

Regulations Governing Graduate Study
GRADUATE PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF
SOCIOLOGY
and
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Updated 2021

PREFACE

This document replaces all previous statements of requirements. Students are responsible for fulfilling these requirements and those of the Graduate School. The Departments of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology conduct a combined graduate program, administered by the Sociology Department. These regulations apply to all graduate students in this combined program. Where these regulations refer to the “chair,” this typically means the chair of the Sociology Department. “Faculty” refers to the faculty of both the Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology departments. The Academic Standing Committee (ASC) interprets and applies regulations in specific cases. Any decision or action of the ASC may be appealed, by either a student or a faculty member, to the joint department faculty by sending a letter to the chair. It is the responsibility of students to monitor their own compliance with these rules. Circulation of this document is regarded as sufficient notice of what is expected of graduate students in our program.

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. ADMISSION

The Director of Graduate Studies serves as admissions officer for the program and as chair of the Committee on Admissions and Awards. All applicants for admission must comply with the basic requirements established by the University of Wisconsin Graduate School (see the *Graduate Guide*, <https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/>) and with the additional requirements imposed by the departments. The departments follow a highly selective admissions policy. Applicants must submit the following information prior to the announced deadline: (1) an application form; (2) a statement of reasons for

graduate study; (3) a complete set of transcripts (ordinarily the undergraduate grade point average must be at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale); (4) scores on the Graduate Record Examination's verbal, quantitative, and analytical tests; (5) three letters of recommendation from professors or supervisors acquainted with the applicant's previous work and potential for graduate training; (6) TOEFL scores for international applicants whose native language is not English; (7) a writing sample (e.g., a research paper); (8) a résumé or curriculum vitae. An undergraduate major in sociology is not required for admission to the graduate program.

Students are admitted to the doctoral program and complete a Master of Science degree en route to the Ph.D. Those who have already completed a Master's degree in sociology or a related field may petition to be advanced into the Ph.D. program without completing a Master's degree in our departments. See Part II: The Master of Science Degree.

B. FUNDING

The departments guarantee funding to all incoming students for their first five continuous years in the program. Students requesting a leave of absence during the first five years may request a stopped funding clock as well (see Part I, section L).

Funding can take the form of fellowships, project assistantships, research assistantships, teaching assistantships, traineeships, or lectureships. (Non-native English speakers are required to demonstrate proficiency in spoken English by passing the Speak Test before they are appointed as teaching assistants [see <https://esl.wisc.edu/ita-training/speak/>].) The funding guarantee is contingent on satisfactory progress through the program, which includes timely completion of Master's and doctoral degree requirements (Part II, section C), average grade requirement (Part I, section F), removal of incompletes (Part I, section H), required courses (Part I, section I), and adherence to all other rules of the program, the Graduate School, and the University. Students who have lost their guarantee through failure to make satisfactory progress may appeal to the Academic Standing Committee (Part I, section J).

Students sometimes locate graduate assistantships in other departments and programs on campus. Often these units notify our departments of available positions, and they are announced to students via e-mail. Students can also search for positions on the UW-Madison Jobs website (<https://studentjobs.wisc.edu/uw-graduate-assistantships/>.) They can seek external (i.e., non-UW-Madison) sources of support as well (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/external-fellowship-database/>). Appointment as a graduate assistant in another campus unit or receipt of an external award does not extend the program's guarantee beyond the student's fifth year in the program. This support is considered part of the five-year funding guarantee.

After the funding guarantee has expired, students often seek support for their studies by applying for non-UW-Madison fellowships and scholarships. Students develop skill in crafting grant proposals by applying for an external award while enrolled in Soc 700, Introductory Proseminar, during their initial term in the program.

C. MAJOR PROFESSOR

Every graduate student must have a major professor (i.e., faculty advisor). The Director of Graduate Studies assigns an initial faculty advisor to each entering graduate student. Sometimes the initial advisor continues to serve as the student's major professor throughout the student's graduate school career; other times the student decides to seek guidance from a different professor; occasionally the major professor believes it would be best for the student to work with another faculty member. In short, the student-advisor relationship is one of mutual agreement, and it may be ended by either party. Students may

arrange for a different faculty member to serve as the primary advisor of their research by obtaining that professor's approval and submitting a Change-of-Advisor form. Students may also add a second professor to serve as a co-advisor, by submitting an Addition-of-Co-Advisor form. (Forms are available on the program Web site: <https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>.) Students are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their advisors and consulting with them about research plans, course selection, and other academic and professional issues. Approval of a student's plans and progress by the major professor does not exempt a student from meeting program requirements. If questions arise concerning the applicability of any rule to the student's particular situation, the student should discuss matters with the major professor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Graduate Program Advisor, and, if appropriate, communicate with the Academic Standing Committee.

D. DEFINITION OF "FULL TIME STATUS"

Graduate students are expected to maintain full-time status. Full-time status for a student who has not yet attained dissertator status means either carrying a full-time course load or having a part-time project assistantship or teaching assistantship and carrying a part-time course load. A full-time course load means enrollment in 8-15 credits during the fall and spring semesters. These credits must be in graded courses numbered 300 and above; courses numbered below 300, audited courses, and courses carried on a pass/fail basis do not satisfy the enrollment requirement. Students with appointments as research assistants, trainees, or fellows are required to enroll in at least 8 credits during the fall and spring terms. If the appointment is for a calendar year (12 months) rather than an academic year (9 months), the student must enroll in 2 credits during the 8-week summer session as well. Students with appointments as half-time teaching assistants, half-time project assistants, or half-time lecturers are required to enroll in at least 4 credits during the fall and spring terms in order to be considered full-time students. They are not required to enroll during the summer. Graduate students who are dissertators must enroll in 3 credits during each fall and spring semester. They must enroll in 3 credits during the 8-week summer session as well if they have a summer appointment as a research assistant, trainee, or fellow or they plan to graduate in the summer. Dissertators are always considered full-time students.

E. GRADUATE SCHOOL CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School requires that at least half of the credits a student applies toward a program's graduate degree credit requirement must be courses designed for graduate work (see <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244>). In our program, courses in which students earn graduate-level credits are courses open to graduate students only (those numbered 700-999) and courses for graduate students and upper-level undergraduate students that are either specifically designed for graduate students or assess graduate students separately from undergrads (those numbered 300-699). All graduate-level courses are identified in the course enrollment system with this statement—"50% Graduate Coursework Requirement"—indicating that the course meets this requirement.

In order to earn a Master of Science degree, the Graduate School requires students to complete a minimum of 16 UW-Madison graduate-level credits. (The departments require 30 credits in Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology for the Master's degree; see Part II, section F: Course Work for the Master's Degree.)

In order to earn the doctoral degree, the Graduate School requires a minimum of 32 UW-Madison graduate-level credits. This is a cumulative total that includes the 16 graduate-level credits required for the Master's degree. (The departments require 51 credits for the Ph.D. degree in Sociology; this minimum includes the 30 credits required for the Master's Degree; see Part III: The Doctor of Philosophy Degree.)

F. AVERAGE GRADE REQUIREMENT

The grading system in Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology courses at the graduate level is: A (4.0), AB (3.5), B (3.0), BC (2.5), C (2.0), D (1.0), F, S, U. A grade of S (“satisfactory”) is the passing grade in some seminars, thesis, and reading & research courses; it carries no weight in calculating the GPA. A grade of C, D, F, or U is a failing grade. A grade of P for a graduate student does not mean “pass,” as it does for an undergraduate. It means “progress” and functions the same as an I (“incomplete”) and thus is considered a “deficient grade.” The only final grade allowed for Soc 990, Thesis, is an S; therefore, this is the grade a faculty member should assign each semester that a student is enrolled in 990. (A faculty member who assigns grades of P must change each one to a grade of S when the student needs a Master’s or Ph.D. warrant, as the Graduate School will not issue warrants for students who have these “deficient grades” on their transcripts.) The Graduate School requires an overall GPA of 3.0 in graduate coursework. However, the departments require an overall GPA of 3.25 in graduate coursework, after the first semester, when 3.0 is allowed.

If a student’s GPA falls below these requirements, the student’s total record is reviewed by the Academic Standing Committee (ASC), the committee that reviews lack of progress and responds to special requests from students. If the ASC recommends that the student be placed on Probation or Not in Good Standing (and not permitted to enroll), the student and the major professor are informed and may appeal this decision. Any students whose grade point average falls below 3.25 should immediately discuss the situation with their advisor and submit in writing to the ASC any relevant information before the ASC initiates a review of the student’s case.

G. GRADE APPEAL PROCEDURE

Students have the right to appeal a grade if they believe the assigned grade was based on criteria other than their performance in the course. Grounds may include, but are not limited to, procedural errors, bias based on the student’s membership in a legally protected category, or personal malice. The student should first appeal to the faculty member who assigned the grade. If not satisfied with the faculty member’s response, the student may submit a formal appeal in writing to the chair of the department, describing the nature of the complaint and the requested remedy.

The chair may, at his or her discretion, investigate the appeal personally or delegate the investigation to other members of the faculty. The investigator will read the appeal, interview the student, interview the faculty member, and examine the academic work involved in the complaint, before reaching a decision. The decision shall be for a change of grade only in cases where there is reasonable basis for concluding that the original grade was based in part on error and/or bias. Differences between the investigator and the instructor in subjective judgment about the quality of the coursework are not grounds for grade changes. The investigator will communicate his/her/their decision to the faculty member; if the faculty member disagrees with the decision, he/she/they may appeal the decision to the full faculty. Following any such appeal, or in the absence of an appeal, the investigator will write a letter to the complainant outlining the decision and the reasoning behind it and send a copy to the faculty member and to the chair.

A graduate student may appeal a departmental decision, in writing, to the dean of the Graduate School.

H. REMOVAL OF INCOMPLETES

Students who do not complete the work required in a course or seminar and are assigned a temporary grade of I (incomplete) must, according to Graduate School regulations, complete the course requirements and remove the incomplete from their record by the end of the next full semester they are in residence.

Incomplete grades that are not replaced by a final grade by this deadline will result in the Graduate School placing a hold on the student's record, preventing enrollment in the subsequent term. Students should note that incompletes must be resolved before they are eligible to receive a Master's degree warrant or attain dissertator status. However, if the coursework is no longer relevant, the instructor of the course is no longer at the university, or a change of program makes completion of the work unnecessary, students may be allowed to receive a Permanent Incomplete (PI) for the course. (See <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1213>.)

Failure to complete coursework within two registered semesters may result in a letter from the ASC to the student and to the professor in whose course the incomplete was received. The professor may be encouraged to submit a change of grade from Incomplete to Fail.

I. REQUIRED COURSES AND COURSE WAIVERS

Courses required for the Master's degree—in quantitative methods (Sociology 361), qualitative methods (Sociology 754), and theory (Sociology 773)—must be completed by the end of a student's fourth semester in residence. Additional courses required for the Ph.D. degree—in quantitative methods (Sociology 362) and research methods (Sociology 750)—must be completed by the end of the sixth semester in residence.

Students seeking a waiver of any required course are expected to provide the graduate program advisor with the syllabus for the course taken and the transcript from the prior institution demonstrating that the course was completed and showing the grade earned. The graduate program advisor in turn contacts the Sociology/C&E Sociology professor or professors who teach the required course that the student would like waived, forwards the documents, and asks the professor[s] to evaluate the documents and make a recommendation to the ASC. Faculty may, at their discretion, request relevant papers/projects to make a recommendation. The key factors in determining waivers are the comparability of the prior course[s] to the course[s] the student wishes to have waived and the student's performance in the prior course[s]. The ASC makes a determination about the waiver and sends the decision to the graduate program advisor who records the decision and notifies the student.

A requirement that is completed by waiver carries no credit toward the Graduate School's credit requirements or toward the Department's 30-credit requirement for the Master's degree or 51-credit requirement for the Ph.D. degree.

When students receive a failing grade (C or lower) in a required course, their total record is reviewed by the ASC. If the committee's recommendation is that the student not be allowed to continue in the program, the student and the major advisor are so informed and given the opportunity to appeal to the full faculty. If the faculty uphold the recommendation, it is transmitted to the Graduate School. Alternatively, if the ASC decides to permit continuation, the student must repeat the course within the next two regular semesters. (In rare circumstances, the ASC allows a student to continue in the program without repeating the required course.) The grade attained in the second attempt, if passing, is recorded, and the student's departmental GPA recomputed after substituting the new grade for the original failing grade. (This can be done only on the department record, not on the UW transcript.) A second failure leads to a recommendation that the student not be allowed to continue in the program.

J. ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEE

The Academic Standing Committee (ASC) administers the regulations established by the faculty. Faculty and faculty committees determine whether the quality of a student's work is satisfactory, while the ASC

determines whether a student is meeting degree requirements in a timely fashion and imposes sanctions when progress is not satisfactory. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Advisor monitor students' progress, identify students at risk of not meeting significant benchmarks, and communicate with students, their advisors, and the ASC when students are not fulfilling requirements in a timely way. The goal is for these students not to flounder and instead to get extra support from their advisors and to request extensions so they may remain in good standing. Students who are falling behind are sent a warning letter reminding them of program expectations for satisfactory progress and encouraging them to meet with their advisor to develop a plan for meeting requirements. Students who do not fulfill requirements by an agreed-upon extended deadline are put on probation; they are subsequently dropped from the program if they fail to meet the terms of their probation. Within boundaries set by the faculty, the ASC is authorized to consider individual circumstances and problems and to grant extensions of deadlines and waivers of requirements.

The final authority for all graduate program regulations is the full faculty. Students may appeal any matter pertaining to their program to the full faculty, by writing a letter to the chair. The faculty then consider the appeal during a meeting.

ASC procedures are designed to encourage students to work closely with their advisor[s] and other faculty, who are aware of the student's work and personal circumstances. Students petitioning for a deadline extension or requirement waiver must obtain an endorsement from their advisor or a substitute faculty member. Advisors may petition the ASC on behalf of their advisees. The ASC may ask advisors for further information beyond that written on the petition.

Students may ask the Director of Graduate Studies or other faculty members to advise them, to speak with the ASC on their behalf, or to endorse their requests. Students may also consult with the chair of the ASC or with the Graduate Program Advisor about ASC procedures and standards; however, interactions with the ASC chair or the Graduate Program Advisor cannot substitute for a student's relationship with a faculty advisor.

Requests for extensions or waivers and appeals of past ASC actions should be submitted in writing to the Graduate Program Advisor, who forwards the petition to the ASC and places a copy of the request or appeal in the student's academic file. The ASC makes decisions on the basis of the information it has received with the petition as well as information available in the student's file. The ASC chair communicates the decision to the Graduate Program Advisor, who reports it to the student and places the official written response in the student's file.

Students or their advisors may appeal to the ASC for reconsideration of any action the committee has taken. Such an appeal should present additional information or should challenge the ASC's interpretation of policy or its application of standards or procedures. Students who appeal the ASC's actions have the right to request that their written appeal be supplemented by a hearing before the committee. Whenever students appear before the ASC or consult a committee member, they may ask their advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, another member of the faculty, or another student in the program to be present. If the ASC denies the appeal, the student or the advisor may present an oral or written appeal to a meeting of the full faculty, whose decision is final.

K. DEADLINES AND EXTENSION REQUESTS

Master's Degree Time Limits

Students are in good standing if they have completed all Master's degree requirements (i.e., coursework, a thesis defense, and thesis deposit) by the end of the summer after their third year in the program. Students who have not completed the MS degree on schedule may request an extension of the time limit by submitting a request to the Academic Standing Committee. The extension request form is available on the program Web site (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>).

The ASC is authorized to approve extension requests upon written justification from the student and the faculty advisor. Requests for additional extensions must be approved by the full joint faculty. Students who still have a funding guarantee (i.e., students within their first five years in the program) must have approved extensions; if not, they risk losing their good standing and thus their funding guarantee as well.

Ph.D. Degree Time Limits

Students who have completed Master's degree requirements and are continuing in the Ph.D. program, as well as students who have been granted a secondary Master's waiver, are in good standing if they pass both written prelim exams and thus are eligible for dissertator status by the end of the summer after their fourth year in the program. Students who have been granted a primary Master's waiver and thereby been advanced into the Ph.D. program are in good standing if they are eligible for dissertator status by the end of the summer after their third year in the program. Students may request an extension beyond these time limits by submitting a Ph.D. Extension Request form, available on the program Web site (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>), to the Academic Standing Committee. The request should be made as soon as the need for an extension becomes apparent. The ASC may request additional documentation and will review the student's record and make a decision. If the ASC rejects the request, the student may appeal to the full faculty. Students who are more than two semesters late in completing requirements for dissertator status are at risk of being placed on probation, and students who are more than four semesters late are normally dropped from the program. Students who still have a funding guarantee (i.e., students within their first five years in the program) must have approved extensions; if not, they risk losing their good standing and thus their funding guarantee as well.

L. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Requests to take a leave of absence or to go on part-time status should be made to the Academic Standing Committee along with a supplemental letter of justification from the student's faculty advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies. An additional petition to stop the five-year funding clock may be made to ASC at the same time, again with justification provided by the major professor or the DGS.

Students may request permission for a leave or part-time status by submitting a Leave of Absence Request form available on the program Web site (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>). Leave requests should be submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor, who forwards the request to the ASC and places a copy of the request in the student's academic file. The ASC makes a decision and communicates the decision to the Graduate Program Advisor, who reports it to the student and places a record of the response in the student's file.

Approval for either a leave of absence or part-time status for one semester or one year will generally be deemed to merit a stopped clock; nevertheless, a formal request to the ASC must be made. The default is that the funding clock will continue to run. For approval of leaves or part-time status for more than one year, the petition should advance strong justifications. In most cases, a request for a stopped clock for two years or a request for leave/part-time status for more than two years will not be approved.

M. MISCONDUCT

Students may be disciplined or dismissed from the graduate program for academic misconduct (see <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/Info-112>) or non-academic misconduct (see <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/Info-113>), regardless of their academic standing in the program. Student conduct rules are found in three chapters of the University of Wisconsin System Administrative Code, which apply to all UW campuses and students. These are commonly referred to as UWS 14 (Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures), UWS 17 (Student Non-academic Disciplinary Procedures), and UWS 18 (Conduct on University Lands). Copies of these rules and campus disciplinary procedures are available from the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>).

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a violation of academic integrity, which relies on honesty, trust, fairness, and responsibility. Such misconduct includes, but is not limited to, receiving unauthorized assistance on any academic examination or assignment, submitting another's work as one's own, quoting or paraphrasing the work of another without full citation to the original author's work, falsifying data or research results, or reporting deceptive information about the conduct or results of a research project.

All incidents of suspected academic misconduct are initially investigated by the faculty member involved. Details about the process to be followed can be found on the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards Web site (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/#process>). When a student is found responsible for academic misconduct, a sanction is imposed. Sanctions range from an oral reprimand to expulsion from the university (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/sanctions-1/>).

Non-academic Misconduct

Non-academic Misconduct is a violation of community values and standards, which rely on respect, civility, decency, and self-awareness. Such misconduct, either inside or outside the classroom, interferes with a safe and inclusive living and learning environment. It includes, but is not limited to, disruption of classes or research, intimidation, harassment, demeaning comments, behaviors that convey bias or hatred, theft, sexual assault, and violence. Non-academic misconduct also includes willful or negligent actions that damage university property, resources, or facilities or threaten public safety, peace, or order.

Incidents of non-academic misconduct may be reported by any member of the campus community by completing and submitting an Incident Report Form (see https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofWisconsinMadison&layout_id=0). Details about the process to be followed can be found on the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards Web site (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct/#process>). When a student is found responsible for non-academic misconduct, a sanction is imposed. Sanctions can require participation in educational programs, result in denial of privileges, or affect student status (see <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/sanctions-1/#nonacademic>).

N. SPECIALTY AREAS

Functions

The faculty have organized the graduate program into "specialty areas" in which they have committed themselves to certain responsibilities, including regularly reviewing the progress of affiliated graduate students. Each of these specialty areas has been formally approved as such by faculty vote. (Note: There

are additional faculty and student “interest areas” and preliminary exam areas that have not been voted in as “specialty areas.”) The following is the current list of specialty areas.

Specialty Areas

- Class Analysis and Historical Change
- Demography/Ecology
- Deviance, Law, and Social Control
- Economic Sociology
- Environmental Sociology
- Methods and Statistics
- Political Sociology
- Race and Ethnic Studies
- Community and Environmental Sociology
- Social Psychology and Micro Sociology
- Social Stratification
- Sociology of Agriculture and Food Systems
- Sociology of Economic Change and Development
- Sociology of Gender
- Sociology of Medicine

The faculty in specialty areas meet periodically to review curriculum. Many specialty areas offer training seminars or working groups.

The Annual Review

All faculty meet once each year to review student progress. Prior to the annual review, students report on their academic progress to date and their plans for the upcoming academic year on a form provided by the graduate program. Students are encouraged to meet routinely with their faculty advisor to discuss progress and plans and may wish to do so in particular just before the review. A copy of the form is given to the Graduate Program Advisor and becomes part of the student’s academic file. If a student’s major professor is not a member of the specialty area reviewing the student, the professor will be invited to participate in the review.

The Specialty Area faculty are not responsible for enforcing graduate program rules and deadlines. Monitoring compliance with regulations remains the responsibility of students, faculty advisors, the DGS, and the Graduate Program Advisor; enforcing rules and deadlines is the responsibility of the ASC. However, as a part of its review of students’ academic performance, the Specialty Area faculty consider students’ progress with respect to policies and deadlines, as well as the overall quality of students’ academic work.

Following the review, the coordinator of the specialty area and/or the major professor should provide students with feedback on the specialty area faculty’s evaluation of their progress. This feedback should be sent to the Graduate Program Advisor as well, to become part of students’ academic file.

Student Membership in Specialty Areas

Once each academic year, on the Annual Review form, graduate students are asked to: a. indicate their faculty advisor, b. indicate the specialty area[s] with which they are affiliated, and c. indicate in which specialty area[s] they wish to be reviewed. Students may change their specialty area affiliation and/or

review area at any time. Students may affiliate with one or more specialty areas and be reviewed by one or more specialty areas. Each student must affiliate with, and be reviewed by, at least one specialty area.

Students may participate in the open activities (e.g., seminars, working groups) of specialty areas with which they are not affiliated.

Establishment of Specialty Area Programs

Specialty areas and prelim areas are created by a vote of the full faculty. Consideration of the establishment of a specialty area or a new prelim area may be initiated by any four faculty members petitioning the joint program faculty. Proposals for the establishment of new training seminars is considered by the Curriculum Committee.

II. THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

MASTER'S DEGREE

Students are admitted to the doctoral program in sociology and either complete a Master of Science degree en route to the Ph.D. or receive a waiver of the Master's requirements based on their having already earned a Master's degree that included a thesis before entering the program (see Part II, section D). Some students choose to leave the program after completing the Master's degree, however. Occasionally students who do not intend to proceed to the Ph.D. in our program decide to earn a non-thesis Master's degree (see Part II, section F).

MASTER'S REQUIREMENTS

Overview

The Master of Science degree requires a minimum of 30 credits of graduate work in Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology, to include required courses in statistics, methods, and theory. All entering students are also required to take a one-credit proseminar, which meets once a week for two hours, taught by the Director of Graduate Studies. This seminar introduces various specialty areas within the program and the discipline, provides information about campus resources, and addresses academic and professional development matters. In addition to coursework, students pursuing a Master's degree are required to write a thesis and defend it during a comprehensive oral examination.

The department recommends to the Graduate School that a Master of Science degree be awarded after the student has:

1. Completed all Master's degree course and credit requirements.
2. Completed a thesis that is acceptable to the major professor.
3. Passed a Master's Comprehensive Oral Examination.

The Master's comprehensive oral examination committee also decides whether the student will be permitted to continue for the Ph.D.

Time limit

Students have six semesters plus a summer to complete requirements for the Master's degree. (See Part I, section K, above, for information on requesting an extension of the deadline for completing Master's requirements.)

A. COURSEWORK FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE

The Master of Science degree requires a minimum of 30 credits of graduate work in Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology.

- These 30 credits must include the four required courses listed below plus at least 9 credits from courses and seminars restricted to graduate students (typically these courses are numbered 700-984). All required courses must be taken for a regular (i.e., A-F) letter grade.
- The 30 credits may include no more than 9 credits numbered 985 and above (i.e., training seminars, working group courses, independent reading courses, and thesis credits). These courses may be taken on an S/U basis.

Required courses for all students:

- Soc 700: Introductory Proseminar for Graduate Students
- Soc 361: Statistics for Sociologists II
- Soc 754: Qualitative Research Methods in Sociology
- Soc 773: Intermediate Classical Theory

Additional courses required for students affiliated with the Center for Demography & Ecology or the Center for Demography of Health & Aging:

- Soc 674: Elementary Demographic Techniques
- Soc 756: Advanced Demographic Techniques

Each semester, throughout the graduate program, CDE/CDHA students also enroll in:

- Soc 995: Demography Training Seminar
- Soc 997: Demography Research Seminar

During the summer, CDE/CDHA students with 12-month appointments as Fellows, RAs, or Trainees enroll in Soc 997 for two credits.

B. THESIS

Students must write a thesis under the supervision of their major professor. The Master's thesis must be professionally written and demonstrate the student's sociological research skills. A thesis is generally comparable in size and scope to a journal article (i.e., it is usually between 35 and 75 pages long, and its content and style are similar to those of articles published in sociological journals). A solid Master's thesis poses a problem or question, locates it within past empirical and theoretical scholarship, provides data or evidence relevant to the problem or question, and discusses the significance of the data for the research question and the larger literature within which it is embedded. Master's theses involve some sort of research (broadly construed) but do not necessarily have to involve primary data collection. The Master's research may be quantitative or qualitative, and it may involve a reanalysis of existing data or secondary sources. Purely theoretical Master's theses are acceptable when they involve creative, original theoretical work.

At some stage in the formulation and execution of the research for the Master's thesis, the major professor and the student may wish to seek advice from two additional faculty members who are prospective members of the Master's comprehensive oral examination committee. Although only the advisor gives formal approval of the thesis, the other committee members must agree that the thesis is of sufficient quality to warrant awarding the Master's degree; the Master's oral examination committee may require revisions of the thesis. After the Master's oral, the final version of the thesis must be approved by the major professor, who signs an approval form that accompanies the thesis when it is submitted for deposit in Memorial Library.

The final version of the thesis must follow the Graduate School's formatting requirements (see <https://grad.wisc.edu/current-students/masters-guide/>).

C. COMPREHENSIVE ORAL EXAMINATION

The oral exam is conducted by a committee of three Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology faculty members: the student's advisor, who serves as chair, and two additional faculty members chosen by the student and the advisor. The exam typically lasts for approximately two hours. Questions may cover general sociology, graduate work to date, and the thesis.

Master's Warrant

After the student's faculty advisor determines that an acceptable version of the thesis has been completed, the student asks the Graduate Program Advisor to submit a Master's warrant request to the Graduate School and schedules a Master's comprehensive oral exam. The warrant must be requested at least three weeks before the exam. The Graduate School's Master's Degree Coordinator will honor the program's request for a warrant if the student's record has no deficient grades (i.e., Incomplete, No Report, or Progress) and the Graduate Program Advisor verifies that Graduate School credit requirements will be satisfied by the student's completion of the current semester's work. Warrants are term-specific.

Master's Oral Exam Committee

The Master's comprehensive oral exam committee is composed of three faculty members in the Departments of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology. (See <https://sociology.wisc.edu/faculty/> and <https://dces.wisc.edu/people/faculty/>.) Ordinarily, the student's major professor is the committee chair. Only a faculty member in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Sociology or Department of Community & Environmental Sociology, a former member within one year of resignation or retirement, or a former member granted an extension of graduate faculty status (see FPP 3.05 D) may serve as one of the three committee members; however, occasionally a student wishes to include a fourth UW-Madison faculty member from another department and may do so with the major professor's approval.

Oral Exam Procedures

The student should provide copies of the approved thesis to all members of the examination committee at least two weeks before the exam.

The Master's comprehensive oral examination is wide-ranging and may include a thesis defense as well as questions about general sociology and graduate work to date. The examination committee must make two decisions. The first is whether to award the Master's degree; the second is whether the student should be permitted to continue in the Ph.D. program.

If the student passes the oral examination and the committee finds the thesis to be acceptable as written or with minor revisions, the committee members sign the warrant. The chair then returns the signed warrant to the Graduate Program Advisor who forwards it to the Graduate School's Master's Degree Coordinator. After the final version of the thesis is approved, an approval form is signed by the advisor and deposited along with the thesis in Memorial Library. Subsequently, the Graduate School awards the Master's degree, and the Registrar posts the degree on the student's transcript.

If a student fails the Master's oral exam, either because the committee has found the thesis to be unacceptable or because the student's oral examination performance was deemed not to be of passing quality, the student may petition to retake the Master's oral not more than twelve months after the examination. One petition to retake the examination will be granted if the student has an approved extension for completing the Master's degree (i.e., has not lost good standing for failure to complete the Master's degree in a timely fashion or for other reasons). Students who fail the Master's oral exam twice are dropped from the program.

If the student passes the Master's comprehensive oral exam, the committee then considers whether the student will be permitted to continue in the Ph.D. program. The faculty of the Departments of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology believe that the Master's thesis is one of the best indicators of a student's capacity to do independent research. Thus at the Master's oral, the faculty determine whether the student is adequately prepared to advance to doctoral-level research. The entire record of the student to date is taken into account in making this second decision. The decision is communicated by the chair of the examination committee, orally to the student on the day of the exam and in written form to the Graduate Program Advisor on the Master's warrant; the warrant is subsequently forwarded to the Graduate School.

Students who are dropped from good standing for failing the Master's oral exam twice or who are not recommended for continuation in the Ph.D. program may appeal to the full faculty for reconsideration.

D. MASTER'S DEGREE WAIVER

Completing the Master's thesis and passing the Master's oral exam, after completing Master's course and credit requirements, is the means by which a student is passed into the Ph.D. portion of the program. If students enter the graduate program having already earned a Master's degree that included a thesis—i.e., an MA or MS degree in sociology or a related field—they do not automatically move into the Ph.D. program. However, they may petition to be advanced into the Ph.D. program without first completing a Master's degree in this program by seeking a Master's waiver. (The Master's thesis requirement is never waived for students who do not have a Master's degree.) There are two types of waiver petitions, primary and secondary.

Primary Master's Waiver

A primary Master's waiver is granted if a faculty committee judges that the student's prior preparation and Master's thesis or paper meet Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology Department standards for advancement into the Ph.D. program in content and quality. To request a primary Master's waiver, the student fills out a waiver request form, available on the program Web site (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>), and submits the Master's thesis or paper(s) for review to a committee of three faculty members who have agreed to evaluate the work. Submitted theses and papers ordinarily must be in English. However, the English requirement may be waived if the three faculty members certify that they are competent and willing to read the submitted work in the language in

which it is written. If no faculty are available to evaluate a thesis written in a language other than English, the student may request a secondary waiver.

Primary Master's waivers must be requested during the student's first year of enrollment in the sociology graduate program. Students may petition only once for a primary Master's waiver. If a primary Master's waiver request is granted, the student advances into the Ph.D. program. If a primary waiver request is denied, the student may be offered the option of pursuing a secondary Master's waiver.

Secondary Master's Waiver

A secondary Master's waiver may be granted on the basis of additional work supplementing the Master's thesis or paper. Students whose theses are not in English and could not be evaluated by UW-Madison Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology faculty may submit for review a paper written in English that is based on the thesis research. Students whose theses or papers were rejected in a primary waiver review may submit revised papers or additional papers that remove the deficiencies identified by the faculty during the primary review. Any student preparing for a secondary Master's waiver should work closely with an advisor who can help the student ensure the quality and acceptability of the materials presented later. To request a secondary Master's waiver, the student fills out a waiver request form, available on the program Web site (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>), and submits the papers to be reviewed to a faculty committee. The faculty committee reviews the papers and conducts a Master's-level oral examination to determine whether the student may be advanced into the Ph.D. program.

If a secondary Master's waiver request is granted, the student advances into the Ph.D. program. If a secondary waiver request is denied, the student will be required to complete Master's degree requirements in the sociology program. Students may apply only once for a secondary Master's waiver. Secondary Master's waivers must be obtained within the first two years of the student's enrollment in the sociology graduate program.

Note: It is possible under this provision to write and submit an entirely new thesis-like paper. In this case, the student may choose either to complete the formalities of receiving a second Master's degree or to receive a secondary waiver. Individual circumstances will determine which choice is preferable for the student.

Master's Degree Waiver Time Allowances

Students who are granted a primary Master's waiver and thus are advanced into the Ph.D. program have a total of six semesters plus a summer to complete doctoral requirements (i.e., coursework and written prelims) and become eligible for dissertator status. Students who are granted a secondary Master's waiver have eight semesters plus a summer to complete the requirements and gain eligibility for dissertator status.

E. NON-THESIS MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

Students who do not intend to proceed to the Ph.D. may choose to complete the requirements for a non-thesis Master of Science degree instead. The requirements for the non-thesis Master's include completion of all Master's degree coursework (see Part II, section A) and passing a comprehensive oral exam. The oral exam is conducted by a three-member committee composed of Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology faculty and usually headed by the student's major professor. It typically lasts

for approximately two hours. Questions may cover general sociology, graduate work to date, the student's experience in the program, career plans, and other issues the student may wish to discuss.

Students who receive a non-thesis Master's degree are not eligible for admission to our sociology doctoral program. However, they may pursue a doctoral degree in another UW-Madison program or a doctoral degree in sociology at another institution.

III. THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

Students are advanced into the Ph.D. program upon either completing Master's degree requirements and receiving approval from their Master's Oral Examination Committee or receiving approval for a primary or secondary Master's waiver.

PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

Overview

The Ph.D. degree requires a minimum of 51 credits of graduate work to include required courses in statistics, methods, and theory, four seminars in Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology, and courses in a minor area; passing two written preliminary examinations and a brief oral exam; writing a dissertation; and defending it during a final oral exam.

Time limits

Most students have eight semesters plus a summer to complete coursework requirements and pass preliminary exams. However, students who have been granted a primary Master's waiver have six semesters plus a summer to complete these requirements. (See Part I, section K, above, for information on requesting an extension of the deadline for completing the requirements.)

Students must complete the dissertation, pass the final oral exam, and deposit the dissertation within five years of becoming a dissertator. A student's faculty advisor may appeal this time limit by submitting a written request to the Graduate School's Ph.D. Degree Coordinator. The request should provide an explanation for the delay and must provide information demonstrating that the student has remained current in the field. The evidence may include a résumé showing applicable work experience and/or official transcripts from other schools attended. (See <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221>.)

A. COURSEWORK FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

The Ph.D. degree requires a minimum of 51 credits of graduate coursework (these include the 30 credits required for the Master's degree; they also include the credits a student enrolls in while a dissertator).

- These 51 credits must include the six required courses listed below plus four seminars in Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology, as well as courses in a minor area of study. All required courses must be taken for a regular (i.e., A-F) letter grade.
- The 51 credits may include training seminars, working group courses, independent reading courses, and thesis credits. These courses may be taken on an S/U basis.

Required courses for all students:

- Soc 700: Introductory Proseminar for Graduate Students
- Soc 361: Statistics for Sociologists II
- Soc 362: Statistics for Sociologists III
- Soc 750: Research Methods in Sociology
- Soc 754: Qualitative Research Methods in Sociology
- Soc 773: Intermediate Classical Theory
- Four seminars in Sociology taught by Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology faculty. (These courses may or may not be labeled “Seminar,” but they are typically numbered between 900 and 979; training research courses—i.e., those numbered between 980 and 995—do not count toward the seminar requirement. Seminar courses in which a student earns an S [satisfactory] rather than a letter grade count toward the 51 required credits but do not fulfill the seminar requirement.)

Additional courses required for students affiliated with the Center for Demography & Ecology or the Center for Demography of Health & Aging:

- Soc 674: Elementary Demographic Techniques
- Soc 756: Advanced Demographic Techniques
- Soc 971: Seminar in Population & Society I
- Soc 971: Seminar in Population & Society II

Each semester, throughout the graduate program, CDE/CDHA students also enroll in:

- Soc 995: Demography Training Seminar
- Soc 997: Demography Research Seminar

During the summer, CDE/CDHA students with 12-month appointments as Fellows, RAs or Trainees must enroll in either Soc 997 for two credits (if they’re not yet dissertators) or Soc 990 for one credit and Soc 997 for two credits (if they have dissertator status).

Minor requirement (also see additional information about the Minor in Part IV, section A):

- Option A, external: a minimum of nine graduate credits in one department or program (either single disciplinary or multi-disciplinary) outside of both Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology.
- Option B, distributed: a minimum of nine graduate credits in two or more departments outside of both Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology. The courses must be thematically unified and thus form a coherent topic.
- Option C, certificate: completion of a Graduate/Professional certificate in a program outside of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology. Certificate programs coordinate teaching and research among scholars active in interrelated disciplines, and they typically require 9-12 credits.

Notes:

--Students should consult their major professor when considering courses and seminars and select those that meet their interests.

--In general, training seminars and working group courses do not count toward the four-seminar requirement. However, students may request that one such course count for the requirement if the faculty

member in charge of the training seminar or working group recommends it and the request is approved by the Academic Standing Committee. Approval is based upon certification by the faculty member that the work the student presented is equivalent to that normally expected in a seminar.

--There is no departmental foreign language requirement. However, a student's course of study, dissertation topic, or source of funding may require proficiency in a language other than English.

B. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS (also see additional information about the Preliminary Examinations, Part IV, section B)

Passing preliminary (or qualifying) examinations allows a student to be admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree—i.e., to attain dissertator status. Preliminary exams consist of two written exams and one brief oral exam. Written exams are offered twice each year—in late July or early August, before the start of the Fall semester, and in January, before the start of the Spring semester. The oral exam takes place after the student has passed both written exams, at any time that the student and the advisor agree upon.

Written exam: Some exams take place on campus in the course of a day; they consist of a three-hour session in the morning and another three-hour session in the afternoon. (Students whose native language is not English and students with a documented learning disability may have additional time.) Others are take-home exams, typically written over a period of three days. (Students with care-giving responsibilities may have a fourth day; students whose native language is not English and students with a documented learning disability may also have additional time.) Exams in Group II may, with permission from faculty in the area, take the form of two papers.

Two options exist for completing the written preliminary examination requirement.

Option 1, two written exams: Students must pass one exam in a Group I subfield and a second exam in a subfield from either Group I or Group II.

Option 2, one written exam and one paper-option exam: Students must pass one written exam in a Group I subfield and write two papers (usually one paper demonstrating breadth—e.g., a literature review—and one demonstrating depth—e.g., an analysis of an issue) focusing on one of the subfields in Group II.

Group I Exams

- Comparative-Historical Sociology
- Demography & Ecology
- Economic Change & Development
- Economic Sociology
- Environmental Sociology
- Gender
- Organizational & Occupational Analysis
- Political Sociology
- Race & Ethnic Studies
- Social Psychology & Micro-Sociology
- Social Stratification

Group II Exams

- Agri-Food Systems
- Class Analysis & Historical Change

- Communities & Urban Sociology
- Crime, Deviance, & Social Control
- Culture
- Education
- Ethnography
- Ethnomethodology & Conversation Analysis
- Family
- General Social Theory
- Law & Society
- Medical Sociology
- Methods & Statistics
- Science & Technology

Prelim time limit: Students who are granted a primary Master's waiver are expected to pass both written prelim exams by the end of the summer after their 6th semester in the program.

Students who are granted a secondary Master's waiver and students who earn a Master's degree on the way to entering the doctoral program are expected to pass both written prelim exams by the end of the summer after their 8th semester in the program.

Oral exam: This "exam" is actually a brief, informal conversation the student has with the faculty advisor, focusing on ideas and general plans for the dissertation.

C. DISSERTATOR STATUS, DISSERTATION PROPOSAL, AND DISSERTATION

Dissertator Status

"Dissertator" is a unique fee status for students who have completed all requirements for the doctoral degree except the dissertation (see <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1247>). Once the oral exam has taken place, the student may request dissertator status by completing a Petition to Become a Dissertator form and obtaining the faculty advisor's signature. This form is available on the program Web site (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>). The student gives the signed petition to the Graduate Program Advisor who submits a warrant request to the Graduate School. The Graduate School's Ph.D. Degree Coordinator issues a warrant if the student's record has no deficient grades (i.e., Incomplete, No Report, or Progress) and the Graduate Program Advisor verifies that the student has met All But Dissertation (ABD) requirements. The warrant must be signed by the student's faculty advisor, the student's minor advisor if an Option A minor or a Professional/Graduate Certificate was completed, and the program chair. Once the signed warrant has been returned to the Graduate School, the Ph.D. Degree Coordinator confers dissertator status and notifies the student via e-mail.

Dissertators must maintain continuous enrollment in three credits each term from the time they attain dissertator status until they complete the Ph.D. In most cases, this means enrolling in three credits of their advisor's section of Soc 990, Thesis. However, students affiliated with CDE/CDHA may enroll in one credit of Soc 990, one credit of Soc 995, and one credit of Soc 997. If students wish to take a three-credit course instead of three credits of Soc 990 (or instead of one credit each of 990, 995, 997), they may do so if the course is directly related to the dissertation research and they have their faculty advisor's approval. (See <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208>.)

Dissertation Proposal

Students may draft and defend a proposal either before or after attaining dissertator status. The dissertation proposal is a comprehensive statement of the proposed dissertation research. It specifies the nature of the problem, topic, or hypothesis to be investigated; articulates the questions motivating the dissertation research and the context in which they will be explored; outlines the type and sources of information to be gathered; summarizes the methods for gathering it; and discusses the significance of the proposed research. In the course of developing a proposal, students may find it appropriate to choose a new faculty advisor or to add a co-advisor.

When the dissertation proposal is ready for presentation and before substantial work has been done on the dissertation, the student should form a dissertation advisory committee. This committee typically includes the student's faculty advisor and two other Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology faculty members who have agreed to serve. Once the committee is formed, the student defends the proposal at a hearing—a meeting attended by the student and the advisory committee.

The committee's first responsibility is to meet with the student and approve the proposal as is, approve the proposal with agreed-upon revisions, or withhold approval and schedule another hearing after additional work on the proposal has been completed. Results of the initial hearing and any subsequent conferences are indicated on the Dissertation Proposal Hearing Form, which is available on the program Web site (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>). When the proposal is approved, the student has established a research plan "contract" with the departments, and the form along with a copy of the proposal are given to the chair's assistant for program records. A copy of the form alone is given to the Graduate Program Advisor for the student's academic file.

Once a dissertation proposal has been approved by the advisory committee, the major professor has the bulk of responsibility for assisting the student in further research and writing. The other two members of the advisory committee continue to be available for consultation with the student and should be kept informed of the student's progress.

Dissertation

The dissertation is an independent investigation that results in a book-length document involving original research and creative scholarship. A doctoral dissertation must be a dissertator's own work. If the dissertation is the result of research endeavors in which others have collaborated, a substantial portion must represent the dissertator's own contribution and the other research participants must be identified. (See <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1248>.)

The final version of the dissertation must follow the Graduate School's formatting requirements (see <https://grad.wisc.edu/current-students/doctoral-guide/>).

D. FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION

The final oral exam is conducted by a five-member committee composed of faculty in Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology as well as at least one UW-Madison faculty member outside the two departments. The exam typically lasts for approximately two hours. Questions may cover the dissertation as well as the student's major and minor studies. At its discretion, the committee may regard passing preliminary examinations and completing the minor as "final" for certain aspects of the major and minor studies.

Final Warrant

After the student's faculty advisor determines that an acceptable version of the dissertation has been completed, the student asks the Graduate Program Advisor to submit a final warrant request to the Graduate School and schedules the final oral exam. The warrant must be requested at least three weeks before the exam. The Graduate School's Ph.D. Degree Coordinator will honor the program's request for a warrant if the student's record has no deficient grades (i.e., No Report or Progress) and the Graduate Program Advisor verifies that Graduate School credit requirements will be satisfied by the student's completion of the current semester's work. Warrants are term-specific.

Final Oral Exam Committee

The final oral exam committee must have appropriate expertise to afford the breadth and depth sought in doctoral degree examinations. The committee must include at least three faculty members in the Departments of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology (see <https://sociology.wisc.edu/faculty/> and <https://dces.wisc.edu/people/faculty/>), a UW-Madison faculty member outside the two departments, and a fifth person chosen by the student and approved by the major professor. Ordinarily, the student's major professor serves as committee chair, and the other two Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology members are faculty who served on the student's dissertation proposal advisory committee. The fourth member is often a faculty member under whom the student studied while completing the minor. The fifth member may be any person whom the student and the major professor agree will be a useful addition to the committee. (See <https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/choosing-a-dissertation-committee/>.)

Final Oral Exam Procedures

The student should provide copies of the approved dissertation to all members of the examination committee at least two weeks before the exam. All committee members are expected to read the final draft of the dissertation, participate in the conversation by raising questions arising from their area of expertise, suggest ways to expand on the research, and help decide whether to approve the dissertation. Because committee members outside of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology often have a tenure home in a department where the student took minor courses, the outside member is expected to contribute to the discussion by evaluating ways in which the student incorporated non-sociology ideas into the analysis of a sociological topic to enrich it. The outside member should also comment on ways to place the research into a broader context (e.g., for a book).

The final oral examination may include a defense of the dissertation, questions about subsequent research emerging from the dissertation project, and questions about the student's subfield and minor area studies. If the student passes the oral examination and the committee finds the dissertation to be acceptable as written or in need of only a few corrections, all committee members sign the warrant. If minor revisions are required, all committee members except the chair sign the warrant and thereby authorize the chair to approve any revisions. If substantial revisions are required, the warrant remains unsigned until the entire committee approves the revisions. When students are asked to make substantial revisions to a dissertation, the committee may also require them to retake the final oral exam.

Once the final warrant is signed, the chair sends it to both the student and the Graduate Program Advisor. The student is required to upload the final warrant when depositing the dissertation; the Graduate Program Advisor places the warrant in the student's academic file for department records. The Graduate School awards the Ph.D. degree, and the Registrar posts the degree on the student's transcript.

IV. ADDITIONAL POLICY INFORMATION

A. THE PH.D. MINOR REQUIREMENT

The Graduate School requires that all students fulfill a breadth requirement by completing courses from one or more fields outside of but related to their principal subject of concentration. (See <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200>.) Plans for meeting this requirement should be formulated by students early in their career, in consultation with their major professor and appropriate faculty in the other field[s]. Students may choose among three options: an external doctoral minor, a distributed doctoral minor, or a graduate/professional certificate in a program outside the major. Students must have formal approval from their major professor for the minor they wish to pursue.

The External Minor (Option A) is a traditional course of study in a single department or program. (Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology are a single graduate program; the minor field must be in another department.) To enrich the work they do in sociology, students may complete a minimum of nine credits of coursework in a minor field selected for its relevance to their area of concentration. Students should inquire at the office of the minor department for information about requirements and procedures. The minor advisor in that department certifies completion of the minor on the Minor Agreement Form and on the warrant for dissertator status. Students are expected to give a copy of the signed Minor Agreement Form to the Graduate Program Advisor who places it in their academic file.

The Distributed Minor (Option B) involves coursework in two or more departments outside of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology. To enrich the work they do in sociology, students may complete a minimum of nine credits of coursework distributed among two or more departments selected for their relevance to the students' area of concentration. The courses must be thematically unified and thereby form a coherent topic. There may be one (but no more than one) course cross-listed with Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology, but no courses may be taught by either Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology professors. The student's faculty advisor certifies completion of the minor on the Minor Agreement Form and on the warrant for dissertator status. Students are expected to give a copy of the signed Minor Agreement Form to the Graduate Program Advisor who places it in their academic file.

The Graduate/Professional Certificate Minor (Option C) involves completing coursework for a Graduate/Professional certificate in a program outside of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology. To enrich the work they do in sociology, students may wish to complete a certificate in a program that provides advanced training that they can apply in a variety of fields. Certificate programs coordinate teaching and research among scholars active in interrelated disciplines; they typically require 9-12 credits. Information about certificates is available in the *Graduate Guide* at <https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#graduateprofessionalcertificatestext>. The certificate advisor certifies completion of the minor on the Minor Agreement Form and on the warrant for dissertator status. Students are expected to give a copy of the signed Minor Agreement Form to the Graduate Program Advisor who places it in their academic file.

B. WRITTEN PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

The doctoral program preliminary examinations consist of two written examinations and an oral examination. Students must pass at least one examination from Group I and a second from either Group I or Group II. The oral exam is a conversation the student has with the advisor, focusing on the student's plans for the dissertation.

This section details the policies for written examinations.

Preparation

In order to provide clarity and transparency to students preparing to take any preliminary exam, members of the standing prelim area committees will give students either:

- (a) a list of topics students should study, or
- (b) approval of student-generated reading and/or topic lists for the exam

at least three months in advance of the exam test date, either

- (i) at annual standing prelim area committee meetings,
- (ii) through individual meetings with all the students taking the exam, and/or
- (iii) by providing a written rubric posted online or sent via e-mail.

Eligibility

Students must complete all Master's requirements, including depositing the thesis in Memorial Library, and be advanced into the Ph.D. program before taking written preliminary examinations. Occasionally, however, students wish to take a prelim before completing the Master's thesis. In this case, students must obtain a statement from their advisor confirming that it is in the student's best interest to take the exam prior to defending and depositing the thesis, as doing so will facilitate progress toward both the Master's and Ph.D. degrees. Given advisor approval, students may take one prelim exam prior to completing the remaining Master's requirements. However, the second prelim must be taken after defending and depositing the thesis. Should students wish to take a second prelim before completing the thesis, they must have a compelling reason for the request (e.g., the thesis is essentially complete, but the defense must be postponed due to lack of faculty availability). In this case, students must have approval from both the advisor and the Academic Standing Committee.

Exam Dates and Sign-up

Exams are offered twice each year, in late July or early August, before the start of the Fall semester, and in January, before the start of the Spring semester. Sign-ups for summer prelims typically take place in early March; sign-ups for winter prelims typically take place in early October.

Students must either be admitted to the Ph.D. program or have advisor/ASC approval in order to sign up for preliminary exams. Eligible students may sign up for and take, or retake, written examinations at any time they are offered, providing the time limit detailed below is not violated.

Standing Area Committees

Each fall, the Chair or the Graduate Program Advisor asks faculty to participate on standing area committees. Faculty members may join as many standing committees as they wish, but they must join at least one. To remain viable, a prelim area needs at least three faculty members on the standing committee. If a prelim area was viable in the previous year but fewer than three faculty agree to participate on the standing committee in the current year, the prelim area is placed on probation. Students are allowed to sign up for prelims in areas currently on probation. However, if fewer than three faculty agree to participate again in the following year, the prelim area is suspended.

Standing area committees are required to establish clear policies regarding whether there is reading list for the prelim, what format the exam will have, whether a paper option exists for a Group II prelim, and whether revisions of papers submitted for paper-option exams are allowed. Standing committees are encouraged to be “laboratories of democracy” for innovative practices.

Each standing committee must meet at least once a year with any students interested in taking the prelim in order to clarify expectations (e.g., which courses should be taken, whether there is an established reading list, how best to prepare for the exam). Standing committees that fail to meet this obligation will be placed on probation.

Prelim Committees

After students sign up for prelims, the Sociology chair appoints, at his/her/their discretion, prelim committees from among the faculty in the standing areas to develop examination questions and evaluate students’ essays. One of the committee members is appointed to serve as chair. The Graduate Program Advisor shares information about prelim committee membership with students. Prelim committees are expected to send exam questions to the Graduate Program Advisor at least one week before the exam date and to evaluate students’ exams within two weeks of students’ completion of prelim essays and papers.

Exam Options

Two options exist for completing the program requirements for written examinations: (1) two written examinations (either conventional six-hour exams or take-home exams) and (2) one written examination and one paper-option exam. Standing area committees are empowered to switch prelim formats from a conventional six-hour exam to a take-home exam (or vice versa); they may also develop new prelim exam formats if they wish.

Conventional Six-Hour Exams

Each six-hour examination is designed to require at least two hours’ writing in the morning and two hours’ writing in the afternoon; however, students may spend up to three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon. It is expected that students will take up to one hour in each period to consider the questions and outline their answers. Students whose native language is not English are allowed an extra 30 minutes in the morning and an extra 30 minutes in the afternoon to write their exams. Students with a documented disability may also have additional time. The examinations are administered on the UW-Madison campus, usually in the SSCC computer lab, under monitored conditions. Examination questions are not circulated prior to the examination period.

Books, articles, notes, and similar resources are not permitted during the examination. However, students are allowed to bring with them an unannotated bibliography as an aid to memory. International students are allowed to use a dictionary that translates their native language into English as an aid while writing their examinations. Any student wishing to use a dictionary must give the dictionary they intend to use to the Graduate Program Advisor at least three days before the scheduled examination date, so the advisor can determine that nothing is written in it except the student’s name and address. The Graduate Program Advisor will return the dictionary to the student at the time of the examination.

At the discretion of the chair, a conventional preliminary examination may be given off campus, provided it is given at the same time as the on-campus examinations and is administered by a responsible official in a monitored environment. The chair should permit examinations off campus only in extraordinary situations.

Take-Home Exams

Prelim exams in some topic areas are administered as take-home exams. In most cases, students have three days (72 hours) to complete and submit the exam. Students whose native language is not English are allowed an additional half day, and students with caregiving responsibilities have an extra day (96 hours) to submit their work. Students with a documented disability may have additional time as well. Bibliographies, books, articles, notes, information on Web sites, and other resources are permitted.

Alternate Exam Format in Sociology of Culture

The sociology of culture preliminary examination combines three elements assessing the depth and breadth of a student's command of the field of the sociology of culture:

- a) To demonstrate depth, the student prepares for the committee a professional quality paper following the format of a standard journal article, making a substantiated argument in the field of the sociology of culture in the range of 8,000 to 12,000 words, including notes and references. (The Master's thesis will not be accepted as the paper demonstrating depth.)
- b) To demonstrate breadth, the student prepares a "field statement" of no more than 1000 words that situates the student's intellectual perspective or agenda in the wider field[s] of the sociology of culture.
- c) To further demonstrate breadth, the student takes a one-hour oral examination based on the field statement, administered by three members of the sociology of culture prelim committee.

The paper and the field statement are due together at one of the normal dates of the program preliminary examinations. The oral examination takes place in the first few weeks of the following semester, and is conducted only if the paper has been passed by the committee. A student must pass both the paper and the oral exam to pass the prelim; the field statement in itself, however, is not graded.

Paper Option

In lieu of a conventional six-hour exam or a take-home exam, students may submit two papers in one of the areas listed in Group II, provided they have permission from the faculty in the standing area. Generally one of the papers demonstrates breadth in the subfield (e.g., a literature review) and the other demonstrates depth (e.g., a thorough analysis of a topic).

Papers must represent substantially independent work. Papers representing collaborative work among students will not be accepted except in highly unusual circumstances, and only then when a strong justification is made. Papers representing collaborative work between a student and a faculty member will not be accepted. A Master's thesis or a revised version of a Master's thesis is not eligible for submission. Seminar papers, course papers, and other papers prepared by the student may be submitted, however.

Prelim papers must be submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor by 4:00 pm on the day the conventional six-hour exams are given. Both papers must be submitted and approved at the same time. Students may not submit more than two papers.

Prelim papers are evaluated by faculty on the appropriate prelim examination committee, who determine whether their quality and scope indicate that the student has mastered the preliminary exam area with

enough depth and breadth to merit a pass. The committee decide whether to accept or reject the papers or to allow revision.

Rejected papers may be resubmitted at a subsequent prelim date if they have undergone substantial revision. If a student's papers are rejected twice, the student will be required to take the written examination in that area.

Evaluation

Prelim essays and prelim papers are evaluated with the student's name removed (an alpha-numeric code is substituted to enable faculty to read the exam without knowing which student wrote it). These written examinations are evaluated according to standards of "generalized professional knowledge" rather than standards of "specialized professional knowledge." Grades are "pass with distinction," "pass," or "fail."

Timely Reporting of Results

Prelim committees are expected to evaluate exams and papers and issue results no later than two weeks after the prelim date, except by prior arrangement with the Graduate Program Advisor who will then notify students of the delay as soon as possible. The committee chair sends results to the Graduate Program Advisor who conveys results to the students. Some prelim committees, often those that offer take-home exams, schedule a meeting with each student who has taken the exam. At this meeting, the faculty review their comments on the student's responses and provide additional feedback.

The chair of the committee must provide written or oral feedback to any student who fails an exam. This feedback must be provided within two weeks of notification of the exam results and should specify the reasons for the failure as well as offer suggestions for future exam preparation.

Prelim committees that fail to comply with either of the above policies shall be reported to the department chair for discussion at the next scheduled joint faculty meeting.

Failing an exam

A student who fails a preliminary examination may retake the exam in the same field at a later time or, with faculty advisor approval, take an exam in another subfield instead. Students may retake prelims more than once, providing the time limits specified below are not violated.

Time limits

Students must pass both written preliminary examinations by the end of the summer following their eighth semester in residence at the university, or by the end of the summer following their sixth semester in residence if they received a primary Master's waiver. If a student takes an approved leave of absence and subsequently returns to take a preliminary exam, time may be added to the total semesters to complete this requirement. See Part I, section K (above), regarding requests for an extension of the deadline to complete requirements.

C. ORAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

After students have completed all major and minor coursework and passed both written preliminary exams, they meet with their faculty advisor for an oral prelim, which consists of a discussion of the

student's plans for the dissertation. The date of this meeting is entered on the Graduate School warrant requesting dissertator status as the "date preliminary exams were completed."

V. SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Students in the graduate program can be:

In good standing—i.e., maintaining a minimum GPA of 3.25 (3.00 in the first semester) and earning grades of BC or better in required courses as well as resolving incompletes and meeting degree requirements in a timely way.

On probation—i.e., not progressing according to the criteria for good standing stated above; these students are permitted to enroll but lose their funding guarantee.

Not in good standing—i.e., failing to meet the terms of probation; these students are not permitted to enroll.

Students who have been on probation or are subject to being placed on probation, together with their faculty advisor, may appeal to the ASC to remain in good standing by providing evidence of extenuating circumstances leading to the failure to meet requirements.

Students may not remain more than one semester on probation without passing to good standing. If students fail to remove the conditions that led to probation within one semester, they will be designated "not in good standing" and dropped from the program. However, if extenuating circumstances affect students' ability to meet probation requirements on time, they may appeal for permission to continue on probation by submitting a petition, supported by the faculty advisor, to the ASC.

VI. PROCEDURES SUMMARY ADDENDUM

The Master's Oral Exam

After students have completed all Master's requirements, including the thesis, they must take the Master's comprehensive oral exam. At least three weeks before the exam, the student must notify the graduate program advisor of the exam date and the names of the three exam committee members (faculty advisor and two other faculty members from UW-Madison Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology). Provided all Master's requirements have been met, the graduate program advisor submits a Master's warrant request to the Graduate School on the student's behalf. The student and major professor arrange a time for the oral exam, the graduate program advisor arranges for a room, and the student write a thesis abstract and requests the major professor's approval for it. The student then e-mails the abstract to the graduate program advisor who disseminates an announcement of the upcoming thesis defense/oral exam.

At the time of the exam, the committee decides whether the thesis is acceptable and the student has passed the exam and whether the student may proceed toward the Ph.D. The major professor must sign a thesis approval form after any required revisions have been made. After the thesis is approved, the student deposits it in the Binding Department of Memorial Library, Room B137.

Written Preliminary Exams

Graduate students must pass two written preliminary exams. To prepare for an exam, students should obtain from the standing prelim area committee, at least three months before the exam test date, either a list of topics to study or approval of a student-generated reading and/or topic list. Typically, students must be admitted to the departmental Ph.D. program in order to take preliminary exams. Written preliminary exams are offered twice a year, in late July or early August, before the Fall semester, and in January, before the Spring semester. Prelim sign-ups take place in March for the summer exams and in October for the winter exams. At the end of the sign-up period, the department chair is told which standing areas need prelim committees. The chair appoints committees, and the graduate program advisor notifies students. Questions for conventional six-hour exams are distributed to students on the day of the exam. Take-home exam questions are e-mailed to students. Faculty have two weeks to evaluate exams and issue results.

Dissertator Status and the Continuous Registration Requirement

The Graduate School confers dissertator status for the next semester after the graduate program has certified that all requirements but the dissertation have been met. The student must submit an approved Minor Agreement form and a signed Petition to Become a Dissertator form in order to start the dissertation conferral process. This must be done in time to meet the relevant semester's dissertator status deadline. Once a student becomes a dissertator, the Graduate School's continuous enrollment requirement goes into effect. According to this policy, dissertators must register for three credits during each Fall and Spring semester until all Ph.D. requirements have been completed—i.e., the final oral examination and the dissertation deposit.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the Dissertation Proposal Hearing

The student, with the assistance of the major professor, prepares a dissertation proposal. A Dissertation Advisory Committee should be formed when the proposal is ready for presentation. The committee includes the major professor and at least two other faculty from the UW-Madison Sociology or Community & Environmental Sociology departments. The committee meets with the student and approves, contingently approves, disapproves, or suggests revisions to the proposal. Results of the initial and subsequent conferences between the student and the dissertation advisory committee are communicated by the major professor to the department chair on the Dissertation Proposal Hearing form, with a copy of the approved proposal attached to the form. A copy of the hearing form goes to the graduate program advisor for the student's academic file. When the proposal is approved, the student has a research plan "contract" with the department.

The Ph.D. Final Oral Exam

The student (assisted as necessary by the major professor) must ask individual faculty members to serve on the five-member committee and must coordinate a time and date for the exam. The graduate program advisor reserves a room and announces the exam, including in the announcement an abstract prepared by the student and approved by the major professor. At least three weeks before the proposed exam date, the student should provide the graduate program advisor with the names of the committee members, the proposed title of the dissertation, and the proposed date of the exam. The graduate program advisor then submits a final warrant request to the Graduate School's doctoral degree coordinator. The doctoral degree coordinator issues a warrant for the exam, which is forwarded to the student's major professor, who serves as committee chair. After the exam, the major professor either returns the signed warrant to the graduate program advisor and sends a copy to the student or holds the unsigned warrant until the committee has approved any required revisions and then sends it. The graduate program advisor places

a copy of the warrant in the student's folder. The student uploads the signed warrant, along with other required documents, to the Graduate School's Web site when depositing the dissertation.