

THE GUIDE TO GRADUATE STUDY
(THE BLUE BOOK)

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
BOSTON COLLEGE

REGULATIONS
AND REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE MASTER'S
AND DOCTORAL
DEGREES

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Sociology has two graduate programs: a Master's and a Ph.D. program. The Master's program is designed to educate students for whom the M.A. will be the final degree, as well as to train students who will subsequently go on to doctoral work. The Ph.D. program is designed for students who intend to devote themselves to teaching, research, and practice in sociology. It should be emphasized that the M.A. and Ph.D. programs are distinct from each other. Admission to the former does not automatically imply admission to the latter.

The following is a summary of the departmental rules, regulations, and policies which define these programs. The time requirements for completion of courses and qualifying examinations apply to those with no prior graduate training. Adjustments in expectations and requirements will be made when advanced credit is obtained for courses taken elsewhere. Individual cases which may warrant waiving the rules can be discussed and will be handled as flexibly as possible.

For the policies of the Boston College Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, see <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/policies-and-procedures.html>.

THE FACULTY ADVISOR

Each student must have a faculty advisor at all times. The Graduate Admissions Director and the Graduate Program Director will assign advisors to all incoming students, both M.A. and Ph.D., based on students' declared interests and in consultation with faculty members involved.

During their first year in the program, students are expected to meet with their advisors at least twice per semester to discuss their courses, research interests and projects, and career plans. At some point during their first year, students are then expected to select an advisor of their own choice (in consultation with the Graduate Program Director) -- that can be the same person who was assigned as their advisor in the beginning or a different one. As their interests change, students should feel free to change advisors. However, students must notify the Graduate Program Director so that they can update the records and inform the previous advisor of the change.

To ensure that all the formal program requirements are being met, in addition to meeting with their advisors, first and second year Ph.D. students as well as all M.A. students should consult the Graduate Program Director at least once during each term concerning their progress to date and their plans for the coming term. Ph.D. students in their third year and beyond do not need to stay in touch with the Graduate Program Director, but they should consult with their advisors at least once during each term concerning their progress to date and their plans for the coming term.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

The Master's degree is particularly suitable for students planning to subsequently apply to Ph.D. programs in order to prepare for scholarly careers in teaching at colleges and research universities. It can also be useful for students interested in practicing sociology in an applied setting (e.g., academic administration or policy research). The Master's degree is completed by passing ten courses (30 credit hours), including five required courses.

Required Courses

The core required courses for the M.A. degree are:

- One course in sociological theory (either SOCY7715 or SOCY7716).
- Two graduate-level courses in statistics (some options include SOCY7702, SOCY7703, SOCY7704, SOCY7705, SOCY7706, SOCY7708, SOCY7709).
- Social Inquiry Research Seminar (SOCY7710), offered in the fall semester of the first year. Note that this seminar also requires students to attend the first-year proseminar which meets weekly in conjunction with the departmental seminar.
- One additional methods course:
 - Students writing a Master's Thesis/Paper (see below) must attend the Empirical Research Seminar (SOCY7711) in the Spring semester of their first year. This seminar will help students develop and refine their M.A. Thesis/Paper projects.
 - Those who do not plan to write a Master's Thesis/Paper will select their additional methods course in consultation with the Graduate Program Director. This course can be on either qualitative or quantitative methods. With permission of the Graduate Program Director, the student may use SOCY5540 Internship in Sociology or an applied course aimed at building career skills (such as a course in writing grant proposals) to fulfill this requirement.
 - If a student originally planned to write a Master's Thesis/Paper but ultimately changes their mind, SOCY7711 may still be used to meet the second methods course requirement for that student.

Additional Requirements for M.A. Coursework

- Seven courses (21 credit hours) must be regular classroom courses (i.e., not independent study courses such as Readings and Research). Occasionally, a special course which is listed for administrative reasons as Readings and Research may be run on a classroom basis and thus is considered to be a classroom course.
- Up to three courses (9 credit hours) may be taken in an approved minor field or fields outside Sociology. Exceptions to this rule will be made on a case by case basis.
- Up to two courses (6 credit hours) of graduate work from another institution taken prior to enrollment at BC can be accepted as credit toward the M.A. degree. Students should apply

to the Director of Graduate Studies for transfer credit during their first semester at BC rather than waiting until they are ready to graduate.

MASTER'S THESIS OR MASTER'S PAPER

The Master's Thesis/Paper is required for all students in the Ph.D. program unless they have been waived out of this requirement (due to prior graduate work) by the Director of Graduate Studies. To remain in good standing, Ph.D. students must complete and defend their M.A. Thesis/Paper by September 30 of the third year.

The Master's Thesis/Paper is optional for students in the MA program. Students in the MA program must get the approval of the Graduate Program Director if they wish to pursue this option. The request to pursue this option should be made at the beginning of the second semester of study.

Thesis vs. Paper

The difference between a Master's Thesis and a Master's Paper is that a Thesis (but not a Paper) is officially submitted to the Grad School, and must therefore meet special formatting and administrative requirements. A Master's Thesis is filed in the library, and thus has a more official status as a public document, and may be eligible for external thesis awards. Other than these procedural differences, there is no substantive distinction between the two options. Whether the product is designated as a Master's Thesis or Master's Paper is the student's choice. Both should aim toward a standard of sufficiently high quality so as to be accepted for presentation at a professional conference or meeting.

A Master's Thesis/Paper may assume any of the following forms:

- An empirical study involving the analysis of quantitative or qualitative data.
- An original analytic contribution to theoretical literature in sociology.
- A policy analysis pertaining a particular social "issue" or "problem."

Requirements for both the Thesis and the Paper

- Students writing a Master's Thesis/Paper (which should include all students completing a Thesis/Paper as part of their Ph.D. training) are required to take SOCY7711 (Empirical Research Seminar), in the spring of the first year.
- Students writing a Master's Thesis/Paper are also required to take SOCY7761 (the Second Year Graduate Writing Seminar) which meets every other week over the fall and spring of the second year. Because the Second Year Writing Seminar meets every other week, it is worth only 3 credits. Students formally register for the seminar for one semester only (typically the Spring of their second year). In the Fall of the second year, students are encouraged to register for a Research and Readings (R&R) course with their Thesis/Paper advisor, specifically for the purpose of working on their Thesis/Paper.
- Students are required to work under the supervision of their Thesis/Paper advisor, who must be a member of the Sociology Department. The Thesis/Paper Advisor also serves as Committee Chair.

- A second committee member must be selected by the Committee Chair in consultation with the student and approved by the Graduate Studies Director. The second member may be any faculty member with a Ph.D., in the Sociology Department, Boston College, or another college or university.
- Students complete their Thesis/Paper in consultation with both committee members.
- Once both committee members agree that the student has produced a draft that is ready, an oral defense is scheduled, typically in one of the two departmental conference rooms, which can be booked through Administrative Staff.
- The oral defense involves a discussion of the paper with the Thesis/Paper committee, and including others as appropriate. The final grade for the M.A. Thesis/Paper can be Fail or Pass.
- After the oral defense has been completed, the Committee Chair should email the Graduate Program Director, copying the Administrative Staff, with the following information:
 - Title of the work
 - A brief abstract
 - Date of completion and grade
 - Committee members
 - Whether the student completed a Master's Thesis or Master's Paper

Additional requirements for Master's Thesis only:

Meet formatting and other administrative criteria established by the Morrissey Graduate School of Arts and Sciences: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/Thesis-checklist.html>.

Final Steps for Completing M.A.

M.A. students who will leave the program after graduating with their Master's degree should verify that Student Services has their correct graduation date on Agora Portal > courses and grades > student data. If the student plans on graduating sooner than the date given in Agora, the student should email the responsible person at the Grad School (currently Mara Stahl, stahlmar@bc.edu) to request a date change. If the graduation date is later than the date given on Agora, the student should fill out a Petition for Extension form (found on <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/mcas/gsas/pdf/Petition%20For%20Extension%20of%20Time.pdf>), get the appropriate signatures, make a copy for the Administrative Staff, and take it to the Grad School.

Ph.D. students that have completed all the requirements for the MA must submit a Master's Degree Option form,

<https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/mcas/gsas/pdf/Master%20Degree%20Option.pdf>,
signed by the Graduate Director, to the Grad School.

All MA graduation-related Paperwork should be submitted by December 1 in Fall, by August 1 in Summer, and by the date posted on the BC Academic Calendar in Spring.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Doctoral degree is completed by:

- Obtaining a Master's degree in the department, including the completion of ten courses, the completion of a Master's Thesis/Paper, and passing an oral defense (see Master's degree requirements above).
- Taking an additional eight courses, or the equivalent credits of independent research, beyond the Master's degree in Sociology, including a third graduate-level Research Methods course. The 54 credits (which can include both classroom and readings and research courses) needed for completion of the Ph.D. degree include eight required courses (see below).
- Meeting a one-year full-time residency requirement. (Full-time residency is a three-course load for two consecutive semesters, exclusive of the Summer session.)
- Passing a Comprehensive Examination, consisting of two Specialty Area Examinations and an approved Doctoral Dissertation proposal.
- Completing a doctoral Dissertation and passing an oral defense.
- Some of these requirements may be waived by the Graduate Program Director if the student completed graduate work at another university (see "Transfer from Other Programs" below).

Course Requirements

Among the 54 credits (classes plus independent research) needed for completion of the Ph.D. degree, there are eight required courses:

- A two-semester, 6-credit sequence in sociological theory (SOCY7715, SOCY7716). These should be completed by the end of the fourth semester.
- A three-course, 9-credit sequence in research methods: the Social Inquiry Research Seminar (SOCY7710), taken during the first semester of study; the Empirical Research Seminar (SOCY7711), taken during the second semester of study; and the Second Year Graduate Writing Seminar (SOCY7761), a year-long biweekly course taken in the second year of study. (Students officially register for SOCY7761 in the Spring of their second year; in the Fall of their second year, students working on their Theses/Papers are encouraged to register for a Research and Readings (R&R) course with their Thesis advisors while simultaneously attending SOCY7761).
- Two 3-credit graduate-level courses in statistics (some options include SOCY7702, SOCY7703, SOCY7704, SOCY7705, SOCY7706, SOCY7708, SOCY7709). These should be completed by the end of the fourth semester.
- An additional graduate research methods class (for example, in field research, feminist methodology, advanced quantitative techniques, workshop in historical sociology).
- It is also recommended that PhD students take at least one, and possibly two, substantive electives during their first year in the program.

In the third year, it is expected that most Ph.D. students will enroll in multiple independent Readings and Research (R&R) courses dedicated to working on their Area Examinations. However, students planning to take a Comprehensive Examination in Quantitative Methods are expected to take more classes and fewer independent research credits in their third year.

Second-Year Master's Thesis or Master's Paper

To remain in good standing, Ph.D. students must complete and defend their M.A. Thesis/Paper (described in the previous chapter of this guide) by September 30 of their third year. If the student fails to defend the Thesis/Paper by this time, they fall out of good standing, and may be at risk for losing their funding. The only Ph.D. students exempted from this rule are those whose prior Master's Theses from other graduate programs have been officially accepted as substituting for the BC M.A. Thesis/Paper by the Graduate Program Director (see "Transfer from Other Programs" policy below).

A revised (if necessary) version of the completed Thesis/Paper may be submitted as a component of one of the two Specialty Area Examinations required of all Ph.D. students. (See rules for "Publishable Paper Option" for Specialty Area Examinations.)

Transfer from Other Programs

Ph.D. students who enter with a prior M.A. or having taken graduate-level courses at another university may have one or more of the above Ph.D. requirements waived. Before their second year of study in the Ph.D. program, such students should submit their transcripts and their Master's Thesis/Paper (if applicable) to the Graduate Program Director for evaluation by the Graduate Studies Committee. The Graduate Studies Committee may also request course syllabi for review, if needed. The Committee will inform the student how many credits will be transferred, whether the prior Master's Thesis/Paper is considered as sufficient for fulfilling BC Master's Thesis/Paper requirement, and how this will affect the expected timeline for completing the remaining requirements.

- Ph.D. students with relatively recent M.A. degrees in sociology typically receive some credit (30 credits, or 10 courses) for their prior coursework. They may also have the BC M.A. degree requirement waived.
- Ph.D. students who have completed an M.A. at another university without doing a Master's Thesis/Paper as part of the degree will be required to complete a Thesis/Paper at Boston College.
- In addition to determining how many credits to transfer towards a student's Ph.D. and evaluating prior theses, the Graduate Study Committee will also decide which required courses can be waived, based on the courses listed in the student's transcript. The committee may also request course syllabi, if needed. Required courses in both the statistics sequence (for students who demonstrated proficiency at the level of SOCY7704 or above) and the theory sequence (for students who have both classical and contemporary theory courses in

their transcripts) can be waived. Courses in the research methods sequence are usually not waived, except in special circumstances.

- Ph.D. students with relatively recent M.A. degrees in fields other than sociology, including interdisciplinary degrees, may receive credit for some prior coursework if they can demonstrate the sociological character of the courses in question. They may also have the Master's Thesis/Paper requirement waived if they can demonstrate the sociological character of their prior Thesis. However, such students are nevertheless strongly encouraged to acquire a BC sociology Master's Degree.

Comprehensive Examinations

The Comprehensive Examination consists of three parts: two examinations in specialty areas of the student's choice and a doctoral Dissertation proposal. Grades to be assigned for each component are Pass or Fail. A student must obtain a grade of at least Pass on each component of the examination.

Students who enter the Ph.D. program without a prior Master's degree are expected to pass two specialty Area Examinations by the end of their sixth semester of study (end of the third year); those who entered the program with 30 credits towards their degree (i.e., those with prior Sociology M.A. from BC or another university) are expected to pass their two specialty examinations by the end of their fourth semester of study (end of the second year). Those with minimal coursework transfers (e.g., two courses from their prior Master's degree) are expected to follow a regular timeline (i.e., pass their specialty Area Examinations by the end of their sixth semester of study). For any special cases, the Graduate Studies Committee will provide specific instructions regarding the expected timeline when the coursework transfer decision is made (during the first semester at BC).

For each specialty Area Examination, students must have a committee consisting of two members. The membership of the two committees should ordinarily not overlap. Members include:

- A Chair who is selected by the student (with that faculty member's consent). The Chair must be a member of the Sociology Department.
- A second member, who is selected by the committee chair in consultation with the student. The second member may be any faculty member with a Ph.D., in the Sociology Department, Boston College, or another college or university.

The Graduate Program Director must approve the suggested areas (for oral and take-home examination options) and committee members (for all examination options). Normally, s/he will follow the student's suggestions but, in some cases, s/he might suggest alternatives for the areas or for the committee's second member. The student may petition the Graduate Program Director for permission to have a single faculty member serve on both committees if s/he absolutely cannot find anyone else with the necessary expertise, but the norm is to work with a total of four faculty members on the two committees. Please note: the two specialty Area Examination committees should be established well ahead of the completion of the exam.

Students are encouraged to take Readings and Research courses with committee members to prepare for their Area Examinations. In lieu of a final Paper, students may request that the examination be used to determine the final grade.

Faculty Clusters

Faculty clusters are groups of faculty members with common areas of expertise who agree to serve on Area Examinations on a regular basis. A current list of sociology faculty clusters is maintained on the departmental website, here: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/sociology/people/faculty-clusters.html>. The guidelines for faculty clusters are as follows:

To be listed as a faculty cluster, a minimum of three Boston College faculty members must agree to serve on Area Examination committees in a sociological subfield, including assisting in preparing reading lists, on a regular basis. A minimum of two of these faculty members must be members of the Boston College sociology department. If the number of faculty affiliated with a cluster falls below three (due to retirement, etc.), an additional affiliated faculty member must be recruited, or the cluster designation will be removed from the departmental website. Clusters have the option of developing lists of core readings in their particular subfields. These core reading lists serve as a starting point for Ph.D. students to build their individual Area Exam reading lists.

Specialty Area Examination Options

A Specialty Area Examination may take one of the following forms:

- A Paper of publishable quality submitted to a refereed scholarly journal.
- A take-home examination in an approved area of specialization, based on an approved reading list.
- A specialty Area Exam in quantitative methods, involving an oral exam based on a series of brief reports submitted in advance of the oral examination, and designed to demonstrate competence in a variety of advanced statistical methods. This option can be used to fulfill only one of the two Area Exams.
- A specialty Area Exam in qualitative methods, in which the student will demonstrate knowledge of a broad range of qualitative methods, the benefits and drawbacks of each, as well as the overall benefits and drawbacks of qualitative versus quantitative research styles.
- A scholarly review essay in the spirit of the *Annual Review of Sociology*. This option can be used to fulfill only one of the two Area Exams.

Take-Home Examination Option

Take-home specialty Area Exams are three-day, take-home exams. They may be taken in any of the subfields recognized as sections by the American Sociological Association (ASA), located at <https://www.asanet.org/communities-and-sections/sections/current-sections/>), in any of the official faculty clusters (described above, and located at <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc->

web/schools/mcas/departments/sociology/people/faculty-clusters.html), or in other areas of sufficient breadth, to be cleared by the Graduate Program Director. The area so defined must have a breadth comparable to those listed, and cannot be a narrowly-defined specialty within one of those areas (e.g., on “Aging and the Life Course,” but not on “Retirement” or “The Social Psychology of Aging”). In picking two areas, the student should avoid picking areas in which there is so much overlap that they might be seen as a single specialty. The BC sociology department also has a special Area Exam in advanced quantitative methods (see below).

The reading list that serves as the basis for a take-home examination should be approximately comparable to 2 graduate course syllabi, and is developed by the student in consultation with the two committee members. Based on the reading list, the student and committee members develop a list of 5-8 study questions, from which the final two questions will be drawn.

The questions are generally e-mailed to the student by the Chair of the specialty Area Exam committee or by the Administrative Staff at 9 a.m. on an agreed-upon day. The answers should be returned electronically to the person who sent out the original exam by 9 a.m. three days later (e.g., the student receives the exam on Friday morning and returns it by Monday morning). If there is a need to deviate from this time schedule, approval from the Graduate Program Director is necessary. For example, students for whom English is not a native language may be granted extra time. Students are allowed no technical (library assistance, AI tools, etc.) or intellectual assistance in the writing of their specialty Area Exams. The written product of the take-home exam should ordinarily be approximately 20 pages, double-spaced (i.e., 2 essays of approximately 10 pages each, not including bibliography).

The Specialty Area Exam Committee will normally grade the Area Exam within two weeks, and in any event, by a date not more than 30 days from its completion. Upon the grading of the exam, the student and their committee members should schedule a one-hour feedback meeting to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the exam. The final grade will be determined after that meeting, and will be one of the following: Pass, Revise and Resubmit, or Fail. A grade of at least Pass is required by both readers.

In the event that the student receives a Revise and Resubmit, they will have two weeks to provide a revised version of the exam based on the comments of the Specialty Area Exam Committee on the original version. The Revise and Resubmit version will be given a grade of Pass or Fail. Upon passing the exam, the student should follow the “Final Steps” instructions below.

Publishable Paper Option

To fulfill one or both of the specialty Area Examinations, a student may prepare a paper to be submitted for publication to a refereed sociology journal. Students may also petition the Graduate Program Director to permit a submission to a journal outside the discipline if they can demonstrate the sociological character of their work. The paper to be submitted should be single-authored. However, with the approval of the student’s two-member examination committee, a co-authored paper may be submitted for review, on the condition that the student has had

primary responsibility for the research and writing and is listed as first author on the version of the paper being submitted.

Students may use the second year Master's Thesis/Paper as the basis for a paper-format Area Exam. If the committee agrees that it is already of publishable quality, a Master's Thesis/Paper could on rare occasions be accepted as an Area Exam as-is. However, in most cases a Master's Thesis/Paper will require further revision before being submitted for publication.

Following a judgment by the two members of the examination committee that the Paper is of sufficiently high quality to be submitted for publication to a refereed journal, a one-hour oral examination will be scheduled to discuss both the Paper and the general specialty area within which the Paper is situated. Following the oral examination on the Paper and specialty area, the student will be awarded a grade of Pass or Fail. The examination concludes when, following the successful completion of the oral examination, the Paper is submitted for publication to the referred journal selected by the student and approved by the committee, at which point the student should follow the "Final Steps" instructions below.

Quantitative Methods Option

In the Quantitative Methods examination, students review a variety of different statistical methods and prepare brief reports on each method. The goal is to demonstrate that they understand how to interpret the results of their analysis and understand the relevant statistics. The set of reports generally requires a few months to prepare. The amount of material covered is to be equivalent to two statistics courses beyond the level of SOCY7703. (Some possibilities include SOCY7704 Topics in Multivariate Statistics, SOCY7705 Advanced Statistics, and SOCY7706 Longitudinal Analysis.) Students can decide in consultation with the faculty members teaching graduate statistics courses whether they need to attend particular courses or already have sufficient background to use the methods without additional formal instruction. The general practice is to get a written agreement with the two committee members in advance concerning which statistical methods will be covered. Students are urged to consult with the faculty members teaching graduate statistics courses for help in the selection of the appropriate methods to be included. A one-hour oral examination will also be given that will be based on the analysis presented in these reports. Following the oral examination, the committee will award the student with a grade of Pass or Fail. Upon passing the exam, the student should follow the "Final Steps" instructions below.

Qualitative Methods Option

In the Qualitative Methods examination, the student will demonstrate knowledge of a broad range of qualitative methods, the benefits and drawbacks of each, as well as the overall benefits and drawbacks of qualitative versus quantitative research styles. The format is a 72-hour take-home exam including 12 questions. For further information about the questions and how to prepare for the qualitative methods exam, please contact the members of the Qualitative Methods Exam Committee (currently Josh Seim and Shawn McGuffey).

The questions are generally e-mailed to the student by the Chair of the exam committee or by the Administrative Staff at 9 a.m. on an agreed-upon day. The answers should be returned electronically to the person who sent out the original exam by 9 a.m. three days later (e.g., the student receives the exam on Friday morning and returns it by Monday morning). If there is a need to deviate from this time schedule, approval from the Graduate Program Director is necessary. For example, students for whom English is not a native language may be granted extra time. Students are allowed no technical (library assistance, AI tools, etc.) or intellectual assistance in the writing of their specialty Area Exams.

The Exam Committee will normally grade the Area Exam within two weeks, and in any event, by a date not more than 30 days from its completion. Upon the grading of the exam, the student and their committee members should schedule a one-hour feedback meeting to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the exam. The final grade will be determined after that meeting, and will be one of the following: Pass, Revise and Resubmit, or Fail. A grade of at least Pass is required by both readers.

In the event that the student receives a Revise and Resubmit, they will have two weeks to provide a revised version of the exam based on the comments of the Specialty Area Exam Committee on the original version. The Revise and Resubmit version will be given a grade of Pass or Fail. Upon passing the exam, the student should follow the “Final Steps” instructions below.

Review Essay Option

For *one* area exam *only*, students may choose to write a scholarly review essay, in the spirit of the *Annual Review of Sociology*, of approximately 10,000 words, including a bibliography that would typically include 40-60 scholarly works. The review essay will cover the field or topic within sociology in which the student wishes to develop competence. It should present a comprehensive account of scholarly approaches to the field or topic, include critical analysis of the literature, and identify gaps where new contributions can be made. In an ideal case, the essay becomes the core of the literature review for the dissertation proposal. This may not always be the case. But it may be useful, when putting together the list of scholarly works and deciding on the content of the essay, to keep this goal in mind.

The subject of the review essay *must* be developed in collaboration between the student and their advisor. With the advisor’s input, the student will come up with a preliminary list of scholarly works to include in the essay. It is expected that as the student develops the essay, they will discover and incorporate additional relevant scholarly works. Once the topic and initial list have been developed, feedback should be sought from a second committee member.

Following a judgment by the two members of the examination committee that the essay is ready, a one-hour oral defense will be scheduled. Following the defense, the student will be awarded a grade of Pass or Fail. Upon passing, the student should follow the “Final Steps” instructions below.

Final Steps for Specialty Area Examinations

Once the student receives a passing grade for each specialty Area Exam, the Committee Chair should email the Graduate Program Director, copying the Administrative Staff, with the student's name, the title of the work, the committee members, the grade, and the completion date.

Doctoral Dissertation

No more than eight consecutive years may pass between the beginning of doctoral studies and the awarding of the degree. Within this limit, no more than five years may pass between the completion of the Ph.D. Comprehensives (two Area Exams + Dissertation Proposal) and the oral defense of the Dissertation. Extensions beyond these limits may be made only with departmental recommendation and the approval of the Dean.

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

As part of the Comprehensive Examination, students must complete a Dissertation proposal, present that proposal to their Dissertation committee, and subsequently receive a passing grade from the committee. When committee members agree that the proposal is ready for approval, an announcement including the proposal abstract should be sent to the department, and a presentation date scheduled for two weeks later. Interested community members can then request the full proposal and/or ask to attend the presentation event; the student can also invite any guests as desired.

The first part of the defense is a public event including the student, the committee, and any additional audience members. At this part of the defense:

- The student will make a formal oral presentation, explaining the dissertation topic, describing the theoretical framework, and detailing the proposed methods.
- The student will respond to questions from committee members and others in the audience.

The second part of the defense includes the student and committee members only. At this part of the defense:

- The student and the committee will have a more informal discussion of the proposed dissertation; the committee will also provide detailed feedback on the oral presentation.
- The committee will, without the student present, decide on a grade for the exam, which can be either Pass or Fail. The grade will focus on the substance of the proposal, not the style of the oral presentation.

Following the proposal defense, the committee chairperson should notify the Director of Graduate Studies, who will file the committee composition information with the Morrissey

Graduate College: <https://docs.google.com/a/bc.edu/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd-bkGpoADJX1nrqt8VWp0DIzWGJLu1MVVW3RQ78NTMUNbIsA/viewform?c=0&w=1>.

Dissertation Committee

The composition of the Dissertation committee is subject to the following guidelines:

- The Committee will consist of at least three faculty members, one of whom will be its Chair.
- The Chair, and at least one other member of the Committee, must be full-time faculty members in the Boston College Department of Sociology.
- The composition of each Committee must be approved by the Graduate Program Director. S/he will also review any requests for departures from the above rules.

Dissertation Formats

Ph.D. students may choose to write their dissertation in the traditional **monograph style**, with a single overall argument carried throughout the entire document. Such dissertations are easily converted into book manuscripts.

Alternatively, Ph.D. students may choose to write their dissertations in the **three-article style**. The rules for such dissertations are as follows:

- The student produces three papers prepared as journal articles, as well as introduction and conclusion chapters framing these articles, for a total of at least five chapters.
- The student's dissertation committee must agree to the three-article format. The committee will decide whether or not a three-article format is suitable for the proposed dissertation and acceptable to all members of the committee. There may be many research topics, research questions, and types of data for which this model will not be considered appropriate by the student's committee.
- The dissertation proposal must introduce and outline each of the three articles. If the student later decides that the traditional monograph format is more desirable for her or his dissertation, the student can petition the dissertation committee to shift to the traditional monograph format, a request that will be routinely granted.
- The three articles should meet the following criteria:
 - The three articles must all be in the same sub-area of sociology. The student's committee will make the determination as to how closely linked the articles can or must be.
 - No articles written prior to entry into our graduate program can be counted.
 - The three articles must fit the criterion of being based primarily on original quantitative or qualitative empirical research. However, with the permission of the dissertation committee, the student may be allowed to include one article that does not fit this criterion as it may not call for original data collection or preparation. Some examples include, but are not limited to: theoretical articles, policy essays, and methodology

articles. As they are completed, these chapters should be submitted for publication as soon as possible.

- The corpus of five chapters (which includes the three articles plus the introduction and conclusion) must be approved by the student's committee as representing a contribution to the field at least comparable to that of a typical monograph style dissertation in our department. The final determination of dissertation acceptance will be based on the quality of the research and the importance of the overall contribution of the work as reflected by the articles as a set.

Other Dissertation Requirements

The Dissertation committee and the student will determine a mutually understood procedure and timetable for reviewing the Dissertation in progress.

The student and the Dissertation committee will meet periodically to review the Dissertation in progress. In no instance will the student be permitted to submit a completed version of the Thesis before the Dissertation committee has had ample time for review of significant segments (as specified in the timetable).

The student must submit what s/he believes to be a completed version of the Thesis to the Dissertation committee at least eight weeks prior to the expected date of the oral defense. The expected date of the defense will be decided upon by the student and the Committee. The Dissertation committee may request revisions, which could delay the expected date of the oral defense. Such requests for revisions must be made in writing within four weeks after the date of receipt of the draft.

When all members of the Committee approve, the date of the oral defense may be established. Students have the option of appointing, in consultation with the Dissertation Committee Chair, additional readers who have not served on the student's Dissertation committee. The oral defense is considered a public meeting to which the Department faculty, students, and any other interested members of the academic community are invited. Passing will be determined by a majority vote of the final Oral Committee. In order to pass the oral defense, the student may be required to make certain revisions before the final version of the Dissertation is filed with the Graduate Office.

Administrative Deadlines

In addition to the academic requirements above, there are also significant administrative requirements that must be met in order to complete the dissertation and receive the Ph.D. Students are responsible for meeting the following administrative deadlines:

- 4 months in advance:
 - Student should verify that they are registered and enrolled (generally in either SOCY9999 Doctoral Continuation or SOCY9981 Dissertation Seminar). If they are not registered and enrolled, the student must contact the Director of Graduate Studies immediately.

- Students should verify that Student Services has their correct graduation date on Agora, by clicking on “Graduation Information - View/Update.” If the student plans on graduating sooner than the date given in Agora, the student should email the responsible person at the Grad School (currently Mara Stahl, stahlmar@bc.edu) and request a date change. If the graduation date is later than the date given on Agora, the student should fill out a Petition for Extension form (<https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/mcas/gsas/pdf/Petition%20For%20Extension%20of%20Time.pdf>), get the appropriate electronic signatures, and e-mail to Mara Stahl, copying the Director of Graduate Studies.
- Students should check the the Grad School website (<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/dissertation-checklist.html>) for instructions on completing and submitting the dissertation.
- 2-4 weeks in advance:
 - Student should ask Administrative Staff to reserve a room for the defense
- 1 week in advance:
 - Student should provide Administrative Staff with the dissertation title, abstract, and committee member names.
 - Administrative Staff should an invitation to the oral defense to the department, providing information on: dissertation title, abstract, committee members, place, date and time. The oral defense is considered a public meeting to which the Department faculty, students, and any other interested members of the academic community are invited.

Final Steps

To help students through this final stage, the responsibilities of the Student, Committee Chair, and Graduate Program Director are listed below.

- Student:
 - After the defense, to fill out the dissertation signature page (<https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/mcas/gsas/pdf/BostonCollegeSignaturePage.pdf>), circulate to the committee for their electronic signatures, and send to the relevant person at the Grad School, currently Mara Stahl, stahlmar@bc.edu.
- Committee Chair:
 - After the defense, to e-mail the Graduate Program Director with the information to announce, including the dissertation title and abstract, as well as the names and institutional affiliations of the other committee members.
- Graduate Program Director:
 - To announce the completed dissertation defense to the department.
 - To confirm that all requirements for the Ph.D. have been met as part of the the Grad School clearance process.

A TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETING PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

The following timetable for meeting the Ph.D. requirements is intended to provide students with “progress benchmarks” for each of their years of study within the Department. If possible, students are encouraged to complete these requirements earlier than indicated here. This timetable applies to those without prior M.A coursework (or with two courses or fewer transferred). Those incoming with 30 credits counted towards their BC Ph.D. should subtract one year from the timeline and skip the courses waived for them by the Graduate Studies Committee.

FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete SOCY7710: Social Inquiry Research Seminar and SOCY7711: Empirical Research Seminar.• Complete a minimum of one graduate theory course (SOCY7715 or SOCY7716) and preferably at least one graduate statistics course (however, if you choose SOCY7702 as one of your statistics courses, it is recommended that you take SOCY7703 in the following semester).• Take at least one, or possibly two, substantive electives.• Obtain a total of 18 credits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete required statistics courses and at least one but preferably two of required theory courses.• Take elective courses in the subfields in which you are planning to take your Comprehensive Exams; if such courses are not available that year, enroll in Readings and Research (R&R) courses to prepare for exams.• Complete or plan to complete the residency requirement.• Enroll in SOCY7761: Second Year Writing Seminar (typically offered in both the Fall and the Spring semester, with biweekly meetings; students officially register for it in the Spring), and at least one additional R&R or other non-classroom course (most students take an R&R with their Thesis advisor in the Fall).• Complete Second Year Master’s Thesis/Paper by June 1.• Obtain a total of 18 credits through a combination of coursework and independent research (R&R) courses.

<p>THIRD YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the final 18 credits. Most students will enroll in three-credit R&Rs and/or six-credit Research Practicums (RPs). Students planning to take an exam in Quantitative Methods might opt for taking more formal courses and fewer R&R or RP credits. Complete an additional course in research methods by the end of the Spring semester. • Complete Specialty Area Exams by the end of the summer. • Constitute Doctoral Dissertation committee. • Join the Dissertation Seminar. 	<p>FOURTH YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete public presentation of Doctoral Dissertation Proposal by end of Spring semester. Apply for Dissertation Fellowships. • Continue in Dissertation Seminar.
<p>FIFTH/SIXTH YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Doctoral Dissertation. • Complete Oral Defense of the Dissertation. 	

Students should be in ongoing communication with their academic advisors concerning their progress in meeting these benchmarks, and will be evaluated annually on this basis.

CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED QUANTITATIVE METHODS

The Certificate in Advanced Quantitative Methods is designed to provide formal recognition of a sociology M.A. or Ph.D. student's quantitative methods skills. The certificate appears on the M.A. or Ph.D. students' transcript upon graduation. The certificate is only available to graduate students within the BC Sociology Department.

Students interested in the certificate should contact the Director of Graduate Studies. To meet the requirements to receive the certificate, the student must complete five approved advanced quantitative courses beyond the level of Introductory Statistics (SOCY7702).

Eligible courses include:

- SOCY5516 Survey Methodology
- SOCY7703 Multivariate Statistics
- SOCY7704 Regression Models for Categorical Data
- SOCY7706 Longitudinal Data Analysis
- SOCY7708 Hierarchical Linear Modeling
- SOCY7709 Quantitative Data Management
- SOCY7713 Structural Equation Modeling
- SOCY7717 Event History Analysis and Sequence Analysis

Other courses, including courses from other departments within BC and within the Graduate Consortium, may be counted toward the certificate with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.

A student may also count one semester of "Topics in Advanced Quantitative Methods" (SOCY7103) to work individually on quantitative methodological skills and research.

TA ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Priority will be given for TAs to be assigned to the following classes/professors in the following order:

- Classes with a minimum projected enrollment of 60, or Undergraduate Statistics (SOCY2200) or Graduate Statistics (SOCY7702 and SOCY7703), who will have priority for one TA.
- Classes with a minimum projected enrollment of 80, who will have priority for two TAs.
- Faculty members whose combined enrollments (two courses) are largest, or who are teaching Undergraduate Research Methods (SOCY2210), the Social Inquiry Research Seminar (SOCY7710) or Undergraduate Social Theory (SOCY2215).
- Depending on availability, the Department Chair may be assigned an RA.

Under university policy, TAs are supposed to work a maximum average of 20 hours per week. Our departmental norm, however, is for TAs to work an average of approximately 15 hours per week, with some variation around this average. TAs whose primary responsibilities include only grading midterm and final exams might expect to work approximately 12 hours per week. TAs who are responsible for discussion sections (or for taking on other teaching responsibilities) might expect to work closer to 17 hours. Over the course of three years of TA duties, these differences in workloads should average out to about 15 hours per week for any given student. Although leading discussion sections typically requires more time, students may choose such TA assignments because they provide valuable teaching experience, while first-year students may prefer teaching assignments with a lighter workload.

Prior to agreeing to a particular TA assignment, it is the faculty member's responsibility to let the student know about the duties that will be expected of them. It is the student's responsibility to let the faculty member know if he/she is unable perform any of these duties for any reason (e.g., a time conflict with a course the student is taking). Such potential conflicts need to be communicated to the Graduate Program Director at least one month before the beginning of the class in question in case alternative arrangements need to be made.

Faculty members are urged to do a significant portion of their own grading, even if their course has one or more TAs.

Instructors and TAs who encounter problems in their working relationship that they cannot resolve between themselves should consult the Graduate Program Director.

TEACHING SOCIOLOGY

The Department normally funds first, second, and third year doctoral students through Teaching Assistantships (TAs), and fourth and fifth year doctoral students through Teaching Fellowships (TFs). Whereas TAs are assigned to a professor's course to help with grading and other tasks, TFs are responsible for preparing and teaching their own courses. (TAs generally assist with one course per semester; TFs generally teach two courses per academic year.) The Graduate Program Director is responsible for making TA assignments; the Chair for assigning TFs. While the curriculum needs may require that students assist in or teach courses that are not their first choice, both the Graduate Program Director and Department Chair try to accommodate student preferences in making these assignments.

Support for New Graduate Teaching Fellows

Ph.D. students typically begin teaching their own classes in their 4th year, as Teaching Fellows (TFs). Support for new TFs is available through the BC Center for Teaching Excellence and at the departmental level.

Support from the Center for Teaching Excellence

It is strongly recommended that the semester before teaching their first course, new TFs begin the process of acquiring the Apprenticeship in College Teaching certificate sponsored by the Boston College Center for Teaching Excellence: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/academics/sites/center-for-teaching-excellence/programs-events/graduate-student-programs.html>. The apprenticeship is a free, non-credit-bearing program that prepares graduate students and postdoctoral fellows for teaching. Acquiring the CTE certificate is an excellent way to prepare for the academic job market.

More specifically, it is strongly recommended that the semester before teaching their first course, new TFs attend at least four of the CTE program's hour-long seminars, and that they complete the program during their first year as Teaching Fellows. Especially helpful for preparing the semester before teaching are "Course Design," "Assignment Design," "Grading for Learning," and "Difficult Dialogues."

Support from the Department

New Teaching Fellows will receive teaching mentorship and support from the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Peer Teaching Mentor (PTM). The PTM is a Ph.D. student with demonstrated excellence in teaching, who will support new TFs during the summer before teaching their first course and during their first semester of teaching.

The following is a timeline of key dates for new TF support:

- By April 30, the PTM will contact all incoming TFs, copying the Director of Undergraduate Studies, to make plans for working together over the summer and fall.

- By July 1, syllabi for all courses taught by new TFs will be reviewed by the PTM (for content) and submitted for review to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (for Core alignment).
- By August 31, the PTM and Director of Undergraduate Studies agree on a date for a joint meeting of the Undergraduate Studies Committee and PTM (to discuss classroom observations, feedback, and additional support--see below).
- By October 15, faculty members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee will have made at least one classroom observation for each new Teaching Fellow.
- By November 1, there will be a joint meeting of the PTM and faculty members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Items to discuss include: classroom observations, the progress of new TFs, constructive feedback to be conveyed to the new TFs, and the potential need for additional supports.
- By the beginning of Spring classes, the PTM will meet with all the new TFs to discuss their fall teaching evaluations.

The course evaluations of all Teaching Fellows will also be reviewed by the Department Chair in January of each year. If course evaluations suggest that additional supports are needed, the Chair will bring this to the attention of the Teaching Fellow, their advisor, and the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Review and Approval of Syllabi

The following syllabi must be submitted to the Undergraduate Studies Director for review and approval by July 1 (for fall courses) and December 1 (for spring courses):

- Draft syllabi for all courses to be taught by first-year Teaching Fellows.
- Draft syllabi for existing Core courses to be taught by Teaching Fellows who have not taught them before (e.g., Introduction to Sociology for first-year students). All Core courses must conform to the mission for the social science Core outlined below.

All new Core courses (i.e., new course number and title) must be submitted to the University Core Renewal Committee for review much farther in advance. The application can be found on the Core Curriculum website: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/faculty-resources.html>.

Mission for Core Social Science Classes

The social sciences help us better understand the social worlds in which we live. The social science Core requirement explores the influences on the way people think, feel, and behave in those social worlds by considering the nature of the individual, institutions, and social interactions. Although the social science disciplines have different approaches, they share a common methodology—a theory-driven empirical analysis of data that has relevance to real-world issues. The majority of complex problems that we face in today’s world have economic, political, psychological, and sociological dimensions. The social sciences help students to

develop skills to grasp the complexity of the world and to understand themselves and their place in the world.

Core syllabi should illustrate how the course engages with any number of the following learning goals that are relevant to their course:

- Demonstrate the critical, mathematical, informational, analytic, expressive, and creative skills that are essential tools of the educated person well-prepared for a meaningful life and vocation.
- Understand the major ideas and methods of inquiry of the scholarly disciplines that comprise the university and be able to use those methods of inquiry as beginning practitioners to address complex contemporary problems.
- Be able to identify and articulate the strengths and limitations of the disciplines and the relationship of the disciplines to one another, and demonstrate an understanding of the breadth and diversity of human knowledge as well as its openness to integration in more comprehensive wholes.
- Be conversant with and able to discuss intelligently enduring questions and issues that are fundamental to human inquiry and that have shaped the traditions from which the university has emerged.
- Demonstrate the ability to apply more than one disciplinary perspective to the same enduring question or complex contemporary problem.
- Be familiar with the scholarly exploration of religious faith and understand how faith and reason are related in the search for truth.
- Demonstrate the ability to examine their values and experiences and integrate what they learn with the principles that guide their lives.
- Be prepared and disposed to use their talents and education as engaged global citizens and responsible leaders in service of the common good.

Additional Rules and Guidelines for Graduate Student Teachers

All students teaching courses for the department (whether as Teaching Fellows or as Part-Time faculty) must share their course syllabus on Canvas before the beginning of classes (*see* <http://cteresources.bc.edu/documentation/canvas-quickstart/share-your-syllabus/>).

Students teaching courses for the department (whether as Teaching Fellows or as Part-Time faculty) must be present for all classes, except in the case of illness or emergency. If the student wishes to plan an absence from a class, he or she should first get written permission from the Department Chair.

If there is concern over possible dereliction of duty by a graduate student teacher, the student will be notified by the Graduate Program Director or the Chair that he or she has 24 hours to respond to that concern in writing. The case will be investigated immediately by the Graduate Studies Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Chair as to what remedial action, if any, should be taken.

FUNDING ISSUES FOR PH.D. STUDENTS

Tuition Remission and Stipends

Ordinarily, entering Ph.D. students who come in without prior Sociology Master's degree receive five years of university support, provided they remain in good academic standing. The typical five-year package includes tuition remission and a stipend for the first three academic years. For those three years, the students are ordinarily asked to serve as a Teaching Assistant for one course per semester. Teaching Assistant duties should be limited to work related to the course to which they have been assigned. Fourth- and fifth-year funding is typically linked to serving as a Teaching Fellow (i.e., teaching his or her own course) for two courses over the course of a year.

Except in cases of students who are fully funded from external sources, Ph.D. students are expected to complete five years of service to the department in return for their university support. All Ph.D. students are also encouraged to seek financial support and fellowships from external funding sources, such as educational foundations and various governmental agencies. In addition to sometimes providing a larger amount of financial assistance, being awarded fellowships and research grants may add to the prestige of one's scholarship and help secure employment at the time of graduation.

Students who enter with advanced standing due to graduate work completed elsewhere will normally be guaranteed fewer than five years of support. For example, an entering doctoral student with the equivalent of a Master's degree in Sociology from Boston College (30 credits) would usually be offered support for 4 as opposed to 5 years. This would typically include a stipend for serving as a Teaching Assistant for two years followed by two years of support for serving as a Teaching Fellow. If qualified and with the permission of the Department Chair, such students may shift from being TA's to being TF's during their second year.

Dissertation Fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis by the graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Students awarded a Dissertation Fellowship receive the same amount as a TF, and are not eligible for additional BC funding for serving as a TA, TF, or RA (during the academic year) while holding this fellowship.

Conference/Travel Expenses

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences provides partial funding for graduate students to travel to one conference per year with the authorization of the Graduate School Dean. Details and forms are available online at: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/morrissey/sites/current-graduate-students/forms/graduate-student-reimbursement-guidelines.html>.

TAKING COURSES OUTSIDE BOSTON COLLEGE SOCIOLOGY

The Department encourages M.A. and Ph.D. students to take courses within other departments at Boston College, provided that they are approved by the student's faculty advisor. There is no limit on the number of courses students may take in other departments. However, only graduate-level or mixed graduate/undergraduate-level courses can be counted toward a student's graduate degree.

The Department also encourages M.A. and Ph.D. students to take one graduate-level course per semester at another university through consortium arrangements. Boston College is a member of a consortium that includes Boston University, Brandeis, and Tufts. If the instructor agrees, BC sociology students should be able to take any graduate-level class at any of these institutions. Boston College is also a member of the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, which offers an array of consortium-specific courses each semester (<http://mit.edu/gcws>). There is no limit on the total number of such courses a student may take, provided that they are approved by the student's faculty advisor.

Best Practices for Cross-Registration (in the following order):

1. Discuss with your advisor
2. Reach out to the instructor to ask about availability
3. Download the cross-registration form, located here:
https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/offices/student-services/registrar/crossregform_2021-editable.pdf
4. Fill out the top part of the form and insert your signature
5. Get all the signatures on the BC (lower-left) side of the form. Please note that the part where it says "BC Dean's" signature should actually be signed by the Director of Graduate Studies
6. Get signatures from the host (lower-right) side (instructor, then registrar)
7. Send the completed form to BC student services

If you are taking a class in the Women's Studies consortium, you also need to fill out their online form: <https://www.gcws.mit.edu/applications>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The sociology department upholds the Boston College policy on academic integrity (see https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/academics/sites/university-catalog/policies-procedures.html#tab-academic_integrity_policies). The following are examples of violations of academic integrity:

- Plagiarism. (a) Verbatim copying of material without stating sources; (b) blatant paraphrasing in major portions of a Paper or other written work (e.g., Dissertation, book) without identifying sources; (c) having someone else write the work (either on a paid or unpaid basis).
- Cheating on examinations. (a) use of any source (e.g., AI tools, crib notes, etc.) which is prohibited in that particular examination; (b) copying from another person's examination.
- Falsifying data. Blatant falsifying of data, such as inventing data or misrepresenting sample size.
- Opinions differ among various faculty members regarding the propriety of the same or similar Paper (or parts of the same Paper) being submitted to more than one course. Graduate students must consult the faculty members involved prior to the submission of such Papers.

In the unlikely event that a faculty member accuses a student of a violation of academic integrity, the following review process will take place:

The individual professor or individual student who is making a formal accusation of cheating will bring the case to the attention of the Graduate School which will have responsibility for adjudicating the case. The Department Chair and Graduate Program Director would also be notified.

In adjudicating the process, the Graduate School will normally involve the student's principal advisor and other Sociology Department representatives as appropriate. The Graduate School has a grievance procedure available if the student feels s/he has been unfairly treated. See <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/policies-and-procedures.html>.

HARASSMENT

Students should familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Discriminatory Harassment, both with regard to their roles as student and as teacher. For further information, go to <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/offices/human-resources/sites/oid/Policies-and-Compliance/Discriminatory-Harassment.html>.

INCOMPLETE COURSE GRADES

Graduate students who are unable to complete course requirements by the end of the semester may request a grade of “Incomplete” from the professor. No additional work can be submitted after the date the university system automatically converts the “Incomplete” grade into an “F,” which occurs on August 1 (for the spring semester) and March 1 (for the fall semester). After that, the student may ask the instructor to change the grade (if warranted) based on credit for work done in the course prior to that time.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

All students in the Boston College Morrissey Graduate College of Arts and Sciences (the Grad School) are required to maintain a minimum cumulative average of 3.0 (see <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/policies-and-procedures.html>). The grade point average of sociology graduate students will be reviewed each year in the annual evaluation (see below).

ANNUAL EVALUATION

The academic performance of all graduate students in the sociology department, including GPA, Incomplete course grades, and overall progress in the program, will be reviewed each year by June 1. In anticipation of this, each Ph.D. student in their third year and above will be required to submit an Annual Evaluation Fact Sheet to the department for review. Students in the MA program are not required to submit an annual evaluation fact sheet.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students who wish to take a leave of absence from the graduate program (i.e., to remain in the program without being registered) should in writing request a leave of absence from the Graduate Program Director detailing their reasons for taking a leave and when they intend to return. Once the Director has consented, the students should fill out a Leave of Absence form (available here https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/offices/student-services/registrar/academic-forms.html#tab-graduate_forms) and submit it to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. A leave of absence will be granted for one year only. If the leave needs to extend beyond that, the student must request permission from the Graduate Program Director and resubmit the form for each additional year.

Students with approved leaves of absence will remain in the graduate program, although neither enrolled in courses nor registered for doctoral continuation credits. Students who remain unregistered for more than one year without an approved extension of their leave by the Graduate Program Director will be removed from the program, and may reapply in the event that they wish to continue their graduate studies. All applications for readmission to the Ph.D. program should be submitted to the Graduate Program Director, and will be evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee.

GOOD STANDING POLICY FOR PH.D. STUDENTS

Ph.D. students are expected to meet minimum standards of academic performance. To remain in good standing, each student needs to meet the following criteria:

- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and no “Fs” on the transcript.
- Defend and pass an MA Thesis/Paper by September 30 of the third year (unless the student was waived out of the MA requirement, or entered our Ph.D. program after completing our MA program).
- Pass both Area Exams and the dissertation proposal by September 30 of the fifth year (or by September 30 of the fourth year if the student was waived out of MA requirement, or entered our Ph.D. program after completing our MA program).

A student who fails to meet any of these criteria enters a probationary status. They should contact their advisor and the Graduate Director immediately to make a plan for restoring their good standing.

The student will have an additional semester (until January 15) to restore good standing, after which they will no longer have priority for TA/TF funding for the following academic year. The student will then have an additional unfunded year (until the following January 15) to restore their good standing and to have their funding reinstated for the following fall. Failure to meet this last deadline will result in the student’s removal from the Ph.D. program.

If necessary, students with significant caregiving responsibilities may apply to the Graduate Director for modification of the timeline.

Time during which a student is on a leave of absence does not count toward the deadlines listed above. For example, a student who takes a yearlong leave of absence at the end of their first year will be in their second (not their third) year upon returning to the program.