

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

2023-2024 Graduate Program Handbook



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS
AND SCIENCES

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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 resources. 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.

If you have questions not answered in any of these documents, please feel free to reach out to the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) and 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 of the program. Beyond these milestones, you should plan to attend professional conferences, submit your research for publication, seek out additional training in research methods and teaching, gain teaching experience, pursue internships, and/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. You will also need to take the initiative to work with your mentors 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

Graduate School Forms and Deadlines:

[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](#).

[Graduate School calendar of graduation 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](#).

TEAMS 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.

Graduate Program Contacts

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

Ph.D. Program Overview

Advisors and Mentorship

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 committee for the 2nd-year research paper required by the program. This person will become your advisor of record and, in addition to working with you as you develop your 2nd-year research paper, may also serve as chair of your candidacy exam and dissertation committees.

You should meet with your advisor regularly each year. During the spring semester of each year, 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, 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, but 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, due to advisor leaves or student data collection, 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](#)¹.

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.

Program Milestones and Timeline

The main program milestones are:

- Selection of 2nd-year paper advisor by the end of SP Year 1
- The completion of at least 6 of the required courses by the end of SP Year 1
- Completion (defended) of the 2nd-year paper by the end of AU Year 3
- Completion of required coursework (some electives may be remaining) by end of SP Year 3
- Completion of candidacy examination by the end of SP Year 4
- 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 AU Year 5
- Completing the dissertation by the end of Year 6

¹ Graduate School Handbook, Appendix H

Table 1 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 1: Program Timeline, Milestones and Registration Requirements

Year 1	Fall Semester Classes	Credits	Spring Semester	Credits	Summer ¹	Credits
	6800 Proseminar	1	5608 Qualitative Methods in Sociology	3	Master's thesis research hours	See chart below
	5649 Intro to Quant Research & Multiple Regression	3	6650 Categorical Data Analysis	3		
	6655 Sociological Research Methods	3				
	6582 Sociological Theory	3				
	1 elective	6	2 electives	6		
		12		12		
Milestones: Begin developing 2 nd year paper topic; identify primary advisor for 2 nd year paper.						
Year 2	Fall Semester Classes	Credits	Spring Semester	Credits	Summer ¹	Credits
	Electives, advanced methods, 2nd theory classes	9-12 (see chart below)	6710 Design and Analysis of Sociological research (2nd-year paper course)	3	Master's thesis research hours	See chart below
			Electives, any remaining required courses	6-9		
Milestones: Compete 2 nd -year paper, most of required courses. Defend 2nd-year paper by AU Year 3. Begin to identify candidacy exams topics and chair of committee.						
Year 3	Fall Semester Classes	Credits	Spring Semester	Credits	Summer ¹	Credits
	Electives, advanced methods, 2nd theory classes	See chart below	8801 Ph.D. Proseminar	1	Research hours ²	See chart below
			Required electives and/or research hours ²	See chart below		
Milestones: Prepare 2nd-year paper for publication; identify topics & committee for candidacy exams.						
Year 4	Fall Semester Classes	Credits	Spring Semester	Credits	Summer ¹	Credits
	Required electives and/or research hours ²	See chart below	8801 Ph.D. Proseminar	1	Research hours ²	See chart below
Milestones: Take candidacy exams (by the end of the Spring semester). ³ Begin identifying dissertation topic, dissertation committee.						
Year 5	Milestones: Identify dissertation committee. Prepare and defend the dissertation proposal. Start dissertation.				Dissertation research hours	See chart below
Year 6	Milestones: Dissertation research and writing. Prepare for the job market. Activate any dissertation year fellowships (OSU or other)				Dissertation research hours	See chart below

¹The department does not offer graduate courses in the summer. Students usually enroll only in research hours. Independent studies with a faculty member require a plan/syllabus and DGS approval; students required to enroll in classes may enroll in independent study or research hours with sociology faculty or take courses in other departments.

²Use research hours to prepare for candidacy exams and dissertation hours if you have defended your 2nd-year paper/received your masters.

³Candidacy exams are offered only in Autumn and Spring semesters. Students should have completed all required coursework except electives before taking candidacy exams.

Ph.D. Program – Specific Components

Coursework

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 Transfer of Courses below for details. All courses must be completed with a grade of B- or better to fulfill course requirements.

Required Courses (all courses are 3 credits unless otherwise noted)

4 methods courses

SOCIOL 5608 Qualitative Methods in Sociology (SP Year 1)

SOCIOL 5649 Introduction to Quantitative Research/Multiple Regression (AU Year 1)

SOCIOL 6650 Categorical Data Analysis (SP Year 1)

SOCIOL 6655 Sociological Research Methods (AU Year 1)

2 theory courses

SOCIOL 6582 Sociological Theory (AU Year 1)

SOCIOL 8580 Issues in Contemporary Society (Year 1 or 2, depending on when offered)

2nd-year paper course (can be exempt with approval of advisor and DGS)

SOCIOL 6710 Design and Analysis of Sociological Research (SP Year 2)

1 advanced methods course

SOCIOL 6708 Design and Analysis of Qualitative Sociological Research

SOCIOL 7753 Introduction to Demographic Analysis

SOCIOL 8607 Causal Modeling

SOCIOL 8632 Analysis of Longitudinal Data

SOCIOL 8651 Hierarchical Linear Models

Two 1-credit hour professional development seminars.

SOCIOL 6800 Proseminar in Sociology (AU First Year)

SOCIOL 8801 Ph.D. Proseminar (SP Third Year)

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 three 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 can be counted as an elective.* No more than one 5000-level course can be counted as an elective. Outside courses and independent study to be counted as electives require approval from the DGS, your primary advisor, and possibly other faculty who teach related courses. Students should apply for approval via the [Outside Course Approval](#) form and send a syllabus to the GPC before registering for the course to ensure it will meet departmental requirements.

Required Registration

The total number of credit hours of required enrollment per term (autumn, spring and summer) depend on your funding situation, the term, and your position in the program. Please refer to the below chart each term before registering. Please register as soon as possible after the registration window opens so that you are able to get your classes of choice. If you must change your registration before or after the term begins ALWAYS ADD BEFORE YOU DROP. This ensures that you will not fall below the required minimum credits, which will trigger fees and require further administrative actions. **Students will be responsible for any late fees triggered by late registration; the department will not cover these fees.**

TABLE 2: Registration Requirements

Level	AU and SP with 50%+ GA Funding	Summer with 50%+ GA Funding	AU and SP with Fellowship Funding	SU with Fellowship Funding
Pre-Candidacy	8 hours	4 hours	12 hours	6 hours
Post-Candidacy	3 hours	3 hours	3 hours	3 hours

Please register for your sociology courses when the registration windows open to ensure your place in the class – we do enroll non-sociology students and courses can fill. See OSU deadlines for registration and fees to ensure timely registration for all of your necessary credits: [OSU Academic Calendar](#).

Transfer of Credits

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.

Graduate school transfer credit form: [Transfer of Graduate Credit form via GradForms](#).

In addition to core coursework all students are required to complete a 2nd-year paper, Candidacy Exams, and a Dissertation. These components are discussed below.

The 2nd-year Paper

All students are required to complete a 2nd-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 2nd-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 2nd-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 2nd-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 [Graduate School Handbook](#) for complete requirements.

The Paper

The 2nd-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 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 2nd-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 should identify a 2nd-year paper advisor by the beginning of their second year. The advisor can help identify 2 other faculty members to form the 2nd-year paper committee. This committee is only for your 2nd-year paper. As you move forward in the program, you may decide to change your advisor and identify other committee members for your candidacy exams and dissertation proposal/defense.

During the research and writing of the 2nd-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.

For students who are not submitting the 2nd-year paper for an MA degree, the 2nd-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); two other faculty members (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 2nd-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.

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 research area related to the paper. 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 2nd-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 approval of defense [document](#) to the committee for signature.

Candidacy Exams

In Year 3 or 4, students will sit for the candidacy examination. The candidacy exam consists of a written and an 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. Students must be registered for a minimum of 3 credit hours during the semester in which they take the candidacy exam.² Students may register for dissertation research hours if not taking formal courses during that semester.

Timing

Sociology graduate students are eligible to take the candidacy exam once they have successfully completed their required coursework (some electives may remain to be completed). Students may take them as early in their program as possible but must complete the exam (including oral defense) by the end of SP Year 4 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.³

Please fill out this form at least 2 months before your proposed candidacy exam dates: [Candidacy Sign Up](#)

Topics and Preparation

Candidacy exams are an opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge and mastery of the literature in two broadly defined subfields in sociology. Students select two areas of specialization in consultation with their advisor from the categories shown below.

- Community & Urban
- Comparative & Historical
- Crime, Deviance & Social Control
- Education
- Family
- Gender, Race & Class
- Health & Medical
- Methodology
- Political
- Population/Demography
- 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.

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.

Reading Lists

² Graduate School Handbook, 7.3.4

³ Graduate School Handbook, 7.3.4

The *Graduate Program Hub* folder on Teams includes preparatory materials, past exams, and reading lists arranged by area. Other graduate students have also put together a list of preparation tips.

At least three months before the exam, students should submit and prepare reading lists for their committee to approve. 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 Department of Sociology 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.

Procedures

Candidacy exams are held only 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 a department office, other OSU office, a room in an OSU library, or at home.

After signing up, students should complete a course checklist to ensure they have completed all non-elective required coursework. Most electives should be complete at this time, but all 8 do not need to be completed before the exams.

Once the written dates are set, the DGS assigns a department representative – a faculty member who is outside of the areas of the exam - to the committee. Once the outside rep has been assigned, the student should start working with all committee members to schedule the oral defense. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the oral defense with the faculty committee members, reserve a room with the Chair's Administrative Assistant, and notify the Graduate Program Coordinator of the date, time, and location of the 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.

Written portion

On the days of the written exam, the student has 4 hours and 45 minutes each day beginning at 10am. The GPC will email the questions to the students at the start time on the corresponding day (i.e., Day 1 and Day 2 questions) and collect the answers at the ending time each day. At the end of the second day, the GPC sends copies of all questions and answers to the student and committee.

Oral portion

The oral defense must take place 1-4 weeks after the written exam. 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.

Committee members then determine whether the student's performance across both portions of the exam was satisfactory.

- 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.

Post-Candidacy Status and Continuous Enrollment

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.⁴

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 2nd-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. Upon scheduling the dissertation defense, a Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR) will be assigned by the Graduate School to the committee from outside the department.

Upon entering candidacy, students will focus on dissertation research while completing any remaining elective courses. 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; 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.

⁴ Graduate School Handbook, 3.1.3

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.

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](#) (also found in the *Graduate Program Hub* Teams channel); after the defense, the committee will either approve the proposal or require revisions.

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](#).

- 1) In the semester you intend to defend, ensure you are registered for at least 3 credit hours.
- 2) 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.

- 3) Schedule your exam date with your committee and reserve a room
- 4) 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.

- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.

- 7) 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.
- 8) Upon notification of your GFR, deliver a copy of the dissertation to the GFR in their preferred format.
- 9) The exam is a two-hour defense following the general [guidelines for defenses](#) in the department.
- 10) Immediately upon completing the exam, verify that your committee has submitted the Report on Final Examination via [GradForms](#).
- 11) 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](#).
- 12) 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 university⁵.

Need to Know

Credit Hours and Registration

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.⁶ Graduate credit hours are courses listed at 6000-level or above and occasionally below.⁷ 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 depend on the source of funding and candidacy status of each student. Please note that you should ALWAYS be registered for credits if you are being funded by the department or other OSU entity. [Table 2](#) above provides the specific hour requirements. If you are sitting for a candidacy exam or will be defending your dissertation, you must be registered for the minimum number of required hours even if you are not funded by OSU. If you have any questions, please ask the GPC before the initial fee deadline.

Please note: 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.

⁵ Graduate School Handbook, 7.10.6

⁶ Graduate School Handbook, 7.1.4-5

⁷ Graduate School Handbook, 4.0.1

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. Graduate Associates (GA) 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 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.

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. 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.

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/poster accepted as a the primary or co-author, or be on the conference program in another meaningful way (e.g. as a session chair or discussant).

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](#).

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 or GRA) 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). Further, to comply with new university requirements, the department is no longer able to approve new requests to work or live outside of the state of Ohio while employed as a GRA or GTA. The Graduate School may have different rules on out-of-state residence of students funded on dissertation-year fellowships, and the department defers to the Graduate School’s process for approving these requests.

Whether the position is internally or externally (grant) funded, students who wish to work remotely within the state of Ohio as GTAs or GRAs for the Sociology Department without maintaining a regular presence on campus must take the following steps:

1. Petition the department for permission by emailing the Graduate Program Services Specialist. 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 regular 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.
2. Submit a [Flexible Work Agreement](#) for approval by Human Resources (contact Karissa Wess for details).
3. Ensure that your work location accurately reflects your primary working location and update it as needed.

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 be invited 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, please contact the GPC and Department Manager 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 the department (DGS and faculty advisor).**

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 department GTA/GRAs are strongly discouraged from outside employment in addition to their department appointment. The university's [Outside Activities and Conflict Policy](#) requires that those who wish to engage in outside employment or other relevant activities as specified in the policy must submit an [Outside Activities Approval Form](#) and obtain approval before engaging in the activity. The department also requires prior approval of outside employment from your advisor and the DGS. The department's primary concern is that a student's departmental funding may be in jeopardy if their external employment delays their normal academic progress in the program.

Annual Review

Each spring, department faculty review the records of all graduate students. This review aims to evaluate students' progress and to ensure students are making adequate progress and getting the support they need as they move through the program. It is also an opportunity for students to work with their advisors to plan the following year and set goals for completion of the milestones and other tasks such as publications. Students who are at risk of becoming ineligible for funding because they are not making reasonable progress will be notified following the annual review so they can meet with the DGS and their advisor to formulate a plan for getting back on track.

Procedure

Each spring, students are required to complete the Annual Student Progress Report (Qualtrics survey). Students then meet with their advisor to discuss their progress with a copy of their report and an up-to-date CV. After this meeting, the student or advisor submits the signed Advisor Evaluation. Students must submit all forms to the GPC (Advisor Evaluation, Annual Student Progress Report, and CV) or post on teams (instructions provided each year).

Regardless of level in the program, failure to submit annual review materials may be detrimental to your academic standing in the department. Please see the DGS if you have questions or concerns about this process.

“Good Standing” and “Reasonable Progress”

“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.”⁸

“Reasonable progress” is a term used in the Sociology Department to mean students are meeting department milestones as outlined previously. Sometimes students are not making reasonable progress due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a health event or family emergency or unexpected complications in the research process. We are committed to working with students through this time and will help develop a plan to return to reasonable progress. It is important for students to maintain open communication with the department (advisor or other faculty member, GPS, DGS) during these times.

Students should also work beyond these formal milestones toward professional development appropriate for their career goals. These activities may include attending and presenting at academic conferences, submitting research for publication, preparing to teach, seeking additional training methods, applying for internships, or interacting with professional peers in their desired field of employment. The department will work to provide guidance and support for these professional development activities; however, students should 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.

GPA's 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:

- 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.

⁸ See Graduate School Handbook, 5.1 for more details.

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:

- 2nd-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
- 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.

Defense Times

- 2nd-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 Graduate School's [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 2nd-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 Handbook⁹. The department oversees all leaves of absence on a case-by-case basis.

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 2 faculty contacts before arriving on campus for their first semester. At the end of your first year, you should identify a primary advisor who will also serve as the chair of your 2nd-year paper committee. You may choose one of your 2 initial faculty contacts or another faculty member, whomever fits best with your 2nd-year paper research. Students should inform the initial faculty contacts who their 2nd-year paper chair/advisor will be. Faculty contacts not chosen for this role may stay on as mentors, but a primary advisor will need to be identified at this stage. In subsequent stages of the program, this advisor may change as student research interests/needs change. Students 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?

⁹ For relevant parental leave sections, see Graduate School Handbook 11.2 and Section F.7.

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: Sociology Department Graduate Associateships (GAs)

Overview

Upon entering the OSU Sociology Graduate Program, graduate students are guaranteed up to 6 nine-month appointments, inclusive of fellowship years, as department GAs. While fellowships do not require graduate students to work, GA appointments carry either research- or teaching-related work requirements. GAs provide valuable teaching, research, and academic experiences as well as financial support. Descriptions of the various GA appointments are described below, followed by more details about the requirements of such appointments. Please note, summer GA appointments will be offered based on the budget and research/teaching needs of the department.

This appendix seeks to introduce and clarify Department of Sociology GA rules, processes, and procedures. Please reference [Section 9](#) of the [Graduate School Handbook](#) for a further introduction to the structuring and offering of GA's ([Appendix E](#) offers additional information about GA appointments and procedures; [Appendix F](#) specifically addresses guidelines for time off). After consulting information presented here and in the Graduate School Handbook, requests for guidance and advice about GA responsibilities may be first addressed to a faculty supervisor, the Instructional Coordinator, or the Director of Graduate Studies. If a concern arises that requires additional feedback and/or support, the Vice Chair and Department are appropriate contact persons.

Types of Graduate Associates (GAs)

A student may be appointed as a Graduate Research Associate, or a Graduate Teaching Associate. **The responsibilities of each vary with the supervising faculty member**; nonetheless, it is important to emphasize that GA responsibilities must strictly entail professional responsibilities and should not include personal favors.

Graduate Research Associate (GRA)

Two types of Graduate Research Associate (GRA) positions are available: departmentally-funded GRAs and sponsor-funded GRAs. The department sometimes assigns departmentally funded GRAs to work with one or more professors who will determine the GRA's responsibilities. Faculty members who obtain funds from internal (e.g., university seed grants) or external (e.g., external grants) sponsors will invite graduate students of their own choosing to work with them on their funded projects. At times, other university units, e.g., the Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR) and faculty in other departments, also appoint sociology students as GRAs. Selection of GRAs and determination of responsibilities are made by the project supervisors in those units.

Appointments for sponsor-funded GRAs must be made in a timely fashion so as not to disrupt the department's teaching and scheduling needs. Therefore, GA's should give early notification of intentions to accept such a position to the Vice Chair and Instructional Coordinator.

GRA responsibilities include assisting with research related tasks such as literature reviews, data preparation and analysis, and drafting of research manuscripts. GRAs may also be asked to assist with original data collection. GRA responsibilities should not be allowed to unreasonably interfere with other graduate student responsibilities (e.g., class schedules). Research responsibilities should be made clear in advance of the appointment.

Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA)

The Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) appointments include several types of primary teaching responsibilities: independent instructors who teach their own classes (post-MA students); recitation leaders who assist a professor and lead recitation sections; and non-recitation teaching associates who assist a professor with grading and other tasks but do not hold separate recitation sections

Teaching Associates with Independent Classes

GTAs with responsibility for teaching an independent course prepare a syllabus, order textbooks and/or provide other course readings, create a Carmen course, coordinate and administer Student Life Disability Services (SLDS) student accommodations, prepare and deliver lectures, design and grade all assignments and exams, keep regular office hours to discuss course materials or grades with students, and respond to student emails. They are expected to become informed of and to follow all university and departmental policies for instruction.

Teaching resources, including the Instructional Policies Handbook and slide repository, can be found in the Teaching Resources folder in the *Graduate Student Program Hub* of the Sociology Teams. Students are encouraged to upload their teaching materials as references for other graduate students. Additionally, students may seek out resources from The Michael V. Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning (ex. Graduate Teaching Orientation). The Ph.D. Proseminar in SP of Year 3 will also cover some basics of teaching sociology. Students should also seek assistance from their advisors, other faculty members, senior graduate students, and others who have taught the course in prior semesters for help in designing their course and other questions prior to, during and after their teaching semester.

Teaching Associates with Recitation Sections

Teaching associates with recitation section responsibilities are required to meet with the instructor (prior to the semester and throughout the term as set by the instructor, e.g., weekly or biweekly), coordinate and administer SLDS student accommodations, attend all lectures, complete course assignment responsibilities (be familiar with the course text and assigned readings, help prepare and grade homework assignments and exams, enter grades and comments into Carmen), respond to student emails, prepare and conduct recitation sections (lead session, develop PowerPoint slide presentations for lecture), and hold regular office hours to discuss course material and grades with students throughout the semester. The faculty member whom they are assisting might also have them present one or more lectures to the entire class during the quarter. GTAs without independent classes are not to be primary instructors on a regular basis. Those who have concerns about their workload or assigned responsibilities are encouraged to first discuss those concerns with the primary course instructor but are also welcome to bring any issues directly to the attention of the Vice Chair and/or the DGS. Because responsibilities may vary, course instructors should provide GTAs with an outline of expected duties, preferably in writing, at the beginning of the semester.

Teaching Associates without Recitation Sections

Essentially, the duties of these teaching associates are the same as those noted in 2c.2 with the exception that they do not have responsibility for teaching recitation sections. Associates are required to attend lectures, do required course reading, assist in preparing and grading exams and papers, and hold office hours to discuss course material and grades with students. Other assignments may include conducting review sessions, presenting a lecture or two on an assigned topic, and generally assisting in classroom activities and organization.

GTA Teaching Orientation

Each year, the Drake Institute holds a week-long teaching orientation workshop for new GTAs in mid-August of each year. While not required this is a very valuable opportunity to help orient you to the classroom and prepare you for teaching your own course. More information about teaching training is available on the Drake website: <https://drakeinstitute.osu.edu/about>.

Requirements for GA Appointment

To be eligible for a Graduate Associate appointment funded by the Department of Sociology, a student must meet the minimum requirements set by the Graduate School (see [*Graduate School Handbook*](#)). A summary of the registration requirements are in [Table 2](#) in this document.

Students are invited to apply for Graduate Associate appointments for each term via an email notification. To be eligible for funding, students must be making reasonable progress and respond to the survey indicating their preferred GTA assignments and/or their intended GRA or fellowship funding source. Note: the department does not have general GRA assignments to offer, rather GRA positions come from funding a particular faculty member may have. Students should contact faculty directly to inquire about GRA opportunities well in advance of the GA assigning process. The information provided via the GA survey is reviewed and students are matched with a GTA assignment. Once set, students are asked to accept or decline the appointments within one week of notification. Students will be provided with a Recruit-to-Hire (new appointments) or Period Activity Pay (reappointments) document stating the terms of the appointment in Workday.

As noted earlier, the department's ability to support continuing graduate students beyond their 6th year or in the summer depends upon budget considerations beyond the department's control.

Period of appointment and workload

Graduate Associates normally are appointed for Autumn through Spring semesters at 50 percent time, approximately 20 hours per week; this is a weekly average, not a weekly ceiling. All students will arrive with 9-month appointments, and funds are frequently available for summer appointments. Preference for summer appointments may be given to more advanced graduate students and those who can best fill specific teaching, research, or administrative needs. Attention also may be given to students' records of academic progress.

In all semesters of appointment, GAs should be available to meet with the supervising faculty or staff member before the semester begins and should plan to continue working through the end of exam week and the submitting of grades. Grades usually are due on the Monday following the end of exam week.

Although the average hours of work for a Graduate Associate should not exceed 20 hours per week (for a total of 320 hours over a 16-week semester), the workload will vary over the semester. Graduate Associates will need to balance the demands of their teaching or research assignments and their own course work and other responsibilities. GAs are encouraged to log weekly hours to accurately track time commitments to GA-related tasks over the course of the semester. When demands seem to be conflicting or too onerous, GAs should discuss the problem with the faculty or staff member responsible for workload. Any further appeal beyond the supervising faculty/staff should be brought to the Director of Graduate Studies, Vice Chair, or a faculty advisor, all of whom may consult with the Chair if necessary).

Faculty who supervise GAs should communicate expectations to the GA regarding workload levels and task content. For example, if the GA workload has been exceeded one week, it should be appropriately reduced another week. GAs should be provided information on expectations and responsibilities, preferably in writing, prior to the start of the Associateship to ensure that the type of work expected under the position is mutually understood.

Stipend levels

Compensation for Graduate Associate duties is based on the stipend level set by the Graduate School at the start of each year. In addition to the basic salary, a Graduate Associate receives a waiver of most academic fees, including resident and non-resident tuition, and 100% of health insurance premiums (out of pocket expenses would be covered by the students). Income tax on the salary of GAs may be withheld from paychecks.

Summer Fee Authorization

Graduate students holding a 50 percent or greater GA appointment for two consecutive semesters are entitled to a summer fee authorization (tuition and other fees) during Summer term of that academic year without being on appointment. Students holding a 25 percent or less GA appointment for two semesters are entitled to a summer fee authorization at half the full fee authorization rate. Students using the summer fee authorization must be registered for the minimum number of credit hours established in Table 2 of this handbook. A graduate student who elects not to enroll during the summer may not defer the use of the summer fee authorization to a later term.

Students on a summer fee authorization may hold a 25 percent or less GA appointment. They should not be appointed as student associates as that title assumes that students are not enrolled for courses. When students are on GA appointments of 50 percent or greater for four or more consecutive term, such cases are considered regular GA appointments and the fee authorization must be paid by the appointing unit. A summer fee authorization would occur at the conclusion of the consecutive GA appointment semesters when the student is not appointed or is appointed to a GA appointment of 25 percent or less. (See *Graduate School Handbook*).

Evaluation

During the final weeks of the quarter, GAs must inform and encourage students to evaluate the course by completing a Student Evaluation of Instruction form (SEI). The SEI instrument consists of a standard set of questions developed for use by all departments in the University.

Termination of Appointment

The criteria for termination of a Graduate Associate appointment prior to the end of the appointment period are listed in the Graduate School Handbook (see Section 9.2) as follows: 1) the GA is no longer enrolled in Graduate School, 2) the GA is registered for fewer than the requisite graduate credit hours (see Graduate School Handbook), 3) work performance as a GA is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing unit, 4) the GA graduates, 5) the employing unit has insufficient funds. Unsatisfactory performance will be determined by the combined assessment of the, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Vice Chair and the Department Chair. This judgment may be based on factors such as: failure to perform duties; unexcused absences; sexual or ethnic harassment; and similar serious violations (see departmental list of Do's and Don'ts in Appendix). Reappointment as a GA is also dependent on satisfactory academic performance, and unsatisfactory performance may be a cause of termination.

The university's course scheduling and registration process requires the department to make teaching and recitation leader assignments several months before the position commences. Students who accept a position as an independent instructor or recitation leader are expected to fulfill that commitment except in the case of extraordinary circumstances. Students who wish to decline such a position after accepting it should make the request to the Vice Chair, Instructional Coordinator, and Department Manager and be aware that doing so may place them at lower priority for future department funding.

Grievances Related to GA Appointments

Grievances related to GA appointments or duties should *first* be discussed with the supervising faculty member or the Vice Chair (in the case of independent instructors). If there is not satisfaction with the outcome of this discussion or if the complaint involves some other matter in the department that does not rise to the level of a policy violation, the student should discuss the matter with one or more of the following parties: Director of Graduate Studies, Vice Chair (if related to instruction), or a trusted faculty advisor, all of whom may consult with the department chair. The University Ombudsperson (described above) may also be a helpful resource at any point in the process.

If the problem cannot be resolved informally, the GA may appeal to the Department Chair for a hearing of the grievance. The Department Chair will consult with university professionals with expertise in the relevant area (e.g., human resources, etc.) and make a decision. In the event the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Department Chair, or for some reason feels it necessary in the first place to go beyond the department for adjudication, the student may use the Graduate School's Grievance Procedures. See Section 9.5 of the *Graduate School Handbook* for additional information on grievance procedures.

Note: The procedure outlined in this section does not apply to policy violations including harassment situations (discussed below) or grade grievances. Undergraduates with a grade grievance against a GTA should first discuss it with the GTA, then the supervising faculty member for the course or Vice Chair (in the case of independent instructors) , and then (if necessary) the Director of Undergraduate Studies. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the student should complete the Grade Grievance form available in the Undergraduate Advising Office (141 Townshend Hall). Specific rules regarding grade grievances can be obtained from the Graduate School. (See *Graduate School Handbook*.) *To resolve grade disputes, it is imperative that GTAs retain a complete written record, including grading keys and copies of papers and exams.*

Appendix B: Graduate Student Guide to Reporting Complaints and Policy Violations

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.

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](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
 - ii. [Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, & Non-Discrimination/Harassment Access for Individuals with Disabilities](#)
 - iii. [Activities and Programs with Minor Participants](#)
 - iv. 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.

Graduate and Professional Student Ombudsperson

At any point in the process, students may also consult with the [Graduate and Professional Student Ombudsperson](#) who serves as an independent, impartial, and informal resource for all graduate and professional students for resolving issues and conflicts, and for exploring options and making important decisions.

The primary mission of the GPS ombudsperson is to support graduate and professional students in addressing issues and challenges they may face in their academic and professional careers at OSU. The GPS ombudsperson addresses issues and challenges that students may face with faculty and advisors, within their programs or within the university at large, with the goal of supporting a positive learning and work environment and advancing fairness and equity for graduate and professional students. Note that the ombudsperson provides confidential support resources for a wide variety of issues, but has reporting obligations with the [Office of Institutional Equity](#) related to sexual misconduct and discrimination complaints. Thus, while the ombudsperson will discuss concerns in these areas with sensitivity and keep your information as private as possible, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. For confidential resources for concern in these areas, please contact a [confidential counselor](#).