Graduate Student Handbook

2026–2027

University of Virginia
Department of Sociology

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1 Welcome from the Director of Graduate Studies

Welcome to the Department of Sociology at the University of Virginia. As part of this department, you will join a vibrant and intellectually diverse community of scholars, who are here to help you think broadly about what it means to be a sociologist today. Toward this end, the goal of our graduate program is to provide you with the foundations needed to be able to consume, produce, and apply sociological knowledge, with an eye toward jobs in academia, government, and industry alike. This is done with the help of a balanced curriculum that allows students to foster theoretical insights and methodological skills while exploring various subfields within the discipline.

Through a combination of seminars, workshops, specialized tutorials, and one-on-one advising, our graduate program is carefully designed to facilitate your evolution as a scholar. What this means in practice will change over the course of your time in the Department. The key throughout is providing you with the opportunities and support needed to help you develop and express your ideas, learn how to make claims based on empirical evidence, and to navigate the institutions that structure the world of sociology in all its various manifestations. It is important to emphasize that while much of your time in your program will be spent figuring out what kind of sociologist you want to be, graduate training is, at its heart, a collaborative endeavor. This is true for both the faculty, who are collectively invested in your success and well-being, as well as for you and your fellow graduate students who will become a source of mutual support and inspiration for one another.

The Department of Sociology is, of course, just one part of the University. With this in mind, we urge you to make the most out of everything the university has to offer. This includes library and computing resources, as well as the various schools and departments across Grounds. As you will find, many of our faculty and graduate students do interdisciplinary work of one kind or another. This is reflected in connections to numerous departments throughout the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, as well as to other schools including, but not limited to, the Curry School of Education and the School of Data Science. Members of the Department also share ties with cross-university centers and initiatives such as the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, the Global Studies program, the Center for Global Inquiry and Innovation, and the Quantitative Collaborative. These various departments, schools, programs, and centers serve as alternative outlets for intellectual engagement and community-building with scholars from across the University.

We look forward to helping you on your journey!

Adam Slez
Interim Director of Graduate Studies

2 Degree Requirements

In December 2020, the Faculty of the Sociology Department approved changes to the Department's degree requirements which apply to students who enter the program in 2021–2022 and subsequent academic years. The old degree requirements will continue to apply to students who began graduate study in prior academic years. Old degree requirements are available in Graduate Handbooks associated with each year and upon request from the Director of Graduate Studies.

It is students' responsibility as degree candidates to monitor and periodically verify changes to their academic status in SIS, where students will find their official academic record (based on degree requirements in effect for their entering year) which is used by the Department, GSAS and UREG to keep track of their progress. If students have any questions, they should not hesitate to ask.

All degree candidates who continue to work substantively towards a degree are expected to enroll full-time (i.e., a minimum of 12 credits). *Failure to enroll results in cancellation in SIS.*

2.1 Ph.D. Degree Requirements

In the 2026–2027 academic year, the Department is admitting students into a single program of study leading to the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. However, students have an option of earning an M.A. degree enroute to the Ph.D. (see section on M.A. degree).

The Sociology Ph.D. program entails five main elements: (1) coursework, (2) qualifying first-year exam, (3) special fields paper, (4) qualifying paper, (5) the dissertation proposal, and (6) the dissertation.

Students are expected to complete all coursework in their first three academic years. Students are expected to sit for their first-year exam in the week before the beginning of their second academic year (see description below). They should complete their special fields paper by May 31 of their second academic year. In the spring of their third year, students present (a version of) their third-year paper to the faculty and graduate students in the Department in a special session of the Department's colloquium series. (See below for discussion of written requirements for qualifying paper.) Students may not defend a dissertation proposal until prior requirements, including the qualifying paper, have been completed.

Each semester, students must register for at least 12 credit hours. In the first year, these credits consist primarily of coursework. For the rest of the time while students are in coursework, these hours will normally include 9 credit hours of substantive or methods courses, 1 credit hour of Sociological Issues, and 2 credit hours of non-topical research. Table 1 provides an overview of the standard Ph.D. curriculum, including required courses, teaching obligations, and relevant milestones toward the degree:

Table 1: Standard Graduate Curriculum

Year	Task	Fall	Spring	Summer
1	Courses	Research Design Classical Theory Core course/Elective Core course/Elective Sociological Issues	Stats I Core course/Elective Core course/Elective Sociological Issues Proseminar	
			Teaching Sociology	
	Activities			Study for first-year exam
	Milestones			Complete first-year exam (week before start of second year)
	Teaching			
2	Courses	Stats II Core course/Elective Core course/Elective Sociological Issues Non-Topical	Qualitative Methods Contemporary Theory Advanced Topics Sociological Issues Non-Topical	
	Activities	Prepare for special fields paper/QP	Prepare for special fields paper/QP	Collect/analyze QP data
	Milestones		Special fields paper Develop QP Obtain MA (optional)	
	Teaching	TA	TA	
3	Courses	Non-Topical	Graduate Research Workshop Sociological Issues Non-Topical	
	Activities	Collect/analyze QP data	Complete QP	Dissertation proposal
	Milestones	QP draft completed, approved by advisor	Advance to candidacy	
	Teaching		TA	
4	Activities		Collect dissertation data	Collect dissertation data
	Milestones	Defend proposal (fellowship deadlines are around 10/1, so plan accordingly if applying)		
	Teaching	TA		
5	Activities	Data analysis/writing	Data analysis/writing	
	Teaching	TA*	TA	
6	Activities	Data analysis/writing	Data analysis/writing	
	Teaching	TA	TA	

* With the support from their advisor, students can petition the DGS to transfer their second non-TA semester to the fall of the 5th year if their research necessitates the change (e.g., gaining access to field sites, delays in IRB approval).

2.1.1 Coursework

2.1.1.1 Required Number of Credit Hours and Courses. Students are required to complete a minimum of 72 credits to earn a Ph.D., with at least 50 credits coming from graded coursework. Toward this end, students are required to complete 20 graded courses over the course of their first six semesters in the program. These include two theory courses (SOC5030, SOC5060), four methods courses (SOC5020, SOC5100, SOC5120, SOC5140), a 9000-level Advanced topics seminar, Sociology Proseminar (SOC8031), Graduate Research Workshop (SOC7980), and five semesters of Sociological Issues (SOC8030 and SOC8040), along with six substantive courses.

2.1.1.2 Core Courses. As part of the 20 graded courses outlined above, students are required to take six substantive courses, at least four of which must be Core Courses in Sociology. In order to enable graduate students to meet this requirement, the Department will endeavor to offer at least two Core Courses every semester and to offer most Core Courses at least once every three years. Any additions requested by the faculty are reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee before being added to the list below. Students may not petition the Director of Graduate Studies to substitute other courses for their Core Course requirements. The list currently includes the following:

SOC 5056 – Culture	SOC 8051 – Work
SOC 7470 – Development	SOC 7480 – Globalization
SOC 5057 – Family	SOC 8052 – Religion
SOC 5059 – Science	SOC 8053 – Education
SOC 5080 – Comparative-Historical	SOC 8054 – Political
SOC 5086 – Media	SOC 8055 – Law
SOC 5320 – Gender	SOC 8410 – Race and Ethnicity
SOC 5420 – Stratification	SOC 8470 – Knowledge
SOC 5900 – Economic	SOC 8710 – Organizations

2.1.1.3 Dropping, Adding, and Withdrawing from Graduate Courses. Each semester, the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences establishes deadlines for dropping, adding, and withdrawing from courses. Those deadlines are posted on the academic calendar. The same deadlines apply to undergraduate and graduate students. If a student "drops" a course, no record of the course is retained on the student's transcript. If a student drops a course, it may be necessary to "add" another course in order to maintain the required minimum number of credit hours. After the deadline for dropping, a student may "withdraw" from a course, in which case the course is listed on the student's transcript followed by the notation "W." After the withdrawal deadline, a student must complete the course.

2.1.1.4 Optional Tutorial Courses. Tutorial courses are intended to fill in gaps in the existing curriculum. A tutorial course could be a course in a specialized area not taught in the Department, or a Core Course that is not being taught regularly. Please note that a student CANNOT take a tutorial in a Core Course instead of taking a Departmental seminar, if the relevant seminar is offered during their time in coursework (i.e., 5 semesters in the program). If a Core Course that a student and the student's advisor deem to be needed (given the area of research engaged in the student's qualifying paper) is not offered before the student will begin working on the qualifying paper, the student should discuss suitable options with the advisor and Director of Graduate Studies. Maximum enrollment in any tutorial course is 3 students. Students can count only one elective tutorial class toward their Ph.D. credit requirements.

Students interested in taking a tutorial course should discuss this with the Director of Graduate Studies and the course instructor as soon as possible, and at least one month before the start of the semester in which they would like to take the course. Students will need to petition the Director of Graduate Studies explaining why the tutorial course is important for the student's program of study and receive a positive reply from the Director of Graduate Studies, before the course can be created for the student. In addition, depending on whether the course in question was offered before, it may need to go through the review/approval procedures (thus, the importance of starting the process at least one month in advance). Tutorial Courses are *graded* and the readings and assignments need to be equivalent to a regular 3-credit course.

2.1.1.5 Courses Offered in Other Departments of the University. Generally, students are expected to take all classes during the first year within the Department. However, in the second and third years, and in the first year in rare circumstances, courses offered in other Arts & Sciences departments or other Schools of the University may be useful additions to a student's graduate program. If graduate students take courses out of the Department, a maximum of two such external courses (6 credit hours) may, *with permission from the Director of Graduate Studies,* be counted towards the Department's coursework requirement for the Ph.D. degree. For such a course to count, it must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies *prior to enrollment*. To obtain that approval, a student must submit a petition including: (1) a brief statement explaining why the external course is important for the student's program of study, and (2) a copy of the relevant syllabus (if the current syllabus is not yet available, the syllabus from the most recent offering of the course is acceptable), and (3) an affirmation from the student's advisor that the course is needed for the advancement of the student's studies. Students who transferred credits will need to make a particularly compelling course for taking courses outside of the Department.

2.1.1.6 Research Apprenticeships. A research apprenticeship (SOC 9050/9060) is a graded course aimed at giving students practical research experience through close collaboration with a faculty member on a project of mutual interest. Graduate students may count one research apprenticeship (3 credit hours) toward the Department's coursework requirement for the Ph.D. degree. These projects are expected to be limited in scope (i.e., able to be completed within a semester's time with some allowance for spillover) and clearly defined from the outset, either as a separate "stand-alone" inquiry or as a discrete part of a faculty member's larger research agenda. Student apprentices are expected to be, in effect, junior colleagues, involved in all phases of the project. Because this apprenticeship will typically grant the same credit as a graduate seminar, the total workload should be roughly comparable in most cases. This collaborative effort should result in a tangible scholarly product, most usually a co-authored paper suitable for publication. Faculty members will submit short project descriptions to the Director of Graduate Studies before the beginning of the Fall semester. All students will be apprised of these opportunities and eligible to apply directly to the faculty member sponsoring the apprenticeship. Faculty members have discretion in selecting apprentices and need not accept any of the applicants.

2.1.1.7 Transfers of Credit. Students who have completed coursework **in Sociology** in another graduate program with a grade of B- or better may petition the Director of Graduate Studies for transfer of up to 24 credit hours toward the Department's coursework requirement for the Ph.D. degree. By University regulation, no more than 24 credit hours of work completed at another graduate school may be counted toward the credit hours required for the Ph.D. degree. Moreover, transfer credits do not count toward the M.A. degree.

Petitions for credit transfer must be submitted during the student's first semester in residence and must include: (1) the completed petition form; (2) a transcript from the student's previous graduate program; (3) for each course, either the relevant syllabus or a description that sets forth the information usually contained in a syllabus (e.g., author and title(s) of the principal readings, course requirements). When evaluating requests for credit transfer, the Director of Graduate Studies will consider whether the course relates to a recognized subfield or topic area within the discipline and is substantially equivalent in scope and quality to courses offered by the

Department. As needed, the Director of Graduate Studies may consult with departmental faculty whose research areas are related to the course under consideration. If the Director of Graduate Studies approves the petition, it will be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences for final approval.

Note that transfer of credit hours **does *not* automatically entail waiver of any specific course requirements**. A separate petition is required for this purpose (see "Waivers of Program Requirements" below). However, if a transfer of credit is granted for a course that is substantially equivalent to a specifically required course (for example, Classical Theory or Intermediate Statistics), then a petition for waiver of the requirement will ordinarily be approved.

The transfer of nine credits or more will advance the student's year of study by one term (semester), and the transfer of 21 credits or more will advance the student's year of study by two terms.

2.1.1.8 Waivers of Course Requirements. Graduate students who seek exemption from a specific graduate program requirement must petition the Graduate Studies Committee for a waiver of that requirement. For such petitions to be granted, it is necessary for the student to produce persuasive evidence that she or he has previously done equivalent work in a similar graduate program elsewhere and has earned a grade of B- or better. The Graduate Committee then arrives at its own judgment as to the appropriateness of the exemption.

Petitions must be submitted during the student's first semester in residence and must include: (1) the completed petition form; (2) a transcript from the student's previous graduate program; (3) for each course, either the relevant syllabus or a description that sets forth the information usually contained in a syllabus (e.g., author and title(s) of the principal readings, course requirements). Petitions will be considered by the entire Graduate Studies Committee and, if appropriate, by a faculty member with expertise in the relevant area. The Graduate Committee may ask for further documentation from the student (e.g., course papers, etc.).

Note that the **waiver of a required course does *not* reduce the number of graded credit hours** that the student must complete, unless a separate petition for transfer of credit is also approved (see "Transfers of Credit" above).

2.1.2 Qualifying First-Year Exam

The Qualifying First-Year Exam is an open-book, open-notes exam based on a reading list in a major subfield of sociology (e.g., Gender, Culture, etc.) developed by the Subfield Exam Committee. Before the start of the fall term, the Department Chair will appoint members of the subfield committees, and they will finalize the reading list for the exam.

The exam will be taken during the week before the beginning of the student's second year in the program. It will consist of four questions, answered over a 10-hour period, and should be 15-20 double-spaced pages in length. Works should be referenced in the text (author/date format), but no reference list is needed at the end, unless refencing works not included on the reading list. Students for whom English is not their first language may request to have 15 hours to complete the exam. In an effort to make the time more manageable, exams will be administered across two days, with two questions turned in each day.

The exam will be graded by two faculty members (chair and another member of the Subfield Exam Committee), who will assess students' understanding of major debates in the field, ability to characterize a large body of sociological research in relatively brief answers, and overall development towards a Ph.D.-level understanding of a subfield. The exam will be graded within 3 weeks and students will be notified of the results in writing.

The exams will be evaluated as Pass with Distinction, Pass, Master's Pass (adequate to receive an M.A. but not to advance to the Ph.D. level) and Fail. Students who receive a Fail or a Master's Pass can re-take the same exam one time, before the end of the fall semester of their second year.

2.1.3 Special Fields Paper

The Special Fields Paper is an article-length review of the literature in one subfield of sociology. Students are expected to critically engage with the subfield, which means demonstrating mastery over central themes and debates, with an eye toward new areas of inquiry. Students may benefit from reading articles in the *Annual Review of Sociology* as potential models and should begin a conversation with their advisor about the special fields paper in the fall of the second year. Students are expected to develop a reading list and submit that along with a one-page outline to their advisor by the end of the fall semester of the second year.

The Special Fields Paper will be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by May 31 of the second year in the program, and it should be 8,000–10,000 words in length (not counting the bibliography). The paper will be reviewed by the advisor and one member of the Subfield Exam Committee in the relevant subfield, designated by the chair of the committee.

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To help students reach the final deadline, the following sub-deadlines break the goal into manageable steps.

- One page statement of interest due by September 1
    - This is designed to get students to outline their vision for independent work over the two-year period leading up to the completion of the QP
- Reading list due by October 1
    - Reading lists should be constructed in consultation with the advisor plus one additional faculty member with expertise in the area who will serve as the second reader on the SFP. Both faculty members must sign off on the list
- 2-3 page extended abstract due by December 15
    - The extended abstract replaces the one-page outline submitted to the advisor

The Special Fields Paper will be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies by May 31 of the second year in the program, and it should be 8,000–10,000 words in length (not counting the bibliography). The paper will be reviewed by the advisor and one member of the Subfield Exam Committee in the relevant subfield, designated by the chair of the committee.

The exams will be evaluated as Pass with Distinction, Pass, Master's Pass (adequate to receive an M.A. but not to advance to the Ph.D. level) and Fail. Students who receive a Fail or a Master's Pass can rewrite the paper one time and must submit the revised version to the Director of Graduate Studies at the latest by July 20. Qualifying Research Paper

Students must complete a Qualifying Research Paper with the aim of producing a publishable journal article. This requirement is met through completion of two courses: a) an Advanced Topics Seminar with the advisor in the Spring of the second year (SOC 95xx), and b) a third-year research and writing seminar (SOC 7980), working with the instructor of the course as well as the faculty advisor in the substantive area of interest. The quality and sophistication of the paper should be at the level of a publishable journal article.

2.1.3.1 Designing the Qualifying Project – Advanced Topics Seminar (SOC 95xx). The first step in completing the qualifying research paper is to develop the project. The project will be developed during the Advanced Topics Seminar that students take with their advisors in the Spring of the second year (SOC 95xx). During this course, students will read extensively in their research area and develop a research project they can carry out over the summer and into the fall. The faculty member teaching the course will determine what is the most appropriate final assignment for this course (whether proposal, or lit review, or just a series of short papers/memos, etc.).

At the end of the Advanced Topic Seminar, student will submit a timeline for the completion of the QP and send that to both the faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. *It is absolutely critical that students complete a draft of their paper—including not only reportage but also analysis—before entering the writing seminar* (SOC 7980).

Advanced Topics Seminars are typically created anew for each student, depending on specific areas of interest and topics for the qualifying papers. Each new Advanced Topics Seminar needs to be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and entered into SIS before students can enroll. A maximum of 3 students can enroll in an Advanced Topics Seminar at any given time. Advanced topics seminars often have a more specialized weekly reading list than that which is covered in Core Courses on in the Special Fields Paper.

Procedures for taking an Advanced Topics Seminar:

1. In the fall of their second year, students should talk to faculty and identify an advisor for the Qualifying Paper; the Qualifying Paper advisor will serve as the instructor for the Advanced Topics Seminar. NOTE: There are NO formal requirements that necessitate that the Qualifying Paper advisor must be the same person as the first-year advisor or the dissertation advisor.
2. If the faculty member agrees to serve as Qualifying Paper advisor, the student and the instructor need to provide a title (max 30 spaces) and brief description (max 450 spaces)

of the class. They will also develop a syllabus for the Advanced Topics Seminar, which needs to include purpose/goals of the seminar, a reading list for each week, and a list of assignments throughout the course. This course is graded, and the readings and assignments need to be equivalent to a 3-credit course. The syllabus also needs to note meeting times – the expectation is that the course will meet for at least 1 hour each week.

3. The syllabus should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval before the conclusion of the fall semester.

Incompletes in the Advanced Topic Seminars should be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Before an incomplete is granted in this course, the student is required to provide a written plan for completing the research proposal that has to be approved by both the advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. An incomplete in this course has to be converted into a letter grade at the latest by August 1 or the student will not be allowed to register for the Qualifying Paper Writing Seminar (7980) and will no longer be in good standing. Exceptions will be made in unique circumstances, such as medical leave, and need to be approved by Director of Graduate Studies.

2.1.3.2 Completing the Qualifying Paper - Writing Seminar (7980). Students are expected to enter the Graduate Research Workshop with a rough draft of the QP already in hand. Faculty advisors are expected to read and approve the draft paper (including introduction, literature review, and preliminary data analysis) before students enroll in the writing seminar.

The emphasis in the seminar is on developing students' individual research projects, rather than on teaching new substantive or methodological content. The course provides a structure for the research experience which enables students to maximize learning and skill development from that experience. Specifically, the course aims to do three things:

1. *Impose a realistic and effective timetable* on students' projects, so that they are able to complete a high-quality project by the end of their third academic year. This plan is accomplished by requiring frequent drafts and student presentations of work in progress.
2. *Provide useful feedback* on student work as it evolves. This goal is accomplished by (a) the instructor's comments on drafts and (b) in-class presentations/workshopping of individual students' work followed by discussion.
3. *Teach a limited amount of content* relating to the "art" of carrying out a research project, writing it up for publication, and navigating through the review process.

Students will retain their second-year QP advisor with expertise in their substantive area of interest during the semester of the writing seminar and are expected to continue to work with this advisor concerning the qualifying paper project. Evaluation of the final paper is carried out *jointly* by the instructor of record for the writing seminar and the Qualifying Paper advisor jointly and contributes to the final grade in the writing seminar.

Students are expected to present their Qualifying Paper project to faculty and graduate students at a colloquium held in the Spring of their third year. Note that this is not a requirement for gaining the M.A., rather, it is an expectation meant to help students refine the paper in its final stages before it is sent out for review for publication.

2.1.4 The Dissertation Proposal

Under the supervision of a dissertation advisor and committee, students must prepare a written dissertation proposal and conduct a successful oral defense of that proposal. This requirement is expected to be met by the fall of the fourth year.

2.1.4.1 Forming the Committee. At the outset of the dissertation phase of a student's program, the student should identify a committee chair/advisor and two additional committee members from among the Department's Graduate faculty. Although it is not required, the student may wish to identify an external reader at the proposal stage (see "The Dissertation" below), as some external readers appreciate the opportunity for early involvement. Once a student has identified their dissertation advisor and committee members, they should submit a completed copy of the Committee Approval Form to the Academic Administrative Assistant who will send the form out to request signatures via DocuSign. This form will list (and be signed by) the dissertation advisor and committee members of the student. The form should be reviewed and signed by the Director of Graduate Studies in the fall of the 4th year, and at least 30 days before the dissertation proposal defense. The committee must be approved before the dissertation proposal defense can be scheduled.

2.1.4.2 Writing the Proposal. Although the length and form of the dissertation proposal will vary based on the project, the proposal should present a *concise* and compelling articulation of the project's goals, methods, and potential implications. As such, the proposal should include the following elements: an outline of, or concise review of, research literature on the relevant topic; (b) a clear statement of one or more research questions and an explanation of why and how the dissertation will make a contribution to the literature by answering those questions; and (c) a clear and detailed plan for carrying out empirical research to address the research questions, including a description of data sources and analytical methods. The proposal should be a maximum of 20 double-spaced pages (plus references), although some proposals occasionally run longer.

The proposal should be developed and detailed sufficiently to convince readers of the project's value, while still allowing flexibility for the shifts in direction and emphasis that are likely to emerge as the research proceeds.

When the committee determines that the proposal is ready, a date will be scheduled for the oral defense of the dissertation proposal. At least one week in advance, the student should provide a paper copy of the proposal to the Academic Administrative Assistant for public announcement and circulation. On the day of the proposal defense, the student and committee members should complete the Dissertation Proposal Defense Form. Once the form is filled out, students should submit it to the Academic Administrative Assistant who will send the form out to request signatures via DocuSign.

2.1.5 The Dissertation

Students are required to write a doctoral dissertation, which should be a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the discipline. The work should be of publishable quality, either as a book or as several journal articles. In addition, students must conduct a successful oral

defense of that dissertation. Ordinarily, students are expected to complete the dissertation within one to two years after defense of the proposal (that is, between the end of the 5th year and the end of the 6th year), depending upon the nature of the data, analysis, or writing involved.

Ordinarily, a student will retain the same dissertation advisor and committee as he or she moves from the proposal stage to the research and writing of the dissertation itself. However, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences requires that a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from another Arts and Sciences department (or, but only with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, a faculty member from another school of the University of Virginia) participate in examining the student at the dissertation defense. Therefore, if the student has not already done so at the proposal stage, it is advisable for the student to select this external reader shortly after the proposal defense and to seek his or her input as appropriate during the development of the dissertation project.

Once the composition of the dissertation committee is finalized, the student should submit a completed copy of the Final Title and Committee Form to the Academic Administrative Assistant. Once the form is filled out, please submit to Academic Administrative Assistant who will send the form out to request signatures via DocuSign. Signatures of all committee members are required (an email confirmation will suffice in lieu of signature). Students will not be allowed to schedule a defense until this form is completed with all signatures. The title submitted on this form can no longer be changed prior to graduation.

Although the length and form of the dissertation will vary according to the substantive requirements of findings, writing, and the subfields of knowledge engaged, the work should be of publishable quality in the sense of defensible to blind review by scholars in the field of study who are current on the progress of research in the field. Depending upon the nature of their projects, students should plan to publish their dissertation research either as a book or as two or more high-quality journal articles.

When the committee determines that the dissertation is ready, a date will be scheduled for the oral defense of the dissertation. The student should contact the Academic Administrative Assistant well in advance if he or she wishes to reserve a special room for the defense (e.g., in the Rotunda). At least one week in advance, the student should provide a paper copy of the dissertation to the Academic Administrative Assistant for public announcement and circulation.

On the day of the proposal defense, the student and committee members should complete the Ph.D. Final Examination Form. This form should then be sent to the Academic Administrative Assistant, who will obtain the signature of the Department Chair and then submit these forms to the GSAS Registrar by the appropriate deadline.

In addition to the Ph.D. Final Examination Form, the student is responsible for completing all other dissertation applications and materials by the appropriate deadlines (e.g., applying for graduation in SIS & survey of earned doctorates & upload to digital repository).

2.1.5.1 Progress Reports. At the end of each term after the defense of a dissertation proposal (beginning with the term in which the proposal is defended), the student must submit a progress report to the Director of Graduate Studies detailing his/her research activities and the relevance of these activities to the course of research and dissertation writing. A template for progress reports will be shared at least two weeks before they are due.

The dissertation advisor will provide a summary of his/her assessment of the student's work, indicating whether he/she is making satisfactory progress towards completion, at the Department annual graduate review.

2.2 M.A. Degree Requirements

While the Department currently admits students only into the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree program, students can obtain an M.A. degree en route to the Ph.D. To obtain an M.A. degree, students must a) meet the course requirements specified below, 2) meet M.A. degree requirements established by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), including completion of 30 credits of course work; and 3) complete the first-year qualifying exam.

To earn an M.A., students must complete a minimum of 24 credits of graded coursework, including SOC 5030 (Classical Sociological Theory), SOC 5100 (Research Design and Methods), one methods-specific course (qualitative or quantitative), a 9000-level Advanced Topics seminar, and one core course. Students are also expected to enroll in the Seminar on Sociological Issues (SOC 8030 and SOC 8040) for a minimum of two semesters.

International students are advised to consult with the International Studies Office concerning the visa implications of completing the M.A. degree.

The full list of GSAS requirements can be found on the UREG website.

3 Deadlines for Degree Candidates

There are a number of hard deadlines that must be in order to receive a degree. The sections below provide information on the major deadlines set out by the University for both the Ph.D. and the M.A. Please note, however, that meeting these deadlines may require input from the faculty, which can take considerable time, so it is important to plan accordingly. This is particularly true when it comes to defending, revising, and depositing a dissertation.

3.1 Doctoral Degree

The relevant deadlines for submitting a dissertation and graduating with a Ph.D. depend on which semester you intend to graduate. For a complete list of steps, see the GSAS webpage on thesis and dissertation submission, though note that the steps and dates below have been slightly modified to align with current departmental practice. As described above, the Department requires that the final dissertation title be submitted when forming the committee, which takes place in advance of the defense.

Fall

- Submit degree application in SIS: September 30
- Submit Final Title and Committee Form: November 30
- Submit Ph.D. Final Examination Form: November 30
- Upload dissertation to digital repository: November 30

Spring

- Submit degree application in SIS: January 31
- Submit Final Title and Committee Form: April 30
- Submit Ph.D. Final Examination Form: April 30
- Upload dissertation to digital repository: April 30

Summer

- Submit degree application in SIS: June 30
- Submit Final Title and Committee Form: July 31
- Submit Ph.D. Final Examination Form: July 31
- Upload dissertation to digital repository: July 31

3.2 En Route Master's Degree

The relevant deadlines for receiving an M.A. en route to a Ph.D. depend on which semester you intend to receive the M.A. Students applying for an M.A. en route to the Ph.D. must email the Master's Degree Request Form to the Enrolled Students Office. The Special Fields Paper serves as the final examination for the purpose of the M.A. See the GSAS website for a copy of the Master's Final Examination Form.

Fall

- Submit degree application via email: September 30
- Submit Master's Final Examination Form: November 30

Spring

- Submit degree application via email: January 31
- Submit Master's Final Examination Form: April 30

Summer

- Submit degree application in SIS: June 30
- Submit Master's Final Examination Form: July 31

4 Academic Advisors

First-year students will be advised by a faculty member who will be assigned by the Director of Graduate Studies and Director of Admissions based on shared interests. In subsequent years,

students should choose their academic advisor from among the members of the sociology faculty, with his or her consent. For students working on a Qualifying Research Paper, the advisor will also be the student's substantive advisor on that paper. For students working on a dissertation proposal or dissertation, the advisor will also chair the student's dissertation committee.

5 Maintaining Good Standing

Graduate students must remain in good standing at all times. Students who do not maintain good standing may be required to withdraw from the graduate program.[1] In addition, students who are receiving financial aid through the Department (as a teaching or research assistant or in the form of a fellowship) must remain in good standing in order to continue receiving that aid. Good standing requires:

1. Earning no grade lower than B- (the lowest grade for which the University will award graduate credit).
2. Maintaining an overall GPA of 3.3 (B+) in graduate courses in the Department.
3. Completing at least five graded courses (15 hours) by the end of the second semester.
4. Completing all coursework, with the exception of the Graduate Research Workshop (SOC 7980) by the end of the fifth semester.
5. Passing the Qualifying First-Year Exam by the beginning of the student's second academic year[2] and completing the Special Fields Paper by May 31 of the second academic year.
6. Completing a workable draft of the Qualifying Research Paper by the first day of spring semester of the third year and presenting that paper at the annual colloquium in the spring of the third year.
7. Defending a Ph.D. proposal by the end of the ninth semester.
8. Completing and defending the Ph.D. dissertation within two years after defending the proposal.
9. Completing all requirements for the Ph.D. degree within seven years from the date of enrollment in the graduate program. (This requirement is mandated by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and can only be waived with GSAS permission.)

Students are considered to have advanced to candidacy after they have completed: a) all coursework, b) both the first-year qualifying exam and the special fields paper, and c) the Qualifying Paper (starting with the proposal and followed by writing the full paper). Students are thus expected to advance to candidacy in the spring of their 3rd year.

6 Alternative Registration Options and Other Accommodations

There may be circumstances in which it is not necessary and/or not feasible for a student to continue taking courses, doing research, or teaching in residence. This is often true for advanced

[1] International students should consult with the International Studies Office regarding the implications of not maintaining good standing. https://iso.virginia.edu/

[2] Students who receive grades of "Fail" or "Master's Pass" on the first-year qualifying exam may petition the Graduate Committee to schedule a second sitting for the exam and to remain in good standing, pending the outcome of the second time taking the exam.

Ph.D. students who are in the process of completing their dissertation. Advanced students who are, for whatever reason, ineligible for tuition remission may, under certain circumstances, reduce the cost of attendance by petitioning for either full-time off-Grounds status or an affiliated status such as Doctoral Completion status or, less commonly, Degree Conferral in Absentia. In addition to providing alternative registration options for advanced Ph.D. students, the University allows graduate students at all levels to withdraw and/or take leave for personal or medical reasons, which may, under certain circumstances, lead to a postponement of a student's expected graduation date. Ph.D. students who require enrollment beyond the standard period of seven years may request an extension to request an extension of time to complete their degree.

6.1 Alternative Registration Options for Advanced Graduate Students

The university offers alternative registration options for advanced Ph.D. students. These include full-time off-Grounds status, as well as affiliated statuses such as Doctoral Completion status and Degree Conferral in Absentia. Whereas the primary effect of full-time off-Grounds status is to reduce the comprehensive fee paid by advanced graduate students while completing research away from Grounds, students with an affiliated status are not enrolled and thus pay a single status fee. In both cases, a reduction in costs is accompanied by restrictions on the resources available to students. This is particularly true in the case of students with an affiliated status, who lose access to the University's student health insurance plan, as well as student health services.

6.1.1 Full-Time Off-Grounds Status

An advanced Ph.D. student who remains enrolled full-time but who will reside outside of the Albemarle-Charlottesville area for a period may petition to utilize off-Grounds status and, if approved, be charged tuition plus a reduced off-Grounds fee. Though a student who enrolls in this status is eligible for library privileges and University insurance or health services, the student would not be eligible for the use of other University resources (like recreational facilities), or to hold an assistantship. Eligible students must submit a new request for off-Grounds enrollment each year. Make sure the Academic Administrative Assistant has a copy of the request form prior to submission to GSAS.

6.1.2 Affiliated Statuses

According to University policy, an affiliated student is a student who expects to complete their degree but is temporarily absent from the University for educational purposes. Affiliated statuses do not constitute enrollments. So, while students with an affiliated status pay a substantially reduced fee in lieu of tuition and comprehensive fees, they are not allowed to access University of Virginia facilities or to hold assistantships. Students with an affiliated status retain NetBadge privileges, as well as continued access to library resources.

Affiliated statuses do not accrue credit, nor do they allow for the deferral of student loans. Once approved for an affiliated status, students may not return to full-time study in their degree program. **International Students** who plan to remain in or return to the United States should contact the International Studies Office before petitioning for an affiliated status in order to determine whether it may affect visa eligibility.

Advanced Ph.D. students who have completed all the degree requirements except the dissertation may petition for Doctoral Completion status. Students who are no longer enrolled full-time but who have successfully defended their dissertation may petition for Degree Conferral in Absentia.

6.1.2.1 Doctoral Completion Status. The Graduate School offers the use of Doctoral Completion status to accommodate advanced Ph.D. students who are actively completing a dissertation or who have essentially completed their degree program and need to remain affiliated with the University in order to graduate. Eligible students may submit a Doctoral Completion Status Petition each term for up to four consecutive terms. **Once a student switches to Doctoral Completion Status they may not switch back to full-time enrollment**. Make sure the Academic Administrative Assistant has a copy of the petition prior to submission to GSAS.

6.1.2.2 Degree Conferral in Absentia. Advanced Ph.D. students who have completed all degree requirements after the graduation deadline for a given term or are no longer enrolled full-time may petition for Degree Conferral in Absentia. Eligibility lasts for a single term. As such, students will not be approved for Degree Conferral in Absentia until all degree requirements have been recorded by the Department. To petition for Degree Conferral in Absentia, students should email the Director of Graduate Studies for approval. Approved requests will be forward to the Graduate School. Requests can be made up to fifteen days before the graduation deadline of the term in question. In such cases students may be subject to additional enrollment fees.

6.2 Taking Time

Personal circumstances may arise which require a student to either pause their course of study or request an extension on their time to degree. In addition to providing for leaves of absence of up to four semesters, the University allows for extensions to normative time limitations for students experiencing significant life events including, but not limited to, a family crisis, a major illness, or the birth or adoption of a child. The University offers paid leave for graduate assistants and instructors of record experiencing parental accommodation events such as the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, or the assumption of legal guardianship for a child under eighteen years of age.

6.2.1 Leaves of Absence

Students who need to temporarily suspend full-time enrollment and postpone their expected graduation date may request a leave of absence. After reviewing the University's policy on leaves of absence, students should email the Director of Graduate Studies to explain the reason for the request and to indicate the proposed period of leave. The Director of Graduate Studies will forward the request to the assistant dean along with the Department's recommendation. In certain cases (e.g., medical leave), students may be asked to meet with the associate dean of students. If the request is approved by the Graduate School, the student will be placed on leave by the GSAS registrar. Students on approved leave retain access to University email, but are ineligible for financial aid and are prohibited from using University facilities.

Students are eligible for reinstatement for up to two years following withdrawal, after which the student would need to complete a new application for admission unless the Department and

Graduate School agree to waive that requirement. Policy requires that the student submit the Request for Reinstatement Form to the Director of Graduate Studies by November 1 to be reinstated for the spring term and April 1 to be reinstated for the fall term. It is important to note that reinstatement is not required in order to graduate after a lapse in full-time enrollment if all of the degree requirements have met. In such cases, students may petition for Degree Conferral in Absentia, as described above.

6.2.2 Extending Time to Degree

Students who have had to suspend progress due to significant life events (e.g., family crisis, major illness, birth or adoption of a child) may petition for a one-semester extension to the normative time limitations associated with pursuing a Ph.D. To be eligible, a student must be enrolled full-time and be in good standing. Students who have experienced or anticipate a significant life event should reach out to their advisor, Department Chair, and/or the Associate Dean for Graduate Education as soon as possible in order to work out the necessary accommodations.

In general, a Ph.D. student who requires enrollment beyond the standard period of seven years should submit the Request for an Extension of Time Limit for Degree Completion Form and supporting materials (i.e., statement of progress over the previous year, plan for completing the degree during the coming year) to the Director of Graduate Studies for review. As per the terms on the GSAS webpage, requests for fall-term extensions will be accepted between April 15 and May 15, while requests for spring-term extensions will be accept between November 15 and December 15. **In order to ensure timely reporting to the National Student Clearinghouse, students with loans or receiving federal aid must submit requests for fall-term extensions by April 22 and spring-term extensions by November 22**.

6.2.3 Parental Leave for Graduate Assistants and Instructors of Record

Under certain circumstances, the University will provide eight weeks of paid leave to graduate students employed as either a graduate assistant (i.e., a GTA or GRA) or as an instructor of record. The purpose of the policy is to provide continued financial support during a temporary leave absence related to the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, or the assumption of legal guardianship for a child under eighteen years of age. Accommodations may begin anywhere between one week before to eight weeks after the event in question. Funding for eight weeks of replacement wages, or for hiring a temporary replacement, is provided in equal share by the school in which the student is enrolled, and the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. Students who anticipate a need for accommodation should contact the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in writing as soon as possible to confirm eligibility, making sure to copy the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (gradstudies@virginia.edu) on this request.

7 Working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant

Most students will, at some point during their graduate careers, serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) in a course taught by a faculty member. In addition to offering a source of funding, service as a GTA is intended to provide students with training and experience in teaching. As many students will benefit from teaching experience when going on the job market,

the GTA experience is an important part of graduate education. Students' work as a GTA has a substantial impact on the quality of education for undergraduate students. The Department is committed to maintaining that quality at a high level. Students who exhibit serious deficiencies in performing their duties (e.g., failure to perform core duties outlined below such as leading discussion sections, holding office hours, meeting with course instructor, grading, etc.) will be asked to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies. If they do not promptly remedy the deficiencies, they may lose their GTA-based funding and face possible termination from the graduate program.

TA assignments are made by the Director of Graduate Studies. The GTA assignments are not a reflection of students' performance in the program but instead are a result of a complex matching procedure aiming to ensure that all courses are adequately covered. If you have any questions about your GTA assignment in any given semester, please do not hesitate to contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

7.1 GTA Job Description

(Approved by the faculty of the Department of Sociology on April 2, 2020)

By assisting in large lecture courses, GTAs enhance the quality of undergraduate education by providing undergraduate students with more personalized teaching attention, opportunities for academic discussion, and clarification of information related to courses. In their capacity as teaching assistants, graduate students have the opportunity to be mentored by experienced teachers and to gain valuable teaching experience. In working with course instructors, GTAs can observe a variety of teaching styles, ask questions about teaching, gain insight into constructing undergraduate courses, and contribute comments or suggestions for improving courses. In order to perform effectively, GTAs need to know both what kinds of duties will be expected of them and what kind of support they can expect to receive from supervising instructors.

Because the courses to which GTAs are assigned vary, GTA duties can vary considerably. However, in most courses, GTAs are typically expected to:

- Prepare for and lead discussion sections
- Schedule and hold at least two (2) office hours per week
- Meet with the instructor and other GTAs on a weekly or bi-weekly basis
- Grade assignments, exams and papers
- Attend lectures
- Proctor exams

In addition, instructors sometimes ask that GTAs perform some of the following tasks that add to the quality of courses and/or help GTAs to develop teaching skills:

- Give input on or help create student assignments
- Contribute to or give input for exams
- Give all or part of <u>one</u> lecture to gain experience
- Schedule exam review sessions (and do so in lieu of office hours)
- Set up and/or maintain a course website

- Copy/scan documents to be placed on the course website or for course handouts/exams
- Put course items on reserve at the library
- Enter grades in SIS and save them for final review and approval by the course instructor

As learning teachers, GTAs should expect the support and direction of their supervising instructors. In general, GTAs should expect that the course instructor will:

- Meet with GTAs before classes begin to give an overview of the course, provide GTAs with copies of the syllabus and reading packets, and clarify the instructor's expectations of GTAs for the particular course
- Order desk copies for GTAs in a timely manner (i.e., before the start of classes)
- Make available any readings to be placed on reserve
- Meet with GTAs on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to ensure a consistent learning experience across sections and rigorous discussion of class materials and to communicate the logic and design of courses so that graduate students learn to develop and teach their own classes
- Discuss grading criteria and desired grade distribution with GTAs
- Decide whether/how exams are to be proctored
- Have the final say in matters regarding grades, exam content, and course content

Although the general expectations outlined above do not preclude that GTAs may perform additional voluntary tasks not included in this job description, there are limits to what GTAs can be asked to do. A course instructor should not ask or expect GTAs to have sole responsibility for performing duties that clearly are the instructor's own, such as syllabus preparation, exam writing, or lecturing. While GTAs may support exam writing (craft a few questions, take practice exams, give feedback), they cannot be responsible for writing entire exams. Nor should instructors expect GTAs to do personal errands not related to the course or other work not related to the course (including work for other courses taught by the instructor). Finally, instructors must not be involved in any relationship with GTAs and both instructors and GTAs must not be involved in any relationship with students they are teaching that would constitute a violation of the University's Conflict of Interest Policy.

7.1.1 Professional Development

Students will be required to participate in pedagogical preparation, usually in the format of a 1-credit course, in the spring semester of their first year in the program.

Being a GTA is a learning experience. We thus encourage GTAs to conduct midterm course evaluations and/or arrange for a teaching assessment poll through the Center for Teaching Excellence and discuss any valuable insights with the instructor.

Similarly, we expect that instructors will visit at least one section taught by each GTA during the course of the semester and provide either a verbal or a written summary of feedback. The Department also requires that the instructor observes and provides verbal or written feedback to all first-time GTAs. The Director of Graduate Studies will email faculty with new GTAs at the start of the fall semester with a reminder about this requirement. In addition to helping students

learn and improve as teachers, observing students' teaching becomes useful when nominating GTAs for teaching awards.

7.1.2 Time Commitment[3]

Per the appointment letter, GTAs are expected to be available to faculty for course-related matters from the start of the first GTA pay period to the end of the last GTA pay period (specific dates are provided in the appointment letter). Moreover, the Department expects all GTAs to be available for an in-person meeting with course instructors at least 72 business hours before the first day of classes and through the end of the exam period. Hard copy official final exams must be graded on Grounds and given to the course instructor, who must keep them for a year per the state records policy. Please make travel arrangements with these expectations in mind.

The GTA appointment lasts for 20 weeks each semester and is paid out in 10 bi-weekly pay periods. Over the duration of the appointment, a three-section GTA appointment is considered to be 10 hours a week and a four-section GTA appointment is considered to be 13.3 hours per week. Although the appointment lasts 20 weeks, the majority of the work occurs during the 15.5 weeks of a given semester. The hours will thus vary from low/none (e.g., before/after end of classes) to medium (e.g. over the course of the semester) and high (e.g., exam week, midterms). Time commitments will also vary depending on a variety of factors such as GTA experience as well as the course structure (e.g., more frequent smaller assignments vs. a smaller number of bigger exams). Overall, faculty should plan courses such that the work matches, as closely as is possible and allowing for expected variation, the expectation that the three section GTAs work 200 hours (and four section GTAs work 266 hours) over the course of the semester.

We urge faculty and students to keep in mind that this is not an hourly assignment, which means that students do not enter weekly hours worked on a timecard, and that work is highly variable across the duration of the appointment. We encourage GTAs and faculty to discuss workload distribution at the first meeting of the semester, along with course structure, grading expectations, this description, mentoring opportunities, and all other matters related to building a constructive working relationship.

Students and faculty with concerns about tasks, availability, and time commitments are encouraged to contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

7.2 Lab Instructor Job Description

Some low-enrollment courses include work in a lab for hands-on learning (e.g. using a statistical software) in addition to attending lecture. In such cases, Lab Instructors will be appointed and funded to supervise lab work. Lab instructors will not be expected to prepare new material for the lab, but rather to assist students with technical questions that may arise as they work on assignments prepared by the faculty. Lab instructors are not expected to attend lectures or grade assignments or exams. They are expected, however, to hold regular office hours. The typical

[3] Please note that full-time students are limited to working a combined maximum of 20 hours per week across all assignments at UVA, and GTAs are responsible for notifying prospective employers of all other work commitments. Working more than 20 hours per week requires written approval from the GSAS Dean before the commitment is made. Exception may not be possible for foreign national students, depending on visa regulations.

workload for a lab instructor will be between 3-5 hours per week, as specified by their letter of employment.

8 Departmental Offices and Facilities

Office Space

If you are a GTA and have an assigned office space, please remember that conditions are rather crowded. We ask that you bring as few personal items as possible to the GTA offices. Please keep your space clean, neat, and adhere to all safety measures. **Do not leave your office space unsecured when you leave it** (even for a trip down the hall), as thefts are occasionally reported. Make sure that confidential course-related materials (such as examination questions or students' work) are secure at all times.

Graduate Lounge

We have a graduate lounge in our department for graduate student use only. A computer and a printer are available for students to use. Students obtain a key to the lounge so they can access the lounge at night or on weekends. It must be kept locked at all times.

Printing

Please use the printer in the graduate lounge **sparingly**. For each semester, the Department will furnish a set number of toner cartridges and boxes of copy paper. Once those supplies have been used, the graduate students will be responsible for furnishing their own supplies. Any supplies purchased by graduate students for the lab must be compatible with the equipment and needs to be approved by the Sociology Department. If supplies are left over from fall or spring semester, they may be carried over to the next semester in addition to the quota allotted for that semester. Hence, at the end of the summer semester, all remaining supplies will be returned to the Department. Each new fall semester will start out with the original quota of supplies. See the following breakdown for lab supplies:

Summer:	3 boxes of toner & 5 boxes of paper
Fall:	5 boxes of toner & 10 boxes of paper
Spring:	5 boxes of toner & 10 boxes of paper

The Konica-Minolta Scanner-Printer should be used sparingly, and only as a backup for the lab printer. Supplies will be purchased as needed, but usage will be monitored.

Faculty, please note that this new policy will affect the printing of readings from Collab. The department encourages you to use course packets instead of posting all readings online.

Use of Copy Machine in Main Office

The copy machine is for department business only. GTAs may copy course materials only if the instructor of the class for which they are assisting has requested it. Course web sites on UVa Collab should be used to post readings which students may print for themselves. Students may

not copy materials for the classes in which they are enrolled. Copy machines for student use are located in the libraries and elsewhere on Grounds.

Mailboxes

You have been assigned a mailbox located in the mailroom (Randall Hall 101). You may receive U.S. Mail at the Department address. You may mail your personal **stamped** mail from this office. Please do not let mail pile up for long periods of time.

E-mail

You have been assigned an e-mail address. Be aware that most of our communication within the Department is done by e-mail. You will need to check it often so that you do not miss the latest information and deadline dates. Moreover, please UVA computing accounts in a professional manner as they are subject to FOIA (Freedom of Information Act).

9 Miscellaneous

Travel and Other Professional Expenses

The department aims to support your scholarly development by providing support for travel to present at professional conferences and other professional expenses. The specifics depend on available funding, number of applications, and other needs of the graduate program. Policies and procedures regarding funding for travel and other professional expenses are updated every July and posted in the graduate lounge as well as shared with all graduate students in July and January via email.

Presenting at conferences is an important part of professional development. When presenting at national and international meetings, keep in mind that you are representing not only yourself, but also your advisor and the Department. We thus strongly urge you to talk to your advisor as you prepare and submit conference presentations. Apart from conference presentations, it is in general a good idea to stay in close communication with your advisor regarding your plans and activities.

Whenever funds are available in the Director of Graduate Studies discretionary budget at the end of the fiscal year, the funds will be used to support graduate student research, especially but not exclusively in the early stages of the program (qualifying paper and/or dissertation proposal). The Director of Graduate Studies will send an email in April to students notifying them if funding is available, the application procedures, and the terms for applying for funding in a given year. The terms and amounts of the awards are at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies and will vary across years based on available funding and existing needs. The availability of these funds is not guaranteed.

Get to Know the Faculty

The most important thing you can do to help yourself through the experience of graduate school is to get to know the faculty, especially those who share your intellectual interests. Very early in your graduate career, develop the habit of dropping in during faculty office hours or engaging faculty at department events. It is incumbent on you to initiate these relationships. In graduate school, your progress and your academic achievements are your responsibility. Building strong relationships with faculty will be very important to you at multiple points in your graduate career, from seeking teaching assistantships, to forming thesis or dissertation committees, to obtaining help with job searches.

Incompletes

Taking an incomplete is sometimes helpful or necessary in order to finish a course paper following the end of a semester. However, you should use this option only sparingly and with care. University regulations stipulate that grades of IN (Incomplete) must be converted to the appropriate letter grade within one semester of the date on which the IN was registered. After 200 days from the original grade due date, the IN grade automatically reverts to an F, which will appear on the transcript. A grade of F, like any other grade below B-, is considered to be an unsatisfactory grade. Receipt of such a grade is grounds for dismissal from the graduate program. Once a grade of F is recorded, the grade may only be changed with the approval of the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies, and the acceptable reasons for the Dean to authorize such a grade change are limited to cases "when an instructor certifies that, because of an error in calculation or transcription, an incorrect grade has been submitted."

The Department has stricter requirements for an incomplete in the Advanced Topic Seminars associated with the Qualifying Paper Proposal (see associated discussion, above).

Problems or Concerns

If a problem or concern arises relating to your studies or your teaching, please discuss it as soon as possible with your faculty advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Academic Administrative Assistant. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality, consistent with university policies.