

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. GENERAL.....2
 - A. Objectives2
 - B. Advising.....2

- II. ADMISSION TO THE M.A. AND PH.D. PROGRAMS2
 - A. The M.A. Program.....2
 - B. Students Entering with Previous Graduate Coursework in Sociology.....2

- III. THE M.A. DEGREE3
 - A. General requirements.....3
 - B. The M.A. with Thesis (30 hours)3
 - C. Nonthesis M.A. with Research Paper3
 - D. The M.A. without Thesis or Research Paper(38 hours).....4
 - E. Admission to the Ph.D. Program following completion of M.A. Thesis or Research Paper4

- IV. THE PH.D. DEGREE.....4
 - A. General.....4
 - B. Advising and Planning a Ph.D. Program.....4
 - C. The Ph.D. Area Examinations..... 4-5
 - D. The Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam.....6

- V. THE PH.D. DISSERTATION6

- VI. GUIDE TO SEQUENCE OF DEPARTMENTAL EVENTS DURING A GRADUATE CAREER7

- VII. POLICY CONCERNING DEPARTMENT ASSISTANTSHIPS.....7
 - A. General Practice.....7
 - B. Eligibility Criteria7
 - C. Selection Procedures8
 - D. Other appointment criteria8

- VIII. GRADUATE-STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNANCE.....8
 - A. General.....8
 - B. Standing Departmental Committees9
 - C. Graduate Student Vote on Committees9

- IX. POLICY ON GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING10
 - A. Minimum Requirements.....10
 - B. Miscellaneous Guidelines10

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

I. GENERAL

A. Objectives

The department of Sociology has three goals: (1) to foster scientific research in the behavioral sciences and to disseminate it through scholarly publication; (2) to develop excellence in teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels through well formulated curricula as well as individual teaching effort; and (3) to serve the larger community in the proper application of sociological knowledge.

The graduate program of the Department of Sociology intends to develop professionals who are qualified both to conduct research and teach. The Department's academic program has two major objectives: (1) the attainment of general competence in theory, methods, and the substantive literature of sociology, and (2) the attainment of special competence within an area of concentration or "major" plus substantial competence in a "minor" field.

B. Advising

1. To facilitate the student's adjustment to the Department and to guide his/her professional training, Department policy is that every student select a faculty advisor. Students new to the Department will utilize the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) as advisor until the student has time to select an advisor and M.A. committee chair. We encourage students to select an advisor by the end of the first year in the program. Students should submit an advising form to the Sociology Department Office by the end of their first year. If the student changes advisors later in the program, new forms must be submitted.
2. Prior to his/her first registration, each new graduate student will confer with the Director of Graduate Studies to review the student's previous preparation in sociology. New students in the M.A. program must take all of the theory and methods/statistics courses required for the M.A. degree.

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

A. The M.A. Program

Admission to the graduate program as a candidate for the M.A. degree requires (a) a minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 and (b) a minimum score of 1100 on the aptitude test of the Graduate Record Examination (quantitative plus verbal GRE scores). The Graduate Admissions Committee has authority to make limited exceptions to these standards when a candidate meets at least one of the criteria and shows strong evidence of graduate school potential, e.g., a high performance in the last two years of college or unusually high grades in social science or mathematics.

B. Students Entering with Previous Graduate Coursework in Sociology

Persons entering with an M.A. degree who have written an empirical M.A. thesis may submit the thesis to a committee of three faculty. The student should first select a chairperson and review the thesis with him or her. The chairperson may request minor or major revisions or may determine that the student should

consider an alternative research project. The M.A. committee chair will work with the student on any revisions. The thesis/research paper is then submitted to the full M.A. committee and a Final Examination (oral) over the M.A. thesis and related matters is held. This procedure follows the M.A. with thesis and M.A. with research paper options described below.

III. THE M.A. DEGREE

A. General requirements

1. The M.A. requires 30 semester hours with thesis or research paper and 38 hours without thesis. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is required over all courses applied to the M.A. and each of the following required courses must be passed with a grade of at least a B-:

34:201 History of Sociological Theory

34:214 Introduction to Sociological Data Analysis

34:215 Sampling, Measurement, and Observational Techniques

34:216 Linear Models in Sociological Research

M.A. students must also take 34:200 (Graduate Proseminar) for two semesters.

2. The M.A. candidate should select a chairperson for his/her Examining Committee who is within his/her major field in the first year of residence. The chairperson and the candidate agree on two additional members for the M.A. Examining Committee. The three-person committee should include two faculty from the student's major and at least one person with methodological/statistical skills related to the person's major.

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

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

C. Nonthesis M.A. with Research Paper

The same requirements as for a formal M.A. thesis will apply, but the student need not meet the Graduate College requirements or deadlines. The M.A. Research Paper should be of journal article length and should be viewed as a learning experience. The student should defend the Paper by the end of the 4th semester. Students who have not completed the M.A. degree requirements in six semesters will not be eligible for consideration for financial support until they have completed the M.A. degree requirements.

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

1. This degree is awarded to a candidate who completes 38 semester hours of course work and passes a Final Examination (oral) over the Master's program of study conducted by his/her Examining Committee. This exam is not merely to duplicate course work but test a candidate's mastery of some subject matter and higher integrative abilities. Registrations that would bring the candidate's accumulated graduate hours in sociology to more than 40 hours will not be approved.
2. The M.A. without thesis does not qualify a student for the Ph.D. program.

E. Admission to the Ph.D. Program following completion of M.A. with Thesis or Research Paper

Prior to the M.A. Final Examination, students should submit *Request for Admission to the Ph.D. Program* forms to their M.A. Committee Chair. At the Final Examination, the M.A. Committee will review the student's record, including performance in classes, the M.A. research, and Graduate Assistantship (RA/TA) assignments. The Committee will make a written recommendation regarding admission to the Ph.D. program on the forms provided. This recommendation must be approved by the DGS.

IV. THE PH.D. DEGREE

A. General

The Ph.D. requires a minimum of 72 semester hours total graduate credit and a minimum of 36 hours in addition to those credited toward the M.A. degree. These 36 hours may not include any credit for 34:386, Ph.D. Dissertation. A GPA of 3.25 is required over all courses (exclusive of the 300-level) applied to the Ph.D. and a B- is required in each of these required courses:

- a Ph.D. level theory course offered by the Sociology Department (eg 34:202 Theory Construction)
- 34:382 Seminar: Practicum on Teaching Sociology (if the student wants to teach his/her own course)
- Two courses (excluding 34:383 or any other independent reading or research course) of at least 3 s.h. in research methods or statistics selected by the student and his/her advisor.

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

B. Advising and Planning a Ph.D. Program

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

C. The Ph.D. Area Examinations

1. General

The Ph.D. Area Examinations are intended to determine whether the candidate is prepared intellectually to undertake the dissertation project and assume professional status. He or she should demonstrate mastery of the major, minor, and related fields of study, as well as the relevant research tools. In the exam the candidate should demonstrate substantial professional competence. The area exams are the principal examinations in the graduate career, but they are to be prepared for expeditiously, passed, and the dissertation project initiated; otherwise, the graduate career is unduly lengthened. The examinations should be taken immediately after completion of courses (a) required for the Ph.D., and (b) those critical to the areas the student has selected (see below).

2. Eligibility to Take Area Exams

- (a) 3.25 GPA (exclusive of 300-level courses);
- (b) A student who has accumulated 45 hours of course work after the M.A. without taking the area exams will not be permitted to register for additional Ph.D. credit until taking this examination.

3. Exam Areas

- (a) Students must take at least one exam from List A (Department areas of strength). There will be standing committees of three faculty (appointed by the chair for year-long terms) who will write and evaluate these exams.

LIST A

Social Psychology
 Crime, Law and Deviance
 Stratification
 Political Sociology
 Organizations
 Family

- (b) Students must take a second exam from List A or List B.

LIST B

Any area for which the student can find (and get approved by the Graduate Committee) three faculty willing to write and evaluate in that area. Some areas might be:

Aging
 Sociology of Culture
 Sociology of Gender
 Sociology of Education
 Medical Sociology
 Theory
 Methods

(This list is not meant to be exhaustive or necessarily representative of what might be possible. We have always allowed students to “manufacture” a legitimate exam area if there are sufficient faculty to write and evaluate it and if it is approved by the DGS and Graduate Studies Committee.)

4. Procedures

- (a) Ph.D. students may take an exam anytime they feel they are ready. Concrete advice about courses and preparation will be provided, however. Students should consult with the advisors about this.
- (b) The two exams need not be taken during the same semester.
- (c) A student who has failed an exam two times will not be allowed to retake the exam and will be considered to have not met Ph.D. requirements and will be dropped from the program.
- (d) Exams will be “in-class, closed book” and will typically be eight hours in length.
- (e) Students may bring a bibliography or reference list into the examination. This list will contain references only and will be checked before the examination begins.
- (f) There will be no required oral exam.

D. The Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

Students (entering the program in Fall 2004 or later) must take the comprehensive examination within the semester following their successful completion of their second area exam. The comprehensive examination will consist of a hearing focused on the dissertation prospectus. The comprehensive examination committee will be the same as the dissertation thesis committee, with the thesis advisor serving as chair (see below). A student whose comprehensive exam is “unsatisfactory” will be allowed one more examination. In accordance with Graduate College policy, the second exam must take place at least four months after the initial exam. Department policy requires that the second exam take place within twelve months.

1. The Dissertation Prospectus

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

V. THE PH.D. DISSERTATION

1. Dissertation Committee

The Ph.D. Dissertation Committee (a minimum of 5 faculty, including outside person(s) is to be formed immediately after completing the area exams. The Dissertation must be written in the student’s major area (one of the two comps areas) and the members should be familiar with the particular theories methods, and substantive areas relevant to the dissertation topic. It is generally assumed that at least two members will be from the major area. More specifically, the committee should include:

- (a) at least three members from the Sociology Department.
- (b) at least two members from the students major area.
- (c) at least one member from outside the department.

2. Dissertation Defense

A student whose dissertation defense (final exam) is “unsatisfactory” will be allowed one more examination. In accordance with Graduate College Policy, the next defense must take place during the following session or later.

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

<u>Semester in Residence</u>	<u>Departmental Events</u>
Prior to registration	Consult with the DGS of the Department concerning registration
2nd - 3rd semester	Form M.A. Examining Committee and present outline of proposed M.A. Thesis/Research Paper to advisor
Prior to 5th	1. M.A. Final Oral Examination 2. Admission to Ph.D. Program
5th - 6th	1. Select a major advisor for Ph.D. 2. Take relevant courses, seek advice and prepare for comps 3. Seriously consider taking one area exam
7th - 8th	1. Finish taking area exams 2. Form Ph.D. Dissertation Committee 3. Ph.D. Prospectus Hearing – Comprehensive Exam
9th.....	Ph.D. Final Examination (Defense of the Dissertation)

VII. POLICY CONCERNING DEPARTMENT ASSISTANTSHIPS**A. General Practice**

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

Given the time difference between the date when awards are allocated (spring) and the date they go into effect (August), it may be necessary to make all awards conditional on continued adequate performance. The most important condition is that awards for the fourth academic year of residence are contingent on completing the M.A. degree before the award period begins (about August 20).

B. Eligibility Criteria

The following list gives the eligibility criteria for funding consideration.

1. A minimum grade-point average of 3.0.
2. Adequate progress toward a degree (see section VII. C).
3. Satisfactory performance in the candidate's current appointment, as defined by his/her supervisor.

C. Selection Procedures

For those candidates in residence who request financial assistance the Department has an established procedure for rank-ordering students for receiving assistantships. Faculty evaluations will be a primary source of information about the students. Each spring semester faculty provide evaluations of students potential, academic performance, RA/TA performance, and also indicate the context in which the evaluations were made. Students beyond the first year will be asked to prepare a vita that identifies their professional activities, such as conference presentations, papers submitted, etc. (First year students may provide a vita if they wish.) Students will also be asked to provide a list of courses taken by semester, a chronology indicating when they selected an advisor, completed the MA, took comps and formed a dissertation committee, and information about teaching skills and experience (e.g., course syllabus and course evaluations). First year students will be evaluated separately from the more advanced students. Teaching needs and student teaching qualifications will have to be considered in making award decisions.

D. Other appointment criteria

1. When an appointment is considered for both a Ph.D. and an M.A. candidate, preference should be given to the doctoral candidate when other things are equal
2. Students will have a lower priority for support beyond their fifth year of support.
3. Teaching Assistants must successfully complete one area exam prior to teaching their own courses. They must also have completed 34:382 or an equivalent Ph.D. level course on teaching, approved by the DGS. (See section 1X.)
4. All students holding an appointment as a teaching or research assistant must take a minimum of 6 semester hours per fall and spring semesters and 2 semester hours per summer semester.
5. Appointment offers should be given to students in residence as early as possible. (Unfortunately, the Department can only make awards when authorized by the University administration. Unpredictable events may make funds available at various times throughout the year).

Students are expected to accept or reject the Department's appointment offer as soon as possible.

VIII. GRADUATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNANCE

A. General

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

B. Standing Departmental Committees

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

Graduate Studies – recommends concerning graduate curriculum and award evaluations; supervises requirements and examinations of M.A. and Ph.D. degrees; approves membership of M.A. and Ph.D. Examining Committees.

3 faculty; 2 graduate students

Recruitment – recommends regarding visits and hiring of faculty job applicants.

3 faculty; 2 graduate students

Undergraduate – recommends regarding undergraduate curriculum and advising.

3 faculty; 2 graduate students

Minority Affairs Committee – offers ideas to create a more diverse campus and community

4 faculty, 2 graduate student

Computer Committee – recommends regarding use and distribution of computers

2 faculty, 2 graduate student

Communications Committee – assists with *Sociogram* newsletter

3 faculty, 2 graduate student

Awards Committee – assists with nomination applications

3 faculty, 2 graduate student

Resource Development Committee – assists in obtaining additional departmental funds

3 faculty, 2 graduate student

C. Graduate Student Vote on Committees

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

- (a) General: conventionally understood conflicts of interest which should result in self-disqualifications, e.g., when a member initiates a grievance or petition or has one initiated against him/her.
- (b) Graduate: direct evaluations of other graduate students, including on whom is to be admitted from the M.A. to the Ph.D. program.
- (c) Recruitment: selection of job candidates for visits to the Department or to whom job offers should be made.

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

IX. POLICY ON GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING

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

A. Minimum Requirements

1. The student should have successfully completed one Area exam.
2. The student should be making adequate progress toward the Ph.D. degree.
3. The student should have taken the teaching seminar (34:382) or an equivalent Ph.D.-level course on teaching, approved by the DGS.

B. Miscellaneous Guidelines

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



Revised April 2009

