SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM

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Statement of Purpose

This *Department Handbook* is intended to assist you throughout your graduate studies at The Ohio State University in the Department of Sociology by providing information about department policies and procedures. Please also consult the *Graduate School Handbook* for information about university rules and regulations for graduate students. Here we focus on additional and detailed department-level rules and regulations. This handbook does not restate the Graduate School requirements and thus does not substitute for a careful reading of the Graduate School Handbook.

Please note that this handbook contains the policies and procedures as incoming students enter the program. During the course of study, the department may make minor changes for purposes of clarification or more significant changes in the program following consultation with the graduate faculty. Substantial changes like new program requirements will apply only to the cohort entering the next academic year.

Current students may request that changes applied to a new cohort be applied to their program, or they may continue to apply the rules in place at the time they entered the program. Exceptions to this rule include former requirements that can no longer be accommodated, or changes mandated by the graduate school.

If you have questions not answered in any of these documents, please first talk with your faculty advisor, then the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC), then the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). We encourage you to take the initiative to obtain the necessary information and plan a sound graduate program. This handbook establishes the formal policies and required milestones in the program. Becoming a successful sociologist must also move beyond these formal milestones. Depending on your professional goals, you may need to attend professional conferences, submit your research for publication; seek out additional methods of training; gain teaching experience; pursue internships, or work on other scientific and professional development elements. The proseminars and the placement committee can help you identify careers that will be a good fit for you and prepare for those careers. Still, you will also need to take the initiative to decide how you would like to apply your sociological training.

We wish you the best of luck with your studies!

Kammi Schmeer
Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

Kristi Williams
Professor and Chair
Quick Reference

I. Graduate School Deadlines:
Applications to Graduate: are due by the third Friday of each Semester via GradForms. Please check the Graduate School website for the current semester deadlines.

Applications for the Candidacy Exam: must be approved by the advisor and the GPC at least two weeks before the oral date via GradForms. See the section on candidacy for the department requirements.

Applications for Doctoral Final Exams: must be approved by the advisor, committee members, and GPC at least two weeks before the exam via GradForms. You must submit a complete draft of the dissertation to your full committee well in advance of this date.

Presidential Fellowship: This annual competition is hosted in the Autumn semester. Students will work with the Graduate Studies Committee members on their materials and will be nominated by the department. We will solicit interest at the beginning of the semester, with nominations due around the third Friday of October. See here for deadlines and requirements.

Alumni Grants for Graduate Research and Scholarship: An annual funding opportunity through the Graduate School. Requirements can be found here.

II. GradForms
GradForms is the Graduate School’s online portal for registration and graduation forms. If you need to submit a form for the Graduate School, you will do so here.

III. Graduate Program Hub
This is our repository of valuable documents and necessary forms. All files are in the ‘Graduate Program Hub’ channel of the ‘OSU Sociology Team (via Microsoft Teams). This includes past candidacy exams and reading lists, job prep materials, department-level forms (links to appropriate documents), travel documentation, and more. This replaces the previous GRADDOCS folder on BuckeyeBox.

IV. Graduate Program Contacts
Director of Graduate Studies: Kammi Schmeer schmeer.1@osu.edu

Graduate Program Coordinator: Dorian Johnson johnson.7185@osu.edu
The Advisor-Advisee Relationship

The advisor(s)-advisee relationship is at the heart of graduate education. Building a productive and supportive advising relationship is thus a crucial task for both faculty and students, and it is the responsibility of both parties to maintain good communication about this relationship.

Students in our department are assigned two Faculty Contacts when first starting graduate school. These faculty members serve as the primary contacts to help get students acclimated to graduate school and our program and to begin formulating their research interests/ideas. By the end of the spring semester of the first year, students should have identified a faculty member (who may or may not be one of the initial faculty contacts) who will chair the second-year research paper committee required by the program. This person will become your advisor of record and, in addition to working with you as you develop your second-year research paper, may also serve as chair of your candidacy exam and dissertation committees.

You should meet with your advisor regularly throughout the academic year. During the spring semester, the advisor and advisee are expected to meet to complete the Annual Review Process and set goals for the coming year. During your first year, if you have not yet established an official advisor of record, either faculty contact can complete the Annual Review with you.

As your research and exam areas become more concentrated, you may want to transition to a different advisor for candidacy or dissertation work. You should feel free to change advisors or to add a co-advisor at any point and for any reason. Be sure to discuss any changes with your current and new advisors.

Advisors and advisees who are on leave or away from campus for extended periods should plan to stay in regular contact through email, phone, video chat, or other mutually convenient mediums. The GPC and DGS are available to help students and advisors navigate the mentoring relationship. Students with concerns about their advising relationship can talk with the GPC or DGS for help navigating the relationship or identifying a different advisor. For best practices in graduate advising, see the Graduate School Handbook.

Please complete the change advisor form to officially declare an advisor or change an advisor. This form requires your previous and new advisors' signatures for approval. You should also talk to your last advisor/faculty contacts so that they know your plans.

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1 Graduate School Handbook, Appendix H
The Ph.D. Program Overview

The Ohio State Sociology graduate program is a Ph.D. program. We do not offer a terminal master’s degree; however, interested students may earn a master’s degree en route to their doctorate. All students follow the same program of study regardless of degrees held upon entering the program.

Program Timeline and Overview
Below is a sample timeline for how students may move through the program. This timeline, milestones, and Program Requirements below are valuable tools for setting goals with your advisor(s).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6800 Proseminar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5608 Qualitative Methods in Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5649 Introduction to Quantitative Research and Multiple Regression</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6650 Categorical Data Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6655 Sociological Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6582 Sociological Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 electives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestone</td>
<td>By the end of the year, begin developing the topic and identify an advisor for the second-year paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Electives or independent studies or advanced methods or theory classes</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>6710 Design and Analysis of Sociological research (second-year paper course)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electives or independent studies or advanced methods or theory classes</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestone</td>
<td>Second-year paper: to be defended by autumn of the third year or before.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Electives or independent studies or advanced methods or theory classes</td>
<td>8801 Ph.D. Proseminar</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electives, independent studies or advanced methods, or theory classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestone</td>
<td>Prepare second-year paper for publication, begin to identify topics and committee for candidacy exams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Complete any remaining required classes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare for candidacy exams.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take candidacy exams (by the end of the Spring semester of the fourth year)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin identifying dissertation topic, dissertation committee</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Identify dissertation committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare and defend the dissertation proposal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissertation research and writing</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepare for the job market.

Note: Course registration requirements for summer depend on appointment status (fellowship, graduate associate, or summer associate). The department typically does not offer graduate courses in the summer; students required to enroll in classes may enroll in independent study or research hours with sociology faculty or take courses in other departments. Candidacy exams are offered in the Autumn and Spring semesters only.

In the program’s first two years, all students are expected to complete and defend a second-year paper of publishable quality. The paper’s defense should occur no later than the first semester of the third year.2

Once the defense is passed, students should: (a) revise the paper (with the support and guidance of their committee) and send it out for publication while continuing to more advanced coursework, and (b) prepare for candidacy exams by identifying exam areas and committee members. Candidacy exams should be taken in the third or fourth year and must be taken by the spring of your fourth year to maintain good progress.

Upon entering candidacy, students are essentially finished with coursework and will focus on dissertation research. Students will prepare a dissertation proposal outlining the planned dissertation and have a formal defense of the proposal with their dissertation committee. The dissertation proposal’s length, format, and timing will vary depending on the project and the advisor; generally, the proposal should be defended two semesters after entering candidacy. Once the proposal is approved, students move thoroughly into research and dissertation writing. An oral defense of the completed dissertation is required to receive the doctoral degree.

As they write their dissertations, students should research the appropriate timing for job applications and plan to apply for academic or non-academic jobs as they finish the degree.

Coursework

As seen in the sample Program Timeline and Program Requirements, students take a series of required courses leading to candidacy exams. Students entering with previous graduate coursework in sociology, or a related discipline, may transfer credits for courses needed; see the section on transferring courses for details.

Outside courses and independent study/research credits to be counted as electives require approval from the DGS, your primary advisor, and possibly other faculty who teach related courses. We encourage you to apply for approval before registering for the course to ensure it will meet departmental requirements.

All courses must be completed with a grade of B- or better to be counted as fulfilling course requirements.

2 For students who do not already have a Master’s, they may follow the Graduation Procedures at this point.
Methods Courses

Students will take 4 methods courses in their first 2 years in the program, each of which are 3 credit hours.

- SOCIOL 5608 Qualitative Methods in Sociology
- SOCIOL 5649 Introduction to Quantitative Research/Multiple Regression
- SOCIOL 6650 Categorical Data Analysis
- SOCIOL 6655 Sociological Research Methods

Theory Courses

Students will also take a total of 2 theory courses. Two 8000-level courses fulfill the requirement for the second course: SOCIOL 6582 and SOCIOL 8580.

- SOCIOL 6582 Sociological Theory
- SOCIOL 8580 Issues in Contemporary Society

Second Year Paper

During the second semester of the second year, students will take a course to support the second-year paper’s design, implementation, and writing. This requirement may be waived for students who complete their paper before the course offering.

- SOCIOL 6710 Design and Analysis of Sociological Research

Advanced Methods

Students will choose at least one advanced methods course leading to candidacy exams. The following courses will fulfill this requirement. Other courses from outside the department may also fulfill this requirement with approval in advance from the Director of Graduate Studies.

- SOCIOL 6708 Design and Analysis of Qualitative Research
- SOCIOL 7753 Introduction to Demographic Analysis
- SOCIOL 8607 Causal Modeling
- SOCIOL 8632 Analysis of Longitudinal Data
- SOCIOL 8651 Hierarchical Linear Models

Proseminar

First-year students take the 1 credit hour professional development seminar in their first semester of the program. The course introduces department expectations and professionalization to the field.

- SOCIOL 6800 Proseminar in Sociology

In the spring of the third year, students take a second professional development course as they complete coursework and move to the less structured portion of the program.
Electives

In addition to these required courses, students are expected to complete a total of 8 electives. Any graduate-level course in sociology fulfills this requirement. Students may take up to two graduate-level courses outside the department to count towards their elective requirement. All 6000-level courses at OSU are graduate-level courses. 5000-level courses can be taught as an undergraduate, graduate, or combined courses; please consult with the DGS and the course instructor to determine whether 5000-level classes are considered graduate courses. For courses outside the department to count toward the elective requirement, you must seek pre-approval from your advisor via the Outside Course Approval form and send a syllabus to the GPC before taking the course. A list of courses approved in past years is available in the Graduate Program Hub channel on Teams.

Elective requirements may only be met through Independent Study or Research Hours with approval from the DGS.

Transfer of Credit

Students may request to transfer credits from previous graduate studies to the program. In all cases, the approval for any credits is at the department’s discretion and evaluated case-by-case basis. Only courses that the DGS, in consultation with knowledgeable faculty, deems comparable to courses required by the department are eligible for consideration. Students are not permitted to transfer any credits from undergraduate work. In general, a maximum of four courses can be transferred. Under exceptional circumstances, the program will consider accepting additional transfer credit.

If you are concerned about the number of required credits, please consult with the GPC.

Graduate school transfer credit form: Transfer of Graduate Credit form via GradForms.

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3 The Outside Course Approval Form can also be found in the Graduate Program Resources Teams channel.
# Program Requirements Checklist

Students are required to complete the following departmental requirements. All courses must be completed with a grade of B- or better to be counted as fulfilling course requirements.

## Core Courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6000 level Theory Course</td>
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<td>6582 Sociological Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Required Methods and Statistics Courses</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5608 Qualitative Methods in Sociology</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>5649 Introduction to Quantitative Research/Multiple Regression</td>
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<td>6650 Categorical Data Analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6655 Sociological Research Methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 – Second Year Paper Course

|          |       | 6710 Design and Analysis of Sociological Research |

1 – 8000 level Theory Course

|          |       | 8580 Issues in Contemporary Theory           |

1 – Advanced Methods Requirement – Courses from outside the department may be considered with approval from the DGS

|          |       | 6708 Design and Analysis of Qualitative Research |
|          |       | 7753 Introduction to Demographic Analysis     |
|          |       | 8607 Causal Modeling                          |
|          |       | 8632 Analysis of Longitudinal Data             |
|          |       | 8651 Hierarchical Linear Models               |
Electives
In addition to the core courses laid out on the previous page, students must also complete a total of 8 elective courses, as described in the earlier section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Course</th>
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Program Components

The Second-Year Paper

All students are required to complete a second-year paper, that is, an original research project of publishable quality, developed under the supervision of an advisor who is a member of the Sociology Department and with the support of a committee of two other faculty members. Students typically complete and defend their paper during their second year, hence the name. However, the department recognizes that some projects are more extensive in scope and may require more time. To maintain reasonable progress, as defined by the department, the paper must be defended no later than the end of the Autumn Semester of the third year. For students who wish to earn a master’s degree in sociology from OSU, the second-year paper serves as a master’s thesis. To earn a master’s degree from OSU, students must follow the graduation requirements for the term in which they intend to defend their paper and will need to follow all procedures for master’s theses as outlined in the Graduate School Handbook.

Earning a master’s degree is not required as part of the program. Students who enter the program with a master’s degree from another institution or another program may choose not to submit the second-
year paper as a master’s thesis. All substantive requirements for the project and the defense are the same regardless of whether the student wishes to submit the second-year paper as a thesis. If graduating, students should complete the required coursework for years 1 and 2 (see program outline) and complete 30 credit hours per the Graduate School requirements. See the Handbook for complete requirements.

The Paper

The second-year paper is an original research project of publishable quality. The Graduate Studies Committee has developed the following guidelines for the paper:

- In general, the length should not exceed 50 pages, including the title page, text, figures, tables, footnotes, and references. This is a guideline for maximum length; papers may be shorter.
- There are no restrictions on the content or methods used other than meeting ordinary standards of the discipline as interpreted by the student’s committee.
- In most cases, extensive literature reviews are not advised. One exception to this might be theoretical papers in which such reviews are integral to the nature of the work. Faculty are encouraged to use the oral exam as a forum for probing theoretical and analytical details that are not explicitly contained in the document’s text.
- We stress that one criterion for evaluation is that it demonstrates the publishable quality or the potential for publishable quality. We recognize that some papers may require polishing before they are ready for submission. Still, the committee should use as its standard the potential for publication if recommended revisions are undertaken.

There are no departmental formatting requirements for the second-year paper. Students who wish to submit the paper as a master’s thesis to receive a master’s degree must follow the Graduate School formatting requirements, which can be found on the Graduate School website.

The Committee

Students are not submitting the paper for an MA degree: The second-year paper committee will consist of three faculty members. The advisor who chairs the committee must be a graduate faculty member in the Department of Sociology. Other members of the committee may be faculty in the department, OSU faculty not in sociology, or faculty from outside the university. Any committee members who are not members of the OSU Department of Sociology must be approved by your advisor and the DGS, regardless of whether you plan to submit the paper as a master’s thesis.

Students who plan to submit the second-year paper to the Graduate School as a master’s thesis must meet the above requirements as well as additional Graduate School requirements, including:

- The committee must include at least two graduate faculty members in sociology. These members could include people whose primary appointment is not in sociology but who have been approved by the Graduate School as graduate faculty. The advisor counts as one of the OSU graduate faculty members.
- You may have someone outside of OSU as your third committee member. The Graduate School must formally approve committee members outside of OSU via GradForms.
During the research and writing of the second-year paper, students should regularly consult with all committee members under the supervision of the committee chair. Students work with committees to schedule the time of the defense.

The Defense

Upon completing the paper, students must pass a one-hour oral examination that evaluates the quality of the paper and the student’s competence in the discipline. While each defense at each stage of the program has different components, there is some general in the department.

The committee may decide on one of the three following outcomes:

- Unanimous pass of satisfactory performance.
- To impose conditions to be met before the student can pass. Most commonly, conditions include revisions of the document.
- Fail a student whose performance is unsatisfactory. In such an instance, the committee must determine whether the student will be allowed to retake their defense.

Students who plan to submit the second-year paper to the Graduate School as a master’s thesis must follow the Graduate School guidelines for defenses, including filing all forms and scheduling the defense in advance. If you do not plan to submit the paper as a thesis, you must schedule the defense at least two weeks in advance and notify the Graduate Program Coordinator of your plan for the defense. The GPC will circulate documents to the committee for signature.

Candidacy

In the third or fourth year of the program, students will sit for the candidacy examination. The candidacy exam is a single exam that consists of a written and oral component. The exam aims to test a student’s comprehension of the field, familiarity with specified areas of study, and capacity to undertake independent research. A student is generally deemed ready to take the exam at the end of coursework and when they are prepared to launch their research that will eventually culminate in the dissertation. Students must be registered for a minimum of 3 credit hours during the semester candidacy is taken. 4 Students who are on appointment should follow the usual registration requirements.

Timing

Sociology graduate students are eligible to take the candidacy exam once they have successfully completed their required coursework. Students may take them as early in their program as possible but must complete the exam (including oral defense) by the end of the Spring Semester of their 4th year to maintain good progress.

According to Graduate School rules, the candidacy exam must be completed at least one semester before a student can defend and graduate. 5

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4 Graduate School Handbook, 7.3.4
5 Graduate School Handbook, 7.3.4
Preparation

Students use a variety of strategies to prepare for candidacy. The Ph.D. proseminar will provide suggestions and guidelines for determining a topic, choosing a committee, putting together a reading list, and preparing for the exam. The Graduate Program Hub folder includes preparatory materials, past exams, and reading lists arranged by area. Other graduate students have also put together a list of preparation tips.

Reading Lists: At least three months before the exam, students should submit and prepare reading lists for their committee to approve. Approved reading lists provide the basis for exam questions. The reading list can and should be based on past reading lists (see the Candidacy folder in the Graduate Program Hub Teams channel) with updates to reflect the student’s interests and the field’s current state.

Committee

The candidacy committee consists of four members: the advisor, two faculty members selected by the student in consultation with the advisor, and one faculty member outside the student’s area whom the DGS assigns. All committee members must be graduate faculty at OSU; faculty outside of sociology may be members with the approval of the DGS. The outside member typically does not provide feedback on reading lists and participates only in the oral component of the exam.

Exam Format

Candidacy exams intend to familiarize students with the literature in two broadly defined subfields in sociology. For this reason, the exam will cover the literature in two of the following areas broadly construed. Students select their areas of specialization in consultation with their advisor.

- Community & Urban
- Comparative & Historical
- Crime, Deviance & Social Control
- Education
- Family
- Gender, Race & Class
- Health & Medical
- Methodology
- Political
- Population
- Social Movements
- Theory
- Work, Economy & Organizations
- Individual Specialization: The student will determine this content in consultation with the advisor. This area cannot be chosen twice.

Written Exam: The written exam is taken across two consecutive days (4 hours 45 minutes per day). Each day tests on one area. The time is loosely allocated to include 4 hours for writing, 30 minutes for
editing and proofreading, and 15 minutes for breaks. The exam can be taken in a location of the student’s choosing.

**Oral Defense:** The oral exam follows many of the general rules of defenses in the department with some additions. Committees can ask questions about any part of the written exam, including questions the student chose not to answer. The oral exam must occur within four weeks of the written exam.

**Procedure**

Candidacy exams are held during the Autumn and Spring semesters. The GPC sends an email opening sign-up during the first week of class. All students intending to sit for exams during that semester should sign up. Students indicate a set of two consecutive business days, during regular university business hours, that they will take their exams. Students may choose to take the exam in department offices or at home.

- After signing up, students will complete a course check to ensure they have completed all required coursework.
- The DGS assigns an outside area department rep to the committee. Once the outside rep has been assigned, the student should start working with all committee members to schedule the oral defense.
- There is one required form for the Graduate School. The Application for Candidacy should be submitted via GradForms and must be approved by the program and the student’s advisor at least two weeks before the oral exam date. Thus, the student should be sure to submit it well in advance of this deadline. This form triggers the Graduate School processes that will eventually confer post-candidacy status.
- On the days of the written exam, the student has 4 hours and 45 minutes each day. The GPC will collect the answers at the end of time each day. At the end of the second day, the GPC sends copies of all questions and answers to the student and committee.
- The oral defense must take place 1-4 weeks after the written exam. Committee members then determine whether the student’s performance across both portions of the exam was satisfactory.

The committee may decide on the following outcomes:

- Pass the student whose performance is satisfactory on both written and oral portions
- Fail a student whose performance is unsatisfactory on either written or oral portions. A student can pass in one subject area but fail in another subject or pass the written but fail the oral.
- The committee may also decide to pass the student under specified conditions, including revisions of the document, taking one or more additional written exams, successful completion of a specific course or courses, or writing a paper on a specified topic.
- If the committee determines that a student has failed one or more portions of the exam, the committee must also decide whether the student will be permitted to take a second candidacy exam. The committee can require the student to retake only one subject area or only the oral portion. The student must pass the second candidacy exam to continue in the program.
After passing the candidacy exams, students are defined as post-candidacy in OSU systems at the beginning of the term following the one in which they took the exam (e.g., exam passed in April 2019, the student is post-candidacy beginning Summer 2019).

Once post-candidacy, students are held to the Continuous Enrollment policy, which requires students to be enrolled in every Autumn and Spring semester until graduation. Summer is excluded.\(^6\)

The Dissertation

The dissertation is the culmination of your graduate training. It is an extensive, original research project that contributes to the body of knowledge in the discipline. While students are researching and writing their dissertation, they are post-candidacy and should generally register for 3 credit hours of SOCIOL 8999. The dissertation defense should occur by the spring semester of the sixth year.

Dissertation Committee

After passing candidacy, a student may choose to change advisors for the dissertation. As with the second-year paper, your dissertation advisor should be in the department. In consultation with their dissertation advisor, the student selects two other faculty members to serve on the dissertation committee. The committee should be formed as soon as possible and not later than one semester after entering candidacy. The selection of advisors and committees is subject to approval by the Graduate Studies Committee. Upon scheduling the dissertation defense, a Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) will be assigned to the committee from outside the department.

Dissertation Proposal

Students are required to submit a written proposal for their dissertation research to their dissertation committee so the committee can review and offer valuable feedback. The length and format of the written proposal are to be determined in consultation with the advisor. Some proposals follow a format of a research plan with little analysis, while others occur at a more advanced stage and include preliminary findings. Valuable models include the National Science Foundation Dissertation Research Improvement Grant and National Institutes of Health F31 Predoctoral Fellowship.

Once the advisor deems the proposal ready, the student should seek feedback from the committee. After committee members have had the opportunity to review the proposal, the entire committee should meet with the student in a one-hour defense. Before the defense, the student should fill out the Dissertation Proposal form (found here or in the Graduate Program Hub Teams channel); after the defense, the committee will either approve the proposal or require revisions. The dissertation proposal should be defended by the beginning of the 5\(^{th}\) year in the program to maintain good progress.

\(^6\) Graduate School Handbook, 3.1.3
Dissertation Defense

Students planning to defend a dissertation should follow the procedures outlined below. We recommend that students print out the following to use as a checklist. Students should also bookmark the Graduate School’s Graduation Calendar to keep track of deadlines and the Final Semester Checklist.

- In the semester you intend to defend, ensure you are registered for at least 3 credit hours.
- Submit the Application to Graduate via GradForms.
  - DEADLINE: The application must be approved by your advisor and the GPC by the third Friday of the semester, so be sure to submit it well ahead of the deadline.
  - Check the status of your application to make sure it is approved by the deadline.
- Schedule your exam date with your committee and reserve a room
- 3-4 weeks before your exam date, send a complete draft of your dissertation to your committee and submit your Application for the Final Exam via GradForms.
  - DEADLINE: The application must be approved by all committee members and received by the Graduate School at least 2 weeks before your exam date. This is a firm deadline, which Graduate School staff will enforce. Getting a complete draft to the committee well ahead of this deadline is essential so they can properly evaluate whether a student is ready to defend. Although faculty may agree to a faster process, committee members can and do decline to approve when approached too close to deadlines or other scheduled defenses. In these cases, students must delay defenses to the subsequent term with implications for tuition and graduate appointments.
  - The draft sent to the committee at this point should be a final draft that reflects previous rounds of comments and revisions from all committee members.
- Undergo format check by taking a complete hard copy to the Graduate School during regular business hours. Check the Format Review and Submission guidelines and Document Preparation before taking your copy over.
- Students receive a notification from the Graduate School notifying them of the Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) to their defense. The GFR is a Graduate Faculty member outside the department intended to ensure the integrity of doctoral examinations around the university. GFRs are full-voting members of each exam committee.
- Upon notification of your GFR, deliver a copy of the dissertation to the GFR in their preferred format.
- The exam is a two-hour defense following the general guidelines for defenses in the department.
- Immediately upon completing the exam, verify that your committee has submitted the Report on Final Examination via GradForms.
- The committee may require some changes to the dissertation document. These changes must be made and approved by the committee via the Report on Final Document form (GradForms), with the final approved document submitted to the Graduate School by the date listed in the Graduation Calendar.
- Students then must convert their final document to the appropriate format for submission to OhioLink. Electronic access to your document may be delayed upon request. Read more about Access to Ohio State Dissertations.
In evaluating the dissertation defense, the committee may make one of the following determinations:

- Pass a student whose performance is satisfactory.
- Impose conditions to be met before the student can earn the Ph.D. Conditions may include but are not limited to revisions of the dissertation.
- Fail a student whose performance is unsatisfactory. If the committee decides the defense is unsatisfactory, they must determine whether the student is permitted to take a second defense. If a student fails a second attempt, the student is not permitted to be a doctoral candidate in the same or any other graduate program at this university.

### Need to Know

#### Credit Hours and Registration

### Minimum Credit Hour Requirements for Completion

The Graduate School requires a minimum of 80 graduate credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree to earn a Ph.D. If a master’s degree has been earned and transferred, as decided by the department, then a minimum of 50 graduate credit hours beyond the master’s is required.

Graduate credit hours are courses listed at 6000-level or above and occasionally below. If you have questions about whether a course outside the department that is listed below 6000-level would count as graduate credit, please consult the GPC.

### Registration Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>AU and SP with 50%+ GA Funding</th>
<th>Summer with 50%+ GA Funding</th>
<th>AU and SP with Fellowship Funding</th>
<th>SU with Fellowship Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Candidacy</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Candidacy</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The department typically funds through graduate students through the academic year, and funded appointments have registration requirements. If you have questions about funded appointments, see the Funding section.

**Pre-Candidacy:** The Department of Sociology requires all pre-candidacy students on appointment as Fellows to be registered for 12 credit hours for each Autumn and Spring semester before entering candidacy. GAs of any type should be registered for a minimum of 8 credit hours for each Autumn and Spring semester before entering candidacy but may register for more. During summer, students

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7 Graduate School Handbook, 7.10.6
8 Graduate School Handbook, 7.1.4-5
9 Graduate School Handbook, 4.0.1
appointed as a GA of any type will register for a minimum of 4 hours, while Fellows must register for 6 credit hours.

**Post-Candidacy:** Starting the first semester after passing [candidacy](#), students switch to taking a maximum of 3 credit hours, typically of [SOCIOL 8999](#) (Dissertation Research Hours). After passing candidacy, students are subject to the Graduate School’s [Continuous Enrollment Policy](#).

**Summer Fee Waiver with no summer appointment:** Students who held a 50% GA appointment for the previous autumn and spring semesters but are not on appointment for summer are entitled to a full fee authorization for the following summer semester. Contact the GPC if you are interested in using this fee waiver so we can be sure it is appropriately applied.

**Registration for Defenses:** If you are sitting for an exam or will be defending, you must be registered for the minimum number of required hours based on your appointment. If you have any questions, please ask the GPC before the initial fee deadline.

All registration and enrollment deadlines (including drop deadlines) can be found on the Registrar’s website. Just select the appropriate semester from the “Important Dates” header.

**Funding**

The department guarantees financial support for all admitted students for 6 academic years, as outlined in their signed offer letters, contingent upon [reasonable progress](#) through the program. This support may come from the department, external grants, fellowships, or other university sources. The department is sometimes able to continue funding beyond the original funding offer, depending on departmental needs, the availability of financial resources, and the student’s performance in the program.

The primary forms of funding in the department are Graduate Teaching and Research Associateships (GTA and GRA). GTAs are assigned each semester, and GRAs are filled by individual faculty members as they have positions available on grants. Please see Appendix A for a description of the expectations for GTA and GRA positions within the department.

Another form of funding is Fellowships. Some students come into the program funded on a fellowship position, which involves a focus on coursework. Students are also encouraged to apply for external fellowships; the GPC will circulate information about fellowships commonly won by sociology Ph.D. students. You may also want to research additional fellowship opportunities.

The OSU Graduate School Presidential Fellowship is a one-year dissertation completion fellowship awarded. Students are eligible for the Presidential Fellowship if they are post-candidacy and do not already have a dissertation-year fellowship awarded by the Graduate School (e.g., University Fellowship, Enrichment Fellowship, Osmer Fellowship.) The competition for the Presidential Fellowship takes place in the fall semester. The GPC will send an email at the beginning of the semester to ask for students interested in being nominated for the fellowship. If chosen to be nominated, members of the GSC will work with the student to prepare materials for the competition.
Remote Work Policy

Graduate students on OSU Graduate School fellowship, including those on dissertation year fellowships, should be aware of the graduate school fellowship rules, which state that “fellowship students must be in attendance on the Columbus campus.” Requests for exemptions to this requirement must be made to the graduate school using the directions provided at the link above.

Effective Spring semester 2023, graduate students who plan to seek departmental funding as a GA (GTA, GRA, or GAA) should be aware that such assignments will be contingent on having a regular presence on the Columbus campus unless the nature of the work assignment explicitly requires extensive off-site work (e.g., GRA assigned to conduct field research).

Whether the position is internally or externally funded, students who wish to work remotely as GTAs or GRAs for the Sociology Department must petition the department for permission to work away from campus by emailing Dorian Johnson. Please include “remote work exemption” in the subject line and provide a detailed justification statement. The department will use the following criteria to consider petitions for remote work: The department will use the following criteria to consider petitions for remote work:

- Remote work assignments will be made on a semester-by-semester basis
- Students who are not meeting the department criteria for “reasonable progress” and the graduate school GPA requirements for “good standing” (see p. 21-22 of this handbook) are not eligible for a remote work assignment.
- Students should initiate the petition two months before the end of the semester that precedes the semester in which they wish to work remotely.
- The department may request additional materials from the petitioning student and/or graduate advisor.
- Decisions will be made no later than two weeks before the beginning of the semester for which remote work is requested.

Students who do not live in the Columbus area must have a Flexible Work Agreement approved by Human Resources (contact Karissa Wess for details), regardless of whether they have a remote or in-person GA assignment. Students who are out of department funding and those who choose not to apply for or accept a department-funded GA assignment are not affected by the remote work policy, nor are they required to submit a Flexible Work Agreement.

Overload Policy

Some students on a regular GTA or GRA appointment may find that they would like to add an additional appointment, usually a GRA appointment. This is referred to as an overload. A regular GA position is 20 hours/week and is a 50% appointment. An overload position adds another 10 hours/week, 25% appointment for a total of 30 hours/week, and a 75% appointment.
Once you are aware that a faculty member would like to hire you on an overload, immediately contact the GPC with the faculty member’s name, the semester in which the faculty member would like to hire you, and the project on which you will be hired. Overloads are subject to approval by both the department and the Graduate School.

Employment Outside of the Department

By Graduate School rule, fellowship students must hold no other appointment or have outside employment during the tenure of their fellowship. Students appointed as GAs are strongly discouraged from seeking outside employment. Any student appointed as a GA considering outside employment must receive approval from their graduate advisor and report the employment to the DGS. Outside employment can become an issue for future funding if a student does not maintain their normal academic progress in the program.

Travel Funds

The department allocates annual travel funds (contingent upon the department budget) to each graduate student to present papers at professional meetings. To be eligible to receive funds, students must have a paper accepted or be on the conference program in another meaningful way.

Other Funding Opportunities

The department has various funds set up as endowments to help support graduate students through fellowship or to provide awards through a yearly paper competition. You can find out about all these opportunities and others available at the university on the website.

Annual Review

Each spring, department faculty review the records of all graduate students. This review aims to evaluate students’ progress and provide the basis for recommendations to the Department Chair regarding departmental funding for the subsequent year. The evaluation meeting is intended to be a consultative and interactive process to assist in shaping each year’s program of study to best meet the student’s needs and ensure timely progress through the program.

Procedure

Each spring, students are required to complete the Annual Student Progress Report. Students then meet with their advisor to discuss their progress with a copy of their report and an up-to-date CV. At this meeting, the student and advisor together fill out the Advisor Evaluation. Students must submit all forms to the GPC (Advisor Evaluation, Annual Student Progress Report, and CV).

Regardless of level in the program, failure to submit annual review materials may be detrimental to your academic standing in the department and result in a registration lock and/or probation.

“Good Standing” and “Reasonable Progress”
As a graduate student at Ohio State, you will hear the phrases “good standing” and “reasonable progress” many times during your program. The two are similar and related but different.

“Good standing” is a Graduate School phrase that indicates that you are meeting the minimum GPA requirements of the Graduate School and are maintaining “reasonable progress” through program milestones. Each department establishes the criteria for defining “reasonable progress.”

In the Sociology Department, reasonable progress means that you are meeting department milestones as outlined below. The department evaluates this through the Annual Review process each year. Sometimes, you are not making reasonable progress due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a health event or family emergency. We are committed to working with you through this time and will help you develop a plan to return to reasonable progress. It is important to maintain open communication with the department during these times.

- The completion of at least 6 of the required courses during the first year
- Completion of the second-year paper by the end of the Autumn semester of the third year
- Selection of a permanent advisor by the end of the spring semester of the first year
- Completion of all required coursework
- Progress towards the candidacy examination as demonstrated by:
  - Developing and submitting a plan of study by the end of the spring semester following the defense of the second-year paper
  - Completing the candidacy examination by the end of the Spring semester of the 4th year
- Forming a dissertation committee by the end of the first semester after admission to candidacy
- Developing a dissertation proposal and defending it by the beginning of the first semester of the fifth year
- Completing the dissertation by the end of the 6th year

The above are the formal milestones required for the completion of the program. You should also work beyond these formal milestones toward professional development appropriate for your career goals. These activities may include attending and presenting at academic conferences, submitting your research for publication, preparing to teach, seeking additional training methods, applying for internships, or interacting with professional peers in your desired field of employment. The department will work to provide guidance and support for these professional development activities; you should also plan to take the initiative in exploring different career paths and learning about necessary career preparation.

GPA Requirements

Graduate students in the Department of Sociology must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.2 and receive B- or better grades in graduate coursework to remain in good standing.

GPAs and grades are reviewed each spring during the Annual Review Process. If the GPA falls below the required threshold, there is more than one C+ on a student’s record, or the student receives a U in research hours, the department will follow the procedures below:

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10 See Graduate School Handbook, 5.1 for more details.
• GPA: The student will be notified that their GPA is close to falling below the GPA requirement (if there is adequate lead time). If the GPA falls below 3.2, the student will be placed on departmental probation and given one semester to raise the GPA to the minimum or better. Failure to meet this requirement will result in dismissal from the program.

• Grades: The student will be notified that there are 1 or more C+ on their record (if there is adequate lead time). If there are 2 C+, they will be placed on departmental probation and notified that a third C+ or lower would result in dismissal from the program.

• Research Hours: The student will be notified that they have an Unsatisfactory grade in SOCIOL 6193, 6999, or 8999 and will be placed on departmental probation. To get off probation, the student must satisfy the terms of a contractual agreement between the student and their advisor for a specified amount of work. The DGS must approve the contract. If a student receives a second Unsatisfactory grade in one of these courses, the student may be dismissed from the program.

Defenses (General Rules)

There are multiple points in the program at which students are required to defend. While each defense is a bit different, all defenses in the department have the following characteristics:

• Second-year paper and dissertation defenses are open to the public except for committee discussions on protocol and evaluation, which are confidential

• Advisors should announce public (see above) student defenses to the department via email at least one day prior
  o Should include student name, time and place of defense, chair and committee members, title, and abstract of the thesis

• Students schedule the date, time, and location for all defenses with their committee and book a room in the department

• Satisfactory decisions must be unanimous. If one faculty member determines the performance is unsatisfactory, the student cannot pass the exam.

While the advisor and committee determine the exact format of the defense, most defenses in the Department of Sociology proceed in the following manner:

After a brief welcome, the advisor asks the student (and the public if applicable) to step out of the room for a few minutes. During this time, the committee briefly discusses their overall evaluation of the document and decides on the order in which faculty ask questions, including how to allocate time. After the committee discussion, the advisor invites the student and audience back into the room and typically asks the student to give a brief introduction on the intellectual path to the exam. Faculty then ask questions for most of the defense time. After the period of questioning, the advisor again asks the student and audience to leave the room. The committee discusses the student’s written and oral performance and determines the overall outcome of the exam. The student and audience are invited back into the room and informed of the committee evaluation.

For more about the different types of defenses:
• Second-year paper (one-hour defense)
• Candidacy (two-hour defense)
• Dissertation proposal (one-hour defense)
• Dissertation (two-hour defense)

Graduation Procedures

All students should consult the Final Semester Procedures and Timelines for the semester in which they intend to graduate. This checklist includes deadlines and all requirements for the graduate school.

Students who enter the program without a master’s degree and wish to earn one en route to the Ph.D. may do so by simply following graduation procedures as you defend your second-year paper.

Leaves of Absence

We understand that life does not stop because you are in graduate school. In some cases, students may need to request a leave of absence. Generally, there are short-term leaves (up to two weeks) and longer, more formalized leaves (longer than two weeks). Regardless of the duration, it is essential to communicate clearly and openly with your advisor and the department. We are dedicated to helping students succeed and will work with you to develop a plan and reach out to any additional units as needed.

The Graduate School suggests that all leave include a completed GA request for leave form attached to an email to the department. You can view their full policies in the handbook here.

The department supports the Parental Leave Policy as laid out in the Graduate School Handbook11.

The department oversees all leaves of absence on a case-by-case basis.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

The department is committed to building a safe, diverse, and equitable environment. In line with the University’s policies on Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, & Non-Discrimination/Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, the department prohibits discrimination of any kind. If you or someone you know is aware of any acts of discrimination, harassment, or misconduct, please contact department HR if you are comfortable or follow the reporting guidelines as outlined in this handbook (pp. 25). Bear in mind that there are resources that can help you as a student to navigate such procedures, such as the Student Advocacy Center. The Office of Institutional Equity is an umbrella office for reporting discrimination and harassment through confidential processes. If the conduct you have experienced is sexual or relationship violence, including stalking, you are also encouraged to report the incident to local law enforcement. Visit the Title IX website to view options for reporting to the university and the Student Wellness Center for a list of resources.

11 For relevant parental leave sections, see Graduate School Handbook 11.2 and Section F.7.
Grievance Procedures

The university offers two pathways to report potential policy violations, as described below. In determining which path to pursue, consider the following:

Reporting Path 1 is not required. All members of the department are encouraged to proceed directly to Reporting Path 2 as it is the most direct route to filing a formal complaint.

Those who report potential policy violations through Reporting Path 2 are not obligated to proceed with a formal complaint unless they are mandatory reporters of sexual assault or misconduct. Supportive information and resources will be provided to complainants regardless of whether a formal complaint is pursued.

Investigations and sanctions for violations of university policy do not occur at the department level. Though the department can provide advice and support to students in this process through Reporting Path 1, no investigation or imposition of sanctions can occur for complaints that do not proceed to Reporting Path 2.

1. Reporting Path 1: Direct report to supervisor

   a. Sociology graduate students may choose from the following options in reporting to a supervisor: (1) Department Chair, (2) Department Manager, (3) Director of Graduate Studies, or (4) Faculty advisor or other Sociology faculty member.

   b. If the student wishes to proceed with a formal complaint after reporting to (3) or (4), the department chair and department manager should be notified, with one exception: Only the department manager and/or Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences are notified of complaints of policy violations by the department chair.

   c. After deciding to proceed with a formal complaint, the department chair and/or department manager will provide information and any needed assistance in proceeding to Reporting Path 2.

   d. If the student does not wish to proceed with a formal complaint, the department chair, department manager, and/or director of graduate studies will file written documentation of the student’s decision to the department chair, direct the student to appropriate supportive resources, and the case will be closed. The department chair and department manager may consult with Human Resources, Employee and Labor Relations, and/or other administrative units to determine if those involved in the complaint would benefit from non-punitive professional development resources or consultations.

2. Reporting Path 2: Direct report to an appropriate university office as described below:

   a. Report potential sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment based on a protected class to the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) https://equity.osu.edu. Click “Report Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct” to access the online reporting portal. Though the complainant need not know whether or which specific policy may have been violated, it can be helpful first to review the policies that OIE oversees listed below:
i. Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct: *see mandatory reporting info below
iii. Access for Individuals with Disabilities
iv. Activities and Programs with Minor Participants
v. The Office of Institutional Equity oversees other policies.

b. Report suspected policy violations of the Code of Student Conduct (excluding those in 2a and Academic Misconduct, described below) to Student Conduct. Click on File A Complaint. The Code of Student Conduct applies to both undergraduate and graduate students.
c. Instructors who suspect academic misconduct in their course should report to: Committee on Academic Misconduct. See Five Easy Steps for Submitting Allegations of Academic Misconduct, which includes a link for online reporting.
d. Other policy violations not described in 2a, 2b, or 2c should be reported to either:
   i. The appropriate university office as described in Procedure Section III.A. of the University Whistleblower Policy or
   ii. By filing an anonymous report online at the Office of University Compliance and Integrity. Click on Make an Anonymous Report

What happens after the appropriate university office receives a complaint? Adjudicating complaints against a university student or employee is not conducted at the department level. The involvement of appropriate university administrative units (e.g., Human Resources, Employee and Labor Relations, Office of Institutional Equity, Office of Compliance, Legal Affairs) in assessing, investigating, and resolving workplace complaints and in applying sanctions for policy violations ensures compliance with state and federal rules, regulations, and laws. University policies specify clear procedures for investigating and resolving complaints of potential violations. For more information on these procedures, consult the relevant policy at the Office of University Compliance and Integrity.

Mandatory reporters of sexual assault and sexual misconduct: Any employee (including graduate students) who receive a disclosure of a sexual assault or becomes aware of information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that a sexual assault may have occurred involving anyone covered under the policy must report all known information immediately. See the Sexual Misconduct policy (Policy Details, Section III)

The following members of the university community have an additional obligation to report all other incidents of sexual misconduct when they receive a disclosure of sexual misconduct or become aware of information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that sexual misconduct may have occurred involving anyone covered under this policy. These individuals must report the incident within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Preparing Future Faculty (PFF)

The Preparing Future Faculty program is a mentorship and career development program offered through the Graduate School and partner colleges and universities in Ohio. It aims to help graduate students discern whether they are interested in pursuing faculty careers in liberal arts colleges or small universities by pairing students with a faculty mentor at one of the partner schools.
Students must apply and be accepted to the program. Students must be post-candidacy to be eligible, and it is recommended that they be one to two years from the job market.

If accepted to PFF, you will have some slightly different registration requirements for the duration of the program. Work with the GPC to ensure you are registered for the correct number of hours.

Other Questions

How do I choose an advisor?

All new students are assigned a faculty contact before arriving on campus for their first semester. Some students stay with their first-year advisor; others change advisors during the first year, as they write their second-year paper, for candidacy, or for the dissertation (or all of the above!). You may change advisors as your research interests, and working style evolves.

You must complete the change advisor form to declare an advisor or change an advisor officially. This form requires your previous and new advisors' signatures for approval. You should also talk to your previous advisor so that they know your plans.

Should I keep copies of my letters and contracts?

Absolutely. While many things get sent via email or DocuSign at Ohio State, it is wise to keep a copy of your initial offer letter, each semester’s GA contract, your annual review letters, as well as any other correspondence to/from the Graduate School all in one place in case any discrepancy arises in the files.

Can I get a minor in graduate school?

You can get a minor if you’d like, but it’s not required. If you’re interested in a minor, consult with your advisor and/or the DGS about the possible benefits.

The Graduate School maintains a list of approved minors and Graduate Interdisciplinary Specializations. It is also possible for students to gain competence in a foreign language, statistics, computer science, philosophy of science, or another related field without seeking a minor/specialization by taking appropriate courses in other departments. These courses may only be used for elective departmental requirements as specified in this document.
Appendix A
Graduate Associateships