

# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Department of Sociology  
Bowling Green State University  
Revised in August 2023

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Sociology offers advanced study at both the master's and doctoral levels for students who seek employment in either academic or non-academic settings. Students can major or minor in Criminology, Demography, Family Studies, or Social Psychology. Students can also elect to minor in Quantitative Methods. Students entering the doctoral program without a master's degree will complete the M.A. thesis and course requirements during their course of study. Regardless of area of specialization, students in our graduate programs build a firm foundation in research methodology, statistics, and theory. Since graduates are employed in both academic and non-academic settings, the program specialty areas provide the flexibility to prepare students for a broad spectrum of professional opportunities.

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint students with faculty expectations and departmental requirements for the award of the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. These requirements in no way replace those described in the *Graduate Catalog* or in the program statements of the specialized areas in which students choose to concentrate. Instead, this handbook sets forth the minimum requirements, which must be met by all graduate students in the Department of Sociology. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the requirements and guidelines specified in this document.

In addition to the formal policies identified in this handbook, the Department of Sociology also has an informal set of operating principles based on the conviction that the student is the prime concern of the department. The spirit of this philosophy is outlined below:

- In both formal and informal settings, we encourage lively interaction, the sharing of ideas, scholarly collaboration, and mutual support among faculty and students.
- We attempt to promote close intellectual relationships between faculty and students. The accessibility of the faculty is well established and is facilitated by a favorable faculty-to-student ratio.
- Graduate students are treated as motivated junior scholars. Learning experiences are arranged to enhance student skills and are oriented to future careers.
- The departmental climate for professional development is humanistic and is designed to foster intellectual craftsmanship.

## **DOCTORAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The objectives of the doctoral program are to provide a broad background in general sociology and to create the capacity for theoretically relevant, rigorous research in at least one area of specialization. Although faculty interests within sociology are wide-ranging, doctoral students will major in one of the following areas:

- Criminology
- Demography
- Family Studies
- Social Psychology

### **ADMISSION TO THE PH.D. PROGRAM**

Only strongly motivated individuals whose records indicate that they are capable of successfully completing a Ph.D. degree are admitted to the Ph.D. program. In applying for admission, prospective students must include the following items in addition to the application form:

1. Transcripts of all previous college work. Admission to the Ph.D. program is contingent on the completion of a bachelor's degree in sociology or an equivalent graduate degree. Students entering the doctoral program without a master's degree that includes an approved thesis by the Graduate Committee will complete the thesis and course requirements for the M.A. degree during their course of study.
2. A resume.
3. Three letters of reference. If the student is completing or has completed a master's degree, at least one of the letters of recommendation must be from a member of the student's thesis committee, preferably the Chair, who will address issues relevant to the thesis (i.e., completion timeline, theoretical and methodological sophistication/rigor, etc.). Those students who do not submit a letter from the Chair of their thesis committee should provide an explanation for excluding as a letter writer the individual most familiar with their work.
4. Examples of the applicant's academic writing, such as a class paper. Applicants who are completing or have already completed a master's degree should consider their thesis proposal or completed thesis for submission.
5. A 500-word statement of interest describing the research interests the applicant hopes to pursue in graduate school, their professional goals, and how a Ph.D. in Sociology will help them fulfill these goals. It is especially important for applicants to describe why they believe that the BGSU Sociology Department's graduate program will help them pursue these interests and achieve these goals. The applicant should also indicate specific faculty members in the department who they think might share similar research interests with them.
5. Submission of Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores is optional. International applicants must submit standardized university-approved tests of English as a foreign language (e.g., TOEFL, MELAB, PTE, IELTS) for all whose first language is not English.

Prospective students are encouraged to visit the Department of Sociology, if practical, or to contact the Director of Graduate Studies by phone or email to discuss their interests within the program.

The Graduate Committee evaluates applications holistically, considering all information including the statement of interest, writing sample, resume, GPA, letters of recommendation, and for international applicants, English test scores.

## CURRICULUM AND REQUIREMENTS

Doctoral students are required to complete 90 semester hours of graduate course credit beyond the bachelor's degree (60 semester hours for those who enter the program with an approved master's degree earned in other programs). Students entering without a master's will complete the thesis and course requirements for the M.A. degree (see beginning on page 12) along the way during their course of study. Of the 90 post-B.A. or 60 post-M.A. credit hours, a minimum of 16 credits must be Dissertation Research (SOC 7990); however, no more than 30 credits of SOC 7990 may be applied to the 90- or 60-hour requirement. Hour requirements, however, are just one component of the degree requirements. Students are expected to demonstrate research competence and breadth and depth of knowledge on the **major area preliminary examination**. The **dissertation**, a mature piece of scholarship embodying the results of original research, is central to the student's plan of study.

Ph.D. students are given considerable flexibility in developing their programs of study, although all students are expected to achieve a level of basic competence in theory, research methods, and statistics. Students will choose a **major** and a **minor** area of concentration from among the following five areas: **Criminology, Demography, Family Studies, Social Psychology**, and, for minor concentration only, **Quantitative Methods**.

All doctoral students are required to take six basic courses in theory and quantitative methods: Classical Sociological Theory (SOC 6010), Statistical Packages (SOC 6090), Statistical Techniques and Applications in Sociology (SOC 6100), Intermediate Methodology (SOC 6110), Intermediate Statistics (SOC 6120), Research Design (SOC 7130), and Professional Development (SOC 6610). Students who earn a grade of C or lower in SOC 6100 may still take SOC 6120, but they must subsequently retake and earn a grade of A or B in SOC 6100.

Students with master's degrees from other programs may have already had courses comparable to SOC 6010, SOC 6100, or SOC 6110. They may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies to have these courses waived; the Director of Graduate Studies will forward it to the Graduate Committee or the Quantitative Methods Committee. SOC 6120 cannot be waived unless the student passes an examination. SOC 7130 cannot be waived.

Doctoral students also must take Teaching Introductory Sociology (SOC 6600).

Ph.D. students take Readings for Preliminary Examinations (SOC 7980) to help them prepare for the major area preliminary exams (see below). Students may take a maximum of 12 semester hours of SOC 7980.

In addition, there are occasions when a student will want to work individually with a professor possessing expertise in an area where courses are not regularly offered. Such students have the option of developing independent readings courses (SOC 6850, SOC 7850) with interested professors<sup>1</sup>. A maximum of 9 hours of Readings in Sociology, also referred to as Independent Study, may be used by a student to satisfy the Ph.D. degree credit requirements. However, these hours cannot count toward area course requirements unless approved by the Director of the Graduate Studies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Both the student and the professor should be aware that this does not count toward the professor's required teaching load.

As stated in the Graduate College catalog, a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in graduate course work is required to maintain academic good standing. A student whose grade point average falls below this level will be placed on academic probation.

Only grades of *A* or *B* are acceptable in required courses. Students who do not achieve a grade of *A* or *B* in these courses may be permitted to repeat the course.

### **Master's Degree Requirements**

Students entering the doctoral program without a master's degree will complete the **master's thesis** and course requirements during their course of study.

To receive the M.A. degree, students must write a formal thesis and complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate course work. At least 3, but not more than 6, of these required 30 hours may be thesis credit (SOC 6990). However, more than 6 hours of SOC 6990 may be accumulated by students who earn more than 30 credit hours. The Master's thesis should be an original contribution to the research literature.

The M.A. degree is offered in five programmatic areas: **Applied Demography, Criminology, Demography, Family Studies and Social Psychology**. All M.A. students are required to complete graduate courses in Classical Sociological Theory (SOC 6010), Statistical Packages (SOC 6090), Statistical Techniques and Applications in Sociology (SOC 6100), Intermediate Methodology (SOC 6110), Intermediate Statistics (SOC 6120), and Professional Development (SOC 6610). Students who do not pass SOC 6100 may still take SOC 6120, but they must subsequently retake and pass SOC 6100.

Each of the five programmatic areas of study at the M.A. level specifies course requirements in addition to those noted above. Further information about these requirements is presented in the specialty area program statements available on the Sociology department web page.

Occasionally, students also develop independent readings courses (SOC 6850) with professors who possess an expertise in an area where courses are not regularly offered. A maximum of 6 hours of Readings in Sociology, also referred to as Independent Study, may be used by a student to satisfy the credit requirements of the M.A. degree. However, these credit hours do not count toward the area course requirements.

Only grades of *A* or *B* are acceptable in required courses. Students who do not achieve a grade of *A* or *B* in these courses may be permitted to repeat the course.

### **ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEWS**

Each year, the Department of Sociology Graduate Committee assesses whether students are exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations according to the department's timeline and criteria for satisfactory progress in the Ph.D. program. The Director of Graduate Studies send students an annual progress form. Students fill in their accomplishments in the past calendar year and describe their goals for the next calendar year. Students' major advisors review the students' annual progress reports and evaluate the students' progress in reference to the Timeline and Criteria for Satisfactory Progress in the PhD Program (Appendix D). The Graduate Committee reviews the students' reports and their advisors' evaluations and votes whether the students will (a) continue in the program, (b) continue in the program with conditions, or (c) be dismissed from the program. The Director of Graduate Studies gives the students written feedback about their progress. The evaluation is meant

to encourage timely degree completion and to offer students constructive feedback and guidance about the trajectory of their graduate work. However, when a student is not making satisfactory progress, the department may elect to discontinue a student's funding (tuition waiver and assistantship). Student funding may be revoked immediately if any of the following criteria is met:

1. The student's GPA falls below 3.0.
2. A student receives a C in any course.
3. A student is not consistently performing their duties as an RA/TA/TI.
4. A student has not completed their thesis prior to the start of their third year in the program.
5. A student has not completed their preliminary examination prior to the start of their fourth year in the program.
6. A student has not completed their dissertation proposal prior to the start of their fifth year in the program.

## **RESIDENCY**

A student is considered to be in residence whenever he or she is registered on campus as a doctoral student. The minimum residency requirement for the Ph.D. degree is met by completing 15 hours of course work (not including SOC 7990) on the main campus in two consecutive semesters, with no fewer than three hours of registration in either of the two semesters. It is strongly recommended that the student's first year of doctoral study be spent in residence.

## **ADVISOR AND COMMITTEES**

During their time in the program, students select courses, prepare for their preliminary examination, and attend to other departmental and Graduate College requirements in consultation with their major advisors, preliminary examination chairs, and the Director of Graduate Studies.

### **Temporary and Major Advisor**

Upon admission to the program, students are assigned to a temporary advisor and to the department's Director of Graduate Studies for advisory assistance. Prior to the end of the first year, once they have clarified their goals and become acquainted with the faculty, students must select a major advisor. The major advisor is the faculty member with whom the student will work most closely during their time in the program and serves as chair of the thesis and/or dissertation committee. **Students will select major advisors from department faculty who are eligible members of the graduate faculty<sup>2</sup>.** The Director of Graduate Studies and major advisor will work together to facilitate student progress through the program.

### **M.A. Thesis Committee**

Prior to beginning formal work on the thesis, the student must form a thesis committee. The thesis committee consists minimally of the student's thesis advisor and two other full-time graduate faculty from the Department of Sociology. However, it is possible for a student to request that a faculty member from another department substitute for one of the sociology department members.

---

<sup>2</sup>A major advisor for a PhD dissertation committee must hold the graduate faculty status Regular I in BGSU Department of Sociology. A major advisor for a MA thesis committee must hold the graduate faculty status Regular I, Regular II, or Probational II in BGSU Department of Sociology.

### **Preliminary Examination Committee**

The area program statement identifies the area chair and all area faculty who participate in the examination process. The area chair acts as chair of the examination committee and solicits questions from the other area faculty. Area faculty submit exam questions to the area/exam chair, who then constructs a draft of the examination. Area faculty review the draft and approve the final version of the examination. A minimum of 3 and a manageable maximum number of readers will grade each area preliminary examination. Beyond this it is up to the area faculty to decide on the composition of the exam committee. In addition, upon a student's application submission, the Dean of the Graduate College appoints a Graduate Faculty Representative to the student's dissertation committee.

Students are not permitted to choose the faculty constituting their exam committee. Such a practice would undermine the standardization of these examinations that the department seeks to maintain. Although students and their major advisor do choose dissertation committee members (with the exception of the Graduate Faculty Representative assigned by the Graduate College), the composition of examination committees is determined by the department faculty in the respective examination areas. Examination and dissertation committees are separate entities having different functions, although membership may overlap in some instances. The Graduate Faculty Representative is the only member who must be on both the dissertation committee and the major area preliminary examination committee.

### **Ph.D. Dissertation Committee**

In consultation with their major advisor, the student selects a minimum of three additional members. At least two of these additional committee members must come from the graduate faculty with Level I status within the Department of Sociology. Finally, the Graduate Faculty Representative who is assigned by the Dean of the Graduate College to the student's preliminary examination committee serves on the student's dissertation committee as well.

## **MAJOR AREA CONCENTRATION**

All Ph.D. students are required to choose a major area of concentration within the Department of Sociology and take a minimum of 5 courses in that area. Students will major in Criminology, Demography, Family Studies, or Social Psychology. Further information about these requirements is presented in the specialty area program statements available on the Sociology department web page.

The M.A. degree is offered in five programmatic areas: Applied Demography, Criminology, Demography, Family Studies and Social Psychology. Each of the five programmatic areas of study at the M.A. level specifies course requirements in addition to those noted above. Further information about these requirements is presented in the specialty area program statements available on the Sociology department web page.

## **MASTER'S THESIS**

The master's thesis is a piece of scholarship embodying the results of original research. Graduate students write their theses under close guidance of their major advisors. Students are expected to decide their major advisors by the end of the second semester and begin working on their thesis

proposals soon after. The proposal is a detailed description of the research problem and theoretical and methodological approaches taken to examine it (See Appendix C).

A public oral presentation of the thesis proposal is required. A minimum GPA of 3.0 in all graduate work is required to apply for thesis topic approval. At least two weeks prior to the oral defense, the student will provide a copy of the complete thesis to committee members. (See above “M.A. Thesis Committee” under ADVISORS AND COMMITTEES). At least one week prior to the suggested date of the proposal defense, the student and advisor will notify the entire department of the upcoming defense and make available to all interested parties, in the main departmental office, a copy of the proposal. Failure to either notify the department or to make available a copy of the proposal at least one week prior to the defense will result in the postponement of the proposal defense. This notification period is required so that all interested parties are given an appropriate opportunity to review the proposal and to make the necessary arrangements to attend the defense. On or prior to the proposal defense meeting date, the student must submit the electronic Thesis Topic Approval form for the committee to report the results of the proposal defense to the Graduate College.

Once a student has a thesis proposal approved by the Graduate College, they must be in continuous registration for at least one hour of SOC 6990 per semester, excluding summers, until the thesis is completed. Students who plan to graduate during the summer session must be enrolled in SOC 6990 that term.

Upon completion of the thesis, the student must pass a public oral defense conducted by their committee. As in the case of the thesis proposal defense, all departmental members must be notified at least one week prior to the thesis defense, and a copy of the thesis must simultaneously be made available in the departmental offices. Failure to provide at least one week’s notice will result in postponement of the defense. In addition to an examination over the thesis content area, the defense also evaluates the student’s general knowledge of sociology. The final copy of the completed thesis must be received in the Graduate College by the published deadline set by the College. Students failing to meet this deadline will not be eligible for graduation that semester.

## **MINOR AREA CONCENTRATION**

All Ph.D. students are required to choose a minor area of concentration within the sociology department in one of the five areas: Criminology, Demography, Family Studies, Social Psychology, or Quantitative Methods. Students may choose, at their option, a second minor.

Since the minor area concentration serves to broaden students’ general knowledge and encourages the integration of a different area of sociology into the major area, Ph.D. students cannot major and minor in the same general area.

Proficiency in the minor area of concentration is satisfied by completion of a four-course sequence as specified in the area program statements for Criminology, Demography, Family Studies, and Social Psychology. A six-course sequence is required for a minor in Quantitative Methods.

In order for the minor area of concentration to be certified by the department, the student must achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 (i.e., at least one grade of *A* and three of *B*) in the four area courses for a minor in Criminology, Demography, Family Studies, or Social Psychology), or a cumulative GPA of 3.167 (i.e., at least one grade of *A* and five of *B*) for a minor in Quantitative



Methods. These courses must be seminar-based or other regularly offered courses; independent studies courses may not be counted among the required minor area courses unless approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who fail to achieve the required GPA (3.0 or 3.167) after taking the specified courses have several options:

Take additional courses in the area until the grades received in any combination of four (six for Quantitative Methods) courses result in a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 (3.167 for Quantitative Methods).

After having taken all area courses offered without achieving the required GPA, re-take a course(s) in order to improve and replace the original grade, thus raising the cumulative GPA to at least 3.0 (3.167 for Quantitative Methods) in any combination of four (six for quantitative methods) area courses.

Choose a second area of minor concentration, subject to the same course and cumulative GPA requirements noted above. Students who fail to achieve the required cumulative GPA in this second area of concentration will not be permitted to choose a third area.

Students who have exhausted all of these options without achieving the required minimum GPA to certify the minor area concentration will be dismissed from the program.

### **Extra-Departmental Minor**

In addition to the required departmental minor, students may elect, at their option, to obtain a second minor in another BGSU department or combination of departments that offer graduate courses or have graduate faculty. Under no circumstances, however, will students be permitted to substitute an extra-departmental minor for the required departmental minor. In addition, the Department of Sociology is unable to provide students with tuition scholarships for additional courses beyond the standard credit hours. If students wish to pursue an outside minor it is their responsibility to submit to the Graduate Committee a formal request along with appropriate documentation. Documentation must include all of the following: (a) the student's written justification for the proposed minor, including the relationship between the outside minor and the student's academic program and career plans; (b) a list of proposed courses in the minor area, including course descriptions; and (c) written confirmation by the Graduate Coordinator or Chair of the outside department that the proposed courses will be offered during the period the student plans to complete their coursework. Students electing to get an additional minor outside of the sociology department must take a minimum of three courses in the outside minor area.

Independent studies courses cannot be counted toward the minimum course requirements for the minor concentration. The student, Director of Graduate Studies, and the student's major advisor will work with faculty from the outside department to determine an appropriate course of study.

### **MAJOR AREA PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION PROCEDURES**

All Ph.D. students are required to take a written examination in their major area of concentration. Because the major area of concentration serves to integrate students into a specialized area of the discipline so that they actually *become* criminologists, demographers, family sociologists, or social psychologists, performance on the preliminary exam should indicate mastery of the subject matter of the area, not only of that material covered in seminars the student has taken. The preliminary examination encourages students to review, internalize, and integrate the wide breadth of ideas, techniques, and issues within their major area of concentration. The written exam consists of two



parts (see below). Each part of the exam is take-home, open-book, and expected to be completed within eight hours in one day (a total of two days).

### **Examination Periods**

Preliminary examinations are administered at two times during the academic year: typically two weeks prior to the beginning of fall semester (the second week of August) and the week prior to the beginning of spring semester (early January). A May exam period is an option only for those who did not pass their first taking of the exam. Students taking their preliminary examination for the first time may do so only during the August and January periods.

Doctoral students who entered the program with a master's degree elsewhere are expected to take their major area preliminary examination prior to their third year of full-time study. Students who entered the program without a master's degree are expected to take their major area preliminary examination prior to their fourth year of full-time study. Consistent with Graduate College policy, students are not permitted to take their preliminary examinations until they have completed 60 hours in the approved course of study beyond a bachelor's degree. Students are required to complete five courses in the major area before taking their preliminary examinations, unless approved by the preliminary examination committee. To remain in good academic standing, Ph.D. students must complete the major area preliminary examinations no later than the beginning of their fourth year in the program if they entered the program without a master's degree and no later than the beginning of their third year in the program if they entered the program with a master's degree.

Doctoral students should recognize that it is to their advantage to complete their preliminary examination as soon as possible (after or when completing 60 hours of coursework); in this way, more time can be devoted to dissertation work. It is expected that that once the required courses for the major area have been completed, the student is ready to take the preliminary examination in that area.

### **Examination Eligibility**

Students must be in good academic standing in order to take the preliminary examination. This consists of a minimum 3.0 GPA including work at the master's level and no grade lower than *B* in any major area course. All five required major area courses also must be completed prior to the examination date except under rare circumstances when the course offerings did not permit a student to complete all five courses in a timely manner. In this scenario, both the student and the examination committee must agree on the student's readiness for taking the exam.

### **Examination Application to the Graduate College**

Students taking their preliminary examination must submit the electronic Preliminary Exam Application forms to the Graduate College no later than 8 weeks prior to the examination date. Once all committee members and the Director of the Graduate Studies have signed the student's application form, the Graduate College will receive the form and assign the Graduate Faculty Representative to the student's preliminary examination committee, who will also serve on the student's dissertation committee.

### **Examination Committee**

See above "Preliminary Examination Committee" under ADVISOR AND COMMITTEES.

### **Question Pool**

Questions can be submitted each exam period by area faculty in good standing with the Graduate College (i.e., graduate faculty status) and these become part of the preliminary examination question pool. The area chair selects questions from those submitted to appear on the preliminary

exam. In this fashion, each area accumulates a number of questions that may reappear on subsequent examinations. In order to accommodate new faculty and new developments in the area, new or modified questions are likely to appear each time the area exam is offered. Copies of all old preliminary exams are available from the area chair or departmental secretary for students to review in preparation for their examination.

### **Examination Preparation**

Students taking an exam are encouraged to meet as a group with the entire examination committee to discuss the structure and content of the examination, reading materials, studying strategies and approaches to answering questions. Upon students' request for a meeting, the area chair will arrange a time and location.

### **Examination Format and Content**

The written preliminary examination is administered in two parts on separate consecutive days. Each part is an eight-hour, take-home exam.

The content of the written examination is not limited to material covered in required and elective seminars but reflects the breadth and depth of the area's subject matter. The examination is given in two parts:

Part I is a general examination covering theories and methods common to all students majoring in the area, regardless of specialization within that area.

Part II may be a specialized examination, or another general examination as determined by the area. Students declare their specialization in one of several pre-approved areas of concentration. Each area explicitly designates the sub-areas available for specialized study/examination in the area program statement.

### **Grading Procedures**

The chair of the exam committee makes copies of the examination and distributes these to the graders, including the Graduate Faculty Representative assigned by the Graduate College. The Graduate Faculty Representative must be a reader of the examination and must sign the appropriate form notifying the Graduate College that the exam has been completed.

Each committee member will independently grade the examination and it is typical that students will be formally notified of their results within 2 weeks of the exam date.

Committee members may award grades of High Pass, Pass, Low Pass, or Fail when evaluating individual questions, but only grades of High Pass, Pass, or Fail are reported as final exam grades. The evaluation agreed upon by the majority of committee members determines the final grades reported to the student and to the Director of Graduate Studies. Three grades are reported: one each for Part I, Part II, and Overall.

Students cannot pass a preliminary examination half if one or more questions are omitted. If a reasonable attempt is not made to answer a question, it will be considered an omission.

A student may fail either Part I or Part II of the written exam and still pass the other part. In this circumstance the student must retake only the part that was failed. The exam on the failed portion must be completed within one calendar year of the date the exam was first taken. If the failed portion of the exam is not taken within one calendar year of the first attempt, the entire major area examination must be retaken.

Feedback regarding results may be delayed beyond the standard timeline described above during the May exam period. This is because the May examination and its grading occur during the summer session when some faculty are out of town. Depending on faculty availability, the grading of the written exam for the May exam period might involve only a simple majority of the area faculty. Similarly, the informal meeting for those who did not pass the May examination might be delayed beyond the standard three weeks after the written exam and may be attended by a simple majority of area faculty.

If students do not pass the major area written exam twice (either the entire exam or any one part), they will be dismissed from the program.

### **Notification of Results to the Students**

Once the area committee agrees on the student's final grades for the written examination, the exam chair will report these grades (High Pass, Pass or Fail for Part I, Part II and Overall) to the student and Director of Graduate Studies via a written memorandum. Those failing the examination will be notified of their grades prior to the informal meeting between the student and the examination committee. It is typically that students will be formally notified of their examination results within 2 weeks of the exam date. If two or more students take the same area exam, all will be notified of the results at the same time. It is possible, however, for students taking the exam in one area to be notified before those taking the exam in another area.

### **Post-Prelim Meetings**

Each student will have a meeting with their preliminary examination committee anytime within four weeks after receiving the results of their written examinations. Each student will schedule a meeting date, time, and location with their prelim committee. The length of the meeting is approximately one hour. To get the most out of this meeting, students are recommended to start planning their dissertation research while they are studying for their prelims.

If the student passed their written exams, **the main objectives of the meeting are for the student to reflect on their achievements, including their preliminary examinations, and to set new goals for the next two years, including their dissertation research.**

On the preliminary examination, the student tells the committee about their self-evaluations of their preliminary examination process and performance. The committee members provide feedback on them.

On research, teaching, and dissertation: The student presents (a) their research, teaching, and professional interests, including their professional identity, (b) their accomplishments so far (e.g., conference presentations, manuscript preparations, teaching), (c) their career goals, (d) their plans of study for the next two years, and (e) their dissertation topic ideas, including why these topics are important to study, how these are related to their broader research interests, and, if they already know, what datasets they are planning to use, to the committee.

To facilitate the committee's feedback, the student must send their most updated c.v. and a one-page handout outlining their dissertation research ideas to the committee no later than a week prior to the meeting.

If the prelim committee does not include the student's (potential) dissertation advisor, their advisor should be invited to attend the meeting as a guest.

If the student did not pass their written exams, the main purpose of the meeting is for the student and the prelim committee to discuss the reasons for the failure and to formulate a plan of study for the student to re-take the exams.

### **Notification of Results to the Graduate College**

Prior to their meeting, the student must submit the electronic Preliminary Exam Report form for the committee to report the results to the Graduate College. At the end of the meeting, the chair will fill in the results and the committee members will sign the form.

### **Transition from Preliminary Examination to Dissertation Proposal**

Students are required to register for dissertation hours in the semester following successful passage of the preliminary exam. It is important that students begin as soon as possible developing a defensible dissertation proposal with the assistance of their major advisor.

## **DISSERTATION**

The dissertation is a mature piece of scholarship embodying the results of original research. Students should begin exploring dissertation ideas during their second (for those who entered the program with a master's degree) or third (for those who entered the program without the master's degree) year in the program. Next they should develop a dissertation proposal right after completing their major area preliminary examination, and be prepared to publicly defend the proposal (i.e., the research topic) no later than prior to the fifth year of full-time study for those who entered without a master's degree and prior to the fourth year for those who entered with a master's degree. The proposal is a detailed description of the research problem and planned research.

With the major advisor's approval, a public proposal defense (i.e., topic approval defense) will be held. At least two weeks prior to the proposal defense, the student will provide a copy of the proposal to committee members. (See above "PhD. Dissertation Committee" under ADVISORS AND COMMITTEES). At least one week prior to the defense, the student will provide all other members of the department (faculty and graduate students) with their dissertation abstract as well as the defense date, time, place, and the names of the committee members. At the same time, a copy of the full proposal must be made available in the department office. Failure to notify the department at least one week prior to the defense, or failure to make a copy of the complete proposal available, will result in a delay of the student's defense. On or prior to the proposal defense meeting date, the student must submit the electronic Dissertation Topic Approval form for the committee to report the results of the proposal defense to the Graduate College.

Once a student has a dissertation proposal (topic) approved by the Graduate College, she/he/they becomes a Doctoral Candidate (ABD). The student must be in continuous registration for at least one hour of SOC 7990 per semester, excluding summers, until the dissertation is completed. Students who plan to graduate during the summer session must be enrolled in SOC 7990 that term.

Upon completion of the written dissertation, the student must pass a public oral defense conducted by their committee. The results of the dissertation defense must be received in the Graduate College by the published deadline set by the College. This date is approximately six weeks prior to commencement. At least two weeks prior to the oral defense, the student will provide a copy of the complete dissertation to committee members. At least one week prior to the defense, the student will provide all other members of the department (faculty and students) with their dissertation abstract as well as the date, time, location of the defense, and the members of the committee. At the same time a copy of the complete dissertation must be made available in the department office. Failure to either notify the department or to make available a copy of the dissertation at least one

week prior to the defense will result in the postponement of the proposal defense. On or prior to the defense meeting date, the student will submit the electronic Defense and Manuscript Approval form for the committee to report the results of the defense. The final copy of the completed dissertation must be uploaded on Ohio Link by the published deadline set by the College. This date is approximately four weeks prior to commencement. Students failing to meet the Graduate College deadlines will not be eligible for graduation that semester.

## POLICY GUIDELINES

1. The completion of the Ph.D. degree in Sociology usually takes four or five years. Students entering the doctoral program without a master's degree will take two years to complete the thesis and course requirements for the M.A. degree and three more years to complete the Ph.D. Students entering the doctoral program with a master's degree will need four years to complete the Ph.D. requirements.
2. The completion of the M.A. degree in Sociology usually takes two years. Although possible to complete in less than two years, such an achievement is likely only under ideal circumstances in terms of course offerings and other contingencies.
3. A major concentration at the doctoral level must include at least five scheduled courses, and at least four scheduled courses are required for a minor concentration. No courses can be double-counted toward a major and a minor area of concentration. Independent study courses may not be included as part of the minimum requirements for any major or minor area of concentration if regular seminars are available. Graduate courses from another university or another department on this campus, however, may be included within a major or minor concentration, contingent upon prior approval by the departmental Graduate Committee. The student should consult the respective program statements for the departmental areas of concentration for a list of required courses.
4. A major concentration for the M.A. degree must include at least three regular content courses. Independent study courses may not be included within this minimum. Graduate courses from another university or another department at Bowling Green may be included within a major as part of these requirements, so long as these receive the prior approval of the departmental Graduate Committee. The departmental area program statements list the required courses for the various areas of specialization.
5. Graduate students' achievements are evaluated annually by the Sociology Department Graduate Committee to assess whether they are exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations according to the department's timeline and criteria for satisfactory progress in the Ph.D. program. The evaluation is meant to encourage timely degree completion and to offer students a constructive feedback and guidance about the trajectory of students' graduate work.
6. Continuance of financial support depends on satisfactory progress in the degree requirements of the program and adequate performance in graduate assistantship assignments. In particular, students entering the doctoral program without a master's degree are required to have an approved thesis proposal prior to the end of their second year and must satisfy the thesis and course requirements for the M.A. degree before the beginning of their third year in the program. Students will have 2 weeks after the beginning of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year to complete their thesis in order to continue to receive funding. If this deadline is missed, funding cannot resume until the semester after the thesis is completed. The graduate committee still has the discretion to determine that the student will not receive any additional stipend or scholarship support, as well as to dismiss the student from the doctoral program.
7. Students holding research or teaching assistantships are required to register for at least 8 graduate credit hours during the fall and spring semesters to maintain their full-time status as defined by Graduate College policy. Funded students who fail to register for 8 credits will have their stipends terminated effective the date this occurs. Students with summer stipends are required to register for at least 1 semester hour of credit, or risk termination of their stipends.

8. Graduate assistantship assignments include teaching assistantship (TA), teaching instructor (TI), and research assistantship (RA). Teaching is not required for a student's degree completion; but is highly recommended and may be the only assistantship assignment available in a given semester. The teaching course (SOC 6600) is a degree requirement, regardless of whether the student will be an instructor of record while in the program.
9. Students must register for a minimum of 3 hours of Thesis Research (SOC 6990) as a degree requirement. A maximum of 6 hours of SOC 6990 may be credited toward the minimum degree requirements, although the student is expected to register for as many additional hours as necessary to complete the thesis.
10. Students may not enroll in Thesis Research (SOC 6990) prior to the completion of two semesters of full-time study in the M.A. program. Thereafter, students may enroll in as many hours of SOC 6990 per semester as they wish, but they also must take at least one substantive area seminar per semester (independent studies, teaching introductory sociology, or professional development courses do not fulfill this requirement). During summer semesters, students may enroll exclusively in SOC 6990.
11. Students may take a maximum of 6 hours of Readings in Sociology (SOC 6850), also referred to as Independent Study, to meet the M.A. degree credit requirements.
12. Students who register for Thesis Research (SOC 6990) are required thereafter to maintain continuous registration in SOC 6990 (at least one hour per semester), excluding summer, until the thesis is accepted by the Graduate College. Students who plan to graduate during the summer session must be enrolled in SOC 6990 that term.
13. The final copy of the completed thesis must be received in the Graduate College by the published deadline set by the College. Students failing to meet this deadline will not be eligible for graduation that semester.
14. Students are eligible to take the major area preliminary examination after completing at least 60 hours in the approved course of study beyond a bachelor's degree, including five courses in the major area. This is typically prior to the beginning of the third year of full-time study for students who entered the program with a master's degree and prior to the beginning of the fourth year of full-time study for students who entered the program without a master's degree.
15. A request to take the major area preliminary examination must be filed with the Graduate College at least eight weeks prior to the examination. It is at this point that the Graduate Dean appoints a Graduate Faculty Representative to participate in the preliminary examination process. This faculty representative must be a member of the exam committee and serves on the dissertation committee. It is the responsibility of the Ph.D. student to apply to the Graduate College for the appointment of the at-large faculty representative before the preliminary exam is taken. The Dean has emphasized that a preliminary examination taken in the absence of Graduate Faculty Representative participation will be declared invalid (i.e., the exam will have to be retaken).
16. The chair of the major area of concentration will serve as a student's preliminary examination committee chair. Students are not permitted to choose the faculty constituting their preliminary examination committee. Such a practice would undermine the standardization of examinations that the department seeks to achieve. While students and their major advisor do choose



dissertation committee members, the composition of examination committees is determined by the faculty in the respective examination areas. Examination committees and dissertation committees are separate entities having different functions. While there likely will be some overlap between a student's preliminary exam committee and their dissertation committee, the only member that must be on both committees is the Graduate Faculty Representative.

17. Students may take a maximum of 9 hours of Readings in Sociology (SOC 7850), also referred to as Independent Study, to meet the Ph.D. degree credit requirements.
18. Students may take a maximum of 12 semester hours of Readings for Preliminary Examinations (SOC 7980).
19. A doctoral student may not enroll in SOC 7990 (Dissertation Research) until the major area preliminary exam has been successfully completed. A minimum of 16 hours of SOC 7990 is required, but no more than 30 hours of SOC 7990 may be included within the minimum number of credits required for the degree. Additional credit hours may be taken, but these will not count toward the degree credit requirements.
20. Immediately upon successful completion of the preliminary exam, students should begin developing a "defendable" dissertation proposal under the supervision of their major advisor. The goal is to have a defended proposal before the beginning of the last year of funding, which is typically the fifth year for students entering the doctoral program with a bachelor's degree and the fourth year for students entering with a master's degree. If this deadline is missed, funding cannot resume until the semester after the dissertation proposal is completed; however, the graduate committee has discretion to determine that the student will not receive any additional stipend or scholarship support.
21. A student who registers for Dissertation Research (SOC 7990) is required thereafter to maintain continuous registration in SOC 7990 (at least one hour per semester), excluding summer session, until the dissertation is completed and accepted by the Graduate College. Students who plan to graduate in summer must enroll in SOC 7990 that term.
22. Since the dissertation defense is a public presentation of the research, the student is required by the Graduate College to publicize the date of the defense by notifying the Graduate College about two weeks before the oral defense is to be held, so that they can include the announcement in the weekly newsletter for faculty and staff. This is a Graduate College requirement.
23. Upon completion of the dissertation, the student must pass a public oral defense conducted by their committee. The results of the dissertation defense must be received in the Graduate College by the published deadline set by the College. Students failing to meet this deadline will not be eligible for graduation that semester.
24. The final copy of the completed dissertation must be received in the Graduate College by the published deadline set by the College. Students failing to meet this deadline will not be eligible for graduation that semester.

The student also should consult the *Graduate Catalog* for general policies affecting Ph.D. students.

**APPENDIX A**  
**DEGREE PROGRESS CHECKLIST: M.A. DEGREE**

**Course Requirements for all M.A. Students**

1. Required courses:
  - a. SOC 6010 - Classical Sociological Theory (not required for Applied Demography).
  - b. SOC 6090 - Statistical Packages
  - c. SOC 6100 - Statistical Techniques and Applications in Sociology
  - c. SOC 6110 - Intermediate Methodology
  - d. SOC 6120 - Intermediate Statistics
  - e. SOC 6610 – Professional Development
  - f. SOC 6990 - Thesis Research (3 hours minimum, 6 hours maximum)
  - g. Required courses for major area of concentration
2. Select major advisor by the end of the second semester.

**Thesis Requirements**

1. Formation of a thesis committee consisting of a major advisor and at least two full-time sociology graduate faculty members.
2. Public oral presentation of a thesis proposal by the end of the third semester. The proposal must be a detailed description, not an abstract, of the research problem and the theoretical/methodological orientation.
3. Complete at least 30 semester hours of graduate course credit. At least 3 of these credits must be Thesis Research (SOC 6990); however, not more than 6 hours of SOC 6990 may be counted toward the fulfillment of the minimum credit hour requirements.
4. Completed thesis submitted to committee at least two weeks prior to the oral defense.
5. Submission of completed thesis to the Graduate College by the published deadline set by the College. This date is approximately four weeks prior to commencement.
6. Application for graduation by deadline specified in the *Graduate Catalog*.

These points of degree progress are used by the Graduate Committee in determining eligibility for renewal of contracts and continuation in the program.

**APPENDIX B**  
**DEGREE PROGRESS CHECKLIST: PH.D. PROGRAM**

1. Meet residency requirement as specified in the *Graduate Catalog*
2. Declare major and minor areas by end of the second semester of course work.
3. Select major advisor by end of second semester.
4. Required courses:
  - a. SOC 6010 - Classical Sociological Theory
  - b. SOC 6090 - Statistical Packages
  - c. SOC 6100 - Statistical Techniques and Applications in Sociology
  - d. SOC 6110 - Intermediate Methodology
  - e. SOC 6120 - Intermediate Statistics
  - f. SOC 6600 - Teaching Introductory Sociology
  - g. SOC 6610 – Professional Development
  - h. SOC 7130 - Research Design
  - i. SOC 7990 - Dissertation Research (16 hours minimum; 30 hours maximum).
- g. Required courses for major and minor areas of concentration
5. Apply to Graduate College for the assignment of a Graduate Faculty Representative at least eight weeks prior to taking major area preliminary examination.
6. Major area preliminary examination should be taken prior to the beginning of the third year for those who joined the program with a master's degree from another program, and prior to the beginning of the fourth year for those who joined the program without a master's degree, and must be completed prior to the beginning of the sixth semester.
7. Complete at least 90 semester hours of graduate course credit beyond the bachelor's degree. Students who entered the program with a master's degree from other programs are waived for 30 credit hours. At least 16 of these credits must be Dissertation Research (SOC 7990); however, not more than 30 hours of SOC 7990 may be counted toward the fulfillment of the minimum credit hour requirements.
8. Choose dissertation committee consisting of major advisor and three additional full-time graduate faculty, two of whom must come from within the department. The Graduate Faculty Representative assigned to the student's preliminary exam committee also will serve on the dissertation committee.
9. Defense of formal dissertation proposal prior to the student's last year of funding.
10. Completed dissertation submitted to committee at least two weeks prior to the defense.
11. Completed dissertation made available to departmental members at least one week prior to the defense.
12. Oral defense of dissertation by the published deadline set by the Graduate College. This date is approximately six weeks prior to commencement.
13. Submit completed copy of dissertation to the Graduate College through uploading it on Ohio Link by the published deadline set by the College. This date is approximately four weeks prior to commencement.
14. Application for graduation by deadline specified in the *Graduate Catalog*.

These points of degree progress are used by the Graduate Committee in determining eligibility for renewal of contracts and continuation in the program.

**APPENDIX C**  
**SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

1. Introduction and statement of the problem.
2. Theoretical orientation and review of the literature. This section of the proposal should review only that literature which is pertinent to the research topic.
3. Specific hypotheses to be tested, if appropriate. State the hypotheses and variables that will be investigated. Give specific attention to how the concepts and variables will be defined and operationalized.
4. Methodology. Describe data (quantitative or qualitative) to be used. Discuss how the data will be gathered, their adequacy and limitations, and how the research design is appropriate for testing the hypotheses.
5. Analysis of the data. Explain how the hypotheses will be tested, the kinds of analyses to be used, and the format for presenting the findings.
6. Contribution of the research. Discuss the importance of the study: its theoretical, methodological, and substantive contributions as well as any policy implications.
7. Limitations of the proposed research (e.g., theoretical problems, generalizability of findings, measurement, or sampling limitations).

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Timeline and Criteria for Satisfactory Progress in the PhD Program**

To be successful, it is important that students and faculty understand the timeline for completion of the PhD as well as the expectations for students to maintain satisfactory progress. The schedule below outlines the optimal progression of students through the PhD program, expectations for satisfactory progress, and important procedural benchmarks. It is recognized that an individual's situation might deviate from the schedule below for a variety of reasons, some of which are beyond their control, such as a required course not being offered in a given semester or year. The committee will evaluate each student's situation on a case-by-case basis.

#### **General Expectations:**

- A balance of A's and B's in coursework; no C's, which are considered unsatisfactory
- Successful completion of required and elective coursework
- Successful performance of teaching/research assistantship responsibilities
- Demonstration of ethics and a professional attitude, as well as engagement in the intellectual life of the department (e.g., attendance at CFDR presentations, participation in workshops, other program activities).

#### **For Students Entering without an MA**

##### **Year 1**

###### **Fall Semester**

- SOC 6010: Classical Sociological Theory
- SOC 6610: Professional Development
- SOC 6100: Statistical Techniques and Applications in Sociology
- SOC 6110: Intermediate Methodology

###### **Winter Session**

- Stay academically engaged, read sociology journals, think about potential thesis topics

###### **Spring Semester**

- SOC 6120: Intermediate Statistics
- SOC 6090: Statistical Packages
- Elective or required course
- Elective or required course
- Identification of Thesis Advisor (who will also serve as Major advisor) dept form required
- Preliminary identification of thesis topic

###### **Summer Semester**

- SOC 6990: Thesis Research
- Further development of thesis topic

##### **Year 2**

###### **Fall Semester**

- SOC 7130: Research Design
- Elective or required course
- Elective or required course (if available)

- SOC 6990: Thesis Research
- Formation of a thesis committee
- Defense of M.A. thesis proposal

#### **Winter Session**

- Continue work on Thesis

#### **Spring Semester**

- Elective or required course
- Elective or required course
- Elective or required course (if available)
- SOC 6990: Thesis Research
- M.A. Thesis Defense

#### **Summer Semester**

- SOC 6600: Teaching Introductory Sociology
- [Mandatory] Completion of M.A. degree no later than beginning of Fall Semester

### **Year 3**

#### **Fall and/or Spring Semesters**

- Complete remaining major and minor area coursework
- Gain instructor experience in freestanding courses, unless engaged in research assistantship
- Preparation of the M.A. thesis and/or other research paper for presentation (e.g., BGSU-OSU, ASC, PAA, ASA conferences)
- Submission of the M.A. thesis and/or other paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- SOC 7980: Readings for Preliminary Examination
- Schedule Preliminary Examination (if coursework will be complete)
- Identify Dissertation Advisor and potential dissertation topics

#### **Winter Session**

- Work on and submit papers for presentation and publication

#### **Summer Semester**

- SOC 7980: Readings for Preliminary Examination
- Complete Preliminary Examination
- Begin thinking about job market, perhaps attending “Students on Job Market” workshop.

### **Year 4**

#### **Fall and Spring Semesters**

- Development of dissertation proposal (Fall)
- Defense of dissertation proposal before end of Spring Semester
- Complete remaining minor area coursework
- Instructor experience in freestanding courses, unless engaged in research assistantship
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to revise/submit research papers for publication
- Preparation of a second research paper for presentation and publication
- Submission of a second paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal

### **Winter Session**

- Continue work on dissertation
- Work on and submit papers for presentation and publication

### **Summer Semester**

- Preparation for the Job Market (finalizing CV, research and teaching statements, invite letter writers)
- Preliminary analysis for dissertation in preparation for job presentation

## **Year 5**

### **Fall and Spring Semesters**

- On the Job Market
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to revise/submit research papers for publication
- Preparation of a third research paper for presentation and publication
- Submission of a third paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- Instructor experience in freestanding courses, unless engaged in research assistantship
- (Recommended) Defense of dissertation before end of Spring Semester

### **Winter Session**

- Continue work on dissertation
- Work on and submit papers for presentation and publication

### **Summer Semester**

- (Recommended) Completion of Ph.D. degree by beginning of Fall Semester

## **Year 6**

- A sixth year of funding might be possible for students in strong standing, making excellent progression on dissertation, and actively pursuing opportunities to publish their research.
- Instructor experience in freestanding courses.
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to revise/submit research papers for publication

## **For Students Entering with an Approved MA**

### **Year 1**

#### **Fall Semester**

- SOC 6010: Classical Sociological Theory (or elective or required course)
- SOC 6610: Professional Development (new in Fall 2020)
- SOC 6100: Statistical Techniques and Applications in Sociology (or elective or required course)
- SOC 6110: Intermediate Methodology (or elective or required course)
- SOC XXXX: Professional Development

#### **Winter Session**

- Stay academically engaged, read sociology journals, think about potential topics for spring semester course projects



### **Spring Semester**

- SOC 6120: Intermediate Statistics
- SOC 6090: Statistical Packages (or elective or required course, new in Spring 2021)
- Elective or required course
- Elective or required course (if courses are available)
- Identification of Major Advisor *dept form required*

### **Summer Semester**

- SOC 6600: Teaching Introductory Sociology (if offered)
- Preparation of the M.A. thesis and/or other research paper for presentation (e.g., BGSU-OSU Research Conference) and publication

## **Year 2**

### **Fall and Spring Semesters**

- SOC 7130: Research Design (Fall Semester)
- SOC 7980: Readings for Preliminary Examination (Spring Semester)
- Complete remaining major and minor area coursework
- Gain instructor experience in freestanding courses, unless engaged in research assistantship
- Submission of at least one paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- Schedule Preliminary Examination (Spring Semester if coursework will be complete)
- Identification of Dissertation Advisor and potential dissertation topics (by end of Spring)

### **Winter Session**

- Work on and submit papers for presentation and publication

### **Summer Semester**

- SOC 7980: Readings for Preliminary Examination
- Complete Preliminary Examination
- Begin thinking about job market, perhaps attending “Students on Job Market” workshop.

## **Year 3**

### **Fall and Spring Semesters**

- Development of dissertation proposal (Fall)
- Defense of dissertation proposal before end of Spring Semester
- Complete remaining major and minor area coursework
- Instructor experience in freestanding courses, unless engaged in research assistantship
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to revise/submit research papers for publication
- Preparation of a second research paper for presentation and publication
- Submission of second paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal

### **Winter Session**

- Work on and submit papers for presentation and publication

### **Summer Semester**

- Preparation for the Job Market (finalizing CV, research and teaching statements, invite letter writers)
- Preliminary analysis for dissertation in preparation for job presentation

## **Year 4**

### **Fall and Spring Semesters**

- On the Job Market
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to revise/submit research papers for publication
- Preparation of a third research paper for presentation
- Submission of a third paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal
- Instructor experience in freestanding courses, unless engaged in research assistantship
- (Recommended) Defense of dissertation before end of Spring Semester

### **Summer Semester**

- (Recommended) Completion of Ph.D. degree before the beginning of Fall Semester

## **Year 5**

- A fifth year of funding might be possible for students in strong standing, making excellent progression on dissertation, and actively pursuing opportunities to publish their research.
- Instructor experience in freestanding courses.
- Evidence of ongoing efforts to revise/submit research papers for publication