. Students are expected to work entirely on their own during the examination period. The department will provide a quiet place to work and access to a computer to all exam takers who request workspace.
- c. Students are not allowed to discuss the exam with their committee members or other faculty or peers during the exam period. The Comprehensive Exam Committee will fail an examination without review if a student receives help from another person during the exam period or if a student shares the contents of the examination questions or responses with anyone during the exam period without the express permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. Plagiarism or collusion during the exam period are grounds for expulsion from the graduate program, as per University of Iowa policy.
- d. Students are, however, welcome to ask the committee chair clarification questions via email. The Department Administrator should be cc'd on all communication.
- e. Students should immediately contact the Department Administrator during the exam period if an emergency occurs.

## 9. Evaluation

- a. Exams will be graded by the committee within two weeks of the end of the exam period. Per the Graduate College, the examination report must be submitted to the Graduate College office within fourteen days after the completion of the examination.
- b. A successful exam will demonstrate a student's mastery of chosen readings, as evidenced by an ability: to creatively synthesize diverse perspectives and findings in a way that has the potential to extend existing literature; to discuss relevant works at a detail sufficient to demonstrate that they have been read and understood; to think critically about the readings and to provide reasoned judgments about their worth and utility; to write coherent and organized prose. Failed exams will display an absence of these qualities.
  - i. Each question will be graded as follows: Pass with Distinction, Pass, Pass with Revisions, Fail.
  - ii. The exam as a whole will be graded as follows: Distinction, Pass, Reservations, Unsatisfactory. The following chart summarizes the relationship between exam grade and question outcomes:

	Overall Exam Grade			
	Distinction	Pass	Reservations	Unsatisfactory
Pass with Distinction	At least 3 responses			
Pass				
Pass with Revisions	None	No more than 1 response	No more than 2 total	
Fail	None	None		2 or more

- c. Each committee member will sign the examination report in alignment with the agreed upon exam grade: satisfactory (for Distinction or Pass), reservations, or unsatisfactory.
- i. Per the Graduate College rules: A grade of "Reservations" should only be used when a committee feels that the deficiencies displayed by the student were modest and easily fixed.
  - ii. If giving a reservations grade, the committee must clarify to the student in writing what actions are required of the student to correct the deficiencies. The language describing the actions must be specific. For instance, if additional course work is required, a list of suitable courses must be presented. If the candidate needs to rewrite portions of their responses, the deficient areas must be identified, etc.
  - iii. This action plan must include a date on which all actions/revisions must be completed. This plan must be formally submitted to the Graduate College alongside the examination report. Copies of the action plan should be kept by the DGS, the chair of the examination committee, and the student.
  - iv. If the candidate satisfies the required actions by the pre-specified due date, the DGS will send a written report to the Graduate College indicating the date for which the examining committee considers the actions to have been satisfied. Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as "Satisfactory" as of that date. If the actions are not satisfied on time, or if the actions are not of sufficient quality as evaluated by the committee, the DGS will send a written report to the Graduate College indicating that fact. Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as "Unsatisfactory" as of that date.
  - v. Students should be mindful to avoid extensive overlap in their answers. If, for example, the responses to question one and question five overlap a great deal, the committee will count the overlapping portion for one response but not the other. Note: Responses will be run through turnitin.com to detect plagiarism.

- d. The Comprehensive Exam may be attempted twice; a student who fails in a second attempt will not be advanced to Ph.D. candidacy. After the first failure, the student must take the second exam in the next exam period. If the student fails to take the second attempt consecutively, the student will not be advanced to Ph.D. candidacy.
  - I. The student is allowed to make revisions to the scope statement but then must go through the approval process again.
  - II. If the student wishes to change topic areas entirely and convene a new committee, the student must obtain approval by the DGS and Graduate Studies. The committee will write a new exam and submit to the Department Administrator and DGS five working days in advance of the exam for final approval.

## **V. THE PH.D. DISSERTATION**

### **A. Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee is to be formed upon successful completion of the comprehensive exam, and will be made up of four faculty members. At least three of the members must be graduate faculty from the Department of Sociology and Criminology. The fourth member can be another graduate faculty member from our department, a UI tenure-track faculty member from another department, or a recognized scholar of professorial rank from another peer academic institution. When inviting a faculty member from outside of UI, the scholar must be approved by the DGS as well as the Graduate College (see the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations for request instructions; APPENDIX A: Relevant Links). The student will select one member as Chair (or two as co-chairs).

The dissertation must be written in the student's major area (i.e., the topics covered in the comprehensive exam) and the members should be familiar with particular theories, methods, and substantive areas relevant to the dissertation topic. It is generally assumed that at least two members will be from the major area.

### **B. The Dissertation Prospectus**

All Ph.D. candidates shall prepare a detailed prospectus of research for the dissertation within one year of their comprehensive exam. The Prospectus is considered a finished product, separate from the dissertation, in which the candidate shows the capability of planning research and communicating their plans to others (similar to an application for research funds). It will include all pertinent information for the research in view, such as theoretical orientation, literature review and bibliography, pilot research, design, population, sampling and data gathering procedures, detailed analysis plans (including, where appropriate, dummy tables) and the inferences made possible by the research. The Prospectus should be written in consultation with the student's Dissertation Committee members; it should allow the Dissertation Committee to evaluate the feasibility of the dissertation research and make suggestions to improve it. The Prospectus should be of professional quality; it is a public document within the department.

### **C. Final Ph.D. Dissertation Defense**

After the first deposit of the dissertation with the Graduate College (see the Graduate College Thesis Manual for official dissertation formatting instructions) the candidate must pass an oral examination by their dissertation defense committee (the comprehensive exam committee).

The examination is open to the public. It covers the candidate's doctoral dissertation and research and all matters relating to it. It must be taken no later than five years after passing the comprehensive examination. Failure to meet this deadline entails the re-examination of the candidate to determine the student's qualifications for the final dissertation defense. The final defense is graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The requirements for the doctoral degree are met after first passing this dissertation defense and then making the final dissertation deposit with the Graduate College. **Note:** Deadlines for degree application, first deposit of thesis, final examination and final thesis deposits are noted on the Graduate College website and are available from the Registrar's Office.

## VI. GUIDE TO SEQUENCE OF DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS DURING A GRADUATE CAREER

<u>Semester in Residence</u>	<u>Departmental Events</u>
Prior to 1 <sup>st</sup> semester registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with the DGS of the department concerning registration</li> </ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form M.A. Examining Committee and present outline of proposed M.A. Thesis/Research Paper to advisor</li> </ul>
Prior to 5 <sup>th</sup> semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M.A. Final Examination (Defense of M.A. Thesis/Research Paper)</li> <li>• Admission to Ph.D. Program</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select a major advisor for Ph.D.</li> <li>• Take relevant courses, seek advice, and prepare for comprehensive exams</li> <li>• Pass Comprehensive Exam</li> </ul>
7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form Ph.D. Dissertation Committee</li> <li>• Ph.D. Prospectus Defense</li> </ul>
9 <sup>th</sup> semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ph.D. Final Examination (Defense of the Dissertation)</li> </ul>

## VII. STUDENT EVALUATION

### A. Course Grades

1. Grades in graduate courses can run from A through F, but the meaning of each grade is not the same as that found at the undergraduate level. Any grade below B represents an inadequate performance. Although some variance occurs from instructor to instructor, a student is well advised to regard A- as the minimum grade indicating good performance in a class.
2. Course work is expected to be completed in a timely manner, that is, by the end of the semester. This expectation should only be set aside in unusual circumstances. In such instances, students may be assigned an "Incomplete." Normally, incompletes must be removed during the student's next semester of registration by the date established in the academic calendar, or the incomplete automatically becomes an F. Grades of an F can result in a student being placed on departmental academic probation.

## **B. Instructors' Evaluation Reports**

1. The work of students employed as teaching assistants is similarly evaluated at the end of each semester by the faculty member in charge of the course or research activity to which the student is assigned.
2. As required by the University Operations Manual, first-time teaching assistants leading their own discussion sections need to be evaluated by the eighth week of class. Thus, by the eighth week of class, instructors that have a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) are to submit an evaluation of their first-time communications competence of the GTA, and an evaluation of the teaching competence of the GTA. Instructors may use a variety of methods to evaluate first time GTAs, including a recommended classroom observation. IF the instructor's evaluation indicates that the GTA needs assistance, the DGS and instructor will develop a plan for assisting the GTA.

## **VIII. STUDENT ACADEMIC STATUS**

### **A. Good Standing**

To be eligible for the Ph.D. degree, a student must be in "good standing" and must be registered at the University in the semester during which the degree is to be awarded. "Good standing" is indicated by a grade-point minimum of 3.25. In addition, graduate students in sociology must meet the general requirements of the Graduate College.

### **B. Probation**

Students may be placed on probation if they fall below the minimum grade point average or miss any of the minimum time requirements. Consequences of probation include:

1. Ineligibility to take examinations for the Ph.D.;
2. Ineligibility for admission to candidacy for an advanced degree;
3. Ineligibility for renewal, and possible termination, of financial awards; and
4. Dismissal from the graduate program if probation continues for two consecutive semesters following that in which the deficiency occurred. (Summer sessions do not count for this purpose.)

Students on probation will be returned to good standing immediately if probation was for failure to maintain a satisfactory grade-point average, and if that average—both semester and cumulative—is raised to the required level in the semester following that which led to probation; or at the discretion of the department if probation was for failure to show promise of scholarly distinction and achievement. While on probation, classes taken to raise GPA to minimum requirements must be in the student's major (i.e., sociology).

## **IX. DISMISSAL AND REVIEW**

The Director of Graduate Studies, on behalf of the Department, will advise a student by letter of any decision placing the student on probation no later than two weeks after the decision is made.

It is the right of every student receiving such notification to seek further clarification from individual instructors, members of any examining committee concerned, the Director of Graduate Study, and the Chair of the Department Chair outlining the grievances in detail and describing any prior informal efforts to secure redress.

Within five days of receipt of the student's letter, the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) meets to begin review of the case. The DEO attends during GSC meetings ex officio. It is likely that more than one meeting will be needed to review the material and formulate a decision. Within three weeks of the initial meeting the GSC will determine what action is to be taken after reviewing all materials. All actions must be consistent with the Graduate College policy as indicated in the College manual. If the DEO upholds the original department decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Graduate College. This process is outlined in the Graduate College's Manual of Rules and Regulations (see APPENDIX A: Relevant Links).

## **X. POLICY CONCERNING DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

### **A. General Practice**

Each year, students without a formal agreement for future funding must compete for financial support. Prior departmental support is not in itself an assurance of future support. Historically, the vast majority of students in degree programs in sociology at the University of Iowa have been given major financial support for at least five years of their graduate Ph.D. training.

The Department strives to ensure that all students making satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. receive financial support. However, awards may be terminated at any time if a recipient is not satisfactorily performing all duties connected with the appointment or stops making satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree. A student who fails to maintain "good standing" (see [VIII. STUDENT ACADEMIC STATUS](#)) is not making satisfactory progress toward a degree.

Given the time difference between the date when awards are allocated (spring) and the date they go into effect (fall), it may be necessary to make all awards conditional on continued adequate performance. The most important condition is that awards for the fourth academic year of residence are contingent on completing the M.A. degree before the award period begins (mid- to late August).

### **B. Eligibility Criteria**

The following list gives the eligibility criteria for funding consideration:

1. A minimum grade point average of 3.25.
2. Adequate progress toward a degree.
3. Satisfactory performance in the candidate's current appointment, as defined by their supervisor.

### **C. Selection Procedures**

For those candidates in residence who request financial assistance, the Department has established procedure to rank-ordering students for receiving assistantships. Faculty evaluations will be a primary source of information about the students. Each spring semester, faculty provide evaluations of students' potential, academic performance, Teaching Assistant/Research Assistant performance, and also indicate the context in which the evaluations were made. Students beyond the first year will be asked to prepare a vita that identifies their professional activities, such as conference presentations, papers submitted, etc. First-year students may provide a vita if they wish to do so. Students will also be asked to provide a list of courses taken by semester, a chronology indicating when they selected an advisor, completed the M.A., took the area exams, formed a dissertation

committee, and information about teaching skills and experience (e.g., course syllabi and course evaluations). First-year students will be evaluated separately from the more advanced students. Teaching needs and student teaching qualifications will be considered in making award decisions.

#### **D. Other Appointment Criteria**

1. When an appointment is considered for both a Ph.D. and an M.A. candidate, preference should be given to the doctoral candidate when other things are equal.
2. Students who have not defended their dissertation prospectus within a year of completing their comprehensive exam will receive the lowest priority for department funding.
3. Teaching Assistants must successfully complete one area exam prior to teaching their own courses. They must also have completed SOC:7010 or an equivalent Ph.D. level course on teaching, approved by the DGS (see [IX. DISMISSAL AND REVIEW](#)).
4. Students are expected to accept or reject the department's appointment offer as soon as possible. Normally, no student will be given departmental financial support beyond their tenth semester of enrollment. In some extraordinary circumstances, however, a student may receive additional support. These extraordinary appointments are made based upon the following criteria that are ranked in order of importance:
  - a. The teaching and other program needs of the department;
  - b. Faculty and student evaluation of the student's prior instructional performance; and
  - c. Evidence that the student is making very strong progress towards completing their dissertation. This could include completed chapters of the dissertation, data collection and/or analysis, or other evidence that the dissertation will be finished in a timely manner.

### **XI. GRADUATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNANCE**

#### **A. General**

The power to make departmental policy resides with the faculty. Every three years the faculty elects a chairperson (who must also be appointed to the chair by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences). Their duty is to administer the policies established by the faculty. Regular faculty meetings are open to graduate students. Graduate student committee members may place items on the agenda, but students do not have votes in faculty meetings, only on certain committees, eight of which have graduate students serving on them.

#### **B. Standing Departmental Committees**

The list of standing committees in the department, their function, and their standard composition is as follows:

1. Awards Committee: Assists with nomination applications (3 faculty members; 1 graduate student)
2. Communications Committee: Assists with newsletter and website (3 faculty members, 2 graduate students)
3. Computer Committee: Makes recommendations regarding use and distribution of

computers (2 faculty members; 2 graduate students)

4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee: Offers ideas to create a more diverse campus and community (4 faculty members, 2 graduate students)
5. Graduate Studies Committee: Makes recommendations concerning graduate curriculum and award evaluations; supervises requirements and examination of M.A. and Ph.D. degrees; approves membership of M.A. and Ph. D Examining Committees (3 faculty members, 1 graduate student)
6. Recruitment Committee: Makes recommendations regarding visits and hiring of faculty job applicants (3-4 faculty members; 1 graduate student)
7. Resource Development Committee: Assists in obtaining additional departmental funds (3 faculty members, 2 graduate students)
8. Theory Workshop Committee: Assists in inviting speakers to campus and scheduling presentations (3 faculty members, 1 graduate student)
9. Undergraduate Committee: Makes recommendations regarding undergraduate curriculum and advising (2 faculty members; 1 graduate student; 1 undergraduate student)

### **C. Graduate Student Votes on Committees**

Graduate student committee members vote on committee issues with the following exceptions:

1. General: Conventionally understood conflicts of interest which should result in self-disqualifications, e.g., when a member initiates a grievance or petition or has one initiated against them
2. Graduate: Direct evaluations of other graduate students, including about whom is to be admitted from the M.A. to the Ph.D. program
3. Recruitment: Selection of job candidates for visits to the department or to whom job offers should be made

The Department is open to graduate students' suggestions on any issue and the faculty wishes to participate with graduate students in designing and implementing an outstanding professional training program in sociology.

## **XII. POLICY ON GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING**

The department views teaching by graduate students as an important supplement to their academic work and we are committed to providing such opportunities within the constraints posed by our undergraduate teaching program. Graduate students will be eligible for such experience when they meet the minimal requirements stated below. The timing and nature of the experience will be dependent on the departmental needs and the students' areas of expertise.

### **A. Minimum Requirements**

1. The student should have successfully passed their comprehensive exam
2. The student should be making adequate progress toward the Ph.D. degree
3. The student should have taken the teaching seminar (SOC:7010) or an equivalent Ph.D.-level course on teaching, approved by the DGS

### **B. Miscellaneous Guidelines**

5. The student should have background (e.g., course work) and competence (e.g., as a teaching assistant) appropriate to the course.
6. Graduate students will usually be assigned to teach lower-level courses. Assignments to more advanced sociology courses are contingent on a student's expertise, the department's teaching needs, and sociology courses are contingent on a student's expertise, the department's teaching needs, and requirements of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
7. Students should be discouraged from developing new courses for our undergraduate program.
8. Graduate students in sociology should not take a course taught by a sociology graduate student for credit.

## APPENDIX A: Relevant Links

- American Sociological Association: <https://www.asanet.org/>
- Department of Sociology and Criminology Graduate Advisor Change Form: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/sociology/sites/clas.uiowa.edu.sociology/files/graduate/advisor%20change%20form.pdf>
- Department of Sociology and Criminology Graduate Resources Site: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/sociology/graduate-program/resources-current-students>
- Graduate College Deadlines: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/deadlines>
- Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual>
  - Academic Grievance Procedure: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/manual/academic-grievance-procedure>
- Graduate College Thesis Manual: <https://grad.uiowa.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertation>
- Office of the Registrar Deadlines: <https://registrar.uiowa.edu/calendars-deadlines>
- University of Iowa Operations Manual: <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/>
- University of Iowa Student Disability Services: <https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu>

## APPENDIX B: Two Example Exams

(Each answer must be less than 2,500 words, which is roughly 10 pages with double spacing and 1-inch margins.)

### Example 1: Stratification and Networks

1. How has network theory contributed to the sociological study of stratification? At minimum, discuss theory and evidence addressing how positionality impacts access to and mobilization of capital, and subsequent economic, educational, and health outcomes.
2. Compare how status is typically conceptualized and operationalized in the field of stratification. At minimum, discuss the notion of status as it has been developed in the literature on “Status Attainment” in stratification, “Status Characteristics” in social psychology, and “Positional Advantage” in networks and organizational sociology. Be sure to address strength and weaknesses of each approach.
3. There is a large literature on the role of networks in ‘getting a job.’ Briefly summarize the key theoretical arguments pertaining to how networks (or social capital) can be leveraged with respect to labor market outcomes. Be sure to address the role of class, race, and gender as it relates to networks and labor markets. Finally, explain the key issues and recent advancements related to measurement and inference (causality) in this area of research.
4. Things spread via social networks, including disease, innovations, ideas, and behavior. Choose one of the following areas and critically discuss contemporary research on diffusion and social influence in one of the following areas:
  - a. Sociology of Health
  - b. Sociology of Culture
  - c. Sociology of Organizations
5. Network analysis is a powerful tool for studying relationality not just in social space (e.g., personal networks) but in abstract space (idea/concept networks). Write a short lecture that explains this emerging area of research to an undergraduate audience. Your lecture should, at minimum, discuss:
  - Mapping of cultural schemas
  - Relational (and Correlational) Classes
  - Belief Networks

## **Example 2: Stratification, Medical Sociology, Networks**

1. Drawing on the sociological literature on stratification and medical sociology, what are the major axes of health inequality in contemporary times (in the U.S.) and what are the main theoretical explanations regarding the causes of health inequality?
2. The literature on social disadvantage and health inequality suggests that the effect of disadvantageous position on health outcomes differs for physical health versus mental health. Critically review the current state of the theoretical and empirical research in this area.
3. The sociology of mental health employs sociological perspectives, including labeling theory, social capital, and the social stress paradigm, to understand how a variety of social factors influence and are influenced by mental health status. Critically discuss each of these relational approaches, including relevant theory and methodological issues. Also identify at least two promising areas of future research.
4. Recently, network scholars have emphasized the importance of examining the causal direction of the relationship between social networks and mental health by studying the coevolution of networks and health. Explain why, and critically assess recent studies in this area.
5. Network homophily is an important component of why networks can potentially affect life outcomes. Network effects emerge when alters' behaviors, beliefs, or practices affect ego. Researchers examining network effects, in which homophily is present, largely conclude that such effects attribute to higher levels of social inequality along several domains, such as health. Design a study that examines the relationship between network homophily and mental health outcomes. Discuss the strength and weaknesses of this study with respect to previous studies. The study should seek to quantify the effects of at least one of the following forms of homophily:
  - a. Gender
  - b. Race
  - c. SES
  - d. Education

## APPENDIX C: Example Exam Instructions

Exam Start Day and Time: *Month DD, YYYY, Day of Week, Time*

Exam End Day and Time: *Month DD, YYYY, Day of Week, Time*

### Directions

- Please answer questions 1-5 (including all sub-questions) and provide one Works Cited section for all five questions. The full answer for each question must be no longer than 2500 words. The Works Cited section is not included in the word count.
- You may work at any site and are free to use any books and personal notes during the exam period.
- You are expected to work entirely on their own during the examination period. You are not allowed to discuss the exam with your committee members or other faculty or peers during the exam period. The Comprehensive Exam Committee will fail an examination without review if a student receives help from another person during the exam period or if a student shares the contents of the examination questions or responses with anyone during the exam period without the express permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. Per University policy, plagiarism and/or collusion during the exam period are grounds for expulsion from the graduate program.
- You are welcome to ask the committee chair(s) clarification questions via email. The Department Administrator should be cc'd on all communication.
- Please turn in your completed exam (Microsoft Word or PDF) to either the Department Administrator or the DGS by the above-specified deadline.
- If an emergency occurs during the exam period that prevents you from finishing the exam, please contact the Department Administrator immediately. Office hours are 8:00am – 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

## APPENDIX D: Checklist after Student Declares Intent to Take Exam

- Step 1: Finalize Committee Composition
  - Chair [Graduate Faculty UI Soc & Crim]  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Member [Graduate Faculty UI Soc & Crim]  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Member [Graduate Faculty UI Soc & Crim]  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Member [Institution & Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ ]  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Step 2: Prepare Scope Statement
  - Read scope statements and exams from previous test-takers.
  - Draft statement of the areas (broad and specific) you wish to conduct future research.
  - Compile a list of readings that are relevant to your research areas (broad and specific). Identify classics, foundational pieces, and current/cutting edge work in both areas.
  - Draft 4-8 practice questions that will help you prepare for your dissertation research, then draft practice answers.
  - Solicit feedback from your committee on scope statement, reading list, practice questions and answers.
  
- Step 3: Obtain Committee Approval
  - The finished scope statement should be 2-3 pages (not including bibliography) and should include: a concise statement of research areas to be examined, a list of key or representative readings (60-100 total) that are most relevant to the exam, and a list of 4-8 suggested questions you are prepared to answer.
  - Tentatively schedule a one-week exam period given committee availability. The period must fall between: Jan 1<sup>st</sup> – start of Spring term; May 1<sup>st</sup> – June 15<sup>th</sup>; Aug 1<sup>st</sup> – start of Fall term.
  
- Step 4: Obtain Departmental Approval
  - Email the DGS your scope statement and documentation of committee approval (by cc'ing all committee members) on or before December 1<sup>st</sup> / April 1<sup>st</sup> / July 1<sup>st</sup>. The DGS will then obtain approval from Graduate Studies.
  
- Step 5: Complete Graduate College Paperwork and Finalize Exam Logistics
  - Once approval is obtained, finalize exam period with committee. Once finalized, contact the Department Administrator to fill out your GC paperwork.
  - Exam Location: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Exam Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Exam End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 6: Take Exam

- Committee chair emails questions to DGS five working days before the exam for approval.
- Department Administrator emails exam at appointed time. Student emails the Department Administrator all responses by the deadline.
- Department Administrator sends responses to all committee members and sets a two-week deadline. Department Administrator notifies student and DGS of outcome when evaluation is received and files appropriate paperwork.

## APPENDIX E: Example Timeline from the Student's Perspective

<p>Semesters 1 – 4 (years 1 – 2)</p>	<p>Develop Fundamentals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research methodology skillset</li> <li>• Expertise in sociological/criminological theory and relevant substantive research</li> <li>• Scholarly communication skills</li> </ul>
<p>Semesters 3 – 4 (year 2)</p>	<p>Complete M.A.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pick a topic, pick an advisor, and execute a research project to fulfill M.A.</li> <li>2. Defend M.A.</li> </ol>
<p>Semesters 5 – 6 (year 3)</p>	<p>Complete Comprehensive Exam</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. [SEPT] Soon after the M.A. is defended, choose a committee chair to help you sketch out areas (one broad and one specific) for the comp exam. Discuss committee composition. Declare your intent to take the comp exam in May.</li> <li>2. Read scope statements and exams from previous test-takers.</li> <li>3. [OCT] Begin to draft questions that you aspire to answer for the exam; compile a list of representative readings and outline how they would be used to answer those questions. This exercise is similar to the work you would do if you were drafting lectures for an undergraduate or graduate course on your exam topic.</li> <li>4. Finalize your committee.</li> <li>5. [DEC] Solicit feedback from your committee on your mini lectures/drafts of responses.</li> <li>6. [JAN] Write, revise, and finalize the scope statement. Preparing your scope statement <i>is</i> studying for the exam. The statement should include at minimum:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A concise statement of the research areas in which you see yourself conducting future research and are prepared to answer exam questions.</li> <li>b. A representative list of readings that pertain to each subarea for which you are prepared to answer questions.</li> <li>c. A list of 4-8 example questions that you are prepared to answer based on your reading list and the topics you wish to pursue for your dissertation research.</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. [MAR] Obtain internal approval for the scope statement from your committee and make tentative plans for the exam period, which in this case should fall between May 1 and roughly June 7.</li> <li>8. [APR] Submit your scope statement before April 1<sup>st</sup> to the DGS and Graduate Studies for approval.</li> <li>9. Once approval is obtained, email the committee to finalize the exam period. Once finalized, contact the front office to fill out your paperwork for the GC for your given exam date.</li> <li>10. [MAY] Take the exam.</li> </ol>

<p>Semesters 7 – 8 (year 4)</p>	<p>Defend Dissertation Prospectus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pick a topic and develop the dissertation prospectus</li> <li>• Try to get M.A. or another paper into the publication pipeline</li> <li>• Work on teaching certificate</li> </ul>
<p>Semesters 9 – 10 (year 5)</p>	<p>Prepare for Job Market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for fellowships to fund yourself for year 6</li> <li>• Conduct dissertation research and develop job talk</li> <li>• Work on advancing papers in the publication pipeline</li> </ul>
<p>Semesters 11 – 12 (year 6)</p>	<p>Complete Ph.D.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply for jobs</li> <li>• Practice job talk if applying to academic jobs</li> <li>• Finish dissertation</li> </ul>