

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

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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. Students earn the Master’s degree en route to the Ph.D. The program is not designed for students who intend from the beginning to solely earn a Master’s degree.

II. ADMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT

Applicants are admitted to the Ph.D. program for entry only in the fall semester. The admission process is highly competitive. Consult the [Sociology Department webpage](#) for application deadlines. Members of the Graduate Program Committee evaluate all applications for entry into the graduate program. Funding and admission decisions are based on undergraduate courses and grades, letters of recommendation, a writing sample, a personal statement, and GRE scores. Applicants from outside the United States also must submit scores from the [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) exam.

Students who have a Master’s degree should also submit evidence of their performance in their Master’s program. If admitted, they may apply to have some of their MA work transferred toward the Ph.D. requirements. All requests to transfer courses are evaluated by the Graduate Director in consultation with relevant department faculty members.

III. FINANCIAL AID

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

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 full tuition remission, a stipend, and some fringe benefits, including health insurance (benefits vary by award type).

Students admitted to the program with major financial aid typically receive a multi-year package of support. This package commonly consists of two years of Fellowship followed by three years of TA or

GA support. Annual renewal for each year of funding offers made at admission is dependent upon satisfactory progress toward the degrees (see IX. REASONABLE PROGRESS).

- a. **University Fellowships** are awarded at the time of admission. Fellowships have no work obligation and allow students to devote full time to their studies. Fellows are expected not to hold jobs inside or outside the University during that academic year.
- b. **Teaching Assistantships (TAs)** provide support for two semesters of the *academic* calendar year. Teaching Assistants attend course lectures, lead discussion sections for lecture courses, assist with writing and grading examinations, hold office hours, and otherwise support the instructor for a course. Experienced TAs may be given full responsibility for teaching a course.
- c. **Graduate Assistantships (GAs)** are usually funded through faculty research grants. GAs work 15 hours per week assisting with all aspects of the faculty member's project.

Minor University Funding

A wide variety of minor funding sources are available. These positions do not include tuition remission or benefits. Sources of minor funding include the following:

- a. Part Time Lecturer (PTL) positions that pay a fixed salary for teaching a specific course.
- b. Wages for working on research grants or on specific department projects.
- c. Wages for helping professors grade student work in large courses.
- d. Teaching during the summer session, the winter break, or at one of our satellite campuses which is paid on a per course basis.

Competitive External Funding

A variety of fellowships are available from external sources. The procedures and stipends attached to these vary, as do the rules of eligibility. Students interested in applying for externally funded research grants or fellowships should contact [GradFund](#) directed by [Teresa Delcorso](#). The benefits of receiving competitive funding are not just financial; the receipt of a prestigious fellowship is an indication of one's potential as a scholar, and is helpful when applying for jobs as an assistant professor or research scientist.

Banking of Funding Years

Graduate students who receive funding from an external source during the years included in their original funding offer made at the time of admission are not guaranteed that they can defer (i.e., bank) their sociology funding for use in future years in the program. We try to find a university fellowship or TA position for a student who gets outside funding on a one-to-one year substitution for years beyond the original funding offer (assuming reasonable progress). However, we cannot promise that such a substitution will be available. No such substitutions of funding will be made beyond the seventh year in the program. We hope that this policy does not dissuade students from applying for prestigious external fellowships. Fellowships from the National Science Foundation and other organizations are an important indicator of one's potential as a scholar, and can open doors on the job market and for future funding opportunities from such organizations.

Tuition Remission

Domestic students: During the first year in the program, all tuition (in-state or out-of-state) is paid for domestic (U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents) sociology graduate students funded on fellowships or as TAs. In subsequent years, the department continues to pay full tuition (in-state or out-of-state) for funded students. *However, students are strongly encouraged to apply for New Jersey*

residency following their first year in the program. Note that individuals must reside in New Jersey for 12 months to establish residency and become eligible for in-state tuition.

International students: Out-of-state tuition is paid for all international sociology graduate students funded on fellowships or teaching assistantships.

Before the end of each semester, funded students should pick up their tuition remission form (RT-100) from the Sociology Graduate Administrator. Students must submit this form to the Cashier's Office along with a copy of their term bill. Fellows must also pay their campus, computer, and school fees online. Tuition remission forms are due to Student Accounting by the term bill deadline. If a student does not submit their tuition remission form by the deadline, they must pay a \$125 late fee.

IV. NON-FINANCIAL RESOURCES

1. Advising

Incoming students are assigned a first year advisor to help guide them through their adjustment to the department. Students are encouraged to select their own advisor who shares their substantive interests, methodological approach, and/or general orientation to sociology by the beginning of the second year.

All students are encouraged to have at least one meeting per semester with their advisor to discuss progress in coursework, qualifying papers, dissertation proposal, and the dissertation. Students may also consult with their advisor regarding other issues and concerns with teaching, professional development, research funding, and publishing. It is critical that students keep their advisor updated on their progress and on any problems that arise in the program. Effective mentoring is a two-way street, where the student keeps the advisor updated on personal progress, and the advisor checks in on the student to ensure that s/he is making satisfactory progress in the program.

In addition to consulting with their advisors, students are encouraged to develop working relationships with other members of the department. Obtaining multiple perspectives on intellectual and professional matters is critical for a student's development as a sociologist and a scholar.

2. Computer Services

Upon entering the program, each student is assigned a departmental computer account for accessing e-mail and computers in the department. The department's computer lab is located in the lower level of Davison Hall. The computers in the lab maintain site licenses for Microsoft Office, Stata, SPSS, SAS, NVivo, and a variety of other useful packages for data management and analysis. These can be used for free on the lab computers. A variety of software is also available for use on your personal computer for free or at a university discounted price at the [Rutgers software portal](#) (requires a Rutgers netid login).

3. Mail and E-mail Services

Each graduate student has a departmental mailbox on the first floor of Davison Hall. All departmental e-mails are sent to the students' sociology e-mail addresses. It is the students' responsibility to set up appropriate e-mail forwarding if they use another e-mail service such as gmail. It is critical that students check their departmental email on a regular basis (at least once a day) to ensure that they are informed of all department matters including registration, funding, department events, course information, and the like.

4. Student Organizations

- a. **GUSS:** The Graduate Union of Sociology Students (GUSS) is an organization composed of all sociology graduate students. GUSS conducts new student orientations, sponsors social events, handles elections of the student representatives to departmental committees, and manages the GUSS budget.
- b. **The GSA:** The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is an organization for graduate students from all departments. All graduate students are automatically members of the GSA. The budget is generated from student fees (paid by all graduate students). With these funds and graduate student support, the GSA sponsors a wide variety of activities.

V. REQUIREMENTS AND COURSE/RESEARCH CREDITS POLICIES

(These requirements apply to all students entering the Rutgers Sociology Graduate Program in the fall semester of 2013 and any time thereafter)

1. M.A. Requirements (see appendix A for an M.A.–Ph.D. timeline)

The Master's degree requires completion of the following:

- a. Four required courses *with a grade of B or above*
 - Soc. 501 - Sociological Research Methods I
 - Soc. 515 - Classical Sociological Theory
 - Soc. 516 - Contemporary Sociological Theory
 - Soc. 541 - Statistical Methods in Sociology I
- b. Six elective courses; 1 may be an Independent Study, 1 may be outside the department, and 1 may be the Writing Seminar.
- c. First-year proseminar (attendance required but there is no course registration)
- d. One qualifying paper (QP) (see section VI on Qualifying Papers for details)

2. Ph.D. Requirements (see appendix A for an M.A.–Ph.D. timeline)

The Ph.D. degree requires completion of the following:

- a. All requirements for the M.A. degree listed in section V.1
- b. Two additional required courses *with a grade of B or above*
 - Soc. 542 - Statistical Methods in Sociology II
 - One other methods/statistics course from the following
 - Soc. 520 - Comparative Historical Methods
 - Soc. 573 – Ethnographic Methods
 - Soc. 615 - Qualitative Research Methods
 - Social Network Analysis
 - *Students may request to use an intermediate/advanced statistics courses at RU-Newark in the Criminal Justice program to fulfill this requirement*
- c. Four additional elective courses; 1 may be an Independent Study, 1 may be outside the department, and 1 may be the Writing Seminar if this was **not** used as an elective for the M.A. degree (*see section V.3 below for more details on the writing seminar*)
- d. 24 research credits (these do *not* substitute for course or independent study credits. *See section V.4 below for more details.*)
- e. Second qualifying paper (see section VI on Qualifying Papers for details)
- f. Dissertation proposal defense
- g. Dissertation with successful defense

3. Writing Seminar

Students are required to take the Writing Seminar once to earn the Ph.D. degree. *Students may register for the Writing Seminar for course credit (503/504) or for research credit (703).* Either registration fulfills the Writing Seminar requirement. Note that enrollment in 503/504 counts toward elective requirements while enrollment in 703 counts only toward the required 24 research credits. Please note that students may only receive course credit for the Writing Seminar *once*. All subsequent registrations must be for research credit.

The Writing Seminar supports the development of writing skills for completing and polishing a piece of sociological work (e.g., QP, dissertation proposal, manuscript for submission for journal review). This is a single Writing Seminar that is designed for students using any type of method at any stage of the graduate career. This course is graded only as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. We encourage students to take the Writing Seminar more than one time at varying stages of the program to facilitate progress in completing QPs, submitting papers for publication, and writing dissertation proposals.

4. Research Credits

Students must complete 24 research credits to graduate with the PhD degree. The department advises that students complete 20-24 research credits by the end of their 5th year in the program, although the exact number for each student depends on his or her pace to completion of the Ph.D. Subsequently, students should register for 1 research credit per semester while completing their dissertations. Since these credits are paid for by the department, SAS, or the student, it is important to try not to exceed 24 total research credits through the completion of the Ph.D., if possible.

Below is the suggested timeline for an incoming student in the program who does not transfer any course credits and who plans to complete the Ph.D. at the end of the 6th year. Note that this timeline will vary based on a variety of individual circumstances that students can discuss with the Graduate Director or Administrator.

Year in Program	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
1	-----	-----
2	-----	-----
3	3	3
4	6-8	6-8
5	1-2	1-2

Students should register for research credits with one of their advisers, that is, with either the primary adviser or the lead reader for a QP (except when taking the Writing Seminar for research credits). Students should inform faculty that they are signing up for research credits with them and should agree upon the level of communication and work expected in order to earn an S grade. This generally involves making tangible progress on research and producing some piece of writing (e.g., a draft of a QP, dissertation proposal, dissertation chapter, or article for submission). The student and adviser should stay in regular contact about the student's progress over the course of the semester.

5. 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 for one semester. In order to register for an

independent study, the student (in consultation with the professor) must compile a syllabus that specifies the required reading and writing requirements as well as the meeting schedule. This syllabus must be submitted to the graduate director for approval. Independent studies are considered as equivalent to seminars in workload and hence they count as elective courses for your degree requirements. Students may take no more than two independent studies during their time in the graduate program, one counted toward the M.A. requirements and one toward the Ph.D. requirements.

6. Courses Outside of the Sociology Department

- a. **Number of outside courses** - Students may take up to two courses outside of the Sociology Department that count toward their elective requirements (1 for the M.A. degree requirements and 1 for the Ph.D. degree requirements)
- b. **Inter-University Doctoral Consortium Courses** - Graduate students at Rutgers may take graduate courses at several other universities in the region (e.g., Columbia University, CUNY-Graduate Center, the New School, New York University, Princeton University) at no extra cost. Enrollment in courses at other institutions through this program requires the permission of the student's advisor, the Sociology Graduate Director, and the instructor of the course at the host institution. The form required to register for courses in the consortium is available on the [Graduate School webpage](#). These classes count as courses taken outside the department. Thus, no more than two such courses can be used to meet the program requirements.

7. Grades and Incompletes

- a. **Grades** - You must receive grades of A or B in 14 of the 16 required and elective courses to receive a Ph.D.
- b. **Incompletes** - We strongly discourage students from taking an incomplete in a course. Having an incomplete frequently impairs a student's ability to complete subsequent work on time. If a student is unable to complete all the requirements for a course, the instructor may assign a grade of incomplete if they think the circumstances are warranted. The Graduate School requires that a student make up the work for an Incomplete within twelve months of the end of semester in which the incomplete grade was assigned (e.g., an incomplete in a course from the fall semester 2015 must be completed and the grade turned in by the end of the grading period for the fall semester 2016). If a final grade has not been turned in at the end of the twelve months, the grade turns into a permanent incomplete.

8. Transfer of Credits

- a. Students may apply to transfer up to 12 credits towards the MA degree requirements at Rutgers. Students may apply to transfer an additional 12 credits towards the PhD degree requirements. These may be used for required or elective courses in the degree program upon approval of the graduate director.
- b. All transfer courses must be regular numerical or letter graded classes (not courses graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory or pass/ fail). Courses with grades below B cannot be transferred for credit in our program. Individually arranged reading courses are also not accepted for transfer credit.
- c. The transfer of credit can only be made after completion of 12 graduate credits at Rutgers University.
- d. The Graduate School does not approve any credits to be transferred for the degree at Rutgers for courses that were taken more than 6 years before the transfer request.

VI. QUALIFYING PAPERS

1. Standards and Expectations

A qualifying paper (QP) is a piece of original research (empirical or theoretical) that is ideally the first step toward a publication. A QP, particularly the first QP, is part of the learning process about how to conduct original research that contributes to the discipline. Many QPs ultimately become published journal articles or components of a larger product (e.g., dissertation or book).

- a. **Qualifying Paper Proposal** - Before beginning a qualifying paper, students must write a short (typically about 5 page) proposal. The proposal should: specify the research question; discuss the potential contribution of the work to sociology relative to past research; and provide a timeline of the proposed work. For empirical QPs, the proposal additionally describes the data to be collected or analyzed and the proposed method of analysis. QPs using quantitative secondary data analysis should include a discussion (or table) describing the proposed dependent, independent, and control variables. The QP proposal should be submitted to your reading committee (see information on committee structure in section VI.2) for feedback and revision before scheduling a QP sign-on meeting (see information on QP sign-on meeting in section VI.3.a).
- b. **Content of the Qualifying Paper** - A qualifying paper should be similar to a single journal article in the scope of the research question (i.e., well focused and delimited), data, and findings as well as in its length. As such, a QP is typically 20-30 pages long plus any references, endnotes, tables, and appendices (as relevant). Each paper should demonstrate a careful and thorough consideration of a sociological problem and clearly articulate the contribution of the research to the discipline. One of the qualifying papers may be theoretical but at least one QP must be empirical. QPs can use any substantive and/or methodological approach (e.g., analysis of survey data, textual analysis, interviews, field work). As such, they vary in style and structure. (**Note that if your project involves research with human subjects, you must get IRB approval before collecting any data. See section XII.1 below.**) *We encourage you to take the Writing Seminar as a course when you are working to complete your first QP because this facilitates the development and completion of the qualifying paper.* To ensure breadth and proficiency in more than a single sub-area of sociology, the two qualifying papers must focus on topics that are significantly different from one another. The committee structure (see section VI.2) helps ensure that the foci of the QPs are distinct.

2. Committee Structure

Each committee has a lead reader and two secondary readers. The lead readers for the two qualifying papers must be different. In addition, the two QP committees may have only a one-reader overlap. Thus, the two qualifying paper committees together include five or six different faculty members per graduate student. This structure encourages intellectual and methodological breadth, and ensures that each student interacts intellectually with multiple faculty members. Committee members may include regular sociology faculty and one affiliated graduate faculty member in sociology.

3. Sign-On & Sign-Off Meetings

- a. **Sign-On Meeting** – Upon approval of the QP committee members, the student schedules a meeting with the committee to discuss the content and direction of the project. This meeting lasts approximately one hour. During the meeting, committee members and the student should discuss and agree upon the research question and conceptual framing of the project as well as the data and methods (when relevant). The committee members and the student should also

agree to a written timeline for the proposed work and for communication between the student and committee members (e.g., a progress report every month or two, monthly meeting with the lead reader, etc.). Upon successful completion of the sign-on meeting, the committee members and the Graduate Director sign the [QPI/QPII proposal form](#). This form should be submitted to the sociology graduate administrator.

At the end of the QP sign-on meeting, the committee members should discuss the division of labor and work plan for supervising the student (e.g., work closely with the primary reader before distributing to other committee members, send all drafts to all committee members simultaneously, etc.).

- b. **Sign-Off Meeting** – Upon approval of the QP committee members, the student schedules a final sign-off meeting with the committee. This meeting is scheduled only after the student has completed and revised the qualifying paper in consultation with the committee members. (The process of writing a qualifying paper typically involves multiple drafts and recurrent interaction with your committee members as agreed upon in the sign-on meeting). During the meeting, the student briefly presents the key results and conclusions of the research (about five minutes). The student and committee members discuss whether there are remaining issues to be addressed before the committee agrees to “sign off” on the paper, and discuss strategies for moving the paper toward publication or inclusion in future work (e.g., dissertation). Upon successful completion of the meeting, the committee members and the Graduate Director sign the [Qualifying Paper Evaluation](#) form as well as the MA or PhD Candidacy form. These forms should be submitted to the sociology graduate administrator.

4. Students Entering with an M.A./M.S. from another Program

The department does not accept a prior Master’s thesis in lieu of one of our qualifying papers. A student entering the Rutgers graduate program in sociology with an M.A. or M.S. who wrote a thesis may, however, use his/her thesis as the basis for one qualifying paper. To do so, the student assembles a three-reader committee (see section VI.2) that reads the thesis and provides feedback on the steps required to make the work into a qualifying paper that meets departmental standards. The conditions may range from minor to more substantial revisions in content, approach, style, methods, etc. All restrictions on committee membership noted in section VI.2 apply.

VII. DISSERTATION

After completing the Master’s Degree and having the second qualifying paper approved, students write a dissertation proposal, and ultimately a dissertation. The dissertation must be an original and significant scholarly contribution to the sociological literature. The following steps are required to complete the Ph.D.

1. Dissertation Committee

- a. **Department Committee Members** - The dissertation committee includes the student’s dissertation advisor (who serves as the chair) plus two other members of the sociology graduate faculty. One of the two committee members (but not the chair) may be a member of the Sociology affiliated graduate faculty. In rare instances, students invite a fourth member from the sociology graduate faculty. The dissertation advisor is the main consultant for the student during all phases of the dissertation research and writing. Substitutions in committee membership, once the committee has been formed, must be approved by the Graduate Director. Substitutions normally occur only if a member is unable to serve or if a student’s dissertation topic or methodology changes dramatically.

- b. **Committee Member from Outside the Department** – The committee must also include an additional committee member who is **not** a regular or affiliated Rutgers sociology graduate faculty member. This outside member may be chosen from another department at Rutgers or from outside the University. The outside member should be a recognized authority on the subject of the dissertation. The student is encouraged to talk with his/her dissertation chair and committee members about the selection of the outside member of the committee. The student should also seek advice from the chair and committee members about how to request committee membership from individuals outside of the department. The outside committee member can be selected at the time that the committee is formed or can be added later. However, the outside committee member should be confirmed by two months before the dissertation defense *at the very latest*. It is important that the student discusses the role of the outside member with him/her and with the dissertation chair because the extent of involvement can vary greatly—from providing early and regular feedback to reading and providing comments only on the final draft. An outside member may not serve as the dissertation chair.

2. Dissertation Proposal

A dissertation proposal should be developed in close consultation with the student's dissertation advisor and committee members. Dissertation proposals vary widely with respect to their length and level of detail, although they typically range from 20 to 30 pages. They should specify the research question(s), discuss the potential contribution of the work to sociology relative to past research and theory, describe the data to be collected or analyzed and the proposed method of analysis, and provide a timeline of the proposed work. If major parts of a QP will be included as a portion of the proposed dissertation, the student should make clear the distinct contribution of the dissertation work beyond that made by the QP. The more detail provided in the proposal about all issues noted, the more help committee members can give. Importantly, the dissertation proposal is not a formal contract, and both the student and committee members may adjust components of the project as the dissertation work progresses.

3. Dissertation Proposal Defense

The proposal must be defended in an oral examination with the student's departmental dissertation committee members. During the defense, the student briefly presents the central proposed elements of the dissertation (e.g., research question[s], substantive contribution, data/methods). The student and committee members then discuss issues about the theory, methods, and overall direction of the project to provide guidance for moving the dissertation forward. They should also discuss whether the dissertation will be organized as a "three-paper" project or the more traditional "book-style" dissertation. The three paper model of a dissertation includes three interconnected papers/chapters that are linked by an overarching theme; additional introductory and concluding chapters develop the theoretical and empirical connections among the papers/chapters. Note that both styles are valid models for a dissertation; the decision about which style to use varies across substantive areas and by the way in which the project develops. In the proposal defense, the student and committee should additionally agree upon a projected timeline of progress towards the completion of the dissertation and develop a plan for communication of the student with committee members. Upon approval of the proposal, the committee members and the Graduate Director sign the [Dissertation Proposal Approval Form](#). This form is filed with the Graduate Administrator. The PhD Candidacy form (page 2) should be signed by the Graduate Director and submitted to the Graduate School. At this point, the student is designated as ABD (All But Dissertation).

4. Writing the Dissertation

The dissertation writing process typically takes one to three years. That time period is spent conducting original research, writing an initial draft, and revising the chapters at least once in response to committee members' feedback. The committee (especially the dissertation chair) 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, specify the changes required for dissertation acceptance.

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. After receiving suggestions from committee members, the student revises the dissertation draft. The process of receiving feedback and revising accordingly may happen more than once, with students sometimes drafting several versions of a particular chapter. The dissertation is revised until the advisor and committee members believe that the work is ready for defense.

5. Dissertation Defense

When the student, dissertation chair, and other committee members agree that the dissertation is complete and ready for public defense, the student contacts all committee members to schedule a dissertation defense at a mutually agreeable date and time. The defense date, time, and location should be scheduled at least three weeks in advance. Arrangements for the location of the defense are made with the sociology graduate administrator. The dissertation defense must be publicly announced and all faculty and graduate students in the sociology department must be invited to attend. The student should contact the sociology graduate administrator to arrange for this announcement and invitation. The student should also contact the dissertation chair to discuss the structure of the defense. The student and all departmental members of the committee must be present at the defense unless prior written permission for participation via conference call or Skype is granted by the dissertation chair and Graduate Director. The outside member may be absent if necessary, provided that he or she sends the committee chair written comments.

The dissertation defense typically entails a lively discussion of the student's work, with committee members and guests asking questions about the dissertation research. Immediately following the formal defense, the committee members meet with the candidate to provide a list of changes (if any) that are required before the dissertation is approved. Typically, these required revisions are reviewed by the dissertation advisor although committee members may request to review and approve revisions. 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. During the immediate post-defense meeting, the committee may also provide advice about future revisions as the student prepares the dissertation for publication as a book or refereed journal articles. The committee and Graduate Director must sign the PhD Candidacy form that the student submits to the Graduate School.

6. Formatting the Official Dissertation

The final draft of the dissertation should be prepared in strict accordance with the instructions provided in the [*Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide*](#) available on the Rutgers Graduate School-New Brunswick webpage.

VIII. FACULTY & STUDENT COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Faculty and students should consider the following recommendations to establish a mutually satisfying and productive work arrangement. These guidelines apply to all types and stages of research, including independent studies, qualifying papers, dissertations, and research and teaching assistant work.

- a. Identify the best ways and times to communicate (e.g. email, Skype, in-person meetings). Discuss expectations regarding the frequency and length of meetings. It is strongly recommended that mentors and students arrange at least one meeting per semester. To ensure a productive meeting, students are encouraged to provide an agenda for the meeting and to send drafts of relevant information ahead of time.
- b. Establish a timetable for completion of work. Consider dates for milestones such as completion of literature review, data analysis, first draft, and/or conference presentations. Clarify the role of different faculty mentors at each stage of the timetable.
- c. Faculty should provide timely feedback on written work. Faculty members are encouraged to acknowledge receipt of a student's submission of work and provide an approximate idea of the time it will take to return the work with comments. For a complete draft, faculty may take up to a month to provide feedback; during the summer months, faculty may take longer to review a draft, up to two months. A review of a section of a paper is expected to take less time. Faculty members are encouraged to notify students of prior commitments that may affect these timetables to ensure that students can continue working effectively. Faculty members going on leave should discuss reasonable expectations for providing feedback with all advisees well before the leave begins.
- d. Students are encouraged to make every effort to keep to the established timetable and to communicate with their faculty mentors if they are having difficulty meeting deadlines. Missing a deadline will likely delay the timetable given the time needed to review written work. If a student is not receiving the necessary support to complete her/his work, they should approach the faculty mentor (e.g., advisor, lead reader of a QP) to discuss the problem. If the student does not receive a sufficient response, they should bring the issue to the attention of the graduate director, chair, or a department ombudsperson.

IX. REASONABLE PROGRESS

1. Reasonable Progress Policy (*applies to all students entering the Rutgers Sociology Graduate Program in the fall semester of 2013 and any time thereafter*)

- Students should complete the *first QP and all required courses for the M.A.* by the end of the fall semester of the third year in the program.
- Students should complete the *second QP and all Ph.D. courses* by the end of the fall semester of the fourth year in the program.
- Students should complete their *dissertation proposal and move to ABD status* by the end of the fall semester of the fifth year in the program.

Should a student fail to meet any of the above deadlines, the student and their advisor will receive a notice of unsatisfactory progress. The student is then required to submit a detailed work plan for finishing any uncompleted work by the end of the following semester. The work plan should be written

in consultation with the student's advisor, the lead reader of the Qualifying Paper (when applicable), and the graduate director, all of whom must approve the plan. Failure to meet the deadlines set forth in the work plan will result in the loss of eligibility for funding and may lead to dismissal from the program. *Please consult section IX.2 below for the policy on extenuating circumstances.*

At the end of the fifth year and every subsequent year in the program, each student must submit a written plan for moving forward and completing the dissertation in a timely manner. This plan must be approved by the student's advisor. These plans will be reviewed during the annual student review. The goal of these annual reviews is to foster the development and completion of the dissertation and Ph.D. degree as a means to launch students on to successful careers. A letter will be sent to each student providing feedback on their plan.

Note that the policy of the Graduate School-New Brunswick is that full-time Ph.D. students complete their degrees in seven years or less. Students in the Sociology Department should finish their Ph.D. within this time frame. Requests to the Graduate School for extensions beyond seven years are strongly discouraged. Such requests will be evaluated by the graduate director and the student's advisor on an individual basis.

2. Extenuating Circumstances

In some instances, a student may fail to meet the standards for reasonable progress due to circumstances that are beyond their control. Such circumstances include (but are not limited to) severe and/or long illness, a serious accident, intensive caregiving, family leave, and death in the family. They also include unusual circumstances regarding challenges related to data collection, complications with IRB approval, or unusually delayed feedback by faculty. When such extenuating circumstances apply, the student may petition to obtain a one-semester extension beyond the time specified in the reasonable progress policy set forth in section IX.1 to finish incompletes, a qualifying paper, or a dissertation proposal.

To petition for an extension, the student should submit a letter to the graduate director explaining the circumstances and outlining a proposed timeline for finishing necessary work. The student's advisor should also submit a brief letter of support for the extension and proposed timeline.

If more than one semester is needed to get a student's graduate work back in line with the reasonable progress policy (section IX.1), the student may request a leave of absence from the graduate director for up to two semesters in which the student can register under matriculation continued status. Semesters of matriculation continued status do not count toward a student's standard of progress.

3. Grandfathering for the Reasonable Progress Policy and M.A./Ph.D. Requirements

Some grandfathering of the requirements and policies on reasonable progress is necessary to align the progress of students who entered the sociology graduate program prior to the fall semester of 2013 with the new policies on standards of reasonable progress described in section IX.1. Every student who entered the program in the fall semester of 2009 through the fall semester of 2012 (students in years 2-5 in the fall of 2013) will thus be given a one-semester extension beyond the standards noted in section IX.1 to finish incompletes, a qualifying paper, or a dissertation proposal and align oneself with the new policies (see the full description of the policy and extenuating circumstances in sections IX.1-2). They will thus be expected to complete the first QP and all required courses for the M.A. by the end of the spring semester of the third year in the program, the second QP and all Ph.D. courses by the end of the spring semester of their fourth year in the program, and their dissertation proposal (and move to ABD status) by the end of the spring semester of their fifth year in the program (all conditions beyond these dates that are noted in sections IX.1-2 apply).

X. PERIODIC EVALUATIONS OF PROGRESS

Evaluation of student progress is an essential feature of our graduate program. The fundamental purpose of evaluation is to ensure that students complete the program in the most rewarding way possible, and achieve the highest standards of excellence in their development as scholars. Periodic evaluation offers students substantive guidance about their projects and a reminder 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, is 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. 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 the reasonable 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.
 - *Progress on Qualifying Papers and on the Dissertation.* The department considers 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, is considered a cause for concern. [Department policy on Incompletes is set forth in section V.7.b.]
 - *Other factors.* The faculty may also consider additional factors, including for example, a student's ability to respond thoughtfully to faculty feedback, originality and rigor of a student's work, 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 March. Students in the third through seventh years are reviewed in the fall semester.
- c. **Providing Feedback to Students:** The Graduate Director sends a letter to each student within a month following the Annual Review, summarizing the faculty's assessment of the student's progress and offering constructive criticism and guidance moving forward.

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 takes stock of the student's overall progress. The student's committee makes one of three recommendations: (a) to grant the Master's degree as a stepping stone to the Ph.D.; (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 deny the Master's degree. Most students completing the Master's degree fall into category (a).

XI. FORMS

A candidate entering the final semester of their M.A. or Ph.D. program should complete the following forms:

1. Master of Arts Candidacy Form

Students should complete this form and bring it to the sign-off meeting for the first qualifying paper. The form may not be filed before the student has completed 30 credits (including the five required M.A. courses) and signing off on the first qualifying paper. Students should refer to the [Qualifying Paper and MA Degree Checklist](#) on the [Forms & Checklists](#) page of the department's website for specific instructions.

2. Ph.D. Candidacy Form

Before the sign-off meeting for the second Qualifying Paper, the student should complete pages 1, 2, and 4 of the PhD Candidacy form. At the completion of this sign-off meeting, readers for the QP2 sign page 2, Section B and return the PhD Candidacy form to the Sociology graduate office.

After the successful completion of the student's dissertation proposal, the Graduate Director signs the Ph.D. candidacy form (page 2, section B) and the student should bring the form to the Graduate School. Students should refer to the [Becoming ABD and Being Admitted to Candidacy Checklist](#) on the [Forms & Checklists](#) page of the department's website for specific instructions.

3. Dissertation Defense Forms

Before the dissertation defense, the student must pick up the PhD Candidacy form from the Graduate School. Upon the successful defense of the dissertation, the student's committee members sign page 3, Section B of the Ph.D. candidacy form and the title page of the dissertation. The Graduate Director must then sign the Ph.D. candidacy form certifying all requirements for the Ph.D. degree have been met. The completed candidacy form and signed title page with original signatures are turned in to the Graduate School.

Students must complete various forms for the Graduate School in order to receive the PhD degree. This includes a payment fee form, copyright agreement form, questionnaire, online diploma application, et al. These documents and their deadlines are available on the [Graduate School's webpage](#). Students should also refer to the [PhD Graduation Checklist](#) on the [Forms & Checklists](#) page of the department's website for specific instructions.

NOTE: Degrees are conferred and diplomas issued in October, January, and May. However, a commencement ceremony only takes place in the spring. Recipients of October and January degrees may attend convocation in May. Diplomas and interim certificates will be withheld from all students whose financial and/or library accounts are not clear.

XII. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Protection of Human Subjects in Research

All members of the University community who conduct research with human beings as subjects must conform to 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 information about the Protection of Human Subjects in Research and applications for the review of research with human subjects by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is available at the webpage for the [Human Subjects Protection Program](#).

The University takes this requirement very seriously. A Ph.D. may not be awarded if a dissertation is based upon research that did not receive IRB approval. 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 interrupted their graduate registration without receiving a degree must apply for readmission. The student must complete the application for readmission available on the webpage of the [Graduate School—New Brunswick](#). This form must be approved by the graduate director (and for international students by the Center for Global Services) before it is submitted to the Graduate School. Upon readmission, a restorative fee of one credit of tuition at the current in-state rate for each term lapsed (up to five terms) is charged for students who were ABD when they left the program. A request for a waiver of the restorative fee can be applied for if the applicant can justify a case of extreme hardship or severe temporary disability.

3. Matriculation Continued

If circumstances arise that make it impossible for a student who is not yet ABD to be actively involved in either coursework or research, they may register for Matriculation Continued with the approval of the Graduate Director. The student is charged a nominal fee for this registration status which carries zero credits. Registering as Matriculation Continued keeps the individual as an active student who does not have to apply for readmission upon returning to their work toward their degree. A student can register for as Matriculation Continued for a maximum of two semesters.

4. Full-time and Part-time Programs

Before a student is ABD, they must register for at least 9 credits to be considered a full-time student. After a student is admitted to candidacy (i.e., they are ABD), they are considered a full-time if they are registered for one research credit.

APPENDIX A: M.A.–Ph.D. Timeline

The following timeline of coursework and other requirements for completing the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees is intended to provide guidance for making reasonable progress toward successful completion of the program. The faculty, particularly your adviser, committee members, and the graduate director, should be consulted to obtain the support needed to foster your work and meet the deadlines for reasonable progress (see section IX). Note that the deadlines for completing the two qualifying papers (QP) and the dissertation proposal should be viewed as outer limits for finishing these requirements. Also, the deadlines for approval of the QP proposals are strongly recommended in order to facilitate completion of the QPs by the deadlines.

Year 1	
Fall	Spring
501 Research Methods (M)	516 Contemporary Theory (M)
515 Classical Theory (M)	541 Stat Methods in Soc I (M)
Elective Course	Elective Course
Elective Course ⁺	Elective Course ⁺
Proseminar (no registration required)	Proseminar (no registration required)
Year 2	
Fall	Spring
Stat Methods in Soc II (P)	Second Methods Course (P)
Elective course	Elective Course
Elective course	Elective Course
Elective Course ⁺	Elective Course [*]
	By March 15: Proposal for qualifying paper #1 approved
Year 3	
Fall	Spring
Writing Seminar (P)	Elective Course
Elective Course	Elective Course
Research Credits	Research Credits
December 15: Qualifying paper #1 completed and approved	By March 15: Proposal for qualifying paper #2 approved
Year 4	
December 15: Qualifying paper #2 completed and approved	
Work on the dissertation proposal	
Writing Seminar (second and subsequent enrollments for research credits)	
Research credits	
Year 5 and Beyond	
December 15, Year 5: Dissertation proposal written and successfully defended	
Research credits, writing and defending the dissertation	

* Students may elect to take a fourth course.

(M) - Specific course required for the M.A.

(P) - Specific course required for the Ph.D.