

I ILLINOIS

Sociology

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES

Graduate Handbook

Effective: Academic Year 2017-18

Doctoral Degree Requirements

The graduate program has two objectives: to give students a command of a basic core of sociological knowledge and analytical skills, and to provide opportunities to extend this knowledge through original scholarship. Professional competence in theory and research methods is coupled with in-depth knowledge in areas of specialization.

At the beginning of their time in the program, all students are assigned a first-year advisor from among the regular faculty. While some of these relationships may become permanent, it is anticipated that many students will switch to a new advisor after their first year. By the end of their first year in residence, students are encouraged to choose a more permanent advisor and begin planning for their qualifying paper and examinations. Students must notify the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) of their choices. Subsequent course and research work is done in close consultation with the student's advisor and examination and dissertation committees.

After completing his or her qualifying examinations and qualifying paper, the student prepares a proposal for original dissertation research. The defense of this proposal is the preliminary examination for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. Completing and successfully defending the dissertation are the final requirements for the doctoral degree.

The following sections first describe the course requirements, evaluation and examination procedures, dissertation committee, and dissertation requirements for a Ph.D. in Sociology. Subsequent sections discuss the requirements for a Master's degree in Sociology and describe the Department's criteria for assigning assistantships.

Graduate students should become familiar with the requirements of the Graduate College as set forth in *The Graduate College Handbook of Policy and Requirements for Students, Faculty and Staff*.¹

Graduate students should also note that their conduct is governed by the University's *Student Code*.² Rules concerning the academic integrity, such as plagiarism, are described in Part 4, §1-402 of the *Student Code* and in the LAS guidelines on academic integrity.³

¹<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook>

²<https://studentcode.illinois.edu>

³<https://www.las.illinois.edu/students/integrity/>

Course Requirements

Specific Course Requirements

The departmental courses required for the Ph.D. are:

- Departmental professionalization seminar (SOC 510), taken in the fall of the first year, 2 credits, pass/fail grading.
- Teaching Practicum (SOC 510), taken in the spring of the first year, 2 credits, pass/fail grading.
- Two theory courses: SOC 500 and SOC 501.
- Two foundational methods courses: SOC 583 and SOC 586.
- If students have not already taken an upper-level undergraduate statistics course, they should take SOC 485, the prerequisite for SOC 586, during their first semester in residence.
- One advanced methods course from the following list: SOC 571, SOC 580, SOC 581, SOC 587.
- Advanced methods courses offered under the rubric SOC 590 or SOC 596 can be approved to fulfill the second methods requirement upon showing that the course requires the completion of a research project.
- An additional five substantive courses at the 500 level, from at least two different areas of departmental specialty.
- Optional courses to consider are SOC 505: Department seminars, SOC 597: Readings in sociology (to be taken in preparation for area examinations), and SOC 598: Thesis proposal.
- Students should take 3-24 credits of SOC 599, Dissertation Research.

Waiving Required Courses

Students who believe they have already completed course work equivalent to a required course in the doctoral program may request that the department waive the requirements.

To request a waiver of a required course, students must give a folder to the DGS that contains the following:

- A note to the DGS giving the student's name, saying which course s/he would like to have waived, and describing the course taken previously that s/he believe is equivalent. Indicate where the course was taken and who the instructor was.
- Evidence of the requirements of the course that was taken, such as a syllabus, exams, reading list, homework problems, course catalog descriptions, and the like.
- Evidence of the student's performance in the course, such as answers to exam questions or homework problems, papers written, grades, evaluations, and the like.

The DGS will ask appropriate sociology faculty to evaluate the merits of the request. The faculty member(s) will make a recommendation to the DGS. The DGS will make a decision and communicate it in writing to you, and to your advisor if you have one. The decision will be recorded in your permanent file. You may be asked to take an examination to help confirm the merits of your waiver request.

It is best to request waivers as soon as possible. In order of preference, the best time to request a waiver is before registering for one's first semester, during the first semester, or in the semester before the course in question is offered and usually taken. Students may not petition to have 400-level courses fulfill the five 500-level substantive courses requirement.

Qualifying Examinations and Qualifying Paper

Qualifying Examinations

Graduate students take two qualifying exams. The exams are a means for students to gain mastery of recognized subfields within sociology. Students are expected to demonstrate that they understand major themes, questions, and debates in the sociological literature. The exams will provide a foundation for future research and teaching and may inform students' development of their qualifying papers and dissertations. However, the exams are not intended as a substitute for detailed literature reviews used to justify addressing particular research question(s) in an original research project.

Topics

Students will choose two exam topics from lists of approved topics. These topics will be subfields within sociology that are often the focus of sociology courses. The **first exam** must be on a general topic. The approved general topics are as follows:

- **Theory**
- **Methods**
- **Inequalities**
- **Global and Transnational Sociology**

The **second exam** should relate to a broad specialty or theoretical literature in sociology related to the student's dissertation topic. As department faculty expertise changes over time, the faculty expect the exam topic lists to be modified. Given the current composition of the faculty, the topic list for the second exam includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Sociology of Law
- Crime, Law, and Deviance
- Environmental Sociology
- Sociology of Food / Rural Sociology
- Sociology of Science and Technology
- Sociology of Consumers / Consumption
- Aging and the Life Course
- Medical Sociology / Sociology of Health and Illness
- Political Sociology
- Social Movements / Contentious Politics
- Economic Sociology
- Sociology of Development
- Sociology of Culture
- Sociology of Family
- Sociology of Sport
- Race and Ethnic Relations

- Immigration
- Labor Markets and Careers
- Social Mobility
- Social Stratification
- Sociology of Professions
- Work and Occupations

Administration

Students will notify the Graduate Secretary of their chosen exam topics by the dates shown in the table below. The Department Head will assemble a committee of three faculty members with expertise in the area. One committee will be responsible for preparing the reading list and writing the exam on a given topic for all of the students taking the exam on that topic. The composition of each student's exam committees is therefore likely to change from the first to the second exam. The Graduate Secretary will administer the exam to students by distributing and collecting exams via email. Qualifying examinations are double-blind; i.e., students will not know which faculty members on the exam committee and committee members will not know who is taking the exam.

The exam questions will be based on materials appearing in required reading lists for each of the exam topics. These reading lists will be provided to students by their committee members. (Students will **not** be responsible for creating their own reading lists. Students may, however, supplement the reading lists with scholarly materials of their own choosing.) Students are expected to read and master the reading list prior to taking an exam.

Students will have two weeks to complete an exam. Exams will consist of six questions presented in three pairs. Students will answer one question from each pair in an essay format. Each answer should be a self-contained essay approximately 8-10 pages long (i.e., 2,000-2,500 words). Students will need to cite their work and include a bibliography. One comprehensive bibliography for all three questions will be sufficient.

Students may complete exams in the location(s) of their choice and consult materials from the reading list or other scholarly sources during the exam period. Students should cite relevant literature in their exam essays as practiced in scholarly publications. The exam essays will be evaluated by the students' committees. The committees will have one week to grade the essay.

Exams will be given grades of **high pass** (distinction), **pass**, or **fail**. The Chair of the examination committee will send students their grades via email. If a student fails an exam they will have one additional chance to retake the exam. These make-up exams will consist of new questions, but will be based off the same reading list as the original exam. If a student fails an exam a second time they will be terminated from the graduate program.

All old examination questions and reading lists will be archived and made publicly available to future students on the Department's website. The Graduate Secretary will be responsible for archiving the exams and reading lists.

Timing

Exams will be offered twice each year: in August shortly before the beginning of the academic year and in January shortly before the beginning of the spring semester. Students may take the exams in any term they prefer, but both exams must be completed and passed by the end of the student's third year. The schedule of key tasks for Fall and Spring examinations is below.

| | Fall Examinations | Spring Examinations |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Students notify Graduate Secretary of examination topic | April 1 | September 1 |
| Graduate Secretary notifies Department Head of intended examinations | April 8 | September 8 |
| Department Head assembles examination committees and invites them to prepare an exam for each chosen topic | May 1 | October 1 |
| Examination Committees provide reading lists to students | June 1 | November 1 |
| Examination committees submit examination questions to the Graduate Secretary | July 15 | December 15 |
| Graduate Secretary Distributes exams to students | August 2* | January 2 [†] |
| Students return their examinations to the Graduate Secretary | August 16* | January 16 [†] |
| Examination committees submit examination grades to the student, her/his advisor, and the DGS | August 23* | January 23 [†] |

*These dates may be modified, depending on the dates of the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association.

[†]These dates may be modified, depending on the dates of the Winter Break.

If a student encounters an extraordinary situation that prevents him or her from completing an exam as required, such as a death in the family or medical emergency, than s/he may petition the Graduate Studies Committee to extend, delay, or retake the exam without penalty. The Graduate Studies Committee must have received such a petition no later than the date the exam was scheduled to be completed. In turn, the Graduate Studies Committee must respond to the student with a plan to make-up the exam within four weeks of receiving the petition. If a student does not complete an exam when scheduled, nor submit a petition for deferral, then the student will be viewed as failing the exam.

If a student fails an exam, the student will have one chance to retake and pass the exam during a subsequent regularly scheduled exam period. Both exams must be completed and passed by the end of the student's third year.

Qualifying Paper

The Qualifying Paper is a piece of original research of sufficient scope and quality to be potentially publishable. It cannot be identical to a paper written for a course, though it may build upon such a paper. It may be a theoretical analysis, an analysis of secondary data, or an analysis of primary data, such as might be collected in a pilot project in preparation for dissertation research. Students will develop the paper in consultation with a committee of two faculty members, at least one of whom must have a substantial (non-zero time) tenure-line appointment in the Department of Sociology. The paper will be completed and submitted to the committee for evaluation by April 1st of the student's third year in the program.

The student's committee will evaluate the paper and provide a written assessment by May 1st of the student's third year. With respect to meeting the program requirement, qualifying papers will be given a grade of **high pass** (distinction), **pass**, or **fail**. Students who fail the qualifying paper requirement will have 5 months to revise the qualifying paper; the student's committee will provide clear instructions about what revisions are necessary. For papers that pass the requirement, the assessment will include a review that speaks to (1) whether the paper is currently publishable and how the student should invest in attempting to publish it, and (2) what types of revisions the student should be pursuing to ready the paper for publication. Additionally, the committee should set up a meeting with the student to discuss these reviews, with this meeting taking place before September 1 of the student's 4th year. To fulfill the requirement, the student, in close consultation with her/his advisor, must prepare the revised paper for submission to a peer-reviewed journal.

The Dissertation

The dissertation demonstrates the student's scholarly expertise on a research problem that the student selects. A dissertation committee assists in selecting and developing the research problem, and evaluates the student's work on that problem.

Dissertation Committee

The student must consult her or his advisor and the DGS about proposed faculty members for the Dissertation Committee. Those who serve do so because they are specialists on some aspect of the proposed dissertation. The DGS will evaluate and advise the student on the relations between the dissertation problem area and the proposed faculty members. In consultation with the student's advisor, the DGS may alter the committee composition proposed by the student. If, at any point, the dissertation topic changes, a change in the composition of the committee may be required. The student must confirm with the DGS and the dissertation committee chair of any subsequent proposed changes in committee composition.

After the DGS approves a dissertation committee, the student must ask the faculty members if they will serve on the committee. The students must contact the DGS and his/her advisor to let them know which faculty members have agreed to serve. With the concurrence of the Head, the Department of Sociology then submits the proposed committee members to the Graduate College.

Appointment of Doctoral Committee

The Dean of the Graduate College formally appoints this committee to conduct the preliminary oral examination on the proposed dissertation research (the "proposal defense") and later appoints a committee to conduct the final oral examination on the completed dissertation. The same persons may (and typically do) serve on both committees. Note that the official terminology can be a little confusing: the Graduate College uses the term "Qualifying Exam" to refer to what are commonly called the area exams (see above); "Preliminary Exam" refers to the proposal defense; while "Final Exam" refers to the dissertation defense. Students may take SOC 598 in conjunction with writing dissertation proposal.

Committee Membership and Structure

Dissertation committees must consist of at least four voting members, at least three of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty, and at least two of whom must also be tenured at the Urbana-Champaign campus of the University of Illinois (UIUC). If there are more than four voting members on the committee, at least half of the voting members must be members of the Graduate Faculty. Three members of the dissertation committee must be sociology faculty, of whom two must have material appointments (i.e., greater than 0% time) in the Department of Sociology. The Chair of a dissertation committee must have a primary appointment (i.e., greater than 25% time) in the Department of Sociology.

All faculty members with rank of assistant professor or above are eligible for nomination to the UIUC Graduate Faculty by the Department of Sociology. The student should check with the DGS on the Graduate Faculty status of all prospective members of the dissertation committee. Committee members who leave UIUC may continue to serve and participate in the final oral examination for a period of up to three years after leaving the university.

Each dissertation committee must have a chair. The chair must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. The dissertation committee chair is responsible for convening the committee, conducting the examination, and submitting the Preliminary Exam Result form to the unit in which the student is enrolled and to the Graduate College.

At the discretion of the chair, a dissertation committee may have a director. Where there is a distinction, the chair, as noted above, organizes examinations and handles the paperwork, and the director acts as primary mentor on the research. Where there is no distinction (the typical case in our department), the chair takes both sets of responsibilities.

Committee Duties

The student must consult frequently with the chair, the director, and other committee members when developing a dissertation proposal and when doing research for the thesis and its defense. The primary duties of the dissertation committee are:

- to examine and evaluate the student's dissertation proposal at the preliminary examination (i.e., the proposal defense);
- to examine and evaluate the student's completed doctoral dissertation at the final oral examination (i.e., the dissertation defense).

The chair is responsible for reporting to the DGS on the student's progress, committee actions, changes in committee composition, etc.

Proposal Defense: Preliminary Examination

The preliminary examination in the Department of Sociology is a formal oral examination. It is based on a written dissertation proposal (see below) that the student has developed in consultation with the director of the proposed research and with the other members of the dissertation committee.

Preliminary examinations are open to all faculty and graduate students, but only the committee members have voice and vote (unless faculty arrange otherwise in advance with the chair of the committee).

Before scheduling a preliminary examination, a student must have successfully completed all required coursework and the Qualifying Paper and have passed both Qualifying Examinations. Students are required to prepare and submit an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval of their dissertation research project before they defend their dissertation proposal.

Scheduling the Preliminary Examination

Students may schedule the preliminary examination only after completing all course work and the Qualifying Paper and passing the Qualifying Examinations.

A student who intends to complete her/his preliminary examination must contact the Graduate Secretary **FOUR weeks in advance**. They will discuss tentative dates for the examination and the student will receive a "Preliminary Exam Committee Appointment" form. It is the student's responsibility to complete the form, which entails getting the signatures of the faculty who agree to serve on the Preliminary Examination Committee. The student must also meet with the DGS to ensure that s/he has completed all of her/his requirements and is in good academic standing.

At least THREE weeks prior to the date of the preliminary examination, the student must return the completed "Preliminary Exam Committee Appointment" form to the Graduate Secretary and arrange the date, time, and place of the examination. The examination cannot be scheduled in the first or last two weeks of instruction, on reading days, during final examinations, registration periods, on weekends, or on Fridays after 2 p.m. if a faculty meeting is scheduled; nor should they be scheduled during the summer months or winter recess unless the entire committee can attend (there can be no substitutions). Students must remind committee members of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

Dissertation Proposal

A dissertation proposal is a detailed research plan, a contract, a work schedule, and a road map. Although proposals will vary according to the area of inquiry, the available data, and the mode of analysis, each should be approximately 25-35 pages long (i.e., 6,250-8,750 words) and contain the following components:

- Problem Statement
 - present a clearly defined research topic of sociological importance
 - concisely state the specific research question(s) or hypotheses for the study
- Research Objectives
 - explain how your research will contribute to solving a question or problem of general sociological importance
 - review the existing theoretical literature covering the issues of importance to your research
 - define the specific terms, concepts, and measures you are using, and how you will approach their operationalization
- Methods
 - describe your methodology in detail, i.e. explain how you will investigate the problem

- provide a justification for your method selection, i.e. explain how the methods you will employ following logically from your proposed goals. This should include a review of how previous studies have approached your topic methodologically.
- Data
 - provide detailed information on the data being brought to bear on your question, i.e. explain which evidence will you collect and where it will come from
- Feasibility and Significance
 - explain why you are qualified to undertake this research, i.e. discuss the skills you presently have as well as those that you need to complete your project
 - explain when you plan to complete the project and what you have done to make its completion feasible by that time; include a calendar with key deadlines
 - explain why the knowledge gained from your project is worth knowing
- Bibliography
- Appendices
 - if applicable, include drafts of your survey questions, interview questions, etc.
 - include your application to the Institutional Review Board

Circulating the Proposal

At least THREE weeks prior to the date of the preliminary examination, the student must circulate copies of the dissertation proposal to committee members and give one copy to the Graduate Secretary for her/his permanent file. At that time, the student must also submit an abstract (one or two pages) to the Graduate Secretary, who will distribute it to all members of the faculty and all of the graduate students. The **abstract must include** the following information:

- the student's name;
- the date, time, and location of the preliminary examination;
- the names, titles and affiliations of the members of the Preliminary Examination Committee;
- a working title for the dissertation;
- an abstract that summarizes the proposed dissertation (200–250 words).

Evaluating the Proposal

The examining committee chair records the results of the examination (pass, fail, or adjourn) on a form, "Certificate of Result of Preliminary Examination for the Doctoral Degree" and forwards them to the Departmental secretary who gives the results to the Graduate College within 30 days.

If the dissertation proposal is not approved ("fail"), the student may take the examination a second time. The student must submit a revised dissertation proposal to his/her committee and the departmental secretary for her/his permanent file, distribute a new abstract to all sociology faculty, and schedule a new examination time and place in the same manner specified above. Students who fail a second time must petition the Committee to take the examination a third time.

If the dissertation proposal is approved and the project is later found not to be feasible, the student must submit a new proposal to the Committee and defend it according to the above procedures.

If five years elapse between the date the student passed the preliminary examination and the date of the final oral dissertation defense, the Graduate College requires the student to retake the preliminary examination.

Seeking Funding for the Research

Students are strongly encouraged to identify and apply for a grant supporting their dissertation research within 6 months after defending their dissertation proposal. Once they have done so, students should send a copy of the grant application to the DGS, who will place it into the student's permanent file. Failure to identify and apply for a grant will be noted in a student's annual review.

Dissertation Defense: Final Oral Examination

Students must register for SOC 599 in the semester of the dissertation's defense. Students can register for 0 units of SOC 599. At the beginning of the semester, the student notifies the DGS in writing of her/his plans to defend (a brief dated note is sufficient). The student's dissertation committee gives the final oral examination after the dissertation text is completed. In the oral examination the student summarizes the research problem, the theories and the previous studies that generated the research questions, the methods employed to answer the questions, the results, and the conclusions that can be drawn. After giving the summary the student answers questions put by the dissertation committee about the ideas, questions, methods, results, and inferences.

Scheduling the Final Oral Examination

A student who intends to complete her/his final oral examination must contact the Graduate Secretary **FOUR weeks in advance**. They will discuss tentative dates for the examination and the student will receive a "Dissertation Committee" form. It is the student's responsibility to complete the form, which entails getting the signatures of the faculty who agree to serve on the Dissertation Committee.

At least THREE weeks prior to the date of the final oral examination, the student must return the completed "Dissertation Committee" form to the Graduate Secretary and arrange the date, time, and place of the examination. The examination cannot be scheduled in the first or last two weeks of instruction, on reading days, during final examinations, registration periods, on weekends, or on Fridays after 2 p.m. if a faculty meeting is scheduled; nor should they be scheduled during the summer months or winter recess unless the entire committee can attend (there can be no substitutions). Students must remind committee members of the date, time, and place of the final oral examination.

Providing Reading Copies of the Dissertation

Students must give copies of the final dissertation manuscript to members of the Committee and the Department Head (for review by the faculty and graduate students) **at least THREE weeks** before the day of the final oral examination.

Circulating an Abstract of the Dissertation

At least two weeks prior to the date of the final oral examination, the student must circulate an abstract of the dissertation (one or two pages) to the Graduate Secretary, who will distribute it to all members of the faculty and all of the graduate students. The **abstract must include** the following information:

- the student's name;
- the date, time, and location of the final oral examination;
- the names, titles, and affiliations of the members of the Dissertation Committee;
- the title of the dissertation;
- an abstract that summarizes the dissertation (200–250 words).

Final oral examinations are open to the public, but voting is restricted to the eligible members of the dissertation committee.

Evaluating the Dissertation

Before the results of the final examination can be forwarded to the Graduate College, committee members and the Head must sign a “Thesis/Dissertation Approval” form certifying the candidate’s successful completion of the dissertation and the red bordered form certifying that the completed dissertation meets department standards. The latter is signed in duplicate and bound with the copy of the dissertation deposited with the Graduate College.

Students who fail the final examination may take it a second time. A third examination is possible only by petition.

Dissertation Format

The student must prepare the dissertation in a written format according to the Graduate College guidelines in *Handbook for Graduate Students Preparing to Deposit*, available online at: <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-dissertation>.

The Secretary to the Department Head must sign the “Format Approval” form and attach it to the dissertation before the student submits it to the Graduate College for a format check.

If more than one year elapses between a student’s passing his or her final examination and depositing the dissertation with the Graduate College, the Graduate College will not accept the dissertation unless the Department Head sends with the dissertation a statement to the Dean of the Graduate College recommending acceptance and certifying that the thesis is essentially the one defended.

Degree Conferred

Doctoral candidates must deposit two copies of the dissertation at the Graduate College. One will be bound and deposited in the library and the other microfilmed and then returned to the department where it will be available to faculty and graduate student. The University of Illinois confers doctoral degrees only in May, August, and December.

Evaluation of Good Standing and Progress

Graduate College and Department rules require that students be informed annually of their progress in meeting requirements and their likelihood of completing the doctoral program. Near the end of the Spring semester, the sociology graduate faculty meet (i.e. complete the “annual review”) to evaluate each student’s progress, course load, course completion, and grades. The faculty also discuss students’ performance as teaching assistants, teaching fellows, or research assistants, and any special accomplishments such as presenting at conference or other meetings, publishing papers, or receiving grants or teaching awards. Each student’s progress is compared to the standards for normal progress described below, and to that of other students—particularly those who entered in the same year. After the faculty meeting, the DGS sends a letter to each student that:

- summarizes the evaluation of progress and standing;
- conveys any special commendations or concerns;
- and states any specific risks to good standing, with the steps and deadlines for correcting those risks.

As required by the UIUC Graduate College, the DGS reports to the Dean of the Graduate College on any students who were found not to be in good standing.

Normal Progress

Normally, students are expected to complete course work and other degree requirements in a reasonable time. This is currently indicated by completing:

- Required core courses in the first 1 1/2 years.
- Additional required and elective courses within the first 2 1/2 years.
- Qualifying Examinations by the end of the 3rd year.
(SOC 597 can be taken as a readings course in preparation for qualifying examinations.)
- Qualifying Paper by the end of the 3rd year.
- Preliminary Examination (dissertation proposal defense) before the beginning of the 4th year.
- Dissertation defense within 5 years.

Defending the Dissertation within Five Years

The faculty discuss the case of any student who has not defended the dissertation within five years. The student could be deemed in bad standing, depending on the other things normally considered in the student's annual review. More commonly, the student will be notified of marginal progress. All students passing the five-year mark will be reminded of the seven year limit (see below).

Students should avoid incomplete ("I") grades. A history of I grades indicates an inability to handle a normal workload and jeopardizes good standing and financial aid. If course work is not completed by the last day of instruction of the following semester, an **I** reverts to an **F**. Students may petition the Department of Sociology and the Graduate College to extend the I beyond this "lapse" date or to drop the course retroactively; however, the department rarely approves such petitions. If an **I** reverts to an **F**, after the work is completed and graded and with the approval of the instructor and the DGS, a student may petition the Graduate College to change the grade.

Grades in Required Courses

Students must earn a **B** or better in any required course. A grade of **C** in a required sociology core or graduate area sociology course indicates an academic deficiency that initiates a consultation with the course instructor, the Department Head, and the DGS.

Grade Point Average

Students must maintain grade point averages (GPAs) of at least 3.25 every semester. The GPA reflects all course work graded **A** through **F** and "absent" (AB). It excludes courses with grades of credit (CR), no credit (NC), incomplete (I), deferred (DF), satisfactory (S), or unsatisfactory (U); and excludes course work completed at other institutions; and undergraduate courses taken for credit in semester hours.

Seven Year Limit

Graduate College rules allow no more than seven years for completion of the doctoral program (six for students who entered with a master's degree). The only standard exceptions are for students in the Medical Scholars Program (MSP). Any student (including Medical Scholars) who must take more than seven years to complete the Ph.D. must obtain an exemption from the 7-year rule from the Graduate College. To petition for an exception to the Graduate College deadline, the student must complete a "Graduate Student Request" form. This form is available online at: <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gsas/graduate-student-request-form>

Although the Graduate College provides a formal procedure for requesting an extension, they are reluctant to grant extensions except to students in the MSP.

Deadline Extensions

Students may request extended deadlines by writing to the DGS. A request must include a projected schedule (i.e., timeline) that shows when requirements will be met. The student must be explicit about reasons for the request. The student's advisor must approve the request.

Family and medical leave are the most common reasons for approved extensions of deadlines. Extensions also may be approved for special academic needs such as study abroad. Students in the Medical Scholars Program get standard academic extensions on written request. Relevant departmental time limits may be extended by one year for students who have completed their first year in medical school, two years for students who have completed their second year in medical school, and three years for Medical Scholars who have completed the required 60 weeks of medical clerkship.

Leaves of Absence from the Ph.D. Program

The Department follows the UIUC Graduate College policies on Leaves of Absence and Absence without Leave. According to Graduate College policy, graduate students in degree-seeking programs are entitled to a total of two terms (fall and/or spring semesters) of academic leave of the types described below, in the course of a single degree program. However, students must document their request for a leave and meet the eligibility requirements. Students who anticipate not being enrolled for one or more terms, (fall or spring semesters, not summer), for whatever reason must meet with their program adviser **before the first day of classes of their period of non-enrollment** to apply for and receive approval for an Academic Leave of Absence.

There are two categories of Academic Leaves of Absence:

- **Personal Academic Leaves of Absence** may be requested for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to leave for health reasons, for personal reasons, for active military service, or to take care of dependents or family members. Students who are on an approved Personal Academic Leave of Absence use the leave for personal reasons and not to make progress on the degree. In addition, students on Personal Academic Leaves of Absence should not expect that faculty will provide feedback on academic work, including proposals or drafts of theses.
- **Academic Progress Leaves of Absence** may be requested for instances of academic activity such as Study Abroad when the student registers at another institution, or fieldwork when the student is not using UIUC resources including faculty time, nor receiving financial support paid through the University. Students who are on an approved Academic Progress Leave of Absence do use the Leave to make progress toward completion of the degree, but must not use campus resources. Expectations of progress to be made during the Leave should be documented in the student's academic file.

All Academic Leaves must be requested before the term begins. Students must request an "Academic Leave of Absence" form from the Graduate Secretary. Once the form has been signed by the student's advisor and the DGS, the student must return it to the Graduate Secretary who

will place it in the student's permanent file. An Academic Leave of Absence cannot be requested retroactively, cannot be used to return to good standing, and cannot be used to extend the time to degree. Note: the maximum allowed Academic Leave of Absence is two terms (spring or fall) during a student's degree program. These terms may be consecutive terms or terms approved individually.

There are potentially negative consequences for failing to request an Academic Leave of Absence. Students who do not enroll and do not meet with the program and document their status with an approved Academic Leave of Absence before a period of non-enrollment begins are considered Absent without Leave. A program may put an advising hold on a student who is Absent without Leave. A student who is Absent without Leave may be prevented from re-enrolling, may have additional degree requirements to complete if allowed to return, or may be subject to new degree requirements.

For further information about the Graduate College leave policy, please see the *The Graduate College Handbook of Policy and Requirements for Students, Faculty and Staff*, available on the web at: <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/gradhandbook>.

Master's Degree Requirements

The Master's Degree

The Department does not offer a Master's degree program. All graduate students enter the doctoral program. The Master's degree may be granted as an intermediate step on the way to the Ph.D. Students qualify for the Master's degree by receiving departmental certification as having completed a suitable Qualifying Paper (see page 7) and completing the necessary coursework (see below).

Credit toward a Master's Degree

The Graduate College may give students up to five units of credit toward a master's degree for graduate-level courses taken at an accredited institution within the past five years that the Sociology Department deems appropriate to count toward the student's master's degree. The Graduate College will not give any credit for courses taken elsewhere until students have earned two units of UIUC credit.

Required Courses

One statistics course (SOC 485)

One theory course (SOC 500 or SOC 501)

One methods course (SOC 571, SOC 581, SOC 583, SOC 587, or SOC 590)

Two professionalization courses (Professionalization Seminar and Teaching Practicum; 2 semesters, 4 credit hours)

Six additional courses at the 400 or 500 level:

- At least four of these must be in sociology
- At least four of these must be at the 500 level

Summary

Total of eleven graduate courses

At least five taken at UIUC campus

At least nine in sociology

At least four at the 500 level

Criteria for Assigning Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantship Assignments are the responsibility of the Graduate Studies Committee. The criteria for assigning assistantships are as follows:

- Good standing in the Ph.D. program. Students who do not make program benchmarks receive the lowest priority for departmental funding, which may mean that they receive no funding in some semesters. In addition, students who do not make program benchmarks are ineligible to apply for departmental fellowships, departmental travel awards, and Graduate College awards.
- First year cohort is assigned **grader** positions with no section or office hour obligations for two semesters, if possible.
- Early career students are given priority over students who are more senior in the program.
- Whenever possible, both student and faculty preferences are taken into account in assigning teaching assistantship (TA) positions.
- Students in the cohort entering from academic year 13/14 are guaranteed funding for four years, pending satisfactory progress and good standing. Students in the cohort entering from academic year 14/15 onward are guaranteed funding for five years, pending satisfactory progress, good standing, and university budget constraints.
- When possible and students and faculty are happy with it, students in courses that meet both fall and spring semesters typically stay with the same course all year.
- Lectureships are assigned via an application process. To serve as a graduate lecturer, students must apply for specific courses and submit a draft syllabus and summary of their teaching evaluations. Lecturers are selected based on experience, expertise, and teaching competence, pending good standing.
- Fall letters of intent will be distributed by June 15th and sooner if possible. Fall appointment letters are dependent upon the outcome of the spring review of graduate students, but will be distributed by July 15th. Spring letters of intent will be distributed by November 15th and appointment letters by December 15th.
- MSP students are eligible for assistantships in the Department of Sociology only up to the point that they complete their Ph.D.

For successful and timely completion of degree requirements, the department strongly discourages full-time TAs (i.e., with a 50% appointment) and Instructors to take on extra teaching jobs outside the University. In addition to the possibility of this becoming a burden for some, it can interfere with and reduce the quality of teaching at the University of Illinois.

If the student has a full-time TA-ship or Instructorship in the Department of Sociology, they are required to talk to the Director of Graduate Studies before they commit to taking on extra teaching jobs outside the University. Should the Director of Graduate Studies determine that the student's outside commitments will negatively affect their capacity to meet their obligations to the University of Illinois, the DGS—in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee—reserves the right to rescind the offer of a TA-ship or Instructorship.

Criteria for Assigning Winter and Summer TAs

- Students must be making adequate academic progress as of the end of the preceding spring semester
- Preference will be given to students who have had previous online teaching experience.
- Preference will be given to students who **did not serve** as a Winter/Summer TA the previous year.
- Preference will be given to those with a 3.5 or higher GPA in 500-level sociology courses.
- Student and/or faculty evaluations, if available, as well as substantive expertise will help determine appointments.