Handbook

Graduate Program in Sociology

Department of Sociology
University of Colorado at Boulder

Revised September 14, 2015

Introduction

This document summarizes relevant policies for the graduate program in the Department of Sociology at the University of Colorado Boulder. Graduate students are subject to the rules described in the handbook that are in effect at the time of their admission to the program. Although the handbook was updated in summer 2012 with significant policy changes throughout, some policies will undoubtedly change or become refined, and the Graduate Program Assistant will keep track of such changes.

Periodically, essential information will appear on *socybiz*, the departmental email list for graduate students. Much official business of the university transpires via email. Thus, all enrolled graduate students must have email addresses and check their CU-Boulder email often.

The Department of Sociology

The graduate program in the Department of Sociology at CU-Boulder seeks to train creative and productive scholars and teachers. The department maintains a strong emphasis in the theories and methods of the discipline while specializing in five areas:

- Crime, Law, and Deviance
- Environmental Sociology
- Gender
- Health and Population Studies
- Qualitative and Interpretive Sociology

Graduate Degrees Offered

The Department of Sociology offers graduate training leading to the Ph.D. To the greatest extent possible, the program seeks to:

- provide mentoring through one-on-one faculty-student relationships, as well as teams of mentors.
- give students clear and informed feedback on progress toward their degrees.
- socialize students into the norms of the profession by informing them about professional expectations and practices not traditionally covered in seminars.
- train students to become competent teachers and researchers.
- provide sound basic training in theory and methods.

The department does not maintain a separate M.A. program and does not encourage applications from students who wish to pursue an M.A. in sociology as a terminal degree. However, there are three scenarios by which students may earn the M.A. degree:

1. Students already making satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. may wish to receive the M.A. as a sign of progress toward the Ph.D. To do so, students must meet the M.A. degree requirements outlined later in this handbook.

2. Students already making satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. may wish to receive the M.A. as a terminal degree when changes in their circumstances (e.g., change in career plans, relocation, family situations, etc.) result in their inability to meet Ph.D. degree requirements. If circumstances change and such students choose to return to the graduate program within two years of receiving the M.A., the department will readmit them.

3. Students whose progress toward the Ph.D. is below expectations can work toward the M.A. as a final degree. If, in the future, they wish to pursue the Ph.D. in this department, they must reapply for admission to the Ph.D. program.

Detailed information on the requirements for the M.A. degree appears later in this handbook.

Admission to the Program

The graduate program admits students only during the fall semester. Completed applications must be submitted online by December 1. Prospective students must apply for admission first to the Department of Sociology. If accepted, the department forwards the application to the Office of Admissions for further processing. Acceptance to the graduate program in the Department of Sociology does not guarantee admission to the Graduate School.

In some cases, the department or the Graduate School may grant provisional admission. If admitted provisionally, the Graduate School usually requires the student to complete 12 credit hours of graduate work with a GPA of 3.25 or better during the first year. The department may require a student to fulfill particular requirements for provisional acceptance.

Transfer of Credit

In accordance with Graduate School policy, the department accepts a maximum of 21 graduate level credit hours from another college or university toward fulfillment of the requirements of the Ph.D. degree. Students may submit requests for transfer of credit only after the successful completion of 6 credits of graduate level course work in CU-Boulder campus with a 3.0 GPA. Transferred credits do not reduce the minimum registration requirements but may reduce the number of formal courses required. The department may recommend to the Graduate Dean that a maximum of 9 graduate level credit hours from another college or university apply toward the requirements of the M.A. degree, for those who plan to receive the terminal M.A. or the M.A. in progress. Students wishing to transfer credit toward the M.A. degree must first complete a satisfactory record of performance over at least one semester in residence. In summary, students may transfer 21 credit hours for the Ph.D. and 9 for the M.A.

Request for transfer of credit forms to submit for consideration by the Graduate Committee are available from the Graduate Program Assistant. All students intending to transfer credits – *including those coming from universities within the CU system* – must meet with their faculty advisors to determine the suitability of particular courses for transfer of credit. The advisor will consult other faculty members as needed and will make a recommendation to the Graduate Committee regarding credit transfer. The final decision rests with the Graduate Committee. Students can claim hours for only approved courses when they apply for candidacy.

Waiver Policy for Required Courses

As a general rule, the Graduate Committee does not grant waivers for required courses on the basis of graduate course work completed elsewhere. These courses include Sociological Theory (SOCY 5201), a second Theory seminar of the student's choice, Data 1/Quantitative Methods 1 (SOCY 5111), Data 2/Quantitative Methods 2 (SOCY 6111), Logics of Qualitative Inquiry (SOCY 5181), and Logics of Quantitative Inquiry – formerly Research Design (SOCY 5031). Students who believe that they have completed courses of equivalent depth and rigor elsewhere may submit a petition requesting a waiver of one or more of these requirements. The petition must include a brief letter explaining why the student wishes to waive the requirement, as well as copies of syllabi, written work, and final grades from the previous course work. These

materials should be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant for review by the Graduate Chair before August 1 of the entering year or, for courses offered later than the first semester, two months prior to the start of the semester in which the relevant seminar is taught. The Graduate Chair will review the request in consultation with faculty teaching the required courses and make a decision prior to the start of the semester. Transfer of credit ***does not*** imply waiver of courses. Waiver of required courses is a much rarer occurrence and involves a separate request and deliberation process.

The Advising System

Each incoming student will be assigned an individual faculty advisor who will help guide the student through the first year of the program. Under the first-year advising system, students are encouraged to work with the first-year advisor to explore the program, the research specialties of the department, and their own developing research interests while getting to know faculty members. Once a student has had an opportunity to meet and work with a variety of faculty, decisions regarding long-term advisors should be made following the first-year experience.

Beginning in the second year of the program, graduate students are expected to seek their own faculty advisors. Only members of the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology or those specifically appointed by the Graduate Committee can act as advisors to graduate students. Although students find advisors in many different ways, the procedure for doing so often begins by locating faculty members with interests that match their own. After an introductory meeting, the student and faculty member should discuss each other's expectations, capacities, and timelines. Once a faculty member agrees to serve in the role of advisor, the student should notify the Graduate Program Assistant in writing or by email. Students should then work with their advisors to select other faculty members to serve on comprehensive examination and dissertation committees.

Students may change advisors at any time and are responsible for informing the Graduate Program Assistant and the affected faculty of any changes.

Teaching Assistantships

Most students receive financial support by serving as Teaching Assistants (TAs). Graduate students in good standing are eligible for graduate teaching assistantships. Teaching assistantships and instructorships, as well as research appointments, are awarded by the Department of Sociology and approved by the Graduate School. Depending on the type of appointment and the percent time involved, Teaching Assistants may receive tuition waivers for a specified number of credit hours. Such appointments are contingent on "continued adequate progress" in a degree program. The Graduate School interprets this as the completion (receiving a letter grade and not Incomplete) of at least 5 graduate credit hours per semester, or 8 credit hours combined graduate and undergraduate course work. The department requires a grade of B- or above in all required courses for adequate progress in the program.

Students may hold appointments in more than one department; however, the total of all appointments may not exceed 50 percent.

Advanced students may teach their own courses as Graduate Part-Time Instructors (GPTIs). However, students who have taught as GPTIs can be assigned TA positions in the future, depending on the department's needs. In other words, having a GPTI assignment one semester does not guarantee the same assignment the next semester.

The Graduate School stipulates that the total number of semesters of teaching support for a master's degree student is eight semesters, not including summers. For all Ph.D. students, regardless of whether receiving the masters' degree at CU or elsewhere, the total number of semesters of teaching support is 12 semesters, not including summers.

Situations sometimes arise, particularly those of a medical nature, which make a student unable to complete his or her TA or GPTI assignment. Students facing such circumstances should inform the Graduate Chair as early as possible to discuss potential accommodations or alternative arrangements.

The Process for Making Teaching Assignments

The Undergraduate Chair makes teaching assignments and issues letters informing students of their assignments. Students receive this notification in as timely a manner as possible, usually at the end of each semester. Students offered assistantships must sign a binding contract accepting the appointment. A student who receives an assistantship in one academic year is not guaranteed an assistantship in subsequent years. The department generally does not grant assistantships beyond a graduate student's fifth year of funding as a TA or GPTI, not the fifth year in the program. However, such applications may be considered if employment opportunities should arise.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the Undergraduate and/or Graduate Chair, the following criteria generally are used in making teaching assignments (established by the Graduate Student Association 12/09/98):

1) *Progress toward Degree:* Students who have adhered to the minimum requirements for the program (B- or above in all required courses) will be included in the pool of applicants for those positions. The department will consider extenuating circumstances for those who have not met those requirements. The Department Chair makes the final decision on assignments.

2) *Matching Course Requests to Availability*: The department will match these as best it can. Students will ***not*** be eliminated from the pool if there is not a match.

3) *Expertise in Area*: Includes papers, research, and courses taken at the graduate level. This category takes into account different stages in the program.

4) *Teaching Experience*: Courses prepared and taught already. This would reduce work for the instructor and help to refine the quality of the course with each subsequent time taught.

5) *Teaching Quality:* Using measures on Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs).

6) *Written Professional Projects*: Includes published articles, manuscripts under review, conference presentations, and awards/honors for written work.

7) *Cumulative GPA*

Summer teaching positions are made available according to the department's needs. Only students who qualify as GPTIs are eligible for summer teaching. The Undergraduate Chair announces available courses, takes requests, and makes these assignments in late spring.

Research Assistantships

The department encourages graduate students to pursue opportunities for funded research wherever possible. The department website features a link to potential funding sources, and students should work closely with faculty mentors to locate other sources. The department supports the efforts of other university units in which students may seek financial support for their research (as well as faculty mentors). Several of these are branches of the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS). IBS represents a multidisciplinary effort among researchers in the social and behavioral sciences. More detailed information about IBS appears on the website: http://www.colorado.edu/IBS/. IBS includes the following Programs and Centers:

- Research Program on Environment and Behavior (E&B)
- Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center (NHRAIC)
- Research Program on Health Behavior (HB)
- Research Program on Political and Economic Change (PPEC)
- Globalization and Democracy Training Program (GAD)
- Research Program on Population Processes (Population Program)
- Population Aging Center
- Research Program on Problem Behavior (PB)
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV)
- Social Science Data Analysis Center (SSDAC)

Overview of Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

The following outlines program requirements, provides deadlines for meeting them, and gives an example of "adequate progress" toward the degree. The Graduate Committee recognizes that students entering the program with an M.A. degree could move through the program more quickly than others, and that differences among students may affect individual courses of study. Students needing exceptions to the rules outlined or extensions to the established deadlines should see the section on petitions at the end of the handbook.

Students receive the Ph.D. degree after fulfilling the following requirements. Students should aim to fulfill these requirements within five to six years.

1) *Time Limit:* The Graduate School allows six years from the commencement of course work in a graduate program for completion of requirements, including the filing of the dissertation. Under extenuating circumstances, a graduate student and his or her advisor may request by letter an extension of the time limit. This letter, accompanied by a statement from the advisor supporting the request, should go to the Graduate Committee and. If the letter is approved, the Graduate Chair will forward the request to the Dean of the Graduate School.

2) *Minimum Course Hours and Levels*: Students must complete a total of 45 hours of course work credit hours (which can include independent study courses or guided research). At least 24 hours must be in the Department of Sociology on the CU-Boulder campus. All courses taken within the Department of Sociology must be numbered 5000 or above to qualify for graduate credit.

3) *Successful Completion of Required Seminars:* These seminars include Sociological Theory (SOCY 5201), a second Theory seminar of the student's choice, Data 1/ Quantitative Methods 1 (SOCY 5111), Data 2/Quantitative Methods 2 (SOCY 6111), Logics of Qualitative Inquiry (SOCY 5181), and Logics of Quantitative Inquiry – formerly Research Design (SOCY 5031).

   Note on waiver of required seminars: The department generally does not allow waivers of the required courses. See the section, ***Waiver Policy for Required Courses***, for additional information.

4) *Completion of Equivalent of "Preliminary Exams":* Satisfactory completion of the five required classes during the first two years in the program represents what the Graduate School refers to as the "preliminary examination." The criterion for satisfactory completion of the required courses is a grade of B-. Although a B- is a passing grade, any student receiving a B- in a required course must meet with the Graduate Chair to assess his or her progress. Additionally, a student earning less than a B- in a required course must retake the course as directed by the Graduate Committee. Failure to pass the second time will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program. A student may then, with approval from the Graduate Committee, work toward a terminal M.A.

5) *Successful First- and Second- year Reviews*: At the end of the first and second year, faculty members teaching required courses, faculty mentor/ advisors, and faculty supervising TAs conduct a review of students' progress.

6) *Successful Completion of Breadth and Depth Course Requirements:* Students are required to take three courses in the area they identify as their primary specialty to satisfy the depth requirement. While this is most commonly one of the department's five core areas, students can petition the Graduate Committee to design their own primary specialty. Students also are required to take one course in each of two additional areas, chosen from among the department's core areas, to satisfy the breadth requirement. Students can petition the Graduate Committee to have courses from outside the department count as part of either their breadth or depth requirements.

7) *Successful Completion of Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam:* Students should take this exam no later than the second full week of August after their fourth program year. Students must complete the required 45 hours of course work before taking the specialty area comprehensive exam. The student and the Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam Committee set the exam date and time (details in section, ***Years Three and Four***).

8) *Successful Defense of Dissertation Proposal:* Students should prepare a written dissertation proposal and orally defend it before the dissertation committee by January of their fifth program year (details in section, ***Years Five and Six***).

9) *Completion and Successful Defense of the Dissertation:* Students should complete dissertation research and defend by the end of their sixth program year. Students should obtain a copy of the Graduate School's "Thesis and Dissertation Specifications" at: http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html#thesis.

Additional information appears in the section, ***Years Five and Six***, below.

The following is a typical sequence through the program:

(Also see http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/gradchecklist.pdf)

Enter Program

Students typically focus on required courses during the first year, though there are also opportunities to take electives.

Preregistration for Graduate Students

All graduate students should register as soon as possible after receiving registration materials. Graduate students who wish to enroll in independent study, guided research, dissertation hours, or master's thesis hours should contact the Graduate Program Assistant. Students who register late may incur financial penalties and will find it difficult to enroll in desired courses. Failure to complete registration as soon as possible may also lead to the cancellation of graduate seminars due to insufficient enrollment.

Graduate students are expected to take two or three seminars each semester. We recommend that students in their first year consult with either the Graduate Chair and/or the first-year faculty advisor to determine whether two or three seminars will serve the student best in their first year (advice will depend on prior course work, familiarity with statistics, methods, and theory, prior teaching experience, and additional responsibilities outside of graduate school). Beyond the first year, we recommend that students take three courses each semester.

Years One and Two
Required Seminars

Year One Courses
1) SOCY 5031 (3 credits) Research Design: Logics of Quantitative Inquiry
2) SOCY 5111 (3 credits) Data 1/Quantitative Methods 1
3) SOCY 5181 (3 credits) Logics of Qualitative Inquiry
4) SOCY 5201 (3 credits) Sociological Theory
5) SOCY 6111 (3 credits) Data 2/Quantitative Methods 2

Year Two/Three Course
6) Second Theory Seminar in student's area of interest (e.g., Social Psychology, Feminist Theory, or a seminar from outside the department approved by the faculty advisor.) (3 credits)

Limited Credit and Noncredit Seminar

The department offers an ongoing Professionalization Seminar ("Prosem"), led by a group of three elected graduate students. The Prosem meets monthly and consists of sessions on topics chosen by students such as: developing your curriculum vitae (C.V.); working effectively with faculty mentors; staying on top of "the literature"; and understanding the academic job market. The Prosem is open to any interested students.

Grading Rubric for Course Work

Faculty teaching required graduate seminars (theory and methods) must use this grading rubric; those teaching other graduate seminars are urged (but not required to) adopt it. Faculty members who choose *not* to adopt this rubric must include a statement in their syllabus that explains that they are not using the standard rubric and describe how their grading will work.

    A: Consistently performs well above expectations for the course

    A-: Performs above expectations for the course

    B+: Meets expectations for the course

    B: Occasionally performs below expectations for the course

    B-: Consistently performs below expectations for the course

    C range: Unsatisfactory work for a Ph.D. student (student not completing work, not attending class, etc.). Instructor has serious concerns regarding student progress toward degree.

Note: While a B+ is a "meets expectations" grade, it is not expected to serve as a mathematical average for the class. That is, there is no expectation that half the students will perform above and half below a B+.

Maintaining Full-time Student Status

To maintain full-time registration status, students must meet one of the following criteria:

- Enroll in elective seminars for a minimum of 5 credit hours per semester for full-time status in the program.
- Take at least 1 doctoral dissertation credit after completing required course work and prior to passing the specialty comprehensive exam. Students must keep in mind that

registering for 1 dissertation hour will make them full time only in an academic sense. The TIAA-CREF regulations require students to register for at least 3 hours to receive a waiver from the student retirement plan. If a student holding a university appointment registers for only 1 dissertation hour, the university deducts a mandatory student retirement deduction from his or her payroll. In addition, under some circumstances, students may take dissertation credits before completing the specialty exam, but the Graduate Committee strongly encourages students to complete the exam first.

- Take a minimum of 5 dissertation hours *after* passing the comprehensive exam.
- Complete 30 credit hours (not including dissertation hours) by the end of Year Two to be eligible for funding in Year Three. The 30 hours can include independent study and guided research courses. Depending on availability, students may teach as GPTIs after completing 30 hours of course work.

Years Three and Four

Required Course Hours

By the end of Year Four, students must have completed 45 hours of course work, with 24 in residence. Before taking the specialty area comprehensive exam and after completing course work, students may enroll for 1 dissertation hour for full-time status. However, students must keep in mind that registering for 1 dissertation hour will make them full time only in an academic sense. The TIAA-CREF regulations require students to register for at least 3 dissertation hours to receive a waiver from the student retirement plan. If a student holding a university appointment registers for only 1 dissertation hour, the university deducts a mandatory student retirement deduction from his/her payroll.

After taking the specialty area comp exam, students must enroll in a minimum of 3 to 5 dissertation hours to maintain the continuous enrollment requirement. Students should be aware that enrolling in only 3 hours is considered part-time status, which generally is reserved for students not using campus facilities or resources.

Complete Third Year Paper

All students will be required to complete a theoretically informed empirical paper by the end of their third year in the program. Papers may be turned in on October 31 or March 30. Students may choose to submit in fall or spring. Students can analyze secondary data or collect their own data for analysis. Papers should be in the 25- to 40- page range (excluding references and tables). The goals of this requirement are two-fold: 1. Students will be required to demonstrate their mastery of theory and methods through applying this knowledge to a research project of their choosing; and 2. for many students, this paper will, with some additional work, be publishable, giving students early experience with the publication process. Students who would like to make more rapid progress may submit their paper prior to the third year. With the approval of and in consultation with the student's advisor, those students entering with a master's thesis may use previously gathered data in developing a substantively and theoretically new paper of publishable quality for the third year paper requirement. A previously completed master's thesis may not be used to satisfy the third year paper requirement.

Third Year Paper Committee

The student's primary advisor will play a major role in assisting and supporting the student substantively with the third year paper, helping him/her develop a workable topic, assisting in identifying appropriate data, and reading drafts. Note: As a general rule, a faculty member should advise no more than one student per cohort.

Evaluating the Third Year Paper

The student's faculty advisor and two blind reviewers will evaluate the third year paper once it is submitted for approval. The criterion used to judge the paper will be a "revise and resubmit" standard. In other words, papers will be judged passing if, in the determination of the committee, it would likely receive at least a "revise and resubmit" upon being peer-reviewed by an appropriate journal. The paper will be evaluated using a Pass/Fail system. Under the current policy, the third year paper requirement may not be waived.

Students may submit their completed third year papers for evaluation by any one of two deadlines: October 31 or March 30. Failure to pass the third year paper requirement in the third

year will result in dismissal from the program. Students may petition the Graduate Committee to request an extension past spring semester of their third year when unusual extenuating circumstances exist (see section, **Graduate Student Petitions**, at the end of the handbook). Although students may begin preparing for the comprehensive specialty exams (e.g., assembling a committee, developing reading lists, etc.), a passing grade on the third year paper is required before a student can take the comprehensive exams.

A passing paper is publishable in a mainstream sociology journal, as defined by a majority (2/3) of the reviewing committee. Publishable means: to be of sufficient quality to be submitted to an upper-tier mainstream sociology journal, and reviewers believe it will eventually be published in that journal or another peer-reviewed sociology journal.

A passing paper meets all of the following criteria:
1. makes an original contribution to the literature
2. has sound methods
3. has solid analysis
4. is well-written

Methods Training

Students doing qualitative papers will be supported by qualitative data collection (typically taken in fall of Year Two) and qualitative data analysis (typically taken in fall of Year Three). Students doing quantitative papers will be supported by Quantitative Methods 1 and Quantitative Methods 2 (typically taken in Year One), and more advanced quantitative courses in Years Two and Three.

Master's Degree Option

All students who want to earn a master's degree, whether as a terminal degree or en route to the Ph.D., must:

1) complete a total of 30 credit hours of course work at the 5000 level or above, including 4-6 thesis credits and all required courses, with grades of B- or better,
2) be registered for master's hours in the semester of the thesis defense,
3) complete the required master's paperwork (see below), and

4) write and orally defend (see below) an M.A. thesis that adheres to the requirements for a master's thesis as established by the Graduate School. Students will find the format for the M.A. Thesis in "Thesis and Dissertation Specifications" on the Graduate School website at:

http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html#thesis.

Additionally, students who are completing the master's as a ***terminal degree*** must petition the Graduate Committee to obtain a terminal master's. This petition should consist of a letter indicating why the student wishes to pursue the M.A. as a terminal degree. The student's primary advisor must support this petition by sending a letter or email to the Chair of the Graduate Committee.

M.A. Thesis and Oral Defense

Students may use their third year paper as a starting point from which to develop the M.A. thesis, but the third year paper does not serve as a master's thesis. To meet Graduate School guidelines, the thesis must be of substantial quality and length. Students must successfully defend their thesis in front of a thesis committee that includes their advisor and two other faculty members. The faculty members comprising a student's "third year paper committee" may serve as this thesis committee, if the student so desires. The thesis defense is a public event at which the candidate explains and defends the thesis. The committee assesses the adequacy of the thesis and the candidate's competence in the relevant areas of sociological knowledge. If more than one committee member votes against passing, the candidate fails the defense. Candidates who fail will have a second opportunity to make a successful defense. The committee must specify what the candidate should do in preparation for the second defense. If the candidate fails the second defense, the Department of Sociology has no obligation to provide another opportunity.

The committee can require modification of the thesis even if the candidate passes the defense. Satisfactory completion of these modifications is a condition of passing the defense.

Master's Paperwork

All students wishing to earn a master's degree (either en route or terminal) must follow these steps:

1. The student must complete all of the master's graduation paperwork. This paperwork will be available from the Graduate Program Assistant.

2. The student must submit a candidacy application and apply online for graduation. The Graduate Program Assistant and advisor will fill out the final exam form.

3. The advisor needs to submit a final grade card after the defense or exam.

Students wishing to earn a master's degree are responsible for meeting deadlines posted on the Graduate School website, http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/.

Develop Specialty Area

From the time they enter the program students should consider specialty areas and direct their work toward building a knowledge base in those areas. As a general guideline, students should consider how they intend to package themselves for the job market. The specialty areas are those in which the student will become sufficiently qualified to teach and do research. Students in Years Three and Four should concentrate on the task of refining the specialty areas. In addition to course work, this should include submitting papers to journals and conferences and preparing for the specialty area comprehensive exam. Students at this stage in the program should work closely with their faculty mentor and other faculty who can provide mentoring.

Form Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Committee (SCEC)

The student's Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Committee, or SCEC, administers specialty area comprehensive examinations. This committee consists of five members of the graduate faculty, chosen by the student in consultation with the advisor. At least three members (including the advisor) must be graduate faculty of the Department of Sociology at CU-Boulder. Outside members are not required for the SCEC but are required for dissertation committees, as outlined below. Students must advise the Graduate Committee of the members of the SCEC via the Graduate Program Assistant before the end of the first semester of the third

program year. The Graduate Committee then approves the SCEC and sends the recommendation to the Graduate School.

Optional Primary and Secondary Committee Members

Each graduate student, with the approval of her or his advisor, has the option of naming one or two committee members as secondary members. The primary/secondary designation is not required, but some students find the distinction helpful to divide the labor among committee members. Secondary members of comprehensive examination committees may add their voices to committee decisions whenever they wish to, but especially when the primary members disagree or otherwise ask for the secondary members' input. There is no requirement or expectation that secondary members actively participate in oral defenses or evaluations of comp exams, but individual faculty members may feel comfortable signing off on the exam form only after they have read everything and have fully participated in all committee meetings. Because both primary and secondary members must sign various forms needed for the student to graduate, both should always have copies of examinations. They may attend committee meetings and defenses, but they are not required to do so. At most, only one committee member from outside the Department of Sociology at CU-Boulder can serve as a primary member. With the approval of the advisor, a student can make changes in primary or secondary status of committee members at any time.

Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Reading List

Students must develop a Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Reading List in concert with the advisor and other committee members. When the committee agrees that the list is comprehensive, each member must indicate his or her approval on a signature form. The student is responsible for obtaining approval and signatures.

The Specialty Area Reading List Approval Report is available on the website, http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/specialtyarea.html. Committee members also may indicate their approval by sending an email to the student, copied to the Graduate Program Assistant.

Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam

The purpose of the specialty area comprehensive exam is for the student to demonstrate mastery of the relevant literature in the area(s) of choice. Students must take this exam no later than the second full week of August after the fourth program year. Because students must be enrolled full time during the semester in which they take the exam, students are not advised to schedule the specialty comp during the summer months. Students must complete the required 45 hours of course work before taking the exam. The student and SCEC coordinate a date and time for the exam.

Exam Structure

The specialty comp will be a written exam in which the student answers several questions created by the SCEC (a typical structure is to give the student six questions and allow him/her to choose three questions to answer). The student has up to 24 hours to complete the exam. The student can choose to do the exam in one of three ways: 1. Complete the exam in one 24-hour period; 2. Complete the exam in two 12-hour periods; or 3. Complete the exam in three 8-hour periods. If the student chooses to take the exam over multiple days, the exam committee will provide the questions in sections. That is, a student taking the exam in two 12-hour periods will receive half of the exam on day one, and half on day two; a student taking the exam in three 8-hour periods will receive the exam in thirds.

Evaluating the Exam

The exam will be graded by the student's SCEC (or by its primary members). Evaluation options (set by the Graduate School) include: Pass, High Pass, Pass with revisions, or Fail. Students who fail this exam must retake it within a year. A second failure will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program, at which time a student may, upon approval from the Graduate Committee, work toward a terminal M.A. degree.

Application for Candidacy

At least three weeks before the specialty exam, students must obtain a "Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree" from the Graduate Program Assistant, who will process the application and forward it to the Graduate School.

Years Five and Six

Required Dissertation Hours

Students who have completed the specialty area comp exam must register for a minimum of 5 dissertation hours each fall and spring semester until passing the dissertation defense. Thirty total hours are required; no more than 10 dissertation hours taken prior to the specialty exam can count toward the total requirement. Students can take up to 10 hours in the same semester as the specialty exam. These count toward the required 30 hours.

Formation of the Dissertation Committee

Students must work with their advisors to form a committee of five members. The dissertation committee may, but does not necessarily, consist of the same five faculty members who served on the SCEC (provided that the outside member requirement was met). The student must designate one of these members as the committee chair, or two as co-chairs (one outside member may co-chair, but not chair, a committee). The composition of the committee should be as follows:

- At least *three* members (including the chair) must hold tenured or tenure-track regular Graduate Faculty appointments in the Department of Sociology at CU-Boulder.
- A *fourth* member may be from the Department of Sociology, from another department on campus, or from off campus. For off-campus faculty, the Graduate Committee will process the necessary faculty appointment under a special category. Because the department processes this person's appointment, he/she counts as an inside, rather than an outside member.
- A *fifth* member is designated as an *outside* member. This person must hold a regular or tenured Graduate Faculty appointment from a department outside the Department of Sociology.
- Students may, with the approval of the dissertation committee chair, add a sixth member if the addition is consistent with Graduate School policy.

Refer to the section, *Optional Primary and Secondary Committee Members*, above for guidance about assigning primary and secondary committee members. The Graduate Committee must

approve the composition of the dissertation committee before the student begins work on the dissertation. The student should provide the names and primary or secondary designations, if used, to the Graduate Program Assistant to obtain this approval.

Dissertation Proposal/Prospectus and Defense

Students must write a dissertation proposal and orally defend it before the dissertation committee before January of the fifth program year. The proposal should offer a working outline of the project, developed prior to the defense and in concert with (especially) the primary members of the committee. The Graduate Student Resources page of the department website has some examples and potentially useful information. Formats vary widely, but proposals are generally between 30 and 40 pages long (excluding tables and references). Students are not expected to submit finished chapters of a dissertation at this time. In general, a proposal should establish the topic(s) under investigation and state the relevant questions that have arisen thus far. It should also establish the methods and/or analytical techniques used in the initial stages of the research, keeping in mind that the need for additional or alternative strategies might arise as the research progresses. A timetable can help the student as well as the committee, but given the unpredictability of research, this, too, might be subject to change. In short, no specific requirements for a prospectus can apply to every project.

Students must allow committee members at least two weeks before an oral defense to review the proposal and determine project suitability. Committee members may suggest changes during this time. The student may officially work on the dissertation project only after the committee has approved the proposal or revised proposal with a majority vote. However, the work might well be underway (for example, as part of a course) at the time of the defense.

The student must bring a Dissertation Proposal Defense Report, available on the website (http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/defense.doc), to the defense. After obtaining signatures, the student must make two copies and follow the directions on the form for submission. An approved proposal is a contract between the committee and the student, who can expect to receive a Ph.D. only if he or she fulfills the proposal's objectives and successfully defends the dissertation.

Dissertation Research and Defense

Students should aim to complete dissertation research and defend by the end of the sixth program year. Primary committee members should read chapters or sections of the dissertation in progress. Secondary members may elect to read only the last draft, but the committee member(s) and the student may negotiate this.

The Graduate School's requirements for the written dissertation appear in "Thesis and Dissertation Specifications" on the Graduate School website at:

http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/index.html#thesis

The Ph.D. dissertation defense is a public event, and any student or faculty member may attend. At least four committee members must evaluate the defense as satisfactory for the student to pass. Candidates who fail the defense will have a second opportunity to defend. The committee must specify what the candidate should do to prepare. The department has no obligation to give students a third chance to defend the dissertation. A committee can (and usually does) require dissertation revisions even if the candidate passes the defense. In the case where a student fails his or her dissertation defense, he or she may reconfigure the dissertation committee partially or completely. The student will be required to re-defend the dissertation proposal, and the time between the first and a subsequent defense must be at least eight weeks.

Annual Review and Report

Department faculty conduct a review of all students, with a particular focus on students in years one through three, every spring. The process involves gathering information on student progress, identifying students who are struggling to make adequate progress, and providing those students with feedback for improvement. While the process focuses on helping students through the program, students who fail to respond to feedback over time may face probation or dismissal from the program.

Collecting Information

Faculty use feedback from three sources for the review: students, primary advisors, and other faculty.

1. *Student Progress Reports:* All students in the program are required to complete the Student Progress Report/Checklist (form available on the department website), which includes all program requirements. In the report, students record course work, teaching assignments, comp exams completed, papers presented, awards and grants received, and other information relevant to evaluation. Students are also expected to begin to assemble a C.V. (curriculum vitae) in their first year and to continue adding to it in subsequent years. All students must submit their progress report and C.V. to *both* the Graduate Program Assistant and their faculty advisor by the Friday before spring break.

2. *Faculty Advisor Assessments:* Each faculty member should assess whether individual meetings with their advisees are necessary prior to writing their own assessments of advisee progress. Such meetings should happen in early April. Faculty advisors should then complete advisor assessments (form available on the department website) for each of their advisees. Part of the assessment includes their estimation of whether the student meets, exceeds, or does not meet department standards for normal progress through the program. Faculty advisors must submit their assessments to the Graduate Program Assistant by April 15.

3. *Other Faculty Assessments:* For students in years one through three, the faculty collects additional information to identify students who are struggling early in the program. Thus, we ask that any faculty member who has worked with students in their first three years complete faculty assessments. Faculty members should assess students whom they have had in classes, have directed independent studies or guided research for, have had as teaching or research assistants, or have worked with in any other significant capacity.

Review Meeting

Using input from students, advisors, and other faculty members, the Graduate Committee will meet to identify struggling students. Any student who receives a B- (or lower) in any class or a B in two or more classes will be discussed, as well as students whom any faculty members identify as not making satisfactory progress. The faculty will then hold a review meeting to discuss those

students and assemble feedback for them. The Graduate Chair and the Graduate Program Assistant will be present for all assessments; other faculty members will be invited to participate only for those students with whom they have worked in any capacity.

Providing Feedback

Faculty will assemble feedback to be directed to the students identified, with an emphasis on areas in need of improvement and specific suggestions for how to work toward improvement in these areas. Following the annual review, the student's advisor will be expected to meet with the student to convey the findings as soon as possible. For students who have been identified as struggling (a) in many different facets of graduate life, and/or (b) for a second year in a row, the Graduate Committee, after consultation with the student's advisor, may choose to place the student on probationary status (which should be held in strict confidence). This status will come with a clear set of directives for improvement that the student will be expected to meet by the following annual review to stay in the program. If at the following review, the student has not made necessary improvement, the Graduate Chair will be responsible for advising the student to leave the program.

Time-Off Program

The Time-Off Program (TOP) allows students who have not passed the comprehensive exam stage to leave the graduate program for a specified period without penalty. Students in good standing who wish to take time off must: (1) petition the Graduate Committee for approval, and (2) apply for the TOP through the Registrar's Office. The six-year clock does not run while a student is on time off. Students who have passed the comprehensive exam and wish to take time off should contact the Graduate Program Assistant.

Graduate Student Petitions

Students may petition the Graduate Committee to request exceptions to rules when extenuating circumstances exist. A petition should take the form of a concise memo or letter, depending on the amount of explanation required. Students should address petitions to the Graduate Committee. The text of the petition should include:

- A summary of the issue

- A statement of student's preference of "audience" for the discussion of the petition, (elected student representatives to the Graduate Committee will be included in the committee's deliberations of the student's petition only by request of the petitioner)
- The names of the student's committee members
- The signatures of the student and his or her faculty advisor

Students should submit petitions to the Graduate Program Assistant. In general, the Graduate Committee places petitions on the agenda of the next meeting following submission. The Graduate Committee meets regularly during the academic year, but not during summer. Students should plan to submit petitions in time for consideration during the fall and spring semesters. The committee considers petitions on a case-by-case basis. The outcomes of past petitions submitted to the Graduate Committee do not constitute policy and in no way indicate the possible outcome of future petitions submitted by other students.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is considered a serious offense. In cases of plagiarism, the Graduate Committee will meet with the student's advisor to determine the appropriate action for the student.

Appendix A: Departmental Email Lists

Socyfac: This email list is for Department of Sociology faculty members only. Faculty members use this list for both official departmental communication and for personal communication among faculty. Graduate students may not subscribe to the *socyfac* email list. However, they may post to the *socyfac* list if the content of the message relates to official departmental business. Graduate students should not post personal messages to the *socyfac* list.

Socybiz: This email list is for official departmental communication with graduate students. All graduate students in the Department of Sociology are required to subscribe to this list, and faculty members may subscribe to *socybiz* if they so choose. Graduate students are required to check their official university account regularly. This is the only formal means of communication for graduate students in the Department of Sociology.

Graduate students and faculty members may post to *socybiz* if the content of the message relates to official departmental business. Graduate students or faculty members should not post personal messages to the *socybiz* list.

Appendix B: Helpful Email Links

Commencement: http://www.colorado.edu/commencement/

Financial Aid Office: http://www.colorado.edu/financialaid/

Graduate School: http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/current/index.html

Graduate School Forms: http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/

Graduate Teacher Program (GTP): http://www.colorado.edu/gtp/

In-state Tuition (Establishing Residency): http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/state-tuition

Registrar's Office: http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/

Transcript Ordering: http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/transcripts

Tuition and Fees: https://bursar.colorado.edu/

United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS): http://www.colorado.edu/uggs/

VPN Setup: http://www.colorado.edu/oit/services/network-internet-services/vpn

Writing Center: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html