

CONTENTS OF THE HANDBOOK

[ABOUT THE PROGRAM](#)

[ADMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT](#)

[FINANCIAL AID](#)

[NON-FINANCIAL RESOURCES](#)

[COURSE WORK AND RESEARCH CREDITS](#)

[QUALIFYING PAPERS](#)

[PERIODIC EVALUATIONS OF PROGRESS](#)

[DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND DISSERTATION](#)

[FORMS TO BE FILED](#)

[MISCELLANEOUS](#)

[APPENDIX A.](#) DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

[APPENDIX B.](#) MODEL FOUR YEAR COURSE SCHEDULE

[APPENDIX C.](#) TRANSFERRING CREDITS FROM OTHER DEPARTMENTS

[APPENDIX D.](#) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Department of Sociology offers a graduate program leading to the Ph.D. degree. The Ph.D. in Sociology is conferred in recognition of high quality and original scholarship within the discipline, and distinguished creative achievement within at least one subfield of the discipline. Students earn the Master's degree en route to the Ph.D., and some may exit the program after obtaining the Master's. However, the program is not designed for students who know from the beginning that they want to go only as far as the Master's level.

The graduate student career encompasses three distinct but overlapping stages, each of which requires extensive reading and writing. The first stage consists of classroom work. We offer a set of required core courses in theory, methods, and statistics, a first-year proseminar in which students are introduced to faculty members' research, and a set of elective seminars in a wide variety of substantive areas. Next, the student moves into a stage of writing qualifying papers, which are designed to bridge the gap between writing term papers for classes and a much longer and more complex dissertation. In the third and final stage, the student assembles a faculty committee that provides guidance during the planning and writing of an original dissertation. In practice, these three stages always overlap to some degree.

II. ADMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT

Applicants admitted to the program formally enter the program in the fall semester. The admission process is competitive. Consult the Sociology Department web page for application deadlines. Occasionally, an applicant with strong credentials who has missed the application deadline may be admitted as a non-matriculating student for one semester. If the student performs well in his or her courses, he or she will be retroactively admitted to the program with

the work completed during the trial semester counting toward the degree requirements.

Members of the Sociology faculty evaluate all applications for entry into the Rutgers Graduate Program in Sociology. Funding and admission decisions take into account undergraduate courses and grades, letters of recommendation, a writing sample, a personal statement, and GRE scores. Applicants from outside the USA also have to take the [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) exam.

Incoming students should schedule an interview with the Graduate Director as soon as they arrive at Rutgers. Each student will have already been assigned an advisor on the basis of shared research interests (see below for further information on advising). Questions regarding the requirements for the Ph.D. and M.A. degrees should be addressed to the Graduate Director and/or the student's advisor. Initial assignment of advisors is always somewhat arbitrary and non-binding; students may change their advisor at any point and for any reason simply by informing the Graduate Director and their current advisor. Students often change advisors as they get to know specific faculty members and as their interests change and evolve.

Students who already have a Master's degree when applying for admission should also submit evidence of their performance in their previous Master's program. If admitted, they may apply to have some or all of the work they have already done credited toward their Ph.D. requirements. Incoming students with prior graduate work (whether or not they have completed the Master's) should meet with the Graduate Director in their first semester in residence to determine which prior courses are likely to transfer toward a Rutgers degree.

III. FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid for graduate students is of four types: major university funding, minor university funding, external funding, and funding for research expenses. Each of these is described below.

1. Major University Funding

Three major kinds of financial support are awarded *by the department* to graduate students: Fellowships, Graduate Assistantships (GAs), and Teaching Assistantships (TAs). All of these provide complete tuition remission, a living stipend, and possibly (depending on the specific award) some fringe benefits, including health insurance.

Students who are admitted to the program with major financial aid usually receive this in the form of a multi-year package designed to support them during the first several (3 to 5) years. One typical package consists of two years of Fellowship followed by three years of TA or GA support. Annual renewal of these multi-year packages is dependent upon satisfactory progress each year toward the Ph.D. Occasionally, a student may be admitted with just one year of major funding but this has been unusual in recent years.

Students who have been admitted without funding, or whose funding packages have run out, may apply for major funding on a year-to-year basis (after their first year in the program). These

positions will almost always be GAs or TAs, although more advanced students may apply for more remunerative (and extremely competitive part-time lecturer positions or “writing year” dissertation fellowships).

a. **University Fellowships** are awarded at the time of admission and usually cover two years of graduate study. The fellowship is the only form of major funding that carries no employment obligation. A Fellow is given the opportunity to devote full time to being a student. Therefore, Fellows are expected not to hold jobs inside or outside the University except, if they wish, during the summers. Only a very limited number of University Fellowships are awarded each year and they are all allocated, by University policy, to the recruitment of new students.

b. **GAs** are usually generated out of research grants secured by individual faculty members. Graduate Assistants are expected to work 15 hours a week, from September through June, with time off for holidays that the University makes available to “staff”. Note that this is a different schedule than that for Teaching Assistantships. “Calendar year” Graduate Assistants work through the summer as well. Year-to-year applicants for GA positions must apply directly to the faculty member actually doing the research. GAs are typically hired because they have a particular skill (e.g., statistical analysis, data management, archival research skills) or they evidence the potential to provide important assistance to an ongoing research project.

c. **TAs** (the most common form of major funding) are supported by the budget of the Graduate Dean. Only a limited number of TAs are allocated to each academic department each year depending on undergraduate course enrollment statistics. TAs follow the *academic* calendar year of work. Teaching Assistants generally lead discussion sessions of large lecture courses where they also help write examinations and grade the examinations of their students. Each TA is responsible for two or three sections. In some cases, experienced TAs may instead be given full responsibility for teaching a course. Qualified students may sometimes be given TAs in other departments that don’t have enough graduate students to fill all of their TA needs. Students typically do not hold teaching assistantships within our department for more than three years, in order to give as many students as possible an opportunity to receive this aid.

When a year-to-year TA line is available, the following criteria are used to evaluate applicants:

- Year in the program
- Number of years of funding received by department
- Course grades (including GPA and personal distribution of grades)
- Pace in completion of course work
- Qualifying papers – pace, number completed, and faculty evaluations of paper quality
- Number of incompletes
- Number of “banked” TA years

2. Minor University Funding

A wide variety of minor funding sources are available. These usually pay only for living expenses, although occasionally partial tuition remission may also be granted. Sources of minor funding include the following:

a. Part Time Lecturer positions that pay a fixed salary for teaching a specific course.

- b. Wages of labor for working on research grants or on specific department projects.
- c. Wages for helping professors grade student work in large courses.
- d. Pay-per-course for teaching during the summer session, during the winter break, or at one of our satellite campuses.
- e. Teaching or research at other Rutgers campuses (Camden or Newark).
- f. Work-Study programs for students meeting federal eligibility requirements.

Students may also choose to pursue outside sources of funding that advance their professional goals, such as teaching at other institutions or obtaining student loans. All minor funding requires the student's initiative to find out about opportunities and to apply for them. These opportunities arise at various times throughout the year and can be for periods as short as a few weeks or as long as a few years.

3. Competitive Funding From Outside the University

A variety of fellowships are available from external sources. The procedures and stipends attached to these change from time to time, as do the rules of eligibility. Please note that these fellowships require that students and prospective students take the initiative to acquire applications and submit them by fixed deadlines. Among the most important of these are Fulbright, Javits and NSF fellowships.

Students may apply directly for fellowships and traineeships to such agencies as the National Science Foundation or the Public Health Service. (See book located in student library for details). Other forms of external financial aid are described in detail in the Graduate School Bulletin.

Students interested in applying for externally funded research grants or fellowships should contact the Resource Center for Graduate Student External Support (<http://chaser.rutgers.edu>). The Resource Center is located on the College Avenue Campus in the Graduate Dean's Office, 25 Bishop Place, Room 301, and is currently operated by Teresa Delcorso. The Center's phone number is 732-932-2705, or you may contact Teresa by email, at delcorso@rci.rutgers.edu.

There is also a Grants Register—available in the Rutgers libraries. This contains information on thousands of grant-giving programs and is a little overwhelming. Most students looking for grant money find it a lot more efficient to work through the Resource Center for Graduate Student External Support.

4. Funding for Research Expenses

A different sort of funding from any of the above consists of reimbursement for expenses involved in doing research, obtaining the tools needed for research, and/or presenting research findings at professional meetings. Sources of this kind of funding may be departmental, University-wide, or may come from outside agencies or foundations. Awards in this category are always competitive, and usually fewer than half of those who apply receive this sort of research support. Since the opportunities for these sorts of grants, the application requirements,

and the application deadlines change year by year, this handbook cannot provide specifics. As such opportunities arise, students will be notified.

IV. NON-FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In order to help students in their progress toward the Ph.D., the sociology department also provides a variety of non-financial resources including the following:

1. Advising

One of the most important influences on a graduate student's career is his or her choice of an advisor. Incoming students are assigned an advisor based on the research interests stated on their graduate school application. Initial assignments are made by the Graduate Director. However, students are welcome and even encouraged to select their own advisor after having entered the program. Students generally select an advisor who shares at least one of the following: substantive interests, methodological approach, and general orientation to sociology. However, the most important criteria are feeling comfortable and being able to communicate easily and honestly with one's advisor.

It is difficult to establish a formal "best practices" policy for advisor-advisee relationships. Students have diverse needs, just as faculty have diverse personalities and work styles. At the very least, all students are encouraged to have one meeting per semester with their advisor to discuss progress in course work, qualifying papers, dissertation proposal, and dissertation. Students also may consult their advisor regarding other issues and concerns, such as teaching, professional development issues, research funding, and publishing. It is absolutely critical that students keep their mentors updated of their progress and (where applicable) problems in the program, as mentors typically serve as informants and advocates for their advisees during the Annual Review.

Although each student will have a primary advisor, students are encouraged to develop working relationships with other members of the department as well — typically through class work and qualifying papers. Obtaining multiple perspectives on both intellectual and professional development issues is critical for a student's development as a sociologist and scholar.

2. Computer Services

Application for computer accounts can be obtained from the sociology department's computer lab manager, who is currently Shan Harewood (ph: 732-445-4126; email: harewood@sociology.rutgers.edu). From time to time, the lab also offers training in the use of software of particular interest to sociologists. More general training programs are offered by RUCS (<http://oit.rutgers.edu/>), the University-wide computer center on Busch campus. The department's computer lab is on the third floor of Lucy Stone Hall.

The computer lab also maintains site licenses for Microsoft Office, SPSS, SAS, and a variety of other useful packages for data management and analysis. These can be used for free on the lab computers or purchased (usually for a nominal sum) for installation on students' own computers.

3. Mail and Email Services

Each graduate student has a departmental mailbox. These are located in the mail room on the second floor of Lucy Stone Hall (B-201). It's a good idea to check your mailbox at least once a week because important notices are sometimes distributed in that way.

Email is the most frequently used means of communication within the department. All students are eligible for email accounts on the department's mail server. Some students may prefer to use external email accounts or to maintain multiple email accounts. Since this can get confusing, each student should tell the graduate program administrative assistant (currently Dianne Yarnell) what email address he/she wants to use for departmental communication. This should be an email address that is checked at least a couple of times a week. That email address will appear on official department rosters and will also be the one used for the soc_grad listserv. The soc_grad listserv is an emailing list of all active sociology graduate students. It is used frequently by faculty and administrative staff to send messages to all graduate students at once. Any sociology graduate student can also send email to the listserv to communicate with every other graduate student in the department at once. Students are responsible for informing the department promptly of any changes in this main email address to avoid missing important announcements.

Since it is imperative to keep the lines of communication open between the student and the Graduate Sociology Program, all students should inform the graduate program administrator as soon as there is any change-of-address, change of phone number, or change of email address. Simply advising the Registrar's office is not sufficient for this purpose; they do not send a copy of this information to the Graduate Sociology Office.

4. Library Services

Students have the use of all university libraries. The library supports online catalog searches and many useful general search tools as well as full-text archives of certain reference sources. Librarians will help students learn to use these powerful resources in the most efficient way.

5. Offices in Lucy Stone Hall

Because of shortage of space, the department is not able to offer office space in Lucy Stone Hall to all graduate students. However, communal office space is guaranteed for all first-year students. Likewise all those teaching are provided with shared space. The department tries to stretch its limited office space as widely and as fairly as possible.

6. Student Organizations

a. **GUSS:** The Graduate Union of Sociology Students (GUSS) is an organization which is composed of all Sociology Graduate Students and headed by two co-chairpersons who are elected by the students. GUSS conducts new student orientations, sponsors various social events, handles elections of the student members, takes charge of the GUSS budget, and is represented at most Graduate Program Committee and general faculty meetings.

b. **The GSA:** The GSA is the Graduate Student Association, composed of all graduate students from all departments. All graduate students are automatically members of the GSA, which means the membership is about 6,000 in number. The budget is generated from student fees (paid by all graduate students). With this money and graduate student support, the GSA sponsors a wide variety of activities and enterprises.

V. COURSE WORK AND RESEARCH CREDITS

There are six types of formal work for credit that you can accumulate: (1) required courses, (2) the department's first-year proseminar, (3) elective seminars, (4) independent studies, (5) research credits, and (6) the writing seminar. How many of each you need for the Master's degree and how many for the Ph.D. is explained in Appendix A.

1. Required Courses

Required courses cover the core areas of sociological theory, research methods, and statistics. All students must take courses in these areas regardless of field of specialization. These courses are offered every year. Students are strongly advised to fulfill these requirements during their first five semesters in the program. Students entering our program with a Master's degree in sociology from another institution may be able to substitute courses taken at the prior institution for some of these requirements. Application for this kind of credit should be made to the Graduate Director.

Exemptions: Some students may feel they have a strong enough statistics background to skip the first course in the required statistics sequence (Soc 541) and go directly into the second statistics course (Soc 542). These students may petition the Graduate Director to go directly into the second course. The student should first meet with the Soc 542 instructor; *both* the student and the instructor should agree that this seems like a good idea before making such a petition.

2. First-Year Proseminar

In order to promote breadth and ensure students' familiarity with the Rutgers faculty as well as the sub-areas of sociology their work represents, first-year students are required to attend a two-semester weekly first-year proseminar. The proseminar does not involve any required reading or writing, and students will receive one research credit per semester. At the proseminar, faculty will discuss their past, current, and future research.

3. Seminars

Each semester, the department also offers a variety of courses in elective subjects. To distinguish these from required courses, they are referred to in this handbook as seminars. The term “seminar” is used here to refer to any non-required course, regardless of whether the classroom format involves lectures, discussions, or both.

During the course of a graduate student’s career at Rutgers, up to two graduate seminars in other academic departments, inside or outside Rutgers, may be substituted for sociology department seminars if they are deemed relevant to the student’s academic area of interest.

4. Independent Studies

Independent studies are based on arrangements made between a professor and one or more graduate students to study a mutually-agreed-upon subject intensely for one semester. From a credit point of view, independent studies are treated by the department and by the University as identical to seminars. Students are limited to two such independent studies during their time in the graduate program.

5. The Writing Seminar

The Writing Seminar (Soc 703) is a unique hybrid entity. It is a required course organized as a seminar for which students receive research credits rather than course credits. The Writing Seminar is offered once a year, usually in the spring semester. It is generally taken in the third or fourth year in the program. Occasionally, a student may be allowed to take it in the second year but only with prior permission from both the Writing Seminar instructor and the Graduate Director. For first- and second-year students, permission of the instructor by itself is not sufficient to register for this course.

The Writing Seminar is designed to help students transform an existing qualifying paper (or an unusually advanced term paper) into an article for publication in a journal. All Ph.D. students must take the Writing Seminar at least once. Students may choose to take it more than once.

6. Research Credits

An advanced student may apply to work with a professor for one or more semesters and receive ‘research credits’ instead of ‘course credits.’ As noted above, students receive two research credits for attending the department’s first-year proseminar. Most research credits are usually taken after all course credit requirements have been fulfilled and dissertation work is progressing. But, under special circumstances, students may decide to take research credits earlier in their careers. Consult Appendix A to find out how many course credits and how many research credits you need for the Master’s or for the Ph.D.

Be aware that course credits and research credits may *never* be substituted for one another. The University treats them as totally different species, charges different rates of tuition, and records them separately on your transcript. To anticipate a question that often confuses students,

independent studies and research credits are treated by the University as satisfying very different requirements even though the one-on-one work that a student does with a professor for independent study credit may often be indistinguishable from the one-on-one work done by another student and another professor for research credits.

7. Incompletes

The department's expectation is that coursework will be completed by the end of the term, and thus we strongly discourage Incompletes. Having even one Incomplete frequently impairs a student's ability to complete subsequent work on time. Having multiple Incompletes constitutes a serious problem. However, students who are unable to complete all the requirements for a course may receive the grade of Incomplete, at the discretion of the instructor. An Incomplete may be taken in required courses, seminars, or independent studies. However, it is important to understand several features of the department policy on Incompletes.

First, not all instructors give grades of Incomplete and those who do each have their own criteria for determining the suitability of this grade. There is no appeal from the instructor's decision as to whether or not to give a grade of Incomplete in a course so it is important to ask rather than assume. In any case, once a permanent grade is assigned, it is considered final.

Second, the department expects that students, even when permitted the option of taking an Incomplete, will complete all their coursework **within six weeks** of the end of the semester. We have deemed this necessary to maintain students' progress through the program. Failure to comply will be taken as a cause for substantial concern. On rare occasions, exceptions may be made to allow a student to carry an Incomplete for a longer period, but only when there are compelling intellectual (e.g. papers requiring extensive research) and/or personal reasons (e.g. medical) for doing so. Incompletes—both those that are completed within six weeks and those that are carried longer—will be discussed during the evaluation of student progress (see section VII below). Students should be aware that carrying Incompletes at any time becomes a matter of record in their file. A record of Incompletes will negatively impact evaluations, funding decisions, and even the possibility of registering for classes.

Third, the Graduate School has a policy that students have up to twelve months to make up the work for an Incomplete. But please note that the department's requirements are more restrictive, and these requirements take precedence over the Graduate School guidelines.

8. Permanent Incomplete Grades (PIN's)

There are two situations in which a PIN grade may be warranted.

a. Students are restricted in the number of Incompletes they may carry. In order to proceed, a student may choose to "abandon" a course by waiving the privilege of completing it. In such a case, the student requests a change from IN to PIN. The PIN is not regarded as an outstanding Incomplete and does not hinder further registration, unless it constitutes part of a pattern which the faculty interprets as warranting a warning or dismissal for unsatisfactory progress.

b. As noted above, the Graduate School requires that Incompletes be made up within one year. Those not removed in favor of a letter grade may be converted to PIN to indicate that the option to complete the course has expired.

9. Inter-University Cooperative Exchange Program

By a series of reciprocal institutional agreements, graduate students at Rutgers may take courses, when appropriate, at certain other universities. Rutgers and Princeton Universities have been engaged in such a cooperative exchange program since 1964. This consortium has been expanded to include such universities as Columbia, CUNY, the New School, and NYU. No application to any of these host institutions is required, and no funds are exchanged between the two institutions. With permission of the student's advisor, our department's Graduate Director, and the instructor of the course at the host institution, a student may register and receive credit for such a course just as if it were part of the Rutgers graduate sociology department curriculum. However, no more than two such outside courses can be used to meet the program requirements.

The policies and procedures related to this program are the following: (1) participants must be currently matriculating at Rutgers; (2) exchange is usually limited to one (and never more than two) graduate courses per student; (3) the course must be applicable to the student's degree program and must be unavailable at the home institution; (4) the student's advisor and the Graduate Director must agree that taking any such course makes sense in terms of the student's progress toward the degree.

To participate in this program, a variety of forms must be filled out and signatures obtained. These may change from time to time so check with the department's graduate administrative office to be sure you are touching all the right bases for the course you are interested in.

10. Summer Session Courses

Depending on availability of faculty sponsors, students can earn some of their necessary course credits or research credits during the summer. Usually, these are either in the form of: (a) independent-study reading-courses taken for course credit; or (b) 700-level supervised research taken for research credits. It is the student's responsibility to find a faculty member willing to sponsor this sort of summer work. The faculty sponsor's name must be submitted at the time of registration. You can't sign up for the credit first and find the faculty sponsor later.

VI. QUALIFYING PAPERS

An important and challenging part of the graduate program is the writing of qualifying papers. Satisfactory completion of the first qualifying paper (QP), in conjunction with the completion of necessary coursework, fulfills the department's requirements for the Master's degree. Completion of the second QP is a necessary step on the way to the Ph.D. Appendix B, at the end of this document, provides more detailed information on the timeline for completion of degrees.

Each qualifying paper must be original work written in our department under the direct supervision of a reading committee composed of three faculty members. Each committee will include a principal reader and two secondary readers. A faculty member who serves as a principal reader on one paper may not serve as a principal reader on the other. The two committees may have a one-reader overlap. Thus, the two qualifying paper committees comprise five or six different faculty members per graduate student. The purpose of this rule is to encourage a student's intellectual and methodological breadth, and to ensure that each student has adequate opportunity and encouragement to interact intellectually with multiple faculty members.

Students entering the Rutgers graduate program in sociology with an M.A. or M.S. that involved writing a thesis may use the thesis as the basis for one of their qualifying papers if they so wish. In such cases, the student will assemble a three-reader committee who shall evaluate the thesis and tell the student what changes/additions/revisions (if any) are required. Be aware that acceptance of a prior Master's thesis in lieu of one of our qualifying papers does not occur automatically. The committee will assess the Master's thesis using the same criteria as they would in evaluating a student's first qualifying paper and may require substantial revisions to ensure that departmental standards are met.

Defining the parameters of a successful qualifying paper is difficult, given the heterogeneity of work styles, foci, and methods in sociology. We hope and expect that the two qualifying papers will ultimately become published journal articles or components of a larger publication such as a book manuscript, although that may not be a requirement for completion of the paper itself. We also require that at least one of the two papers include an empirical component. Students may use any methodological approach (e.g., analysis of survey data, textual analysis, field work), yet the paper must include an original collection and/or analysis of data, broadly defined.

Substantively, each qualifying paper must have its own unique focus although the areas of investigation chosen may, and often will, overlap. The papers are expected to demonstrate a careful and thorough consideration of a problem of sociological relevance. Students are encouraged to choose a well-focused, delimited, and manageable topic. The papers should be concisely written and no more than article-length. Beyond this, it is impossible to generalize about the characteristics of an acceptable qualifying paper. Before starting on each qualifying paper project, discuss expectations in detail with your committee. It is your responsibility to make sure from the start that what they expect you to produce is the same as what you expect them to expect.

Before beginning a qualifying paper, but after selecting your reading committee and talking with them, you must write a short (one- to two-page) proposal for the paper. You will submit this proposal to your committee for consideration. Together, you and the committee will schedule a meeting at which you will present the proposal, and your committee members, pending their approval of the project, will officially 'sign on' as readers. The qualifying paper proposal should be submitted to your reading committee along with a form available from the graduate program administrative assistant. Only when all three committee members and the Graduate Director sign this form and you file it with the administrative assistant, are you free to begin the project.

Please note also that to ensure breadth and students' proficiency in more than just a single sub-area of sociology, readers of the second qualifying paper must agree that the paper's focus is significantly different from that of the first. The two qualifying papers should be used by students to demonstrate mastery of *at least* two subfields within the discipline. [Note that, if your project involves research with human subjects, you must also get prior IRB approval. This process is discussed later in this handbook.]

You should know that the process of writing a qualifying paper typically involves multiple drafts and recurrent interaction with your committee members. Under normal circumstances, committee members are expected to provide feedback to students on paper drafts within one month of receipt, although sometimes that is not possible. You and your committee members are encouraged to be as clear as possible with each other about your expectations for the timeliness of your responses to each other. In addition, committee members are encouraged to share their comments with each other, to ensure that you complete the highest quality, and most collaboratively produced, piece of scholarship you can.

Upon completion of a qualifying paper, you will schedule another meeting with your committee. At this meeting you will briefly present the results of your research, and the committee will be invited to provide an official assessment of the paper, to be recorded in your file (Exceptional, High Pass, or Pass). Committee members will sign off on the paper at this meeting, once again completing a form provided by the graduate program administrative assistant.

As noted above, details on the expected timeline for completion of qualifying papers are included in Appendix B. Make sure you are familiar with these deadlines for proposal and paper submission. Your qualifying papers, taken together, must demonstrate readiness to move on to the dissertation stage. Some of the substantive content you discuss and/or the methodological approaches you employ in one or the other of your qualifying papers may well appear again in improved form in the dissertation. But much of this readiness is intangible and can only be determined through discussions between you and your qualifying paper readers.

VII. PERIODIC EVALUATIONS OF PROGRESS

Evaluation of student progress is an essential feature of our graduate program. The fundamental purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that students complete the program in the most rewarding way possible, by achieving the highest standards of excellence in their development as scholars. Periodic evaluation offers students substantive guidance about their projects, and reminders to be timely in the completion of their work. In short, the faculty is committed to periodic evaluation as a constructive process.

In some instances the department will decide that a student may not continue in the program, either because of clear signs of lack of progress, or because the program is no longer serving the needs and interests of that student. However, this decision, consistent with all assessments, will be made according to the guidelines for review set forth below and in as transparent a fashion as possible.

1. Annual Review:

The primary instrument for periodic evaluation is the Annual Review. To offer feedback in the timeliest way, *all* students are reviewed annually, including those in the advanced stages of dissertation work. Different cohorts are reviewed at different times of the year, however, in synchrony with the schedule of deadlines set forth in Appendix B. Students are evaluated on the quality of their performance in class, on independent research projects including qualifying papers, and in their success in meeting the department's expectations regarding progress deadlines.

a. *Criteria for Evaluation:* The following specific criteria are used for evaluation:

- *Course grades.* Attention is given to both the student's distribution of grades and the overall GPA.
- *Narrative paragraphs.* At the end of each semester, faculty complete narrative paragraphs for each sociology student in their classes. Designed to evaluate the student's scholarly strengths and weaknesses, these paragraphs include an assessment of the student's performance in the course as well as suggestions for improving work done in it. (In cases when students are taking an Incomplete, professors have the option of submitting an update once the work for the course is completed). Faculty members submit the paragraphs to the graduate program administrative assistant, who then distributes them to the student, her/his advisor, and the Graduate Director, as well as placing a copy in the student's file.
- *Progress on Qualifying Papers and on the Dissertation.* The department will consider the quality of this aspect of the student's work and the timeliness with which it is completed.
- *Incompletes.* Carrying Incompletes, and/or a recurrent failure to complete coursework on time, will be considered a cause for concern. [Department policy on Incompletes is set forth in section V, subsection 7, above.]
- *Other factors.* The faculty may also consider additional factors, including for example, a student's ability to respond thoughtfully to faculty feedback, the breadth of a student's course of study, and compliance with the university's code of ethics.

b. *Timing of Reviews:* First- and second-year students are reviewed in late February. Third- and fourth-year students are reviewed in late October. All students in their fifth year or beyond are reviewed in November. All students and their advisors are informed of the results of these individual student evaluations by letter from the Graduate Director. These letters are vehicles both for encouraging the student and for praising her/his accomplishments, and for conveying constructive criticism (when needed) of those areas in which the faculty see the need for improvement.

c. *Providing Feedback to Students:* The Graduate Director sends letters to each student following the Annual Review, summarizing the faculty's assessment of his or her progress and offering guidance for the next steps. Students who are evaluated as meeting the department's expectations regarding progress through the program are considered to be in "good standing." If they are on funding packages, the continuation of their funding is guaranteed.

In some cases, the faculty will express exceptional concerns at the Annual Review about a student's progress. Ideally, the faculty will reach a consensus evaluation of each student, and particularly of those who are having difficulties. Minimally, however, a two-thirds majority is required in a vote by the faculty present to initiate a set of procedures (outlined below) designed to steer a student who is having problems back towards satisfactory progress, and/or towards a clear assessment of his/her fit with the program.

(i) first, a "letter of concern" written by the Graduate Director in collaboration with the student's advisor is issued, stating that the student is not meeting progress requirements. The letter will provide immediate, short-term deadlines for addressing the problem (e.g., clearing Incompletes, filing Qualifying Paper proposals, completing approved Qualifying Papers).

(ii) if the deadlines stated in the letter of concern are not met, the Graduate Director will automatically issue a "letter of warning" setting new deadlines and stating that the student is at risk of losing his/her funding and/or being dismissed from the program.

(iii) if the student still fails to meet program expectations, the full faculty will discuss possible loss of funding and/or dismissal from the program at the next annual review. Again, the faculty will seek a consensus decision, but minimally a two-thirds majority must vote in the student's favor for funding to continue, and a minimum of three faculty members must commit to serving as a QP or dissertation committee member for that student in order to permit his/her continuation in the program.

In extreme cases, where a student has extraordinary difficulty meeting program expectations, the faculty may initiate an out-of-cycle review. The same criteria for evaluation and decision on a course of action will be used as in more typical cases, but in this instance, the faculty may decide to deny funding effective the following academic year.

2. Master's Review

The Annual Review process is the single most important means of student evaluation in the department. But at the time that the student completes the first QP and all coursework necessary for the Master's degree, the faculty will take stock of the student's overall progress, and the student's committee will make one of three recommendations— (a) to deny the Master's degree; (b) to grant a terminal Master's degree signifying that the student may not continue in the program toward the Ph.D.; or (c) to grant the Master's degree as a stepping stone to the Ph.D. In any given year, most students applying for the Master's fall into category (c), and many students who fall into category (b) will have opted for this choice voluntarily.

VIII. DISSERTATION PROPOSAL & DISSERTATION

After the Master's Degree comes the second qualifying paper, and after that comes the drafting of a dissertation proposal and the writing of that dissertation. The dissertation required for the

Ph.D. degree must be an original and significant scholarly contribution to the sociological literature. A student will not be allowed to advance beyond the Master's level unless he or she is deemed able to accomplish this sort of original work.

The following is a list of the 11 steps required in the final stage of the graduate student career:

1. Completion of Coursework and Qualifying Paper Requirements

This also involves determining how many research credits (of the 21 required for the Ph.D.) the student still has to complete. The student is responsible for registering for these research credits semester-by-semester so that the required number have been completed before the dissertation is defended.

2. Selecting a Dissertation Committee.

The dissertation committee consists of three members of the graduate sociology faculty. The student selects one of these faculty members to be the chair of this committee. The chair of the committee will be the student's **dissertation advisor**. The dissertation advisor will be the main consultant for the student during all phases of the dissertation research and writing. The composition of the committee must be approved by the Graduate Director. Substitutions in committee membership, once the committee has been formed, are the responsibility of the Graduate Director, in consultation with the student. Substitutions normally occur only if a member is unable to serve or if a student's dissertation topic changes.

3. Selecting an Outside Member.

There must also be a fourth "outside" member of the committee who is not a member of the Rutgers sociology department. This "outside" member may be chosen either from another department at Rutgers or from outside the University. This "outside" member can be selected at the same time the committee is formed or can be added much later in the process. Some students wait to choose the "outside" reader until a draft of the complete dissertation has been written, although this is not always advisable. The outside member is expected to be a recognized authority on the subject of the thesis. The student should provide the Graduate Director with a statement giving the reasons for the "outside" member's selection. No outside member may serve as the student's chair.

4. Writing the Dissertation Proposal

In consultation with the dissertation advisor, the student next writes a dissertation proposal. The dissertation proposal is typically developed gradually, as a result of the student's preliminary research and discussion with her/his committee members.

5. Defense of the Dissertation Proposal

Once it is written in a final form, the proposal must be defended in an oral examination before the student's dissertation committee. After its approval it is placed in the student's file in the

office of the Graduate Director. At this point, the student is informally designated as ABD (All But Dissertation).

6. Research for the Dissertation

The committee (especially the dissertation advisor) must be kept informed of the student's progress at frequent intervals and should monitor the candidate's work and assist in its development. In so far as possible, the committee should attempt to give the student ample and early warning of any reservations concerning the student's progress and, if necessary, should specify the changes required for dissertation acceptance.

7. Writing the Dissertation Draft

A first draft of the dissertation should be submitted to the dissertation advisor and/or to any or all members of the dissertation committee according to terms agreed upon by the student and by committee members. Often, the student will provide drafts of chapters of the dissertation as they are written; other times the student and dissertation advisor will determine that it would be best to have a completed draft all at once. This is a matter for the student and his committee members to work out individually and, preferably, explicitly. However, regular feedback and frequent revisions are typically important ingredients of an excellent dissertation.

8. Revision of the Dissertation Draft.

In accordance with committee comments, draft chapters and/or a draft of the entire dissertation will be revised until the student is deemed ready for defense. Again, this may take several rounds of revision.

9. Defending the Dissertation

Once the committee is satisfied that the dissertation is ready to be defended, the dissertation advisor will give the student permission to set a date for defense. When the student, the dissertation committee chair, and the other committee members agree that the dissertation is complete and ready for public defense, the Graduate Director should be contacted. It is the responsibility of the student to schedule a mutually agreeable date and time for the defense. The defense should be scheduled at least three weeks in advance. A public announcement must be made and the faculty and graduate student body invited to attend. Except by special prior permission of the Graduate Director, the defense will take place in Room A-256 Lucy Stone Hall and the student and all members of the committee must be present. Routinely, however, permission will be granted for the outside member to be absent if necessary, provided that he or she sends the committee chair written comments.

10. Making Final Revisions.

If the dissertation passes the defense, it almost always happens that final revisions are required. Typically, these are made in consultation with the dissertation advisor who is then given authority to sign-off on the completed manuscript. Students should be advised that this stage of

final revisions, *after* a successful defense, is not trivial or anticlimactic but is an important part of the dissertation process. Making final revisions can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months.

11. Formatting and Printing the Official Version of the Dissertation

The final draft of the dissertation should be prepared in strict accordance with the instructions given in the pamphlet *Style Guide for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation*, available in the Sociology graduate office or the Graduate School. With the completed dissertation, the candidate is required to submit an abstract *not exceeding 350 words*, embodying the principal findings of her/his research. As in the case of the dissertation, the abstract must be approved by the professor in charge of the work for the dissertation and accepted by the other members of the student's committee.

IX. FORMS TO BE FILED

A candidate entering the final term of her/his M.A. or Ph.D. program, in anticipation that the faculty will recommend the conferral of the degree, should complete and file the following forms:

1. Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts should be filed at least four weeks before the student expects to complete all requirements for the M.A. degree as outlined above. The form may not be filed before the student has completed 30 hours of graduate credit as well as the first qualifying paper. The form is to be filled out by the student and signed by the instructors of Soc. 501, 515, and 516, the principal reader of Qualifying Paper I, and the Graduate Director.

2. Application for Candidacy for the Ph.D. - Part I is to be filled out by the student, signed by the advisor, the Graduate Director, and the readers of Qualifying Paper II, and returned *by the student* to the Graduate School office *immediately after passing* the second qualifying paper.

3. Dissertation Defense - *Before* defending the dissertation, the student must pick up the form at the Graduate School. At that time, other forms will be given to the student, e.g., payment fee forms, microfilming/copyright agreement forms, questionnaires, etc. The student will then go to his/her defense. If the defense is successful, the student's committee will sign Section B of the candidacy form and the title page of the dissertation. Final approval must be given by the Graduate Director certifying all requirements have been met for the Ph.D. degree. This form, along with the other forms mentioned above, and two copies of the dissertation must be returned **ALL AT THE SAME TIME** to the Graduate School.

4. Diploma Application - A Diploma Application form must be filled out and returned to the graduate registrar, Administrative Services Building, Room 200A, Busch Campus by dates specified on the back of the form. The dates correspond to the dates on which the degrees are awarded.

All of the above material must be submitted to the Graduate School Office not later than three weeks before the date of commencement (or not later than the announced deadlines for October and January dated diplomas).

Before the Graduate Director will certify that all program requirements have been completed, one bound copy of the dissertation, including a copy of the signed and approved title page, must be presented to the Office of the Graduate Sociology Program (Graduate Secretary).

NOTE: Degrees are conferred and diplomas issued only at the annual commencement each spring; however, a student who completes the degree requirements in the summer or fall may, on request, be given a suitable certificate for use until the following commencement. Application for such a certificate should be sent to the University Registrar (Administrative Services Building) accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Diplomas and interim certificates will be withheld from all students whose financial and/or library accounts are not clear. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that all the requirements are met and that the proper forms are filled out correctly and filed by the appropriate deadlines for conferral of the degree. Information on deadlines and assistance in completing forms can be obtained from the office of the Graduate Director of the Graduate Sociology Program.

X. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Protection of Human Subjects in Research

According to action taken by the Board of Governors on December 6, 1966, all members of the University community who are conducting research with human beings as subjects must conform to certain procedures prescribed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These procedures include the review of the project by a University Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. All members of the University who are conducting research with human subjects (including graduate students) *must* file a statement with the Board describing their work. Regulations require continuing review each year the project is active. Copies of the forms are available from, and should be returned to, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, [Administrative Services Building III](#) on the Cook Campus. Phone: 732-932-0150 (<http://orsp.rutgers.edu/default.htm>). A sample of the form is in the Graduate Secretary's office.

The University takes this requirement very seriously; to the point of not awarding Ph.D.s for completed dissertations that have not undergone IRB review. IRB review is also required for any original research involving human subjects conducted for courses or qualifying papers.

2. Readmission or Restoration of Active Status

Students who have interrupted their graduate registration without receiving a degree in the program for which they were enrolled must apply for readmission. Appropriate forms are

available from the Office of the Graduate School, not the Graduate Admissions Office. A restorative fee of one credit of tuition at the current rate for each term lapsed (up to a limit of five terms) will be charged those who are ABD's. A request for a waiver of the restorative fee can be applied for when the applicant can justify a case of extreme hardship or severe temporary disability. Candidates for a master's degree or students who have completed a master's degree and have interrupted their graduate registration must file within two semesters following the last registration date. After this time interval, the prospective student must submit a new application for admission to the Office of Graduate Admissions. The letters of recommendation should originate from faculty members at Rutgers University with whom the student previously studied. In all other respects, including payment of the application fee and submission of official transcripts of all previous academic work, the application procedure is identical with that of the first application for admission.

3. Matriculation Continued

There may be circumstances that arise while a student is pursuing a degree that make it impossible for the student to be actively involved in either coursework or research for a given semester. Depending upon the particular situation and the status of the student, it may be advisable for the student to register for Matriculation Continued. This is a registration that carries zero credit and a nominal fee. It keeps the student "alive" in the program. Doctoral students who have not completed their qualifying papers but have completed their coursework may use this registration until such time that the second qualifying paper has been completed and research may start. Doctoral students who have passed their qualifying papers are not permitted to register for matriculation continued unless, due to personal circumstances, an exception is approved by the Graduate Dean's Office.

4. Full-time and Part-time Programs

For most purposes, a full-time student is defined as one who is registered for 12 or more credits; one who registers for 11 or fewer credits is a part-time student. *Graduate and teaching assistants, who hold these half-time (one-third line) academic appointments with the common understanding that they must maintain good standing in their own related programs toward advanced degrees, register their assistantships for 6 E credits (signifying a portion of their time and for which, of course, no tuition fee is to be paid), which (together with the required minimum program of 6 credits of course work or research) qualifies them as full-time students in The Graduate School--New Brunswick.* All courses, including both courses of research and regular courses undertaken "not for credit," are counted in measuring the student's recordable program of work. These regulations govern tuition charges, student fees, statistical records, residence requirements, and other issues affected by definitions of full-time and part-time status.

APPENDIX A: DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

1. Requirements for the Ph.D.

The Ph.D. program is designed for full-time students. All students are strongly encouraged to enroll full time. The requirements for the Ph.D. degree are:

1. Minimum time: A student must devote a minimum of three years of full-time study beyond the bachelor's degree for the Ph.D., of which at least one year must be devoted to dissertation-related research. Full-time study for one year is represented by 18 credits of course work or research. If any of the work is conducted on a part-time basis, the minimum time required will naturally be longer.

2. The minimum requirement for the Ph.D. is 72 credits, of which at least 48 must be course credits and 21 must be approved dissertation research.

3. The following required courses must be completed and passed:

Soc. 501 - Sociological Research Methods I

Soc. 515 - Classical Sociological Theory

Soc. 516 - Contemporary Sociological Theory

Soc. 541 - Analysis of Sociological Data I

Soc. 542 - Analysis of Sociological Data II

Plus one additional methods/statistics course chosen from the following:

Soc. 502 - Sociological Research Methods II, or

Soc. 520 - Comparative Historical Methods, or

Soc. 615 - Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods, or

Soc. 633 - Seminar in Social Science Data Analysis

4. Completion of the proseminar during the first year of graduate study (for which a student receives two research credits).

5. Of the 48 required course credits, at least 36 must be with grades of "A" or "B".

6. Completion of two qualifying papers that can be turned into publications. Taken as a whole, these qualifying papers must show evidence of empirical research skills, theoretical skill, and the ability to review analytically a body of sociological literature.

7. Completion of a writing seminar (for which a student receives 3 research credits).

8. Successful defense of the dissertation proposal.

9. Completion and defense of the dissertation.

2. Requirements for the Master's Degree

Obtaining a Master's degree requires satisfactory completion of the following:

1. Two theory courses (Soc. 515 and Soc. 516);

2. Two methods/stats courses (Soc. 501; Soc. 541)

3. At least six additional courses (one may be an Independent Study and one may be outside the department)
4. Completion of the first-year proseminar.
5. The successful completion of one qualifying paper (see section on Qualifying Papers for details).
6. Master's Review as described above (section VII, subsection 2).

APPENDIX B: MODEL FOUR YEAR COURSE SCHEDULE

TABLE 1. Suggested Sequence, Course Requirements and Degree Deadlines

Year 1	
Fall	Spring
920:501 Research Methods	920:516 Contemporary Theory
920:515 Classical Theory	920:541 Analysis of Soc. Data
Elective Course (not indep. study)	Elective Course (not indep study)
TA / Elective Course*	TA / Elective Course*
Proseminar	Proseminar
Year 2	
Fall	Spring
920:542 Analysis of Soc. Data II	Second Methods Course
Elective course	Elective Course
Elective course	Elective Course
TA / Elective Course*	TA / Elective Course*
	By February 15: Proposal for qualifying paper #1 approved

* Students who are not working as T.A.s may, if they choose, elect to take a fourth course. It is usually not recommended that students who are serving as teaching assistants take more than 3 courses per semester without first consulting with the Graduate Director.

Year 3	
Fall	Spring
Second Methods Course (if not taken in year 2)	Elective Courses as needed
Elective Courses as needed	Elective Course or Research Credits
October 15: Qualifying paper #1 completed and approved	By February 15: Proposal for qualifying paper #2 approved
October 15: All M.A. degree requirements satisfactorily completed	

<p>Year 4</p> <p>By October 15: Qualifying paper #2 completed and approved</p> <p>Writing Seminar</p> <p>Independent studies</p> <p>Research credits</p> <p>Research Apprenticeships</p> <p>Teaching one's own course (PTLs)</p> <p>Work on the dissertation proposal</p>
<p>Year 5 and Beyond</p> <p>Writing Seminar</p> <p>By May 15, Year 5: Dissertation proposal written and successfully defended</p> <p>Research credits</p> <p>Research Apprenticeships</p> <p>Teaching one's own course (PTLs)</p> <p>Writing and defending the dissertation</p>

APPENDIX C: TRANSFERING CREDITS FROM OTHER PROGRAMS

1. M.A. candidates, upon completion of 12 graduate credits taken in the Rutgers program, may apply to transfer up to a maximum of 12 credits towards the credits required for the degree at Rutgers.

2. Ph.D. candidates may apply to transfer up to a maximum of 24 credits towards the degree required at Rutgers, upon completion of 12 graduate credits taken in the Rutgers graduate program. However, to transfer a theory, methods or statistics course, the student must demonstrate competence by passing the appropriate exemption examination or secure approval from the Graduate Director of relevant courses taken elsewhere.
On transfer of credits from other institutions, please refer to Section 4 below.

3. Regular numerical or letter grade courses only are approved for transfer, not courses graded "S" or "P". No grade below a "B" will be approved. Individually arranged reading courses are not acceptable for transfer.

4. The Graduate School will not approve any credits to be transferred for the degree at Rutgers after a maximum of 6 years from the time the course(s) were taken. An exception may be made upon receipt of a letter from the student attesting to the fact that the student has been using the knowledge gained from these superannuated credits towards the furtherance of her/his career.

5. Students wishing to transfer credits from other programs should discuss this request with the Graduate Director on entry into the program. However, formal application for transfer credits should be made after completion of 12 graduate credits. Students may obtain the application

form from the Graduate Secretary's office (A260) and submit the completed application with an original transcript to the Graduate Director. After approval, the completed form and the original transcript are forwarded to the Graduate School for final approval. A copy of the approved application for transfer is sent to the Registrar (ASB, Busch Campus) and to the Graduate Director who then informs the student of acceptance.

APPENDIX D: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why can't I take the writing seminar during my first two years in the program without special permission from the Graduate Director?

The writing seminar is designed to be an intensive workshop specifically for the purpose of helping students prepare potentially publishable papers for submission to journals. Since most students in the first two years don't yet have a paper suitable for the writing seminar, special permission is required to determine suitability.

Sometimes a student who has a TA-ship for the coming academic year suddenly becomes aware of a research opportunity that will be important for the student's career but which conflicts with TA responsibilities. Why are some students allowed to "bank" a part of their TA-support for use in future semesters while other students are not?

A student may choose to defer one of his/her fellowship years. Permission to do so is usually granted by the Graduate School and provides no funding stream difficulties. "Banking" Teaching Assistantship years, however, presents a much more complex problem, because the TA line in question might not be available in the particular year the student wants to "cash it in". We believe that there is a need for some shared risk between the student and the department regarding such a possibility. To encourage students to obtain external (out-of-Rutgers) funding, all TA years deferred to accept such funding are "repaid" on a one-to-one basis. Otherwise, students are put back in the pool of both incoming and continuing students requesting one-year TAs.

I am planning to write a "qualitative" dissertation. If I've worked this out with my advisor and he/she is satisfied with my plan, why can't I waive the statistics requirement?

The department is committed to the principle that all graduate students need to learn certain core areas of the discipline of sociology regardless of what they later decide to specialize in. These core areas are theory, methods, and statistics. Although you can control the substantive area in which you decide to work, you can't control the work of others that you will have to read in order to do a thorough literature review in your chosen subject. It's very likely that some of this literature will use statistical methods which you will need to be able to follow with comprehension.

What is the difference between taking an independent study to do research and taking research credits?

Both are one-on-one arrangements between you and a professor who has agreed to supervise your work for one semester. The difference is purely administrative and doesn't affect the working relationship with your professor. An independent study is considered to be a course and it gives you course credits. Eventually you will need a certain number of course credits and a certain number of research credits to get your Ph.D. Usually students are more in need of course credits early in their career and more in need of research credits later on. Each case is different so discuss the matter with the Graduate Director if you are still uncertain.

When I try to find out about getting external funding for a research project I want to do, I keep on being told to talk to Teresa. Who is Teresa and where can I find her?

Teresa Delcorso (732-932-2705; delcorso@rci.rutgers.edu) is the director of the Resource Center for Graduate Student External Support). Her office is located in the Graduate Dean's Building, 25 Bishop Place, College Avenue Campus. She can help you with grant application forms and deadlines and she also maintains a database of private and government agencies that fund sociological research, and so may be able to direct you to the best targets for your funding efforts. Her office maintains a file of previous student grant proposals that have been successful that you can model your own efforts on if you wish.

If I need specialized computer software to do my research, under what circumstances will the department buy it for me?

There's no general rule. If funds are available (varies greatly month to month and year to year) AND if a case can be made that the software may in the future be useful by other students or faculty as well as yourself, the department will give serious consideration to your request. Often, even if the department is not able to buy you the software you need, it may be in a position to get you a substantial educational discount.

Which sorts of questions should I be taking up with the department's administrative staff and which with the Graduate Director or department chair?

Faculty *sets* policy; staff *implements* policy decisions made by faculty. If you already know the department policy (on, say, teaching summer courses or making up an incomplete—just to take two of many possible examples) but you're not sure about the mechanics of actually getting it done, then you should talk to a member of the administrative staff. If you want an exception made to a departmental policy or you want to suggest a change in policy, you should talk to the Graduate Director or department chair. If you're not sure what a specific policy is, talk first to a staff member. If it's a matter of interpretation, they will refer you to the appropriate faculty member or dean.