PROSPECTIVE GRADUATE STUDENT FAQ

- How long does it take to complete the program?
- Do you offer funding or financial aid for graduate studies?
- Do you have a minimum GRE score?
- Do I need to submit official transcripts at any point?
- What should I submit for my writing sample?
- The paper I want to submit as my writing sample is longer than 15 pages. What should I do?
- I am having trouble getting a document to upload into the application, any suggestions?
- Non-Native English Speakers and International Students, English Language Proficiency Requirements: I have a previous degree from an English speaking institution. Do I still need to submit TOEFLiBT scores?
- What is your Institution Code for TOEFLiBT scores?
- I need to submit evidence of English language proficiency, but do not have access to the TOEFL. What should I do?
- How do you make admissions decisions?
- When will I hear whether or not I have been accepted?
- Can I defer an offer of admission?
- Do you accept international students?
- I do not have an undergraduate degree in sociology. Can I still apply?
- I already have a master’s degree in sociology. Will I have to complete all the department’s requirements?
- I have a master’s degree in another field. Will this count?
- I have a strong background in statistics. Do I have to take the required stats courses?
- Does the department offer or facilitate dual degrees?
- What is sociology? Should I go to a program with a terminal MA or a Ph.D. program like the UW’s?
- What if none of the faculty are interested in what I want to study?
- Can I take some courses as a graduate non-matriculated (GNM) student before I apply to the program?
- My research interests are interdisciplinary. Can I incorporate coursework and insights from other departments into my studies and my dissertation?
- Can you mail me any information?
- I’d like to visit campus. How can I arrange this?
- Who do I contact with additional questions?
- What is your the Sociology department’s mailing address / contact information?
- Still have questions? Here are some resources you might want to check out.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM?

There is some variation from student to student as to how long it takes an individual to complete our program and graduate with their Ph.D. On occasion we have had some students complete this within four years. The majority take six or more years to complete this process. There are many factors that contribute to the variations including individual studies, research, and interest, and other factors. Here are the suggested timelines recommended by the department:

Overview of the Ph.D. in Sociology
Recommended Timeline
Return to Top of Page
DO YOU OFFER FUNDING OR FINANCIAL AID FOR GRADUATE STUDIES?

Yes, all applicants who are offered admission to the department are considered for funding, and historically we have been able to fund our students through most — if not all — of their time in graduate school. Most of our funding packages are modest multi-year packages that cover tuition and health insurance, and include a job working as a Teaching Assistant for our undergraduate courses. Many of our graduate students apply for and receive research or fellowship monies that allow them to focus more directly on their coursework or research. Departmental funding for continuing graduate students is contingent on continued good progress through the program and the state's budget situation.

For additional information, go to: Funding and Financial Assistance

DO YOU HAVE A MINIMUM GRE SCORE?

No, we do not have a minimum GRE score; we consider each application in its entirety. However, in recent years the average verbal score of applicants admitted into our program was in the low 600s, and the average quantitative score of admitted applicants was closer to 700 (using the old GRE scoring system). Historical data about our applicants and students can be found by going to the Sociology Departmental Statistics page.

DO I NEED TO SUBMIT OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS AT ANY POINT?

We do not require official transcripts for your application. However, you must upload unofficial transcripts from all institutions as part of your application (colleges and universities). If you are accepted and decide to enroll in our program, you will be asked to submit official transcript(s) at that point. Additional instructions specifying which transcripts to send, and where to send them, will be provided at that time.

- Include transcripts for schools where you transferred the credits to another school later.
- Transfer credits do not necessarily show up in any complete way on your degree issuing school's transcripts and are often missing major pieces of information, such as the grades. You need to upload these additional transcripts individually as a result, even if noted on your degree issuing school's transcript.

WHAT SHOULD I SUBMIT FOR MY WRITING SAMPLE?

The point of the writing sample is to allow the admissions committee to evaluate your ability to analyze and write about complex issues. Your writing sample need not be about sociology per se, but should demonstrate your ability to write in a formal, academically acceptable manner. Typically applicants submit a paper they have written for a class in college, though reports or other papers can be submitted as well. Except in extraordinary instances, fiction is not appropriate.

THE PAPER I WANT TO SUBMIT AS MY WRITING SAMPLE IS LONGER THAN 15 PAGES. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Due to the large volume of applications we receive, we are unable to read more than 15 pages of text (double-spaced; this limit does not include title pages/references). You can either trim your paper down, or submit the entire thing with the knowledge that the committee will not read it in its entirety.

I AM HAVING TROUBLE GETTING A DOCUMENT TO UPLOAD INTO THE APPLICATION, ANY SUGGESTIONS?
There is a series of suggestions on uploading and scanning documents for your application on the Tips for Uploading Documents web page. Please attempt these solutions first. If you are still unable to get the upload to work, contact the Graduate Program Advisor at socadvis@u.washington.edu.

NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS: I HAVE A PREVIOUS DEGREE FROM AN ENGLISH SPEAKING INSTITUTION. DO I STILL NEED TO SUBMIT TOEFLiBT SCORES?

Yes, you will still need to submit recent (not older than two years) official standardized TOEFL language proficiency scores. Our department requires that ALL non-native English speakers submit recent, official English proficiency scores, even if you have a previous degree from an English speaking institution. We only accept TOEFL Scores.

- We only accept TOEFLiBT scores. Use Institution Code 4854 (the same as the Institution Code for GRE scores).
- Minimum Scores for Acceptance: The minimum English test scores to be admitted to our Sociology PhD program are
  - TOEFL Overall Score of 92
  - With a minimum TOEFL Speaking score of 26.
- The ONLY exception made, where students do not need to submit scores, is when a student has received a full four year BA from an accredited institution within the United States, or hold a bachelor’s degree from an institution in Australia, the Bahamas, Canada, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, New Zealand, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, or the United Kingdom, where English is the medium of instruction. While enrolled at the degree-granting school, the student must be in residence on campus. (Note: A master’s degree does not satisfy this requirement).
  - You must email the department at socadvis@uw.edu to obtain this exception.
- Please be sure to watch your application and make sure that your TOEFL scores do get attached to your online application. Note that they will not attach until a few days after you actually submit and pay for your application.
- IELTS: We no longer accept IELTS scores.
  - The ONLY exception to this policy is if TOEFL is completely unavailable in your country. You must email the department at socadvis@uw.edu to obtain this exception. And you will need to take your test as early as possible.

WHAT IS YOUR INSTITUTION CODE FOR TOEFLiBT SCORES?

Use Institution Code 4854, which is the same as the Institution Code for GRE scores.

I NEED TO SUBMIT EVIDENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY, BUT DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO THE TOEFL. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Our general policy is that we only accept TOEFL scores. The ONLY exception to this policy is if the TOEFL test is completely unavailable in your country. You must email the department at socadvis@uw.edu to obtain this exception. You will need to take your test as early as possible. We have found that invariably applicants have had trouble with IELTS reporting scores in a timely fashion. Therefore, if you obtain an exception from the department and are using IELTS we recommend that you take the exam as early as possible, and contact us at socadvis@uw.edu for instructions on how to submit these scores.

Please be sure to watch your application and make sure that your IELTS scores do get attached to your online application. Note that they will not attach until a few days after you actually submit and pay for your application.
HOW DO YOU MAKE ADMISSIONS DECISIONS?

All completed applications are reviewed by members of our admissions committee, which is composed of faculty members and at least one current graduate student. This committee considers the applicants' academic background and accomplishments and their preparation for a research-based graduate program. We also consider the fit between our faculty's strengths and the applicant's stated interests, as we seek to admit a cohort of students who will thrive in our environment.

WHEN WILL I HEAR WHETHER OR NOT I HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED?

We begin notifying applicants as soon as we have made decisions. Typically we extend our first offers of admission in late January or early February, and continue notifying candidates through early March. In some years we develop a waiting list.

CAN I DEFER AN OFFER OF ADMISSION?

Typically, we do not allow students to defer their offers of admission. If you are offered admission and wish to delay enrollment, we usually will reconsider your application (updated if you see fit) in subsequent years, but not defer the actual offer with very few exceptions. Please contact the Graduate Program Advisor at socadvis@uw.edu if you need further information.

DO YOU ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

Yes, we frequently accept international students, and find that they contribute greatly to the intellectual vitality of our department. International students are subject to special financial, visa, and language requirements, and non-native English speaking students must demonstrate English language proficiency (by submitting recent and official English language proficiency test scores).

I DO NOT HAVE AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY. CAN I STILL APPLY?

It is not necessary to have a bachelor's degree in Sociology to apply for the program. We have many applicants who are admitted without a degree in sociology but most do have a social science degree.

I ALREADY HAVE A MASTER'S DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY. WILL I HAVE TO COMPLETE ALL THE DEPARTMENT’S REQUIREMENTS?

Once admitted to the department, and on campus taking classes, students who have already completed a MA in sociology and have written an empirical Masters Thesis may submit their Thesis for review to be advanced to a post-MA status. Students advanced to post-MA status in this way typically take the same required coursework as our pre-MA students, but do not write a second thesis and do not receive a UW Masters Degree. These students will then be evaluated regarding immediate advancement to the Ph.D. program. Advancing to the Ph.D. program allows students to begin preparing for their comprehensive exam, prepare and submit their Ph.D. Training Plan, and to register for dissertation credits with their faculty advisor.

I HAVE A MASTER’S DEGREE IN ANOTHER FIELD. WILL THIS COUNT?

Typically, students who have earned a master's degree in a field other than sociology are admitted into the program as pre-MA students, and complete all requirements associated with both the MA and Ph.D. degrees.
I HAVE A STRONG BACKGROUND IN STATISTICS. DO I HAVE TO TAKE THE REQUIRED STATS COURSES?

Students with substantial background in graduate level statistics may request a waiver from one or more of our required statistics courses. Waivers are granted by our graduate methods committee on a case-by-case basis, after review of syllabi, completed assignments, or other relevant materials.

DOES THE DEPARTMENT OFFER OR FACILITATE DUAL DEGREES?

We do not officially sponsor any dual degree programs. Some students complete a second MA degree while in graduate school at UW, though this often extends their time-to-degree in sociology.

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY? SHOULD I GO TO A PROGRAM WITH A TERMINAL MA OR A PH.D. PROGRAM LIKE THE UW’S?

The American Sociological Association has an excellent Careers in Sociology web site that can help answer these questions.

WHAT IF NONE OF THE FACULTY ARE INTERESTED IN WHAT I WANT TO STUDY?

We strongly encourage applicants to think about the intellectual fit between their interests and the historical and current strengths of any department they are considering for graduate school. While both departments and student's interests change over time, we believe it is a waste of scarce resources to invest in a student who will be intellectually unhappy or unsupported.

CAN I TAKE SOME COURSES AS A GRADUATE NON-MATRICULATED (GNM) STUDENT BEFORE I APPLY TO THE PROGRAM?

At the University of Washington, it is up to the department whether or not to allow graduate non-matriculated students. The Sociology department has decided not to allow this. If you have a class you want to take before you apply to the program, you can contact the professor for permission and then register through UW Professional and Continuing Education.

UW Professional and Continuing Education may advise you to contact us about applying for graduate non-matriculated status. Tell them you have already contacted the department and were told this is not an option.

If you were to apply later and be accepted (and there is no guarantee of this), you might be able to apply a limited number of credits to your departmental credits. These credits could not apply to the Graduate School requirements (36 credits of the 45 required for an MA degree in Sociology).

MY RESEARCH INTERESTS ARE INTERDISCIPLINARY. CAN I INCORPORATE COURSEWORK AND INSIGHTS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS INTO MY STUDIES AND MY DISSERTATION?

Absolutely. We recognize that many of the most important research questions require knowledge of other fields, and the vast majority of our graduate students take courses from faculty in other departments. Further, almost all of our faculty are affiliated, in one way or another, with other departments or programs on campus.

CAN YOU MAIL ME ANY INFORMATION?
In order to conserve natural and financial resources we've put everything online. Feel free to email us at socadvis@uw.edu if you can't find what you're looking for on our website.

I’D LIKE TO VISIT CAMPUS. HOW CAN I ARRANGE THIS?

We invite all admitted students to campus for a ‘recruitment weekend’ in early March. During this weekend students have an opportunity to meet faculty and graduate students, attend seminars, get a feel for the campus and Seattle, and ask whatever questions will help them make a decision about their graduate studies.

Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to host visiting potential students prior to recruitment weekend. If you do plan to visit campus on your own, you may be able to arrange individual meetings with students or faculty.

WHAT IS YOUR MAILING ADDRESS / CONTACT INFORMATION?

Questions may be directed to the Graduate Program Advisor at socadvis@u.washington.edu or by phone at (206) 221-3280.

To contact us by mail:

Attn: Graduate Program Advisor
Department of Sociology
University of Washington
Campus Mail Stop Box 353340
211 Savery Hall
Seattle, WA 98195-3340

PLEASE NOTE:
When using messenger / delivery services such as UPS, please leave off the mail stop / box number.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

UW Sociology Graduate Admissions and Application Instructions
Graduate School Prospective Students Information Page
International Student Services
General English Language Proficiency Requirements**
English Language Requirements for Teaching Assistants**

**Please note the following difference in our departmental policy from these general information pages which provide some additional/other options in regards to test scores, that we do not accept in our department. Departmental entry requirements are different and require test scores of ALL non-native English speaking applicants, regardless of any previous graduate degrees from English speaking institutions. If you have a Bachelors Degree (BA) from an English speaking institution from a country listed in Memo 15 as a way to qualify, you may be able to get a waiver for submitting TOEFL scores. To obtain a waiver, email: socadvis@uw.edu