



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Graduate Program Manual

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I. The Graduate Program

This manual should answer many of your questions related to graduate program requirements, procedures, and forms. The requirements provide you with the training to advance your scholarship, and the procedures and forms help you stay on track and keep the graduate program coordinator (GPC), the graduate program advisor (GPA), and ultimately, the Graduate School, informed of your progress.

Key Departmental Personal

[Kyle Crowder](#) serves as the department chair. The department chair is the faculty member responsible for overseeing the running of the department. This includes, among many other tasks, assigning students to TA positions each quarter. Students are always welcome to reach out to the department chair with any questions or concerns about any aspect of the department, or for help or guidance while navigating through the program.

[Sarah Quinn](#) serves as the graduate program coordinator (GPC). The GPC is the faculty member responsible for overseeing the graduate program. This includes the management of admissions, orientation, annual reviews, progress through milestones, and registration for independent studies. The GPC is available to help graduate students troubleshoot problems and navigate the program.

[Tess McShane](#) is the graduate program advisor (GPA). The GPA is the member of the staff responsible for the running of the graduate program. This is the staff member you will work most closely with as you move through the program, and they will work with you to get registered for classes, schedule exams, file paperwork with the university, generally troubleshoot problems, and help guide you through different policies and processes.

II. The Program at a Glance

Below is a quick overview of the main program milestones:

Coursework

Required coursework for the MA degree is 36 credits and is generally completed in years 1-2 of the program. For the PhD, there are 90 required coursework credits which are generally completed in years 3-5. These include 4 SOC electives (including those taken for the MA) and a four course [PhD training plan](#).

MA Thesis

Requires students to build a committee, who can provide complimentary substantive and methodological guidance for the MA, and an original research paper of publishable quality. Generally completed in years 2-3 (expected to be complete by the end of Fall of the third year). Students who enter the program with an MA, may submit their previous thesis for approval to waive this specific requirement. This must be done by the Fall of the first year.

Comprehensive Exam

Allows students a chance to gain expertise in 2-3 subfields that the student plans to specialize in. Students will work together with their committee of three Sociology faculty members to identify topics, questions, theoretical frames, and potential analytical approaches for the dissertation. Generally completed in year 3 (expected to be complete by the end of Winter of the third year).

Appoint the full Ph.D. committee

Select the Ph.D. supervisory committee that will help guide you through all phases of the dissertation process. Your committee should consist of four faculty members.

Dissertation Prospectus - General Exam

The prospectus serves as a roadmap to the dissertation plan including the research motivations, objective, theoretical framework, data and methods, and a chapter outline. Students will work together with a committee of three Sociology faculty members and one non-departmental UW reviewer to develop the prospectus and prepare for the defense. Successfully defend the dissertation prospectus between years 3-4 (expected to be completed by the end of Fall of the fourth year).

Dissertation - Final Exam

The dissertation represents a culmination of a graduate career in which student's conduct original research addressing a substantive gap in the literature and provide a meaningful contribution to the discipline. With the guidance of their committee, chapters of the dissertation are often published in academic journals, converted into book proposals, and/or used in job talks. Successfully defend the dissertation between years 5-6.

III. Recommended Timeline

Note: While this is a suggested progression through the program, people take many paths throughout their graduate training. Many things could extend this timeline, including: working on additional research collaborations; generating new datasets; health, family, other life events; or major social/environmental upheaval.

Year	Task	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	During this year, a student on this timeline will:
1	Courses	501 (ProSem) 504 (Stats) 510 (Theory)	501 (ProSem) 505 (Stats) 508 (Logic of Inquiry)	501 (ProSem) 506 (Stats) Elective		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete 33 (of 36 required) credits for the MA Progress on the MA (e.g., select a topic and committee chair, and start research) Take Soc502 (if this is a year it is offered) Explore collaborative research projects
	Other				MA research	
2	Courses	502 (Teaching) Elective Elective	Elective 700	Elective 700		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish the MA coursework (including the 9 required credits of Soc700) Finish & defend the MA paper Plan coursework for the Ph.D. Training Plan Begin preparing for the comprehensive exam (selected chair, drafted a list, started reading). Take Soc 502 (if this is a year it is offered) Investigate funding options
	Other			MA Defense	comps prep	
3	Courses	Elective Elective	Elective Elective	Elective Elective		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File the PhD training plan Finish PhD coursework Submit the MA for publication Pass the Comprehensive Exam Appoint the Dissertation committee Write and defend the dissertation proposal Apply for a research grant
	Other	Comprehensive Exam		Prospectus (General Exam)	Research Apply for grants	
4	Courses	800 (dissertation)	800 (dissertation)	800 (dissertation)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake dissertation research Continue research collaboration Present at a professional conference Prepare job market materials
	Other				Research	
5+	Courses	800 (dissertation)	800 (dissertation)	800 (dissertation)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for jobs Submit papers for publications Present at professional meetings Finish and defend the dissertation
	Other			PhD Defense (final exam)		

* Link to UW policies: <https://grad.uw.edu/policies/1-1-graduate-degree-requirement>.

IV. Quick Reference

Below student's can find the links and additional information about important departmental and graduate school forms.

General Forms

[Sociology Independent Study Registration](#) for SOC 600,700,800

[Change of Advisor-UW Sociology Grad Program](#)

MA Departmental Forms

[Request for Review of Prior MA Degree](#)

[Petition to Appoint the MA committee](#)

[Petition to Change the MA Committee](#)

[Master's Thesis Defense Scheduling Form](#)

MA Graduate School Links

[Click here](#) to see the Master's degree requirements per the Graduate School

[Click here](#) to see the see the graduation requirements per the Graduate School

Comprehensive Exams

[Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam Request form](#)

PhD Departmental Forms

[Petition to Appoint the Ph.D. Committee Chair](#)

[Petition for Appointment of the Ph.D. Committee.](#)

[Ph.D. Training Plan form](#)

[Form for Website Submission of Keywords](#)

PhD Graduate School Links

Ph.D. committees are required to have a graduate school representative. See here to find out more about the [Role of the Graduate School Representative \(GSR\)](#)

- To check faculty appointments, refer to the [graduate faculty locator](#)

[Click here](#) to find more information about the Graduate School guidelines for successful completion of the General exam

[Click here](#) to see the requirements for virtual doctoral examinations (remote or hybrid General Exam/Final Exam)

[Click here](#) to see the Graduate School policies for the Final Exam

[Click here](#) to read about the process of submitting an Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) to the Graduate School

[Click here](#) to see the graduation requirements per the Graduate School

Other

[Schedule a room](#) in the Sociology department

[UW Grading Practices for Graduate Students](#)

CSSS Concentration

[Sociology Concentration](#)

[Request for Concentration in Social Statistics form](#)

V. Master’s Requirements

For incoming students without a master’s degree, the first phase of the program involves completing an MA. This phase includes required coursework, the appointment of an MA chair and a full MA thesis committee, and the completion and defense of a master’s thesis.

This is a summary of the requirements during the MA portion of the program. If you started the program before 2014, the requirements will look slightly different. In addition to the coursework requirements, students are expected to successfully complete, defend and submit the thesis to the graduate school.

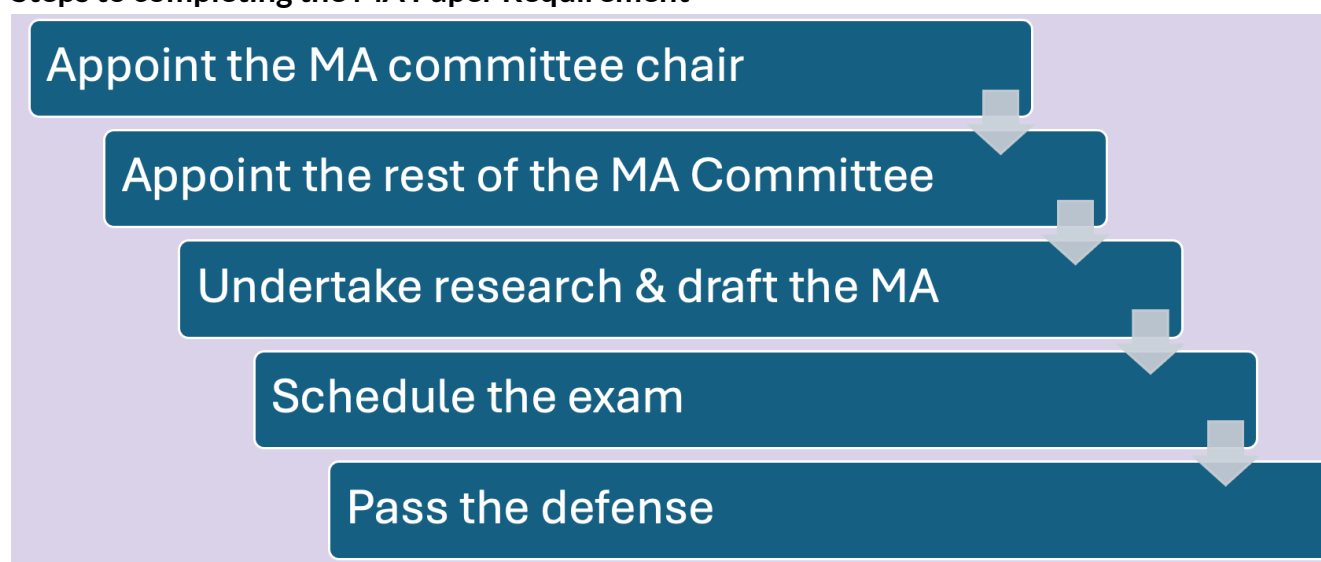
MA Coursework and Paper Requirements

Course Title	Credits
Social Statistics I	3 (must be graded)
Social Statistics II	3 (must be graded)
Quantitative Techniques	3 (must be graded)
Logic of Social Inquiry	3 (must be graded)
Sociological Theory	3 (must be graded)
Proseminar (Autumn, Winter, Spring)	3 (ungraded)
Teaching@UW’s TA training (held annually in September)	-
500-level or approved 400-level courses (<i>see note below</i>). <i>These credits can include required courses: students who receive waivers for required classes must take additional graded credits.</i>	18
SOC 700 / MA thesis credits <i>You need a minimum of 9 credits of SOC 700. You may take more credits, but additional credits will not count towards the degree</i>	9
Total credits required for the UW MA degree	36 (with a minimum 3.3 GPA)

Note: Up to 3 credits of a repeated, same content, Special Topics course (SOC 581 through SOC 590) can apply toward the degree. Multiple Special Topics courses may apply to graduation when course topics/titles are different.

Milestones – completed sequentially
Appoint the chair of the MA committee
Appoint the MA Committee
Pass the MA defense
Graduate with an MA

Steps to completing the MA Paper Requirement



UW Graduate School MA Requirements

You should familiarize yourself with the minimum Graduate School requirements: [The Master’s Degree](#)

After completing your MA, your committee will make a recommendation regarding your advancement to the Ph.D. If you entered the program with a master’s degree, you can petition to have your previous [MA approved](#). If approved, the

committee will make a recommendation about your advancement to the Ph.D. All students, regardless of previous degrees, complete the required first-year coursework.

Approval of Previous MA

Students who enter the program with an MA can request a formal faculty review of their thesis. Students whose MA is approved via this process are not required to complete a second MA degree in the UW sociology department. However, they need to take the required first-year courses.

Procedure

Before or during your first quarter, submit the following [Request for Review of Prior MA Degree](#) form. The form asks for a short statement describing the MA program, what the thesis accomplishes, a copy of the MA thesis (NOTE: if your thesis was written in a language other than English, include a translation), and a transcript of prior graduate coursework.

An ad-hoc committee of at least two faculty members will review the materials. One member of the committee will have substantive and/or methodological expertise in the thesis topic. The prior MA will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Does the MA thesis demonstrate an ability to conduct methodologically sound social scientific research?
2. Does all of the submitted work demonstrate that the student is prepared to begin independent, empirical, sociological research at the Ph.D. level?

Committee members will provide a summary evaluation of the MA thesis and make a recommendation about advancement to the Ph.D. program.

Outcome

The two most common outcomes include accepting or denying the previous MA. In rare cases, the committee will recommend that a student work with a faculty member to revise their thesis. This requires: (i) approval of the entire graduate program committee, (ii) agreement from the designated faculty member, and (iii) completion of revisions within two quarters

Students whose MA is accepted will be classified as 'post-MA'. Students with extensive prior coursework in social statistics may petition to waive one or more of the required statistics courses.

MA Committee

The MA committee supervises and approves your master's thesis. The committee consists of at least two (and no more than four) faculty members. The chair must hold an appointment in sociology. The second member – the reader – may be an adjunct member of the faculty. Both must be members of the graduate faculty. Additional committee member(s) can be from outside the Sociology department, but require approval from the chair.

The Chair

The MA chair serves as the primary academic advisor during the MA phase of the program. Your chair will discuss the research topic and design, assist with analyses, and read & provide feedback on drafts. We encourage you to appoint an MA chair in the spring quarter of the first year.

To appoint the MA chair, the student will ask the faculty member to serve as MA thesis committee chair and complete the [Appoint the MA Chair](#) form.

The Committee

Faculty member(s) serving on the committee provide additional guidance on your thesis. When you are ready to form your committee, you should fill out the [Appoint the MA committee](#) form.

Collecting your committee's signatures via email is an efficient way to approach this process. When reaching out, consider the following template and be sure to cc the GPA in the email.

"I would like to thank you once again for agreeing to be on my MA committee and providing me with support through this academic process. In order to make this official through the department, could you please sign the following forms attached below at your nearest convenience. Thank you."

Changes

If your committee changes, let us know by submitting a [Change of MA committee](#) form.

Non-UW Sociology Faculty Members

Students who want to appoint a non-UW Faculty member to their committee should first familiarize themselves with the Graduate School policies and consult with the chair for approval: [The Master’s Supervisory Committee](#)

MA Thesis

The MA thesis should demonstrate your ability to (1) identify and develop a substantive research question; and (2) apply appropriate methodological tools to this question. The aim is to create a manuscript suitable (in length, style, and rigor) for publication in a social science journal.

MA Thesis Defense

The culmination of your work is the MA thesis defense. This meeting with the full committee serves as a forum for formal review of the thesis and provides an opportunity for the committee to discuss a future plan of study and research.

MA Completion

Finishing your MA degree is a coordinated effort involving you, the Graduate School, the GPA, and your committee. The information on this page and the links to the Graduate School should answer the majority of your questions. The hard deadline for completing all of these tasks is the last day of the quarter.

The Graduate School

The Graduate school has an extensive [graduation page](#) that you will need to examine carefully and often. The page has a detailed graduation checklist highlighting 14 steps that each MA student needs to complete before graduating. The 14 steps are included in the table below:

Graduation Checklist

Step 1	Submit a master’s degree request via MyGrad – Student View at the beginning of your intended graduation quarter but no later than the last day of the quarter.
Step 2	Confirm your name and thesis details on record with the UW and the Graduate School (as listed in MyGrad – Student View).
Step 3	Check your unofficial transcript in MyUW for any missing grades from previous quarters. If needed, contact your professors about grade changes.
Step 4	Create an account in the UW ETD Administrator Site .
Step 5	Review ETD Formatting Guidelines and insert the three required sections into the body of your thesis: title page , copyright page , abstract
Step 6	Obtain the necessary signatures on your Master’s Thesis Approval Form .
Step 7	Upload your Thesis Approval Form to the Administrative documents section of the UW ETD Administrator Site .
Step 8	Upload your thesis to the UW ETD Administrator Site .
Step 9	SUBMIT your (1) thesis and (2) Committee Approval Form via the UW ETD Administrator Site by the quarterly deadline (last day of the quarter at 11:59 p.m.).
Step 10	Confirm submission: after a successful submission, the message “Your dissertation/thesis has been submitted” will appear in the UW ETD Administrator site (followed by an email).
Step 11	Monitor your email after submission for any requests for revisions. Consider setting up e-mail forwarding if you will no longer be checking your UW e-mail.
Step 12	Monitor your UW email after the quarter ends for any time-sensitive requests or questions that might arise as your department and GEMS review your request to graduate.
Step 13	Instructions from the Office of University Registrar (OUR): You may log in and enter your requested diploma name and diploma mailing address by using the online Diploma Name and Address form .
Step 14	Review Commencement details if you plan to participate in any graduation ceremonies.

Department of Sociology

As you work through the tasks required by the Graduate School, you need to also focus on departmental requirements. Your Sociology to-dos include:

- Have your Chair confirm with the GPA that you are ready to take the exam.
- Request a degree audit from the GPA
- Coordinate a day/time/modality (in-person/remote/hybrid) with your entire committee.
- Complete the [Master's Thesis Defense Scheduling Form](#)
- [Schedule a room](#) (The GPA is happy to help with this!)
- Notify the GPA of day/time/modality
- Email your Thesis and Abstract to the GPA

Multiple Degrees/ Certifications

If you are pursuing concurrent degrees/certifications (e.g. CSDE certificate) you have additional graduation requirements, see this [link](#). Inform the GPA about concurrent degrees and certifications. Note: The CSSS is a concentration, not a certification.

VI. Ph.D Requirements

In order to begin the PhD portion of the program, you need to warn your [Master's in the program](#) or have a [previous MA approved](#).

Below is a summary of coursework and the milestones for the PhD program

PhD Coursework and Milestones

Coursework – completed non-sequentially	Credits
4 sociology electives at 500-level or approved 400-level This may include courses taken as electives for the MA Excludes first year required coursework	12 credits
Soc 800 dissertation credits	27 credits
Total credits required for UW PhD degree	90 credits (with a minimum 3.3 GPA)

Milestones – completed sequentially
Appoint the chair of the Ph.D. committee
Develop and submit the Ph.D. training plan
Pass the comprehensive exam
Appoint the full Ph.D. Committee
Pass the general exam (dissertation prospectus)
Identify a subset of the Ph.D. committee as a reading committee
Pass the final exam (dissertation defense)
Submit the dissertation and required paperwork
Graduate with a Ph.D.

Advancement to the Ph.D. Program

At the time of the MA Thesis defense, each member of the MA committee will provide a summary evaluation of the MA thesis, and make a recommendation about advancement to the Ph.D. program. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Graduate Program Committee. If all members of the committee make positive recommendations, the student will advance.

If the MA committee makes a mixed or negative recommendation, the student can appeal the decision within one quarter. Successful appeals require written letters of support - including a commitment to chair or serve on the Ph.D. committee - from at least two faculty members, and may require the student to address other contingencies. Specific instructions will be provided when this occurs.

Ph.D. Supervisory Committee

The Ph.D. dissertation is a substantial piece of original research that reflects your ability to select an important problem for investigation and address it using appropriate research techniques. The Ph.D. Supervisory Committee guides you through all phases of the dissertation process.

The Chair

The chair of the Ph.D. supervisory committee is your primary academic advisor during the Ph.D. phase of the program. This faculty member guides your choice of topics for the required comprehensive exam, works with you to develop a dissertation project, and helps you identify additional members of the committee. We suggest choosing your chair soon after advancement to the PhD program.

The appointment of the Ph.D. committee chair is a Sociology requirement, and it is distinct from the Graduate School petition to appoint the full committee. To appoint your committee chair, complete the [Petition to Appoint the Ph.D. Committee Chair](#) form.

The Full Committee

You will eventually assemble a full supervisory committee, recommended by the department and appointed by the Graduate School. This committee provides advice and feedback on the design and writing of the dissertation. To appoint your full committee, complete the [Petition for Appointment of the Ph.D. Committee](#). Collecting your committee's signatures via email is an efficient way to approach this process. When reaching out, consider the following template and be sure to cc the GPA in the email.

"I would like to thank you once again for agreeing to be on my MA committee and providing me with support through this academic process. In order to make this official through the department, could you please sign the following forms attached below at your nearest convenience. Thank you."

* NOTE you are not considered a doctoral student by the graduate school until the establishment of your full supervisory committee. The graduate school recommends that you establish the committee four months before your general exam (prospectus defense).

Composition

The Sociology department requires that the supervisory committee consist of four faculty members: The committee chair, who must be a member of the graduate faculty in Sociology, plus two additional sociology faculty members (at least one of whom must be a member of the graduate faculty), and a Graduate School Representative. You have the option of including additional faculty members from outside of the department or university.

The Graduate School Representative

The primary duties of the Graduate School Representative (GSR) are to protect you against unfair treatment and to promote quality control in awarding the Ph.D. degree. You choose the GSR in consultation with your chair. The GSR must be outside the home department and have a graduate faculty endorsement. You can use the [graduate faculty locator](#) to check faculty appointments.

The Reading Committee

After the General Exam, you will choose at least three members of your committee to serve on a reading committee. Your readers are responsible for approving your dissertation.

Non-UW Sociology Members

In general, Ph.D. Supervisory Committees are composed of UW Sociology graduate faculty. In some cases, it may be appropriate to include a non-UW faculty member, or a UW faculty member from another department, on a supervisory committee. Such appointments are routinely approved if the non-UW faculty member or non-Sociology UW faculty member will bring something unique to the committee, and if the chair of the committee approves.

Graduate School Links

[The Doctoral Supervisory Committee other than Practice Doctorates](#)

[The Role of the Graduate School Representative \(GSR\)](#)

Minimum Grades

You should maintain a 3.5 cumulative GPA in these courses.

CSSS Concentration

Students who complete a Phd. Training plan that consists of a coherent set of four CSSS courses and who have enrolled in at least one quarter of CSSS 590 (Weekly Seminar) may request a letter of completion from CSSS.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

Overview

The comprehensive exam gives you an opportunity to demonstrate mastery over relevant theory, methods, and empirical material in a subfield or set of related subfields, with an eye toward conducting related research. Exams can be taken in traditional or 'synthetic' areas. Exams that bridge areas may be useful for students whose emerging research agenda draws on multiple lines of scholarship. The topic and coverage of the exam should be substantially broader than a dissertation, and it should cover foundational readings and current scholarship in one or more subfields. Specific exam areas will be developed by you in collaboration with your committee.

Timing

You should take the comprehensive exams within one year of completing the MA degree, and no later than the spring of the fourth year. A few guidelines:

- Schedule exams during the quarter (not during a break).
- The exam is typically taken before the last week of a quarter so it can be graded before the break.
- You must be registered in the quarter in which you take the exam.

Committee

The exam committee should include at least three faculty members selected by the student. A departmental representative (DR) is also randomly assigned to the committee. At least two of the student-selected faculty members should have at least a 25% appointment in the sociology department. The third should have, at a minimum, adjunct status in the department.

Reading List

In preparation for the comprehensive exam students should create a reading list in consultation with their committee. The length varies, but lists should consist of about 30 books and 100 articles and/or book chapters covering both contemporary and classic literature in the chosen area. Students may consult examples of exam topics, reading lists, and exam questions from other students. As you approach this milestone, you should meet with the GPC to discuss your plans for forming a committee, making your list, and figuring out your timeline and plans to prepare. Other graduate students have also put together a list of preparation tips.

Format

Comprehensive exams are offered in two formats. Format A is the most common, but format B is also an option when graduate students consult with their committee.

Format A

Question: Exams typically consist of three to six questions posed by the examining committee.

Response: Written responses should not exceed 30-pages (double-spaced, standard margins, 12-point Times New Roman or similar font). Responses need not be of equal length.

Time limit: Students will have 48 hours to complete the exam.

Protocol: This is an open book exam, allowing students to consult books, articles, notes, and online materials.

However, students should not discuss the questions or responses with anyone. The exam instructions provided by the examining committee will specify whether citations and references are required and whether references count toward the 30-page limit.

Format B

Question: The total number of questions is determined by the examining committee.

Response: The examining committee will set the response terms for the student.

Time Limit: Students will have a maximum of 8 hours each day to complete the exam.

Protocol: This is a shorter, closed-book exam, also conducted over a two-day period. The final structure of the exam is determined by the examining committee.

Additional Time

You can request a 24-hour extension if you are a non-native English writer, are pregnant, have a documented learning disability or have a health condition that requires additional time. Request this extension when scheduling your exam and send the committee approval to the graduate program advisor.

Narrative Rationale

Prepare a short narrative rationale for the exam (one page or less). Describe why you are proposing this particular exam, and outline the broad contours of the exam's domain. If the exam covers more than one field or subfield in the discipline,

the narrative should briefly discuss how this particular combination of fields will prepare you for future research and teaching.

Requesting an Exam

To request an exam, you will need to submit the following to the graduate program advisor (socgpa@uw.edu):

- A [Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam Request form](#)
- Your narrative rationale
- A reading list

You will then wait for approval and the assignment of the departmental representative. Once that is approved, you should schedule your exam with the committee.

Departmental Representative

After the proposed exam has been approved by the GPC, a Departmental Representative (DR) will be randomly assigned to your committee. The main role of the DR is to assure that exams do not become too closely aligned to a student's (or faculty member's) idiosyncratic interests. It also provides faculty with an opportunity to see what type of work is being done in the department. In practice, the DR provides coordination and oversight, as opposed to creating the exam and providing feedback. At a minimum, the DR should review exam questions to ensure that they are neither too broad or too narrow and have an opportunity to read the completed exam.

Outcome

You will learn the exam outcome within two weeks. Exam outcomes include: Pass with Distinction, Pass, Conditional Pass or Fail.

A conditional pass means that the committee is asking for revisions. You have 60-days to revise and resubmit. If you do not resubmit, you will be placed on warning status with the graduate school. Students placed on warning must retake the comprehensive exam within one quarter after the original exam date.

Students who fail the exam will be put on warning status and will have the opportunity to retake the exam the following quarter. Students who fail the exam a second time will be dismissed from the program. A third attempt is granted if two-thirds of the faculty approve.

Ph.D. General Exam / Prospectus Defense

Passing the General Examination is a major milestone in your academic career and results in a promotion to Ph.D. candidate status (also known as 'All but Dissertation' or ABD). During this exam, you will defend a dissertation prospectus that outlines a plan for the full dissertation. You will develop the prospectus by working closely with your Supervisory Committee Chair and (usually) your entire committee.

You can learn more about the General Exam on the Graduate School website: [General Examination](#)

Before you schedule your exam, it is important to:

- Request a degree audit from the GPA
- Submit your PhD Training Plan (if you have not yet done so)
- Register for credits in the quarter of the exam

Scheduling

- Have your Chair confirm with the GPA that you are ready to take the exam
- Coordinate a day/time/modality (in-person/remote/hybrid) with your entire committee.
- [Schedule a room](#) (This can be frustrating. The GPA is happy to help with this!)
- Notify the GPA of day/time/modality
- Schedule the General Exam in MyGrad

The Exam

At least four members of the supervisory committee (including Chair and GSR) must be present at the General Examination. If you plan to have a remote or hybrid exam, review the graduate school requirements for [virtual doctoral examinations](#).

Post Exam

After a successful exam, email a copy of your prospectus to the GPA.

Ph.D. Final Exam / Dissertation Defense

The Final Examination (dissertation defense) is the culmination of the graduate program. Final Examinations at the UW are public events, so all are welcome to attend. The final exam typically includes a short presentation of the dissertation, followed by questions from the Supervisory committee and audience members. The end of the exam includes an executive (closed) session of the Supervisory Committee. If you pass the exam, the committee recommends to the Graduate School that the Ph.D. degree be awarded.

Before you schedule your exam, it is important to:

- Request a degree audit from the GPA
- Appoint your reading committee (a subset of your Supervisory Committee that will read and approve your dissertation). Send this information to the GPA, who will form the committee in MyGrad.

Scheduling

To schedule your exam:

- Have your Chair confirm with the GPA that you are ready to take the exam
- Coordinate a day/time/modality (in-person/remote/hybrid) with your entire committee
- Schedule a room (This can be frustrating. The GPA is happy to help with this!)
- Notify the GPA of day/time/modality
- Schedule the Final Exam in MyGrad.

The Final Examination

At least four members of the supervisory committee (including Chair and GSR) must be present at the Final Examination. If you plan to have a remote or hybrid exam, review the graduate school requirements for [virtual doctoral examinations](#).

UW Graduate School Final Exam Information:

- [Graduate School policies for the Final Exam](#)
- [Reading Committee Timeline and Composition](#)

Completing the Ph.D. Degree

Finishing your PhD includes many academic and administrative steps. You can find information about the academic steps in the [Final Exam \(Dissertation Defense\) page](#). The hard deadline for completing all of these tasks is the last day of the quarter. A slow and steady approach will save you stress at the end of the quarter!

Prepare to Graduate

The Graduate school has an extensive [graduation page](#) that you will need to examine carefully and often. The page provides a detailed graduation checklist highlighting 16 steps that each doctoral student needs to complete before graduating. The 16 steps are included in the table below:

Graduation Checklist

Step 1	Schedule a doctoral final exam via MyGrad – Student View (exam must be formally scheduled in advanced)
Step 2	Verify accuracy of your Supervisory and Reading Committee membership in MyGrad. Contact your graduate program advisor if any corrections are needed.
Step 3	Confirm your name and dissertation details with UW and the Graduate School
Step 4	Check your unofficial transcript in MyUW for any missing grades from previous quarters. If needed, contact your professors about grade changes.
Step 5	Create an account in the UW ETD Administrator Site . This is recommended before you submit your dissertation.

Step 6	Review ETD Formatting Guidelines and insert the three required sections into the body of your dissertation (title page , copyright page , abstract)
Step 7	Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) online. After completion, you will receive your SED Certificate, save a copy of this certificate.
Step 8	Follow up with any reading committee members to obtain all required electronic reading committee approvals . You can check the status of approvals any time by accessing your scheduled final exam .
Step 9	Upload your SED Certificate of Completion to the Administrative Documents section of the UW ETD Administrator Site
Step 10	Upload your dissertation to the UW ETD Administrator Site .
Step 11	SUBMIT your (1) dissertation and (2) SED Certificate of Completion via the UW ETD Administrator Site by the quarterly deadline (last day of the quarter at 11:59 p.m.).
Step 12	Confirm submission
Step 13	Monitor your email after submission for any requests for revisions
Step 14	Monitor your UW email after the quarter ends for any time-sensitive requests or questions that might arise as your department and GEMS review your request to graduate
Step 15	Instructions from the Office of University Registrar (OUR): You may log in and enter your requested diploma name and diploma mailing address by using the online Diploma Name and Address form .
Step 16	Review Commencement details if you plan to participate in any graduation ceremonies.

Submit your Dissertation

You are required to submit an Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) to the Graduate School. This is how you share your research with the academic community. The links below include guidelines and resources about the process.

[Thesis/Dissertation Information Page](#)

[Writing Your Thesis or Dissertation](#) > go to ETD Resources

Update the Department

Email these materials to the GPA:

- Dissertation
- Abstract
- [Keyword Form](#)

VII. Funding

The Department of Sociology guarantees funding for five consecutive academic years. This funding covers tuition and most student fees, and a monthly stipend over 9 consecutive months (September-June). It also covers health insurance for the entire year.

- We guarantee funding in the form of teaching assistantships. More advanced students may have opportunities to develop and lead their own classes.
- Student funding can also come from research assistantships, fellowships, or departmental awards. More information on these is available below.
- As academic student employees, all students are covered by a collective bargaining agreement that specifies that students will work a maximum of 220 hours per quarter.
- All funding is contingent on good standing in the program and satisfactory performance of assigned employee duties

After the fifth year in the program, funding is not guaranteed, but may be possible for students in good standing based on the availability of department funds, and based student progress through the program.

Salary Structure

The University of Washington operates on a tiered salary structure that increases when students receive their master's degree and again when they advance to candidacy. Monthly compensation amounts for each level are posted on the University's [TA/RA Salaries](#) page.

Union Affiliation/Collective Bargaining Agreement

All Academic Student Employees (ASEs) are covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the University of Washington and UAW Local 4121, which is found [here](#). Both ASEs and the University of Washington are bound by the terms of this contract, so it is important for students to familiarize themselves with its provisions.

Offer Letter

All students receive an offer letter when accepted into the program. That offer letter specifies each student's funding package, and is the best point of reference for questions about individual funding offers. What is listed in each student's specific offer letter supersedes any information listed here.

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching assistants (TAs) work with faculty instructors to support undergraduate (and select graduate) courses. This includes leading sections, grading papers, and answering student questions.

Research Assistantships

Some students are funded through research assistantships with faculty members of the sociology department or other departments on campus. Research assistants (RAs) may perform literature reviews, collect data, clean data, analyze data, write-up findings, or otherwise participate in the research process.

Research Assistantships are most typically funded through grants to faculty undertaking research, which means that they are not organized centrally through the department. Students may apply for one of these positions, or be asked by faculty to serve as an RA. Students may seek out RA positions through [Handshake](#) (the University's job search website) or through the [Graduate Funding Information Service](#) (GFIS), which maintains a blog that posts RA positions. The department distributes announcements about RA positions when informed of them.

Fellowships

Some students may qualify for fellowships that partially or fully cover tuition and stipends without additional work requirements. To learn more information about the different awards and fellows offered to graduate students by the department of sociology, visit the [following page](#). The department of sociology has also created the [following page](#) to provide additional information regarding the numerous fellowship opportunities available to graduate students. The Graduate Funding Information Service helps graduate students identify and locate funding opportunities including tuition, research, and travel. Check [here](#) regularly for opportunities.

Sometimes outside fellowships (like those provided by the American Sociological Association) ask for departments to cover tuition. When you apply for these, please meet with the department chair to confirm that the department has the funds to cover any funding shortfall.

Summer Teaching

For students with an MA, a common way of securing funding during the summers is through teaching. Students are eligible to teach summer courses if they have their MA, have completed Soc502: Seminar in Teaching Sociology, and are in good academic standing. We follow the practice of honoring all reasonable requests to teach by eligible graduate students with the proviso that any courses with fewer than 10 students may be canceled. Details about summer teaching opportunities are circulated by the department chair during the academic year.

Summer Collaborative Research Funding

These grants provide funding for hourly employment to work with faculty on a collaborative research project over the summer quarter. In years when funding is available for this, the department chair will typically announce that the application is open in Spring quarter..

Departmental Research Funds for Graduate Students

The Department of Sociology often has endowed funds and other sources to support costs associated with graduate student research, such as costs associated with collecting and/or processing data. We encourage students at all stages of the program to apply. The first step is to fill out a Graduate Research Request. These applications are due on the 3rd Monday of Autumn and Spring quarters. Additional information about eligible expenses, application materials, and selection criteria are listed on the [Graduate Research Funding Award Page](#).

Departmental Travel Funds

Students who have been accepted to present at a conference may be eligible to receive up to \$500 in funds to help cover travel costs. To apply, fill out the [travel request form](#).

VIII. Academic Progress

Your progress through the graduate program is evaluated primarily by the quality of your scholarly work (coursework and research activities) and meeting program milestones in a timely way. Students who are making satisfactory progress receive priority for departmental funding.

Satisfactory progress includes:

1. Maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher (grades below 2.7 may not be counted toward a graduate degree). See [Grading Practices for Graduate Students](#).
2. Registering for a minimum of 10 credits per quarter
3. Completing MA course requirements within the first three years of the program
4. Completing the remaining Ph.D. requirements within three years of advancement to the PhD program (post-MA)

Unsatisfactory progress includes:

- Completing less than 15 “qualifying credits” in the first year of the program.
 - Credits in courses at the 500 (or approved 400-level)
 - Credits in courses with a numerical grade of at least 3.0 or a “Credit” or “Satisfactory” in a non-graded course
- Not completing the required coursework and the MA degree by the fourth year of the program.
- After advancement to the Ph.D. program: falling more than two quarters behind the expected timeline for satisfactory progress and receiving a passing grade on a subject area examination

Unsatisfactory progress may result in a range of remedial actions which are explained in the [Low Scholarship section](#).

Annual Review

Every spring quarter, the sociology department conducts an annual review of all graduate students. This is an opportunity for graduate students to reflect on their progress and get feedback on their work. This is what the process looks like:

1. Students complete an Activity Report and submit an updated CV and unofficial transcript
2. Faculty advisors review student materials and complete an assessment for all students they advise or regularly interact with. The assessment includes information about: degree progress, notable accomplishments and milestones, plans and goals, work quality, areas for development, and advice.
3. The Graduate Program Committee meets to discuss these materials. The primary focus of the meeting is to identify areas where we can better support students.
4. After the GPC meeting, students receive a progress letter about their standing in the department. This letter mentions their accomplishments, their upcoming milestones, and advice from faculty.
5. The Graduate Program Coordinator will contact students who have fallen behind to schedule a meeting to discuss ways the department can help in returning the student to good standing.

Low Scholarship

The department and the Graduate School are invested in helping students who are not meeting program expectations. This process is a tiered approach, involving first the department (warning) and then both the Graduate School and the department (probation, final probation, and drop).

Warning

A student who is not making minimum progress may be issued a warning by the department. See [Academic Progress](#) for minimum progress criteria. A student placed on warning is reviewed the following quarter (excluding summer quarter). A student placed on warning may petition for (1) permission to go on [Leave of Absence](#) for a specified period not to exceed one year, or (2) restoration of “good standing” status. Possible outcomes of this process include: Restoration of good standing; Permission for Leave of Absence; Continuation of warning status, to be reviewed in the following quarter, or; Recommendation to the Graduate School for academic probation

Probation

The department may recommend the Graduate School probationary status. Students on academic probation will be reviewed each quarter that the probation is in effect. There are two possible outcomes of this process. (1) If the student has regained minimum progress, the GPC will recommend to the Graduate School that the probationary status be removed. (2) If the student has not regained minimum progress the GPC may recommend: continuation of probation or final probation.

Final Probation

If a student on final probation has not regained minimum progress by the end of the subsequent quarter, the Graduate Program Committee will recommend either termination from the program or, in exceptional circumstances, continuation of the final probation.

Graduate School Policies and Related Procedures

- [This link](#) outlines the Graduate School's process of termination
- [This link](#) outlines the Academic Grievance Procedure
- [Reinstatement](#) is offered to previously registered students who failed to maintain graduate student status

Incomplete Coursework

If you don't complete coursework by the end of the quarter, the instructor may decide between an incomplete grade or failing grade. It's important to complete the coursework, so that the incomplete can be converted to a numeric grade.

Incompletes for required sociology courses should be completed within one quarter. For non-required courses, you have two years (per the Graduate School). Delays in converting an incomplete to a numerical grade may be considered during the annual review process and in funding decisions.

IX. Concentrations, Certificates, and Training Initiatives

While progressing through the Sociology program, students have the option of completing other certificates or degrees, including a concentration in Social Statistics, a concentration in Qualitative Methods, and certificates from CSDE, CLASS, GWSS. Our department also offers a training initiative in demography from the **Max Planck-UW Training Initiative**

Concentration in Social Statistics

The Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS) promotes collaborative interdisciplinary research on statistical methods for the social sciences, and teaches a rich menu of methodology courses for social science students.

The concentration in social statistics is designed to provide students with significant training in contemporary methods for quantitative sociological research. The core of the concentration is successful completion of advanced CSSS coursework. Students completing the concentration will receive a Letter of Recognition from CSSS.

The most up-to-date information is available on the CSS website:

[Center for Statistics and Social Sciences](#)

[Sociology Concentration](#)

Concentration Requirements

1. Successful completion of a coherent set of four courses in social statistics
2. One quarter of CSSS 590 (the CSSS weekly seminar)

Procedures

After you complete your coursework, submit the [Request for Concentration in Social Statistics form](#) to the Sociology GPA. When course completion is confirmed in the department and the CSSS, you will receive your letter of completion.

CSSS Concentration FAQ

Can I use CSSS Concentration coursework in my Ph.D. Training Plan?

Yes.

Can I complete a Concentration in Social Statistics in addition to my Ph.D. Training Plan?

Of course!

How do I signal my advanced training in quantitative methods on my CV?

There are a couple of ways to do this:

- Add a line called 'Research Interests' and list your primary interests, including quantitative methods from the CSSS Concentration.
- Add a section called 'Specialization and Training'. You can summarize CSSS coursework and mention the letter of recognition. This is also a great place to list the topics of your comprehensive exam and Ph.D. Training plan.

I enrolled in a non-CSSS Section of a CSSS course. Can I count this toward the concentration?

Sure!

Is the CSSS concentration a graduate certificate?

No. This is a concentration and not a graduate certificate.

Qualitative Methods Concentration

QUAL is a program hosted under the Jackson School of International Studies that offers education and training to researchers interested in conducting qualitative data analysis across different sectors.

The Qualitative Methods Concentration focuses on providing formal training about the design, method, and analysis of qualitative research including interviews, focus groups, archival research, digital ethnographies, case studies, and discourse analysis. Students and researchers must complete a series of coursework and qualitative data analysis software workshops (ATLAS.ti).

Concentration Requirements:

1. Complete a minimum of 15 credits (here's the breakdown):
 - 10 credit minimum from Methods courses
 - 5 credits minimum from Theory of Gateway courses
2. Complete 2 [Atlas.ti Data Analysis](#) workshops
3. Attend a minimum of 2 [Speaker Series](#) events

Application Process:

For additional information regarding the application process, students should refer to the following website [link](#).

Qualitative Methods Concentration FAQ

When should I submit the planning form?

The deadline is the end of the first week of classes of each quarter (Summer excluded).

Can I include previously taken courses in the planning form?

Yes!

Can I petition to have course quality for the QUAL concentration?

Yes! Petitions must include the course name, description, and syllabus, and should be sent to qual@uw.edu

Concurrent Degrees or Graduate Certificates

Graduate certificates and concurrent degrees are regulated by the Graduate School. There are strict rules about counting courses toward multiple degrees and certificates and there is very little overlap of credits allowed. Since concurrent certificates and degrees require coordination between programs and the Graduate School, it's important to inform the GPA about your plans.

Graduate Certificates

CSDE, CLASS, GWSS are popular certificates for sociology students. This page will answer many of your questions: [Graduate Certificates](#)

Max Planck-UW Training Initiative

A training opportunity for admitted graduate students at the University of Washington, who are also studying demography with CSDE and MPIDR in Germany. The two-year program offers students the opportunity to develop creative research in demography and a global presence as population scientist. Students receive mentorship from faculty and the opportunity to receive a certificate for training from the Max Planck School of Population, Health, and Data Science.

For additional information, see the [Max Planck-UW Training Initiative](#)

NOTE a change in July 2022 removed restrictions around counting credits towards both a graduate certificate and a graduate degree.

Concurrent Degrees:

Sociology does not have any official concurrent degree programs, so dual degrees would be informal. This page will answer many of your questions:

[Concurrent Degree Programs](#)

Rules governing dual degrees depend on the degree. Sociology students would most likely pursue a non-sociology master's degree. In this case:

- Only 12 Credits can overlap between degrees
- Both programs must approve overlaps

Graduation

When you are ready to graduate, you will need to submit a manual degree audit to the graduate school.

[Instructions for Graduating Concurrent Students](#)

SOC 600, 700, 800 Registration

Individually-tailored study and research credit hours provide an opportunity to pursue in-depth study in specialized areas of interest to you, conduct thesis or dissertation research, or prepare for exams.

A couple of things to keep in mind:

- You will need to work with your faculty supervisor to establish a plan of study (examples are available below).
- A full course load during the academic year is 10 credits, during summer 2 credits
- The credit hours should reflect the amount of work you plan to do. The Graduate School recommends 3 hours of effort per week per credit hour.
- SOC 600/700/800 courses are graded CR/NC
- **SOC 600 are independent study credits** that students use to read deeply in areas of interest. Here is an [example of a plan used to register for SOC 600](#). These are not a substitute for seminars, and students are strongly encouraged to register for the elective courses offered.
- **SOC 700 are masters study credits** that you will use to develop your MA paper. Here is an [example of a plan used to register for SOC 700](#).
- **SOC 800 are credits for taking your comprehensive exams or working on your dissertation**. Here is an [example of a plan used to register for SOC 800](#).

Registration

Complete the [Sociology Independent Study Registration](#) before the beginning of the quarter to avoid late fees. This requires developing a brief plan of study to include: a course description, meeting schedule, learning goals/purpose of course, expected outcomes/product, course structure and learning resources to be used, and method of evaluation. Additional information about the application process is included in the registration form.

Course Substitutions and Waivers

Circumstances that Require a Petition

Sometimes you will want to waive a program requirement or request that a course fulfill a degree requirement. Here are a few scenarios:

- You are an incoming first year student with a solid background in statistics. You request a waiver for SOC 504, SOC 505, or SOC 506.

- You found a 400-level course that is important for your research. You want this course to apply to your degree.
- You want a non-Sociology course to count as one of your graded Sociology electives.

Petition Process

The scenarios above require a petition, which you can submit before or after you take a course. Send an email to the Graduate Program Coordinator (copy the GPA). Include:

- Course description and (ideally) a syllabus
- Key assignments (if known)
- Why this course is relevant to your graduate studies.
- The applicable degree requirement (i.e. graded Sociology elective, PhD training plan).
- Description of sociological content (if requesting that a non-sociology course be counted as a degree requirement).
- List other software/programming you have used, and describe your experience using R programming language.

Leave of Absence

During your time in the program, you need to maintain your graduate student status. You do this by registering for courses or officially going on-leave during the academic year. If you fall out of status, you will need to petition for reinstatement.

You can find information about on-leave status on the Graduate School website.

- [On-leave Eligibility](#)
- [Procedure for Requesting Leave](#)
- [Students Requesting Loan Deferment](#)
- [Reinstatement to the Graduate School](#)

Procedure

1. Discuss your plans with your advisor and the GPC and GPA
2. Apply for on-leave status in MyGrad
3. Your request will be sent to the department for approval
4. After your request is approved, return to MyGrad to pay the on-leave fee
5. Return departmental keys to the main office

Important Points

- You must request leave quarterly.
- On-leave status beyond three consecutive quarters may require a request for extension.
- Your on-leave status is not official until you pay the fee.
- You cannot take any exam when you are on-leave.
- International students should consult the [International Student Services](#) office before going on-leave.

Resources for Graduate Students

Graduate School is a long, expensive, and sometimes stressful experience. But there are lots of resources to help you through. Whether you want to make connections with others who share your academic interests, want to learn more about Seattle, are looking for new sources of funding, or just need someone to talk with, there is a place to find assistance.

If you are an international student, it's a good idea to check in with the [International Student Services Office](#).

They can help:

- provide guidance on maintaining F-1 or J-1 immigration status while attending the UW
- process F-1 and J-1 immigration benefits
- navigate university policy and understand F-1 and J-1 visa restrictions
- ensure university and student compliance with immigration policies
- provide educational tools, including workshops and tutorials

RESOURCES continued...

- [Graduate Advising Guidelines](#)
- [Graduate Student Guidebook](#) (an insider's guide written by and for graduate students)
- [Academic Student Employees \(ASE\)](#)
- [Affiliate Centers](#)
- [Fellowships](#)
- [The Graduate School](#)
- [Health & Well-being](#)
- [Office Space Policy](#)
- [Personnel and Labor Relations](#)
- [Professional Development](#)
- [Teaching Support](#)
- [Travel and Research Support](#)
- [Campus Resources](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Diversity](#)
- [Health and Wellness](#)
- [Sociology Writing Center](#)
- [International Student Information](#)
- [Department Intranet](#) (for faculty, staff, and graduate students)