Graduate Program Overview

Graduate study in Sociology at the University of Washington is designed for students pursuing a Ph.D. Students must complete a MA degree before beginning Ph.D. level work.

For students arriving with a bachelor's degree, the first year the program involves graduate coursework that is relatively structured. Students work on completing their course requirements and a master's thesis. After successfully completing a MA degree, students are typically advanced to the Ph.D. portion of the graduate program. At the Ph.D. level, training is less structured and increasingly focused on the dissertation research. Students typically work as either a teaching assistant, research assistant, or teaching associate during their graduate studies.

MA Portion of the Ph.D. Program

The master's program is designed primarily as preparation for Ph.D. work; it is not a terminal degree, although it may serve as good training for non-academic research. The MA program consists of three elements:

- Substantive training: coursework in substantive areas and social theory
- Methodological training: work in social statistics and general social science methodologies
- The Master's Thesis: independent empirical research conducted under the supervision of the MA Committee.

Ph.D. Program

The Ph.D. degree is conferred in recognition of research accomplishments and in anticipation of continuing research contributions. The Ph.D. program focuses on the development of research skills and sociological knowledge, as reflected in the following requirements:

- Completion of 4 graded elective courses in Sociology beyond the theory and methods courses required for the MA
- Completion of a Ph.D. Training Plan, which is a program of additional courses approved by the Supervisory Committee
- Successful completion of a Comprehensive Exam
- Successful completion of a General Exam or Dissertation Prospectus Hearing
- Completion of an approved dissertation research project, presentation of a scholarly report on its findings, and successful defense of the work in a final dissertation hearing (Final Exam)

Note: Students who entered the program prior to 2014 may follow an earlier set of requirements. Contact the Graduate Program Advisor for details.

Please Note:
Requirements, policies and procedures are subject to change. When graduating, students are expected to fulfill the policies in place at the time of their graduation. Be sure to check the website for up to date procedures and forms as you progress through the program. If you have questions, contact the Graduate Program Advisor.