

Graduate Handbook

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Department of Sociology & Anthropology
West Virginia University
(updated 04/25/2022)

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1. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology at WVU offers a Master of Arts and a Ph.D. in sociology. All students entering the program will be enrolled as doctoral students. Students entering the program with a BA/BS will be dually enrolled in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs until they complete the M.A. requirements. The program emphasizes foundational coursework in sociology, including theory, methods and statistics, as well as courses and independent research in an area related to the department's specializations in crime, community and culture.

The doctoral program explores connections across crime, community, and culture. In addition to being trained in mixed methods—quantitative and qualitative, students are expected to take a third methods course. The Ph.D. program is designed for students who are interested in working as professional sociologists in teaching and research.

The department is strongly committed to teaching, mentoring, and collaborative research with students. Members of the faculty have received major research grants, won national teaching and research awards, published several books and numerous academic articles, and served as the editor or editorial board members of prestigious journals. In many cases, students have worked as research collaborators with faculty and co-authored publications.

1.1 Mission Statement

The Sociology Ph.D. program trains students in the fundamental skills of sociology. Graduates of the program are prepared for teaching and research positions at the academic or professional level. Students acquire advanced knowledge of sociological theory and research in one of the three offered areas of specialization:

- Crime: Social Control and Violence
- Community: Health, Environment and Place
- Culture: Social Psychology, Religion and Organizations

1.2 Program Objectives

The objective of the PhD program in Sociology is to train students to work as professional sociologists in academia, government positions, community agencies, and private industry. We strive to provide students with the skills they need to be successful in their careers. Students who graduate from our program will be able to use sociological theory to evaluate the social world. Students will have the methodological skills needed to develop a research program and assess social issues. Students will be able to critically analyze the canonical literature in one of the three specialty areas offered through the program – crime, community, or culture. Students will be able to explain professional practice and ethics as they relate to sociology and will be familiar with the current state of knowledge, research, and needs of sociology as a discipline.

1.2.1 Learning Outcomes

Students graduating with a MA in Sociology will be able to:

- Proficiently communicate concepts within the field of sociology orally and in writing
- Apply research skills to analyze and/or explore the student's subject area
- Explain the role of research in addressing questions, issues, and problems pertaining to social issues

- Produce original research to evaluate social issues using sociological theories and methodological skills
- Explain professional practice and ethics as they relate to sociology
- Critically analyze and evaluate the literature in the student's subject area

Students graduating with a Ph.D. in Sociology will be able to:

- Effectively communicate, orally and in writing, the current state of knowledge, research, and needs in the field of sociology
- Conduct independent and original research of publishable quality
- Develop a research program to evaluate social issues using sociological theories and methodological skills
- Critically analyze the canonical literature in one of the three specialty areas (crime, community, or culture)
- Explain professional practice and ethics as they relate to sociology

2. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Applying for admission

Required application materials:

- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities previously attended.
- Statement of purpose describing reasons for enrolling in the program. In particular, statements should address the following points: 1) description of your fields of interest, 2) research questions you hope to pursue and how these fit with faculty interests and expertise, and 3) the importance of doctoral study, research, teaching, and community engagement to your future career goals.
- Short sample of your academic writing.
- Curriculum Vitae highlighting your accomplishments in research, teaching and/or service. It should identify any research experience, publications, presentations, teaching experience, service activities, and awards/honors received.
- Three letters of recommendation from people who have direct knowledge of your academic performance, potential for graduate study, and can attest to your academic promise, maturity and commitment to scholarship.
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores. The GRE should be taken within two years of the application submission.
- International students for who English is not the native language are required by the University to submit the Test of English As a Foreign Language (TOEFL). WVU accepts either the TOEFL or the IELTS for this purpose. Please see [English Language Proficiency Requirements](#) for more information.
- Identify a [faculty](#) member (or faculty members) whose research interests you

Applications also include a non-refundable application fee. The GRE is required for all applicants. For any applicant facing special circumstances where taking the GRE presents a hardship, the GPC will evaluate alternatives for that applicant.

The application process is online. Applicants must submit a University Graduate Application at: <https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply>.

2.2 Deadlines for graduate applications

The application deadline is February 1st. Most materials will need to be received by January 15th to be uploaded for evaluation by the February 1st deadline. Initial offers to students will occur on March 15. We do not accept students at mid-year.

2.3 Regular graduate admission

Regular graduate students are degree-seeking students who meet all the criteria for regular admission to a program of their choice. The student must have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university, must have had a grade point average of at least a 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, and must be under no requirements to make up deficiencies.

2.4 Provisional graduate admission

A student may be admitted as a provisional graduate student when the student has earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university, but does not meet the criteria for regular admission. The student may have incomplete credentials, deficiencies to make up, or an undergraduate scholastic record that shows promise but is below the 3.0 grade point average required for regular admission. In the case of provisional admission, the letter of admission from the graduate program will specify the requirements that must be met for the graduate student to be re-classified as a regular graduate student.

2.5 Residency requirements

2.5.1 Residency as part of the doctoral degree requirements

Doctoral education involves many learning experiences that take place outside the formal classroom setting. These involve observing and participating in activities conducted by the graduate faculty, using departmental and University libraries, attending lectures presented by visiting scholars, informally debating other students, and similar activities. To insure that graduate students experience this kind of informal learning, doctoral programs at WVU require at least two semesters in residence on campus.

2.5.2 Residency classification

The residency policy is established by the WV Higher Education Policy Commission Series 25, which is posted at admissions.wvu.edu/admissions/residency/hep-25. The WVU Office of Admissions assigns students a residency classification for admission, tuition, and fee purposes. Students who are legal residents of West Virginia pay “resident” tuition and fees at WVU; students who are residents of other states and nations pay “non-resident” tuition and fees. Further information on residency classification is at admissions.wvu.edu/admissions/residency.

3. TIME LIMITS

Doctoral students are allowed a maximum of ten calendar years from admission to the doctoral program to complete all requirements of the PhD degree. In order to maintain funding students are expected to be admitted to candidacy by the end of the tenth semester of enrollment (for those entering without a master’s degree) or by the end of the eighth semester of enrollment (for those entering with a master’s degree). Students become doctoral candidates once they have successfully passed their dissertation prospectus. Doctoral candidates are allowed no more than five years in which to complete the remaining requirements of their program after being admitted to doctoral candidacy.

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within five calendar years, beginning with the date the student commences courses carrying graduate credit applicable to the degree program. In order for students to maintain funding they are expected to complete all requirements for the master's degree before the end of the fourth semester of enrollment.

4 GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Current students should refer to the [SOCA website](#) for updated forms, links, and other information including a timeline for the thesis, dissertation, and comprehensive exams.

4.1 Required courses

All students are required to take the seven courses in the graduate program's core curriculum. The core courses are designed to provide students with a foundational knowledge in sociology. Students must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75, and a GPA of 3.00 in all courses applied to the graduate program.

The required courses include:

SOC 600 – Professional Development Pro-seminar	1 credit
SOC 601 – Research and Writing Pro-seminar	1 credit
SOC 610 – Advanced General Sociology	3 credits
SOC 615 – Sociological Data Analysis & Interpretation I*	3 credits
SOC 616 – Sociological Data Analysis & Interpretation II*	3 credits
SOC 620 – Sociological Research Methods	3 credits
SOC 730 – Sociological Explanation	3 credits
SOC 710 – Teaching Sociology	3 credits

Additional required core courses for the doctoral program:

SOC 721 – Qualitative Methods	3 credits
SOC 740/760/780 – Area of Specialization	3 credits

*SOC 615 and SOC 616 are 3 credit hour courses. There is an additional weekly workshop associated with both courses that is approximately 1 hour in length. It is expected that students attend the workshop as part of the 615 and 616 requirements.

4.1.1 Students entering the program with a BA/BS or non-thesis MA

Students who enter the graduate program with a BA/BS degree or a non-thesis M.A. degree are required to complete the M.A. degree as part of their progress toward the Ph.D. Students will receive the M.A. degree in sociology upon completing the seven required core courses, three elective courses, six thesis credit hours (32 hours), and the completion of a master's thesis. The elective courses can include the area required course and/or a methods III course. The six thesis credits must be split over at least two semesters. Students will be dually enrolled in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs until they complete the M.A. requirements. Students must be enrolled in at least one credit hour during the semester of graduation. Teaching Sociology (SOC 710) is required for

students funded on a GTA line or interested in professionalization experience. Students are also expected to take SOC 790 Teaching Practicum (1 credit) during their first semester teaching.

Students who continue in the program to complete the Ph.D. have the following requirements in addition to the core required courses:

Doctoral level required core courses (SOC 721)

Area of specialization course

Fifteen hours total of elective course credits

Nine hours of dissertation credits

Doctoral students must take an area of specialization required course. Students can take a third methods course to meet elective requirements. The methods course can be GEOG 550. Other outside courses must be approved by the GPC. The elective courses can include a second area required course and/or a fourth methods course. Doctoral students must also pass comprehensive examinations and successfully defend a dissertation. Teaching Sociology (SOC 710) is required for students funded on a GTA line or interested in professionalization experience. The doctoral program requires students to complete 47-56 credit hours.

4.1.2 Students entering the program with a MA degree (with thesis)

Students are accepted into the doctoral program upon their entry into the department. Students do not need to complete the M.A. thesis provided they have completed a thesis requirement at their previous institution, and the thesis meets the standards of the graduate committee. (see Section 11.1)

Doctoral students are required to take the nine required core courses, an area of specialization required elective, five elective courses, and nine hours of dissertation credits. Students can take a third methods course to meet elective requirements. The methods course can be GEOG 550. Other outside courses must be approved by the GPC. Doctoral students must also pass comprehensive examinations and successfully defend a dissertation. Teaching Sociology (SOC 710) is required for students funded on a GTA line. The doctoral program requires students to complete 50-59 credit hours.

4.2 Areas of Specialization

The program has four areas of research specialization. The areas represent strengths in faculty research and serve as a guide for comprehensive exams.

Crime, Law, and Deviance

Specialized Elective: Sociological Theories of Crime and Deviance

- Criminological theory
- Policing and social control
- Punishments and corrections
- Laws and courts
- Victimization
- Juvenile delinquency
- Gangs and violence
- Neighborhoods/communities and Crime
- Hate crime

- Gender and crime / Violence against Women
- Race and crime
- Corporate/ White Collar Crime and Terrorism
- Mass Media, Crime, and Deviance
- Cybercrime /digital criminology
- Substance use and abuse / Drugs, Crime, and Society
- Perceptions of crime and justice

Inequality, Diversity, and Equity

Specialized Elective: Systemic Inequalities

- Gender and Sexuality (gender-based violence, gender and work, LGBTQ youth, status)
- Race and Ethnicity
- Poverty and Social Class
- Urban issues
- Rural
- Health
- Environment, Environmental Justice
- Intersectionality

Social Psychology and Group Processes

Specialized Elective: – Individual and Society

- Collective behavior, collective action, and social movements
- Symbolic interaction
- Self and identity
- Emotions, affect, and sentiments
- Group processes
- Altruism, pro-social behavior, and group solidarity
- Attitudes and public opinion
- Community/community dynamics

Sociology of Religion

Specialized Elective: Sociology of Religion

- Amish community and culture
- Atheism and nonreligion
- Religion and health
- Religion, politics, and social movements
- Religion and science
- Religion, crime, deviance, discrimination, and victimization
- Religious worldviews, beliefs, and behaviors
- Religious organizations and congregations

4.3 Courses and Credit Hours

4.3.1 Special Courses

Special Course Request Procedure is as follows. Special courses include any class that must be added to the schedule after the schedule is set. Typically, these are sections for single students to work with a faculty member in a focused and special regard. Special courses do not count toward elective requirements.

For graduate special courses (e.g., research hours, independent studies and teaching practicums but not thesis or dissertation hours), the draft syllabus should be sent to the DGS and copied to the Department Chair for their review and approval. Once the syllabus is fine-tuned and approved (if changes are requested), the DGS will let the SLI Coordinator know to add the class to the schedule, without requiring restrictions. Completed contracts must be placed on file.

4.3.2 Course Credit Limitations

Credit toward a graduate degree may be obtained only for courses listed in the graduate catalog and numbered 400–799. No more than forty percent of course credits counted toward any graduate degree may be at the 400-level. No residence credit is allowed for special field assignments or other work taken off the WVU campus without prior approval. Graduate credit is obtained only for courses in which the grade earned is A, B, C, P or S. Courses taken as audits or courses in which the grade earned is D, F, or U may not count toward a graduate degree.

Students may be permitted to do an independent study of 300/400 level courses if the instructor teaching the course agrees. The instructor will need to write a syllabus for the independent study that is more rigorous than that of the 300/400 level course. This syllabus needs to be sent to the DGS and department chair for approval.

4.3.3 Transfer Credits Policy

Students who wish to transfer credits to the doctoral program must meet several requirements. First, students must be or have been enrolled in a sociology program in a PhD granting institution. This stipulation excludes programs with a terminal MA degree and any programs that are not sociology (i.e. applied sociology, criminology, criminal justice, social science).

Second, students must submit an appeal to the Graduate Program Committee (GPC) for any required coursework to be transferred. The GPC will consider transfer credits for core courses including methods, statistics, and theory. All students who transfer into the program are expected to take SOC 600 (Professional Development Pro-seminar), SOC 601 (Research and Writing Pro-seminar), the six elective courses. The appeal will include: syllabi for the courses in question and copy of the transcript indicating the student earned an “A” in the courses in question. Students are encouraged to include additional materials such as essays, papers, statistics homework, or exams to aid in the evaluation of their courses. The GPC will review the appeal file. The GPC retains the right to request the student to take a comprehensive essay exam as part of the appeals process. The essay exam will include questions focused on mastery of statistics and theory.

Students may transfer up to 18 credit hours if approved by the GPC. Courses considered for transfer must have been completed within five years of the application submission.

All students enrolled in the doctoral program are expected to take comprehensive exams and defend their dissertation proposal at WVU.

4.3.4 Non-Degree Students

Sociology graduate courses are restricted to students enrolled in the doctoral program or students in other degree programs for which SOC courses count toward the degree (at the discretion of the instructor). The department restricts access to non-degree students in efforts to maintain a manageable course size.

4.4 Comprehensive exam

The goal of the comprehensive exam is twofold. The comprehensive exam process will enable students to:

1. Offer a cogent assessment of a subfield(s), which means the student can clearly articulate the empirical and theoretical claims and how they have evolved, the areas of current debate, and how the subfield might develop in the future. (Review essay)
2. Become conversant with the primary intellectual questions in a subfield and current empirical research on those questions in a way that allows students to speak easily and comfortably in conversation about these issues without notes or materials. (Oral defense)

While the Master's Thesis and Dissertation projects demonstrate a student's depth of knowledge in a relatively specialized research area, comprehensive exams evaluate students' preparation for research and teaching in a broad subfield of the discipline of sociology. The comprehensive exam is a developmental exercise designed to take students' skills to their highest level by creating the space and time for critical reflection on an entire field before narrowing their focus to their dissertation research questions. Knowledge within a subfield will be helpful for students as they advance to the job market. The organization of the exam around a subfield will allow students to strategically align their subfield(s) with the areas listed in job opportunities. Additionally, the ability to speak competently about the subfield will benefit the student as they interact with recruitment committees, conference panelists and attendees, journalists and policymakers, academic lecture audiences, and undergraduate and graduate students in the discipline. Students should expect to spend approximately four months preparing for the exam.

4.4.1 Exam process

Comprehensive exams should take place in the last semester of coursework or the first semester following the completion of coursework. It is not ideal for students to take comprehensive exams if they are enrolled in a full load of courses (9 credit hours). Students must successfully pass comprehensive exams before defending their dissertation proposal.

A student must formally notify the Director of Graduate Studies that they wish to sit for the comprehensive exam by the second week of a given semester. The comprehensive committee declaration form is due to the department program assistant at this stage. Students should also schedule their oral defense with the department liaison at this time. Once a student has requested to sit for the exam, they must complete the exam that semester. Failure to take the examination at this point will constitute a failure of the exam and the student will only have one more opportunity to pass. Exam dates may only be changed under exceptional circumstances.

Written Exam: Review Essay

Students should critically cover the breadth of knowledge in 30-40 double spaced pages (not including the bibliography). The review essay should be written like an *Annual Review of Sociology* article. Students do not need to be intimately familiar with all research in the subfield but should address the following topics in the review essay:

- History and classical **theoretical traditions** of the subfield
- Prominent **theoretical camps** and contemporary developments
- **Methodological challenges** the field has faced or is facing
- Recent advances, recent turns, or currently visible questions in the field
- Main works and debates
- Potential avenues for future research

The review essay should be situated within one of the department research specializations. These include: 1) Crime, law, and deviance, 2) Inequality, diversity, and equity, 3) Social psychology and group processes, and 4) Sociology of religion. Within each of these areas, the student should identify one (or two) subfields on which to focus. The review essay will include guiding theoretical perspectives in each specialization area along with a comprehensive discussion of the subfield of focus. Essentially, the essay will begin with a broad overview of the area of specialization and narrow as students discuss the subarea(s). Ideally, students can situate their subarea (area of interest) into the broader field of sociology. The student might use a research question to organize the review essay, using the *Annual Review of Sociology* as a model.¹

Students are provided with core reading lists, based on assigned readings in the required area courses, for the department research specializations. The student should work closely with their comprehensive exam committee to identify additional readings that are relevant to the chosen subfield. The student might expect to have conversations with their committee chair throughout the exam process but would not expect to have the committee chair read more than one draft of their review essay. Committee chair feedback might direct the organization of the review essay or other broad questions but should not speak directly to content of the essay, as the purpose of the review essay is for the student to demonstrate an ability to independently assess a subfield(s).

Written exams should be submitted to the committee chair prior to the 13th week of the semester. The written exam is due to the committee ten class days prior to the oral defense. Late essays will not be accepted. Students should cc themselves when they submit the exam.

Grading

The review essay will be graded within 10 class days of the regular semester. Essays are evaluated on the extent to which they demonstrate broad competency in the chosen subfield. A passing grade indicates confidence in the student's competency. Faculty exam committees should consider the following guidelines:

- 1) **Substance:** Is the student knowledgeable and fully informed about the subfield? Are the student's contrasts and comparisons about the literature accurate? Did the student successfully synthesize or integrate different areas of the research or different

¹ If a student pursues publication of their review essay, it is expected they are principal author. See section 15 of the handbook for further information.

perspectives within in it? Does the student understand the scope of the literature? Did they demonstrate an ability to critically analyze empirical studies?

- 2) Writing quality: Is the student's paper clear and concise, logical and well organized? Is the writing free from redundancy, wordiness and awkward phrases? Is the work stylistically elegant and persuasive?

The written exam will receive a grade of pass or fail.

- 1) Pass: the answer is satisfactory and requires no further work.
- 2) Fail (Revise and Resubmit): the answer is deficient and must be redone. In the case of a failing grade, students will be given an opportunity to revise the written exam. Students must retake the exam the following semester. The committee will provide the student with written feedback to guide the R&R process. Students who fail the written exam will be placed on [probation](#); a condition of the probation is to pass the written exam. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the program.

All members of the committee must play a role in the grading process. If a majority of the members vote to pass the exam, it is automatically considered a pass. However, in the case of a difference of opinions, the committee members should meet, discuss their views, and attempt to reconcile their differences before voting on the grade. All grades are submitted to the department liaison to place in the students' files.

4.4.4 Oral defense procedures

The oral defense assesses whether students' can discuss the main points in their review essay without notes or materials. The student may take the oral exam only if they have passed the written part of the exam. Students should be able to engage in a thoughtful discussion about the relevant literature. The questions asked by advisory committee members in the oral defense should be specific to the exam. Students should work with their chairs and committees to prepare for the oral defense. In some cases, the student will be asked to give a brief summary of their written comprehensive exam work, but the primarily emphasis is on a question and answer session.

Grading

Evaluating the oral defense is the responsibility of the exam committee. Before defending, students should communicate with their committees about their specific expectations. However, some general evaluation standards exist. Criteria for grading the defense may pertain to the following:

- 1) Discussion: Is the student able to articulate the empirical and theoretical claims in a subfield? Can they discuss the critical debates? Can they articulate how the subfield might develop in the future?

The oral defense will receive one overall grade:

- 1) Pass: the answers are satisfactory and require no further work.
- 2) Fail: the answers are deficient and must be redone. In the case of a failing grade, the chair of the student's advisory committee must give directions for retaking the exam. Students must retake the exam the following semester. Students who fail the oral defense will be placed on [probation](#); a condition of the probation is to pass the oral defense. Failure to do

so will result in dismissal from the program. Students have one opportunity to retake the oral defense.

All members of the committee must play a role in the grading process. The chair will fill out the oral defense form, providing a brief explanation of the students' grade. If a majority of the members vote to pass the defense, it is automatically considered a pass. However, in the case of a difference of opinions, the committee members should meet, discuss their views, and attempt to reconcile their differences before voting on the given answer. The oral defense form is submitted to the department liaison to place in the students' files.

4.4.5 Comprehensive Examination Grade Appeal Procedure

An appeal is appropriate only when the awarding of a grade to the student may have involved a denial of due process through prejudice or capriciousness. Appeals will not be considered to resolve disputes about the student's knowledge of the subject matter. In all cases, appeals should be made in writing. The student should meet with the exam committee to discuss the grievance in detail. Both the committee and the student are obligated to try to resolve their differences. If after one or more meetings the student is still unsatisfied, he/she may appeal to the Graduate Program Committee (GPC). The GPC will make the final decision on the dispute.

Students who fail to meet the terms of their probation will be dismissed from the program. Typically, students are dismissed from a program at the end of an academic term. A student who is dismissed from a program will not be permitted to register for classes offered by their program or participate in other program activities. Students may [appeal](#) dismissal from a program following the University process.

4.5 Thesis and Dissertation

Upon completion of coursework and the comprehensive exam, students will defend a dissertation proposal. Before the dissertation proposal can be defended, students must have completed any courses for which they received a grade of "Incomplete."

Throughout the first two semesters of the M.A. program and the first four semesters of the doctoral program, students should be actively considering potential topics for a research project. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their interests with several faculty members to help clarify their ideas and research objectives. Selecting and clarifying a research topic early on will help the student focus their coursework and other program activities on a "doable" research project, as well as assemble an appropriate faculty committee. The research topic is always decided by the student, but close research collaborations between students and faculty are encouraged, as they often result in research publications and timely graduation.

Another key step in selecting a research topic is to consider the availability of data. Students may wish to focus their research on a topic that can be addressed through the use of *secondary* data. Students may also consider collecting *primary* data, but should remain aware of time limitations. If human research subjects are to be used in primary data collection, students will need to apply for approval through WVU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before beginning their data collection. IRB approval is needed for secondary data analysis only when identifiers, such as subjects' names or addresses, are included in the dataset. In all other cases, secondary data analysis does not require IRB approval. Students should consult their committee chair about this

matter, and learn more about the IRB process online at:
http://oric.research.wvu.edu/human_subjects_research_and_the_irb.

4.5.1 Prospectus

The thesis and dissertation models allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the program's key learning objectives. With these common aims in mind, all prospectus should include (though to varying degrees) the following elements:

- A statement of the research problem and why it's important. What is it you seek to learn, by whom will the findings be valued, and why? Empirical research is addressed to a particular set of scholars, professionals or citizens. Besides the members of your thesis or dissertation committee, who is your intended audience? What is the sociological relevance of your research idea?
- Citation of relevant literature. Drawing on your training in the program, you must show your ability to integrate empirical literature to form a cohesive argument. Whether you are preparing a theory-driven journal article that tests hypotheses or a traditional length dissertation, you must demonstrate that you know how to search for, find, and properly use related empirical studies. Using the literature "properly" requires a clear understanding of the purpose of your research and its intended audience. Demonstrating your preliminary knowledge of the literature and outlining a clear plan for using it represent a key step in developing a thesis proposal.
- Discussion of methods, data and measurement. What kind of study design is being proposed (survey, experiment, quasi-experiment, interviews, field research, content analysis)? How did you choose your proposed method? Why is your method appropriate for producing the kind of evidence your problem requires? If it is to be a survey, describe the population, sample design, the length, form and content of the questionnaire to be used. If it is to be a participant observation study, indicate the nature of the site, how often you will visit, over what period of time, and what kinds of things you will do while there. If based on secondary data, explain how and for what purposes the original data were collected, by whom, and in what form they will now be used.
- Plans for analyzing and presenting evidence. Offer a concrete discussion of the specific strategies and techniques for analyzing and presenting the evidence. How will you convert the raw data (e.g., completed questionnaires, field notes, interview transcripts, etc.) into specific findings and how will you present such findings to the reader (e.g., tables, charts, field notes or interview excerpts, etc.)? Will you operationalize your dependent variable by creating an index? Will you use qualitative analytical software to code interviews? What statistics, if any, will be used in your analysis? The content of this material will of course vary widely depending on the given method being proposed. The purpose of this section is for you to visualize your thesis in its completed form, and notify your thesis or dissertation committee what they can expect to see in the final draft.
- A project timeline. All proposals should include a detailed timeline that indicates when the student will complete each phase in the research and writing process.

Students should distribute the thesis/dissertation proposal to members of the advisory committee. The committee will have two weeks to read the proposal and inform the committee chair if the proposal is defensible. If the proposal is defensible, the student should work with the chair to schedule a defense date. If the committee deems the proposal not ready for defense, the student should work with the chair to schedule a meeting with the entire committee to go through the feedback and create a plan to move forward. The student should then make the changes and send the revised proposal to the committee. The committee will have two weeks to read the proposal and inform the committee chair if the proposal is defensible. If the proposal is defensible, the student should work with the chair to schedule a defense date. If the committee deems the proposal not ready for defense, the student should work with the chair to schedule a meeting with the entire committee to go through the feedback and create a plan to move forward. The process continues in this manner.

If the defense is not passed, a repeat of the defense may be scheduled only with approval from the department chair. Once the proposal has been accepted, it must be signed by all committee members and the student. One copy of the proposal is entrusted to the committee chair, one to the student, and one is placed in the student's academic file.

The prospectus constitutes a working agreement binding on both the committee and the student. If the student carries out the research outlined in the proposal, the requirements for the study will have been fulfilled, regardless of the findings. If the research requires a change in direction, the proposal can be revised by the mutual consent of the student and his or her committee.

The writing and defense of a prospectus is intended to save students from investing in research whose objectives are unclear or that lack the approval of their committee. Final approval might require several drafts of the proposal. However, the graduate committee strongly believes that time spent in conceptualizing and planning the research will save even more time later.

M.A. Program Requirement. M.A. students must receive acceptance of their thesis proposal by no later than **November 20 in the third semester** of the M.A. program. Missing the November 20 deadline indicates a failure to make adequate progress in the program and may result in the loss of a student's graduate teaching assistantship or continued admission in the graduate program.

4.5.2 Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

Master's thesis. The master's thesis should follow the *journal article model* -- a research report intended for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal and presentation at a professional sociology conference. The length of this product varies across journals. As a rough guide, however, 30-50 typed pages, not including references and tables, is a good length for the body of the text. The general format for many journal articles includes a brief introduction outlining the purpose and sociological relevance of the study, a review of literature or a theoretical framework to contextualize research questions or hypotheses, a discussion of the study's design and methods, an analysis of findings, followed by a summary and conclusion. Students are encouraged to identify a specific academic journal (along with exemplar articles within it) that may be appropriate for their research, consult their committee chair about the journal, and follow the selected journal's submission guidelines as they write their thesis.

Dissertation. The dissertation requirement ensures that students have the ability to carry out a major independent research project. Students can choose from two dissertation models. They can follow the traditional model, which takes the form and substance of a scholarly monograph, or the manuscript model, which consists of three interrelated papers on a single topic. The quality and contribution of each paper should reach the level of articles published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Each article is expected to be single authored. In rare cases, a faculty member may be listed as second author if the student is using a faculty member's (grant) data, for example. In these cases, the student needs to submit a memo, signed by the student and faculty member that will be kept in the student's file that indicates why the dissertation article is co-authored. The memo should outline the role of each author to clearly define the contributions of the student and the co-author. The manuscript model must also include an introductory chapter that clarifies the dissertation theme and situates the work as a whole in the sociological literature, as well as a concluding chapter that synthesizes and integrates the three papers.

For the manuscript dissertation model, students may include their own authored published works in their dissertation, but must work with the journal publisher to ensure all journal policies are met. One-year ETD embargos may be used for articles that have been submitted (or plan to be submitted) to a journal but the publication process has not been completed. This [link](#) describes the types of embargo available and has a note about copyright. There is also information about copyright and copyright issues available in the [WVU Libraries' Research Guides](#).

The student prepares the doctoral dissertation in close consultation with the chair of their dissertation committee. The student, in consultation with the committee chair, should choose a dissertation topic and prepare a research proposal. Copies of the proposal must be made available to all members of the committee and a meeting scheduled for committee input. Students should not continue working on their dissertations without approval from all members of their advisory committees. Students cannot defend their dissertation proposal and their dissertation in the same semester.

Dissertation hours are hard programmed for 6 hours (at the University level). Students who are dissertating need to be registered for 9 hours to maintain full time status—for assistantships, fellowships. Students can either register for 6 hours of dissertation and 3 hours of dissertation or 6 hours of dissertation and 3 hours of research to maintain full time status.

4.5.3 Oral Defense

The oral examination is primarily a defense of the thesis or dissertation. Process: Students should distribute the thesis/dissertation to members of the advisory committee. The committee will have two weeks to read the proposal and inform the committee chair if the thesis/dissertation is defensible. If the document is defensible, the student should work with the chair to schedule a defense date. If the committee deems the thesis/dissertation not ready for defense, the student should work with the chair to schedule a meeting with the entire committee to go through the feedback and create a plan to move forward. The student should then make the changes and send the revised document to the committee. The committee will have two weeks to read the thesis/dissertation and inform the committee chair if the document is defensible. If the thesis/dissertation is defensible, the student should work with the chair to schedule a defense

date. If the committee deems the document not ready for defense, the student should work with the chair to schedule a meeting with the entire committee to go through the feedback and create a plan to move forward. The process continues in this manner.

University policy stipulates: The student's committee chairperson must obtain approval of the time, place, and committee members for the defense from the college or school dean or designee at least three weeks before the defense date. All dissertation defenses are open to the public and the university community and must be posted on the University calendar by the college or school dean or designee.

The student cannot be considered as having satisfactorily passed their defense if there is more than one unfavorable vote among members of the committee. All committee members, including the chair, are considered equal voting members. Results of each defense must be reported to the college or school dean or designee within two business days. If the defense is not passed, a repeat of the defense may be scheduled only with approval from the college/school dean or designee.

The student and all committee members are expected to be physically present for a defense. In extraordinary circumstances, and only with the approval of the college or school dean or designee, an individual may attend by audio or videoconference (with videoconferencing preferred). Anyone attending the defense electronically must remain available during the entire time of the defense.

4.5.4 Other Research Guidelines

It is imperative that advisory committee members respond to draft submissions by the student with explicit commentary within roughly one week. The Chair, in consultation with his/her colleagues, indicates when he/she considers a public presentation appropriate.

In order for a completed thesis or dissertation to receive final approval, it must be signed by all members of the committee after a successful, public presentation by the student. Students preparing a thesis or dissertation must refer to requirements detailed in the WVU Graduate Catalog (p. 40): "Theses and dissertations should be presented to the student's graduate advisor or committee chairperson **at least one month** before the end of the enrollment period in which completion of all requirements is expected."

Students preparing a thesis or dissertation must follow the form and general guidelines proscribed under the WVU Graduate School "Regulations Governing the Preparation of Theses," available from the Graduate Records Office, 103 Woodburn Hall (293-2505). The chair of the student's research committee is to assist the student in applying these general requirements to styles appropriate in the field of sociology.

Students preparing a thesis or dissertation must consult with the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences Graduate Records Office, 103 Woodburn Hall (293-2505) for regulations on deadlines and dates for submission of final copies of the thesis or dissertation. Contact the Library Business Office, Wise Library for any questions regarding Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD).

All WVU Graduate School rules and regulations must be observed. All students are welcome to consult the chairperson of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology about any of the above matters at any time.

4.6 Advancement to Candidacy

Students will fill out the [advancement to candidacy form](#) when they defend their dissertation proposal. The form indicates the formal point at which the committee is considered “established,” after which any changes to committee structure must have college approval. The form will also facilitate college reporting of candidacy semesters to the registrar. More information about the candidacy form can be found [here](#).

5 ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Students are in charge of selecting and managing the composition of their advisory committees. Students may request a temporary advisor prior to their first semester in the program. By the end of the second semester, M.A. students should have identified a faculty member willing to serve as the chair of their advisory committee. Doctoral students should identify a chair by the end of the fourth semester. The chair must be a member of the graduate faculty who is appropriately qualified and authorized by the Graduate School to advise graduate students. The chair should always be the first point of contact for the student on matters of degree requirements, funding, protocols and matters of professional behavior.

In consultation with the chair, students must secure the willingness of additional graduate faculty to serve on the advisory committee. Early selection of an advisory committee can provide the student with guidance especially suited to her/his interests and assures that an appropriate plan of study is developed and followed. The advisory committee is expected to be available for student program planning, discussion of professional development, and consultation and direction on thesis and dissertation research, as well as comprehensive exams. Committee members are expected to be well acquainted with the student's progress at all times after the committee's formation. A student should be certain to keep the committee members fully informed of progress toward the degree.

Once an advisory committee has been officially established, it will not be necessary to alter it if the graduate faculty status of a member of the committee is downgraded. Though rare, substitution of committee members or the chair may occur at the request of either the student or faculty. Any changes in the membership of a committee require approval of the department chair. Changes to the committee after the student has successfully advanced to candidacy requires University intervention. Depending on circumstances and the judgment of the department chair, replacement of the chair of an advisory committee may require that activities already completed (such as a prospectus approval meeting) be repeated.

Graduate faculty standards

Most of the members of the thesis or dissertation committee must be regular members of the graduate faculty, including the chair of the committee. Regular members of the graduate faculty will generally be internal members of the committee—housed within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. No more than one person may be a nonmember of the graduate faculty. An outside faculty member cannot serve as chair of a committee. No family member

may serve on the committee of his or her relative. All advisory committees are subject to the approval of the chairperson or designee of the department/division and the dean or designee of the college or school.

Adjunct faculty members who are members of the regular graduate faculty (e.g. hold an appointment at WVU in a tenure track position) can also serve as internal members on graduate committees. Adjunct faculty who are already on campus are regular graduate faculty if they are considered as such through their primary appointment. (Adjunct faculty are associate members if associate via their primary appointment.) An adjunct faculty member might be considered for internal committee membership if a student's area is underrepresented by faculty members in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Any faculty member can make a recommendation for an adjunct position. The adjunct must meet the standards for a regular member of the graduate faculty and fill a clear gap in current departmental faculty interest areas. The faculty member making the recommendation must also make the case for why the person should be awarded adjunct status rather than serving as the external member on the committee.

Committee members who are not regular graduate faculty members are expected to hold the same or higher degree as that sought by the student. No more than one committee member may be a nonmember of the regular graduate faculty. Adjunct faculty members who hold an associate membership to graduate faculty status (e.g. faculty members at other institutions) can serve on graduate committees as the external member.

Adjunct faculty membership on a committee, as internal or external members, is limited to one. An adjunct faculty member cannot serve as chair of the committee. Faculty members at WVU can be either an internal or external member of the committee, dependent on their adjunct status. If a WVU faculty member outside the department is an adjunct in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, they will serve as an internal member. If a WVU faculty member outside the department is not an adjunct, they will serve as an external member. External adjuncts (at another university) can only be external committee members.

5.1 Master's Thesis Committees

Master's thesis committees consist of no fewer than three members. One member of the committee may be from outside the student's department.

5.2 Doctoral Advisory Committees

Comprehensive exam committee

Comprehensive exam committees must consist of no fewer than three members. It is expected that all members of the comprehensive exam committee are housed within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at WVU. In most cases, the comprehensive exam committee also serves as the basis for the dissertation advisory committee. The chair of the comprehensive exam committee typically transitions into the chair of the dissertation advisory committee except in rare circumstances.

Dissertation advisory committee

Dissertation advisory committees must consist of no fewer than four members. At least one member of the committee must be from a department other than the one in which the student is

seeking a degree (external member). Qualified individuals from outside WVU are allowable, as long as the general requirements for committee membership are followed.

5.3 Thesis and Doctoral Advisory Committee Responsibilities

5.3.1 Responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair will be selected on the basis of content expertise.* This should include topic interest or subject matter expertise, experience in thesis or dissertation direction, or methodology expertise. The Chair is responsible for guiding the candidate to produce MA/doctoral level, original scholarship in the proposed topic area.

The Chair's responsibilities include:

- Being familiar with the current comprehensive exam policies and procedures
- Guiding the candidate to develop a narrative and reading list for comprehensive exams
- Being familiar with current thesis/dissertation policies and procedures
- Advising the candidate from the prospectus stage through the final defense of the thesis/dissertation
- Guiding the candidate in the selection of thesis/dissertation committee members
- Guiding the candidate to set a realistic timeline for completion of the thesis/dissertation
- Responsibly assigning the candidate a grade of P (pass) or F (fail)
- Guiding the candidate toward achieving a high level of technical and ethical quality in the thesis/dissertation research
- Assisting the candidate in developing a quality prospectus and in navigating the prospectus approval process
- Providing guidance on the research proposal structure, formatting, content and setting clear expectations for timely completion of the proposal
- Guiding the candidate in the selection of methods/procedures for data collection and analysis**
- Assisting the candidate in the thesis/dissertation proposal defense process
- Assisting the candidate in navigating the IRB approval process
- Assisting the candidate in data collection and analysis**
- Preparing the candidate for the defense process

*In special circumstances, with program approval, a Co-Chair arrangement may be appropriate for a particular subject matter.

** If a separate Methodologist is assigned, the Chair may serve in a support role.

5.3.2 Responsibilities of the Committee Members

All members of the candidate's committee share responsibility in ensuring that the candidate produces high-quality scholarship. Committee members are responsible for reading manuscripts within the agreed-upon minimum 14 day time frame (per committee member), suggesting substantive editorial changes, and providing rationale for their support and critiques. Committee members who perceive major flaws that are likely to result in a candidate's unsuccessful defense should discuss these concerns with the candidate and Chair immediately.

Committee member's responsibilities include:

- In cooperation with the Chair advising the candidate in the creation of the narrative and reading list for comprehensive exams
- In cooperation with the Chair, advising the candidate from the prospectus stage through the final defense of the thesis/dissertation
- Providing subject matter expertise as requested by Chair or candidate
- Reading drafts and providing meaningful feedback at each defense stage of the thesis/dissertation process
- Guiding the candidate in the selection of methods/procedures for data collection and analysis**
- Assisting the candidate in data collection and analysis**
- Corresponding with the Chair and candidate as needed for clarification/resolution of methodological issues during the thesis/dissertation process**

** Methodologist only (if the Chair is not performing both roles). A Methodologist should be selected who has particular expertise in the type of study the candidate is pursuing (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods).

5.3.3 Responsibilities of the Doctoral Candidate

The candidate is expected to engage in active preparation of the thesis/dissertation process from the onset of the doctoral program. Candidates are responsible for choosing a topic, submitting proofread drafts of materials to the Chair, preparing adequately for meetings, thoroughly reviewing all comprehensive exam and thesis/dissertation policies and procedures, and communicating on a regular basis with the Chair via email, phone, or other communication modality. The candidate is expected to maintain a respectful and professional attitude at all times.

Candidates are expected to maintain contact with the Chair throughout the comprehensive exam and thesis/dissertation process to ensure that the research and writing adhere to the agreed-upon plan. As the project is the candidate's responsibility, s/he must frequently keep the Chair informed of progress. The candidate should contact the Chair in the event of any changes which may interfere with program completion. Occasionally, face-to-face meetings may be scheduled with your Chair or the whole committee.

The candidate is responsible for meeting all deadlines set by the University for the submission of theses/dissertations.

6 REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE GRADUATE FACULTY

6.1 Regular memberships

Individuals who hold appointments at West Virginia University in tenure-track faculty positions or in full-time non-tenure-track faculty or faculty-equivalent positions and who are engaged in scholarly research or creative activity may be considered for regular membership. Regular members must present evidence of continuing scholarly research or creative activity. Criteria include one or more of the following: publication in major peer-reviewed journals, publication of books and book chapters, invited and/or competitively selected presentations of scholarly work at national and international meetings, and presentations and performance of artistic work at professionally recognized events.

6.2 Associate memberships

Individuals with ongoing involvement in graduate education at WVU may be considered for associate membership. These individuals may include WVU faculty members who do not meet the criteria for regular membership, non-faculty professionals with terminal degrees or equivalent expertise, and faculty members at other institutions. Associate members must present evidence of continuing scholarly or creative expertise or involvement in graduate education. Criteria usually include one or more of the following: research activity, scholarly publications, artistic performances or presentations, graduate-level teaching, and service on graduate committees.

6.3 Exceptions

Graduate faculty members who leave WVU may continue to serve on student committees with their same graduate faculty status established prior to their departure. Normally, no candidate for a degree at WVU may be a regular or associate member of the graduate faculty. Emeritus faculty members may remain on the graduate faculty. New faculty members may be appointed as regular or associate graduate faculty members. Individual exceptions to membership criteria may be approved by the Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs.

6.4 Functions of Graduate Faculty Members

Regular graduate faculty members may serve on and chair students' thesis and dissertation committees. Associate graduate faculty members may serve on students' thesis and dissertation committees, but may not chair them.

7 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

7.1 Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)

A graduate assistantship is part of your professional career whether the focus of that career is research, teaching, or public service. Accordingly, time management, focus on work responsibilities and your studies should be your top priorities. Your assistantship is set up to help you in these areas. It is a job. Your supervisor in this position is the Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

There are several types of GTA positions, including non-teaching GTAs, teaching GTAs, and methods certificate GTAs. Each of these positions is described below.

- 1) **Non-Teaching GTAs** are assigned to 1 or 2 faculty members and do not teach their own classes. See section 7.1.1 for additional information.
- 2) **Teaching GTAs** teach their own classes. Teaching GTAs may teach 1 or 2 classes per semester. See section 7.1.2 for additional information.
- 3) **Methods Certificate GTAs** are assigned to teach classes in the Methods Certificate.

7.1.1 Non-teaching GTAs

Non-teaching GTA positions are intended to provide assistance to faculty members teaching undergraduate courses and give faculty a "point of contact" with respect to their teaching needs.

It is the students' responsibility to contact their assigned faculty member(s) the first week of the semester. The student and faculty member are expected to discuss and arrange a working schedule.

The instructor of record for a course should maintain the primary role in developing and delivering lectures, grading, emailing students, and contact hours with students enrolled in the course. While it is appropriate for GTAs to cover 1-2 classes during a semester, it is not appropriate for students to consistently teach a course in lieu of the instructor of record. It is appropriate to have a graduate student cover a class if the faculty member is out for a conference, illness, or an emergency. It is also appropriate for a graduate student to work with a faculty member to develop and deliver a guest lecture.

Typical assigned duties for non-teaching GTAs are as follows:

- Proctoring Exams in classrooms.
- Grading, Gradebook Management, and Academic Record Keeping. The instructor of record is responsible for overseeing the grading process.
- Classroom Assistance (ranging from managing discussions to assisting with technology). The instructor of record is primarily responsible for communication with students and classroom management.
- Assist with curriculum development (help with developing assessments, writing prompts, activities, rubrics, etc.). The instructor of record is responsible for the bulk of the workload required for course preparation.

7.1.2 Teaching GTAs

All GTAs are required to take the Teaching Sociology course at first offering after beginning the doctoral program. If students do not take Teaching Sociology, they may lose the right to GTA funding, as GTAs are expected to teach by their second or third year in the program². Students will have a Teaching Practicum the first time they are instructor of record. Students are offered a full-time week training in online education, delivered in May (aligned with the offering of the Teaching Sociology course).

Once students complete a master's degree in Sociology and the Teaching Sociology course, they are qualified to teach the main general education courses—SOC 101 (Introduction to Sociology) and SOC 207 (Social Problems in Contemporary America). Depending on their areas of specialization, they may also qualify to teach other general education courses, including SOC 221 (Families and Society) and SOC 235 (Race and Ethnic Relations), or courses for the criminology major. These include CRIM 232 (Criminology) and CRIM 234 (The Criminal Justice System).

Students assigned to teach before passing comprehensive exams will teach one class per semester. Once a student teaches a course and has it prepped, they will be given priority for teaching it again—to improve it as soon as possible. On campus courses taught by graduate students will have enrollment capped at 50. After students have successfully passed their comprehensive exams, they are expected to teach two classes per semester. The classes will consist of one on-campus class and one online class. Students can request to teach two sections

² Students who enter the program with a MA degree may be expected to teach their second year in the program, provided the Teaching Sociology course is offered the spring of their first year.

of the same on-campus class (i.e. two sections of 101); however, assignments will be based on department need.

Students may have the opportunity to teach 300 level classes when they are finished with their coursework and comprehensive exams or after they have taught lower division classes for two semesters and have a MA in the area of specialization. Assignment to 300 level classes is based on department need. Faculty are given priority for 300 level courses. Students are expected to fill out the Graduate Teaching Interest form within the first month of each semester in efforts to facilitate planning for the following semester. In addition to identifying courses of interest, the application will assess students' progress in the program and experience and past success with teaching. It is recommended that students submit the syllabus for their 300 level course to their advisor or other faculty member (e.g. DGS) two weeks before the first day of the class. Students teaching a 300 level for the first time will be evaluated by either the DGS or their advisor.

In sum:

- 1) Faculty are given priority for 300 level courses
- 2) Students must teach lower division courses for two semesters before teaching 300 level courses. This gives them experience in the classroom.
- 3) Students may have the opportunity to teach 300 level courses in their area of specialization after they take comprehensive exams or after they have written a MA thesis in the area. In both instances, the student demonstrates expertise in the area.
- 4) Decisions on which students teach 300 level courses is based on department need, student progress, experience and past success with teaching, and course preferences. Students who wish to be considered for 300 level courses will fill out an application the preceding semester. (see Appendix A)

Teaching priorities are determined using the following criteria:

- 1) Required: master's degree and Teaching Sociology course for all classes
- 2) Required: online teaching training for online courses
- 3) Strongly preferred: teach within area of specialization (221, 235, 232, 234)
- 4) Preferred: begin teaching at lower level and "graduate" to upper division courses (300 level) in area of specialization

Summary timeline

Year	Students	Teaching Eligibility
1	All	Take SOC 710 & Online Training
2	All	Take SOC 710 & Online Training
	MA & SOC 710	101, 207 and, depending on area of specialization, 221, 232, 234, and/or 235.
3	MA & SOC 710	101, 207 and, depending on area of specialization, 221, 232, 234, and/or 235.

	MA & SOC 710 & taught lower division courses for two semesters	101, 207 and, depending on area of specialization, 221, 232, 234, and/or 235. Possibly advance to 300 level courses.
4	MA & SOC 710 & taught lower division courses for two semesters	101, 207 and, depending on area of specialization, 221, 232, 234, and/or 235. Possibly advance to 300 level courses.
	MA & SOC 710 & passed comprehensive exams	101, 207 and, depending on area of specialization, 221, 232, 234, and/or 235. Possibly advance to 300 level courses. Teach 2-2 load.
5	MA & SOC 710 & taught lower division courses for two semesters	101, 207 and, depending on area of specialization, 221, 232, 234, and/or 235. Possibly advance to 300 level courses. Teach 2-2 load.
	MA & SOC 710 & passed comprehensive exams	101, 207 and, depending on area of specialization, 221, 232, 234, and/or 235. Possibly advance to 300 level courses. Teach 2-2 load.

7.1.2a Evaluation of Teaching GTAs

Graduate students who are assigned as instructors for a class are required to be evaluated by faculty members at two points during their first semester in the classroom. The goal of the evaluations is to offer constructive feedback on teaching practices. The student instructor should also let the evaluator know if they are having specific problems in the classroom or have specific concerns about their teaching. The evaluator will focus special attention on these issues.

During the first semester in the classroom, graduate student instructors will be evaluated by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and their advisor. The DGS will attend class and observe the student's teaching within the first third of the semester. The student's advisor will attend class and observe the student's teaching about two-thirds of the way through the semester. The DGS and the student's advisor will provide the student with written feedback on their performance. The faculty members will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the written evaluation. The goal of this is two-fold: 1) the feedback from faculty members is useful for the evaluation and reflection of teaching practices and 2) the written feedback can be included as part of the student's teaching portfolio.

In an event of multiple graduate students teaching for the first time during a single term, the DGS responsibility of observing teaching practices will be distributed across Graduate Program Committee (GPC) members.

Additional evaluations by faculty members in the first semester or subsequent semesters will be completed if the DGS or advisor indicate a follow-up is needed to check on the progress of issues raised during the initial evaluation(s). Students can also request additional evaluations if they want to receive further feedback on their teaching.

7.2 Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs)

Graduate Research Assistantships are usually generated out of research grants secured by individual faculty members. Graduate Assistants are expected to work 20 hours a week. Applicants for GRA positions must apply directly to the faculty member actually doing the research. GRAs are typically hired because they have a particular skill (e.g., statistical analysis, data management, archival research skills) or they evidence the potential to provide important assistance to an ongoing research project.

7.3 Stipend and Tuition Waivers

Students receive a stipend and tuition waiver as part of an assistantship. To receive the stipend, students must report to WVU Human Resources to complete hiring forms. Once on payroll (direct deposit required), pay statements will be received in the middle and at the end of each month. Staff can provide exact dates as it may differ each month.

GA Tuition waivers are submitted prior to each semester. GA tuition waivers are in effect during Fall and Spring unless you resign or lose your assistantship. GAs who had tuition waivers for Fall and Spring are eligible for Summer tuition waivers. You need to contact the graduate liaison in the main office, if you register for hours during the summer.

7.4 Rights and grievances

Continuation of your graduate assistantship is contingent on the quality of your work, your reliability and evaluations. Faculty and staff members for whom you complete tasks have the option of formally evaluating your work. If this is done, you have a right to see these evaluations during your spring evaluation.

If you should experience difficulties with your assignment, discuss the situation with the person assigning the task. Ask that particular person to establish his/her expectations for tasks and responsibilities, request syllabi and establish deadlines. If necessary ask for assignments in writing. Should the situation remain unresolved, graduate assistants should speak to the graduate director. After working with both the assigning person and the graduate director unsuccessfully, students should file a written complaint with the department chair. In the event that the chairperson is unable to resolve the situation then the Dean of Graduate Education may be contacted.

7.5 University Employment Outside SOCA

Students employed in departments or programs outside of SOCA will need to work with that department/program to resolve pay and waiver issues. It is the student's responsibility to let the DGS know if the outside assistantship position does not come with a tuition waiver. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the department/program has processed them on payroll.

7.6 Merit graduate tuition waivers

Merit graduate tuition waivers are provided on a competitive and limited basis. These waivers are distributed by the College in cooperation with the WVU Office of Graduate Education and Life to enhance the academic reputation and effectiveness of graduate programs in terms of recruiting and retaining high quality graduate students.

Merit graduate tuition waivers are granted only to degree seeking students making adequate progress toward degree completion. These waivers may be used only for coursework required for

the degree program in which the student is enrolled. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology receives a limited number of merit graduate tuition waiver credits and distributes them based on the strategic goals of the program and department. The waivers awarded to students may constitute a partial or full tuition scholarship. Merit graduate tuition waivers do not cover the cost of associated fees.

Students who are interested in applying for this award should contact the DGS. Additional information about merit tuition waivers can be found [here](#).

8 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

8.1 Department Funds

8.1.1 Travel Funds

One of the goals of the graduate program is to help students cover the cost for travel to conferences for presentation experience and networking opportunities. The graduate program, however, does not have unlimited resources. The graduate committee is in full agreement to support student travel, and has collectively decided to create an award process for travel funding.

1. The travel funds survey is distributed via Qualtrics during the first two weeks of the semester.
2. The graduate committee will review all applications and award winners will be notified of funding decisions.
3. Let the DGS know if you have questions/concerns.

The guidelines are as follows:

1. The Professional Development Funds competition is in support of graduate students who are pursuing activities that improve their dissertation/thesis research and future professional opportunities; therefore, applicants must explain the relationship of their proposed activity to their dissertation/thesis research.
2. There are both fall and spring Professional Development Funding competitions, and will be awarded a maximum of once per year per student. **Applicants are expected to apply during the competition that is closest to the date(s) of the activity for which they are requesting reimbursement.**
3. All professional development activities must further the goals of the Department, and due to the limited nature of these funds, applicants must make every effort to cost share and otherwise keep expenditures to a minimum. Additionally, students must provide evidence of seeking other funding sources outside of the department (e.g. Eberly college travel awards.)
4. Students notified of the department's willingness to provide Professional Development Funds in advance of a proposed activity must actually participate in the activity as described in their proposals. Students who do not or cannot follow through with a proposed activity will be required to return any/all funds received for said activities.
5. In order to process proposals efficiently, late submissions are not likely to be accepted.

8.1.2 Rural Sociology Foundation Fund

1. The Rural Sociology Foundation Fund competition is in support of graduate students who are pursuing research activities. Priority will be given to students conducting rural oriented projects.
2. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and will be awarded as funds are available.
3. Support is available only to students who cannot be supported on other research grants.
4. Students notified of the department's willingness to provide Professional Development Funds in advance of a proposed activity must actually participate in the activity as described in their proposals. Students who do not or cannot follow through with a proposed activity will be required to return any/all funds received for said activities.

Allowable Expenditures

Examples of allowable expenses are:

- Postage associated with data collection
- Duplicating expenses associated with data collection – WVU Copy Centers are to be used whenever possible.
- Travel associated with data collection
- Expendable supplies associated with research procedures (scoring sheets)
- Payment of human subjects

8.1.3 ICPSR Funding

The department may offer scholarship opportunities for individuals who would like to attend the ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research) at the University of Michigan. More information about the summer program can be found here:

<https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/sumprog/>

Students who are interested in attending ICPSR classes should reach out to the department chair and the Director of Graduate Studies indicating their interest and provide a budget of expenses. Students who demonstrate that they are taking cost lowering measures such as car-pooling, splitting the cost of a living space, etc. will be given priority for funding. Individuals who are interested in attending and in receiving funding are highly encouraged to communicate their interest with other graduate students in the department and to plan to attend/travel/stay together.

8.1.4 Professional Development Funds

Student professional development funds may be funded through student awards. Professional development funds can be used for books, software, conferences, workshops, travel, membership, registration, etc. Students who wish to use their professional development funds should contact the Administrative Assistant. Note that any award money must be spent during a student's tenure in the program. Any funds remaining upon graduation, will be forfeited.

8.1.5 Fellowship Awards

Fellowship funding is contingent on department resources. Fellowship funding enables students to spend most of their time studying and conducting research without the pressures of working on- or off-campus. Fellows are normally prohibited from working for any WVU office or unit

while receiving fellowship funding during the fall, spring, and summer terms. Nonetheless, it is understood that teaching and/or research opportunities are a valuable part of students' education and training. Therefore, teaching and/or research supplemental pay is possible but must be approved by the Department of Sociology. Please make such a request in writing to the Department of Sociology.

8.2 Eberly College and Provost Travel Funds

Eberly College of Arts and Sciences offers travel funds for graduate students who are attending conferences. Students may apply once per academic year for up to \$200 from Eberly and \$400 from the Provost in support. These funds will be provided to the student via reimbursement after returning from travel and submitting proper receipts. More information on the application process can be found here: <http://eberly.wvu.edu/students/graduate/graduate-and-doctoral-travel-and-research-programs>

ECAS/Provost will not award travel funding if students are not also awarded money through their department. Therefore, you need to wait to apply for ECAS money until department funding has been awarded.

After department awards have been given, students can apply for ECAS and Provost travel funds. Paperwork should be sent to the DGS and Barb, copying the department chair. Barb will work with the DGS to submit the paperwork to Eberly.

8.3 Eberly College Research Funds

Eberly College of Arts and Sciences offers small research grants for doctoral students conducting research for their dissertation. They will award up to \$800 to students for their dissertation research. More details on eligibility and the application process can be found here: <http://eberly.wvu.edu/students/graduate/graduate-and-doctoral-travel-and-research-programs>

9 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT GUIDELINES AND TIME TO DEGREE

A small number of department-assigned funding slots are reserved for incoming students. These are awarded based on a committee review that begins in February. Typically, departmental funding packages consist of a teaching or research assistantship, a full tuition waiver, and student health insurance. Students are responsible for College/University fees. Assistantship appointments are made fiscal year by fiscal year. Because of this, each appointment is made for one year or less. Students must make systematic progress toward their degrees and demonstrate satisfactory performance to ensure continued funding.

University and Department rules require that students be informed annually of their progress in meeting requirements and their likelihood of completing the doctoral program. The review is also used to assess funding status for the upcoming year. Students will complete the progress report via Qualtrics each spring for review by the student's advisor and the Graduate Program Committee (GPC). The GPC will meet in the spring to evaluate each students' academic progress and performance, evaluating professional potential in relation to the successful completion of specific benchmarks in the program, including coursework, thesis (if applicable), comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal, etc. The review will consider:

- Satisfactory progress (see section 8.1)
- Satisfactory performance

Satisfactory performance includes GTA/GRA evaluations, performance as a scholar (e.g. presentations, publishing, etc.), and performance as a departmental citizen (e.g. attending department colloquium and talks). Each student's progress and performance is compared to the standards for normal progress, and to that of other students—particularly those who entered the same year. Students who do not meet the expectations for satisfactory progress and performance may not be renewed for assistantship funding. Students not making adequate progress in the program or with unsatisfactory performance may be denied funding for conference travel. The student's advisor and the GPC will provide written feedback to the student. The GPC feedback will:

- Summarize the evaluation of progress and standing
- Convey any special commendations or concerns
- State any specific risks to good standing, with the steps and deadlines for correcting those risks
- Indicate funding status for the upcoming academic year.

For those students who demonstrate satisfactory progress and performance, the student and advisor will meet to review the student's progress, goals, and timeline to meeting program objectives and requirements. For students determined not to be making satisfactory progress toward completion of program requirements or do not meet the requirements of satisfactory performance, the student, advisor, and Director of Graduate Studies will meet to discuss the student's progress to date and jointly outline a course of action to move toward meeting the requirements of the doctoral program. Formal, signed documentation of this meeting will be placed on record in the student's file in the Sociology Department. The student, advisor, and Director of Graduate Studies are jointly responsible for monitoring whether the student meets the objectives outlined in the work plan during this probationary period in the program. Failure to adhere to the work plan in terms of deadlines and objectives within the specified time frame will result in dismissal from the graduate program.

Expected completion based on degree requirements is 5 years. As such, the GPC will prioritize funding students through their fifth year, contingent upon making satisfactory progress and demonstrating satisfactory performance in the program as determined by the annual review. This allows for turnover of GA lines to fund incoming cohorts. The students' start date is considered the first semester in which they were enrolled in the graduate program. Funding includes any source—GTAs and GRAs within the department, outside GRAs/GTAs, or fellowships. Most college or department funded assistantships (e.g. Eberly funded GTAs, department funded assistantships associated with research or teaching) will thus be designated for students in their first through fifth years and will only be given to students beyond their fifth year if students who are in good standing in previous cohorts are funded. Students are determined to be in good standing based on their satisfactory progress and performance as noted in the annual review. Faculty funded GRA lines (e.g. grant funded) are left to the discretion of the faculty member who may give them to students in any year of the program.

Students in their 6th (plus) years are eligible to apply for GA funding in the department when funding lines are available. Decisions will be made based on:

- 1) Students who have secured outside funding (e.g. fellowships) in previous years
- 2) Success in the program (e.g. presentations, publications/reports, awards, professional development experiences, etc.)
- 3) Being a good citizen of the department
- 4) Excellence in teaching and department need (for GTA lines)
- 5) Required skills/competencies (for GRA lines)

9.1 Criteria for Satisfactory Progress

Below is a brief summary of key program objectives and general deadlines for accomplishing them. It is recognized that no absolute criteria for evaluating progress toward degree are appropriate. However, the following criteria may be used for assessing progress during diagnostic reviews, decisions concerning offering or continuing assistantships, and establishing priorities for other types of departmental support, such as part-time instructorships. *The progression of requirements applies to both Master's and doctoral students who enter the program with a baccalaureate degree.* See section 11 (“Course Transfers and Waivers”) for the abbreviated requirements for students who enter the program with a Master’s degree.

Year 1

First semester:

1. Orientation. Students learn about the program and get acquainted with the faculty, staff, and fellow students. Students with Graduate Teaching Assistantships receive information about office procedures, job responsibilities and rights.
2. Search for chair of advisory committee. During the first semester, students should review possible areas of study for their Master’s thesis and begin locating relevant faculty advisors. In the process, they may consult the descriptions of faculty on the department’s website (http://soca.wvu.edu/faculty_staff) to solicit advice from specific professors. By the end of the first semester, students should be thinking seriously about their selection of an advisory committee chair who will serve as the main advisor on their master’s thesis, and may also direct their comprehensive exams and dissertation.

Second semester:

1. Select chair of advisory committee. By mid-semester students should select a thesis advisor who will serve as the chair the advisory committee.
2. Design thesis proposal. Students are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with their chair to finish assembling their three-member advisory committee and begin designing a master’s thesis proposal.
3. Complete plan of study. The “Plan of Study” document must be completed in Degree Works.

4. Annual evaluation. All students will complete an annual evaluation in the spring semester.

Year 2

Third semester:

1. Defend master's thesis proposal. All students must write and defend their master's thesis proposal by mid semester. The deadline is November 20. After a successful defense, students must complete a "graduate prospectus defense" form, have it signed by all three members of the advisory committee and submit the form in the main office to have it placed in the student's file.
2. Apply for graduation. An application for graduation is due to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Records Office. An application for graduation will not be accepted for May graduation unless an approved thesis proposal is in the academic file.

Fourth semester:

1. Defend master's thesis. All students must give a public presentation of their master's thesis.
2. Meet graduation deadlines. Students should consult closely with the graduate liaison to meet departmental and college expectations and graduation deadlines. Graduation deadlines are determined by the College and are subject to change. All forms must reach the department liaison 24 hours prior to the College deadlines to allow time for review and processing of documents. Two weeks prior to a scheduled defense an [Eberly College Thesis and Dissertation Defense Date Declaration Form](#) is due. For the purpose of the defense, students must bring a [Eberly College Thesis and Dissertation Oral Defense Form](#) and have it filled out and signed by all committee members after the defense. This form must be submitted to the department liaison immediately after the defense. Students should also bring an [EDT](#) Signature Form to the defense. The students' thesis committee may elect to withhold signatures on this form until revisions are complete. This form must be signed before submission to the library.
3. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD). Master's theses are required to be submitted electronically. ETD technical assistance is offered by the Office of Information Technology.
5. Update plan of study. Students who move on to the PhD program should meet with the chair of their advisory committee and plan for the remaining coursework, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation. Students should update the plan of study document in Degree Works.
4. Annual evaluation. All students will complete an annual evaluation in the spring semester.

Year 3

1. Comprehensive exams. Exams should take place in the last semester of coursework or in the semester immediately following the completion of coursework. Working with the advisory committee, students prepare and carry out comprehensive examinations. See section 4.5 above for more information.
2. Update plan of study. The “Plan of Study” document must be updated in Degree Works.
3. Annual evaluation. All students will complete an annual evaluation in the spring semester.

Year 4

1. Comprehensive exams. Exams should take place in the last semester of coursework or in the semester immediately following the completion of coursework. Exams should be completed by the fall semester.
2. Defend dissertation proposal. Students should defend their dissertation proposal after the successful completion of comprehensive exams. After a successful defense, students must complete a “dissertation defense” form, have it signed by all five members of the advisory committee and submit the form in the main office to have it placed in the student’s file.
3. Update plan of study. The “Plan of Study” document must be updated in Degree Works.
4. Annual evaluation. All students will complete an annual evaluation in the spring semester.

Year 5

1. Defend dissertation. All students must give a public presentation of their dissertation.
2. Meet graduation deadlines. Students should consult closely with the graduate liaison to meet departmental and college expectations and graduation deadlines. For more information, see the graduation deadlines for the master’s thesis discussed above.
3. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD). Dissertations are required to be submitted electronically. ETD technical assistance is offered by the Office of Information Technology.

10 GUIDELINES FOR DISMISSING STUDENTS FROM THE PROGRAM

A proposed dismissal of a student from the graduate program must come from the department chair. The chair of a student’s advisory committee may ask the department chair to make such a recommendation. Reasons for dismissing a student include: a persistent failure to keep course grades above the required level for receiving the degree, failing twice to defend the master’s

thesis, twice failing comprehensive exams, failing to make satisfactory progress towards completing a degree. Students may file an appeal if they feel that they have been dismissed unfairly.

11 CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION POLICY

In any term during which a graduate student is using University libraries or research facilities, consulting with graduate committee members, or completing a thesis or dissertation (including the thesis or dissertation defense and submission of the ETD), the student must enroll for at least one hour of graduate credit. Students who take courses intermittently may be excused from such continuous enrollment if they are not using University facilities or consulting with faculty while they are not enrolled. However, students formally admitted to candidacy for graduate degrees are required to register for at least one credit hour each fall and spring term as a condition of their continued candidacy. Individual programs may also require summer enrollment. By pursuing a degree, such persons by definition are utilizing University services, facilities, and other resources, including faculty expertise; this situation continues in cases where students have completed all required coursework and are working on a thesis or dissertation. Candidates for graduate degrees who fail to maintain continuity of enrollment may be dropped from candidacy.

Students who have completed all requirements for a degree (including the thesis or dissertation defense and submission of the ETD) prior to the beginning of the term of graduation do not need to enroll during that term.

12 WAIVERS AND DEFERRED ENROLLMENT

12.1 Waiver of Master's thesis requirement

Students entering the graduate program in sociology can request to have the thesis requirement waived if they have written a master's thesis in sociology or in a related field. The thesis will be evaluated by all members of the graduate committee, who will read the thesis and provide letters to the Graduate Director asserting that the thesis meets the expectations of the Department. Students who have written their thesis in a language other than English must also provide an English translation of their work to the Department of Sociology. This translation will be evaluated according to the criteria and procedures described above.

12.2 Deferred enrollment

If students are accepted to the program but experience unforeseen circumstances that do not allow them to attend, students can defer their enrollment for one year. Students need to request deferment from the Director of Graduate Studies in writing. Students who are accepted into the program who do not officially request a deferred enrollment must reapply to the program if they wish to be considered for enrollment the following term.

13 RESEARCH ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

If human research subjects are to be used in primary data collection, students may need to apply for approval through WVU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before beginning their data collection. IRB approval is needed for secondary data analysis only when identifiers, such as subjects' names or addresses, are included in the dataset. In all other cases, secondary data analysis does not require IRB approval. Students should consult their committee chair about this

matter, and learn more about the IRB process online at:
http://oric.research.wvu.edu/human_subjects_research_and_the_irb.

14 ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND MISCONDUCT

Students of West Virginia University are citizens of a broader academic community. As such, the University expects that every member of its academic community share its historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. To meet these standards, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students should review of the University's Graduate Catalogue to review the definitions and consequences of academic dishonesty and misconduct.

15 RESPONSIBLE AUTHORSHIP

Faculty and students are expected to adhere to the authorship guidelines provided by the [American Sociological Association](#).

15.1 ASA Code of Ethics Section 14

Sociologists take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have made a substantial contribution.

(a) In collaborative work, both within Sociology and across disciplines, research teams vary with regard to decisions about the order of authorship. Although there are alternate approaches (which may be explained in a footnote or acknowledgement), the default order of authorship in Sociology is based on the relative scientific or professional contributions of the authors.

(b) When collaborative work substantially derives from a student's dissertation or thesis, the student is usually listed as first author.

Full ASA code of ethics available [here](#).

15.2 Additional resources for authorship

Students and faculty should refer to the following resources for additional guidelines.

15.2.1 APA Code of Ethics Section 8.12

(a) Psychologists take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have substantially contributed. (See also Standard [8.12b, Publication Credit](#).)

(b) Principal authorship and other publication credits accurately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their relative status. Mere possession of an institutional position, such as department chair, does not justify authorship credit. Minor contributions to the research or to the writing for publications are acknowledged appropriately, such as in footnotes or in an introductory statement.

(c) Except under exceptional circumstances, a student is listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's doctoral dissertation. Faculty advisors discuss publication credit with students as early as feasible and throughout the research and publication process as appropriate. (See also Standard [8.12b, Publication Credit](#).)

Full APA code of ethics available [here](#).

15.2.2 Other relevant links

[Authorship credit \(ASA\)](#)

[Determining and negotiating authorship](#) (APA)

[Authorship determination scorecard](#) (APA)

[Graduate student's guide to authorship](#) (APA)

16 HANDBOOK ALTERATION POLICY

All substantive changes to the Graduate Handbook must be submitted for the consideration of the faculty one week prior to a full-faculty meeting.

Appendix A. Graduate Student Teaching Interest Form

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Finished MA? No Yes

Taken Teaching Sociology? No Yes

Finished comprehensive exams? No Yes

Please list the course(s) you have previously taught:

Course (please note online\in-person)	Number of Times Taught

In order of preference, please indicate the courses you would be interested in teaching:

Course (please note online\in-person)

Note that teaching assignments are made using the following criteria:

- 1) Curricular and enrollment needs
- 2) Your progress in the program
- 3) Your experience and past success with teaching
- 4) Your course interests

This means, for instance, if a course you are interested in teaching does not meet a curricular need then you will be assigned a course for which there is a need. It is not possible to match all students' interests with department needs; however, these matches will be made where possible.

Appendix B. Student Advice on the Thesis/Dissertation Process

To learn more about how graduate students experience the thesis writing process, the department solicited perspectives from two students, Jacob Matz and Marshall Schmidt, from the 2011-13 cohort. Their comments and suggestions appear below:

In terms of choosing a thesis topic, our suggestions are:

- Choose something interesting enough to work on for two full years. Find something that is important to you, or something you wish to contribute to scientific understanding, or something that satisfies a personal curiosity.
- Choose something narrow enough for the purpose of asking a concise research question, but wide enough to assure that various resources are available (related studies, funding, an associated community of researchers, interest from journals).
- Consider the research interests of the department's faculty. Choose a topic that a faculty member can help you with, and one they have interest in. Also consider the research topics of previous graduate students.
- Consider the availability of data and the extra time it takes to gather your own.
- Let your question guide your methodology; do not fear statistics or qualitative methods.
- Take notes, read and write constantly, become an 'expert' on your area of study.
- Pick a topic that may inform your later academic pursuits or job prospects outside academia.

When it comes to selecting a thesis committee, we suggest:

- Learn about each member's research interests, time constraints, prior commitments, expertise based on publications and other CV details, and classes taught.
- Make sure you have good relationships and rapport with the members.
- Talk to other students for advice.
- Talk to your chair about who they would like to work with or who they think would be a good fit for your research topic.