

# STUDENT MANUAL for Graduate Programs in SOCIOLOGY

-Ph.D. Sociology  
-M.S. Sociology



DEPARTMENT OF  
**SOCIOLOGY**  
College of Arts and Sciences

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431 Social Sciences & Humanities • Stillwater OK 74078-4062 • 405/744-6105

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Welcome to the Department of Sociology at Oklahoma State University!**

This student manual provides an overview of the Sociology Department's graduate program including the application process, graduate assistantships, and graduate curriculum. If you have further questions after reviewing the manual, please contact me, Dr. Jonathan Coley, the Department of Sociology's Graduate Program Director (see my contact information below). I will be happy to answer your questions.

The Department of Sociology at OSU offers an M.S. degree and a Ph.D. degree. Both degree programs emphasize the fundamentals of sociological inquiry (i.e., theory, methods, and statistics) combined with specialty areas within the field. After completing core courses, students work in specialty areas consistent with their career interests and goals. Graduate students may specialize in a combination of areas, including Crime and Deviance, Environmental Sociology, Social Inequality, Social Movements, and Social Psychology. Of course, numerous subfields exist within each area, and we encourage students to explore those subfields that have greatest relevance for their career aspirations.

Graduate students receive access to a variety of accommodations, including a fully equipped graduate student computer lab, ample graduate student office space, and individual desktop computers with access to printers. The Sociology Department is located in Social Sciences & Humanities, a newly refurbished building on campus.

Our program is designed for students interested in careers as professional sociologists in research, teaching, and applied settings. Many of our Ph.D. graduates are employed as teachers and researchers at colleges and universities throughout the nation. Graduates of our M.S. program often continue on to Ph.D. programs at OSU or elsewhere, while others choose applied careers in the public or private sector.

The faculty members of the department have expertise in a broad spectrum of sociology's specialty areas, including various theoretical and methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative), all of which are blended into a balanced graduate curriculum. The department is large enough to include faculty expertise in several substantive sub-areas of sociology, yet small enough to generate intimate graduate seminars and primary relationships between faculty members and graduate students. The sociology faculty emphasize and exemplify the threefold scholarly standards of quality classroom teaching, research, and extension. They actively pursue scholarly and research activities. Members of our faculty have received national grants, published books, contributed research articles to internationally recognized journals, and served as editors and advisory board members for national and international journals.

In short, we remain committed to producing well-educated and successful graduates. Please take a minute and check out what our program can offer you. Again, please let me know if I can assist you, or answer any questions that you might have. Thank you for your interest!

Dr. Jonathan Coley, Graduate Program Director

Department of Sociology  
431 Social Sciences & Humanities  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, OK 74078-4062

Tel: 405-744-6122  
Email: jonathan.s.coley@okstate.edu

# Applying

## Application Process

*OSU makes use of an online graduate application.*

All applicants use this link to apply to the OSU Graduate College:  
<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/apply>

**Fall Admission Deadlines:** The department accepts applications completed by **February 1** for Fall Semester admission. The department has a second, final deadline of **April 1** for Fall Semester admission. Please note, however, that priority for **financial assistance** is given to applicants who meet the February 1 deadline.

**Spring Admission Deadline:** The department also accepts applications completed by **September 15** for Spring Semester admission. Spring Semester applicants normally have fewer opportunities for funding since most of the department's assistantships are awarded to Fall Semester applicants.

**Applicant Review Policy:** The Graduate Committee will not review an application unless accompanied by all required Graduate College and department materials. Upon approval by the Graduate College, the applicant's materials will be referred to the Sociology Department. The Department of Sociology's Graduate Committee will complete a holistic evaluation of all required and optional materials submitted by the applicant for admission to the Master's or doctoral programs in sociology and reach a decision on admittance. Please note that the Sociology Department's Graduate Committee will not review partial applications.

Following Graduate College policy, students must enroll in the program's core courses at OSU within a year after their admission date to retain active status. A student who does not enroll within one year or who interrupts enrollment for one year must reapply to both the Graduate College and the Sociology Graduate Committee for admission. Students reapplying for admission will be subject to Department and College regulations in effect at the time of admission. For further information in this regard, the Graduate College can be contacted directly by phone at (405) 744-6368 or by email at [grad-i@okstate.edu](mailto:grad-i@okstate.edu).

If you would like more information from the Graduate College, please access the Graduate College website <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu>.

## Suggestions for Applicants

When the Graduate College and the Sociology Department have received a complete application on or before the appropriate deadline, the applicant's file will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee for admission to the Graduate College and to the Sociology Graduate Program. Please note that as a policy only the Graduate College can notify applicants whether they have been accepted or denied admittance. Neither Sociology Department staff, the Sociology Graduate Committee members, nor the Sociology Graduate Director can notify applicants. Applicants who have not been notified of their status after one month (4 weeks) of the official deadline should contact OSU's Graduate College to inquire about the status of their application.

The following information will be useful in helping individuals prepare their application. To increase the likelihood of a successful application, please consider the following information:

**Preparation for Graduate Studies in Sociology.** As part of its evaluation process, the Sociology Graduate Committee will consider applicants' academic preparation, particularly course work in sociology, especially in the areas of theory, research methodology, and statistics.

**Letters of Recommendation.** Three letters of recommendation are required by the Sociology Department. The on-line system requires the applicant to enter information (including confidentiality) for each professor asked to provide a letter. The system will email each professor who will upload their own letter and fill out a rating form to go with it. The most effective letters of recommendation come from full-time faculty members who have instructed the applicant in one or more university courses as an undergraduate or master's student. Faculty instructors can best evaluate and discuss the applicant's academic abilities and achievements, and their potential to succeed in graduate studies. Letters of recommendation from employers, college counselors, university administrators, or other individuals who lack direct knowledge of the applicant's academic abilities are discouraged. The Graduate Committee also prefers that applicants not ask graduate student instructors to write letters on their behalf.

**Statement of Purpose.** The statement of purpose is a written essay, approximately two to three pages in length. The Graduate Committee asks applicants to describe in clear terms their educational and professional goals, background and past experiences that relate to these goals, and their rationale for pursuing graduate studies at OSU. The statement of purpose should be clear, concise, and well-organized.

## **Should I Apply to the M.S. or Ph.D. Program?**

Individuals should carefully consider whether to apply for the M.S. or Ph.D. program in Sociology at OSU. The M.S. Program is designed for individuals holding an undergraduate degree (often, but not restricted to, a B.S. or B.A. in Sociology). In contrast, the Ph.D. in Sociology, as in most disciplines, represents the highest degree conferred by our department. Although an applicant's ultimate goal may be to obtain a Ph.D., the Sociology Department's Graduate Committee requires Ph.D. applicants to first have a thesis-based M.S. or M.A. degree before advancing to the Ph.D. level. Individuals with a non-thesis Master's degree, or a non-sociology Master's degree, may be required by the Graduate Committee to complete the M.S. degree in sociology before advancing to the Ph.D. program.

While the Graduate Committee annually admits applicants, it also denies applicants deemed unqualified to join the M.S. or Ph.D. program. It is possible that an individual denied admission to the Ph.D. program could have qualified and been accepted into the department's M.S. program. Applicants who apply to the Ph.D. program are sometimes invited by the Graduate Committee to reapply for the M.S. program instead. We invite individuals with a B.A. or B.S. in fields other than sociology to apply to the Sociology Department's M.S. program. Individuals may be given a provisional acceptance if the Graduate Committee determines that they lack sufficient undergraduate sociology coursework but are otherwise qualified applicants. A provisional acceptance oftentimes involves a limited amount of additional coursework to satisfy deficiencies as identified by the Graduate Committee.

# Graduate Student Information

## **Beginning the Program**

Incoming graduate students should contact Dr. Jonathan Coley, Director of the Graduate Program, after arriving on campus. Dr. Coley serves as temporary advisor for all new students and assists them in planning their Fall and Spring Semester schedules. Departmental orientation meetings are held shortly before the Fall Semester begins for beginning and continuing graduate students, for research assistants, and for teaching assistants. Notification of the dates and times of these meetings will be e-mailed to students awarded an assistantship as well as announced at the beginning of the Fall semester. Incoming students will also enroll in the 1-hour Sociology Proseminar (SOC 5001) during the first fall semester of their graduate studies. The Proseminar serves to introduce new graduate students to the Sociology Graduate Program and faculty. First-year Ph.D. students will also be required to participate in the Sociology Department's Graduate Student Teaching Colloquium as preparation for teaching their own course.

The Office of International Students and Scholars (ISS) assists international students each Fall Semester by providing transportation from Will Rogers International Airport in Oklahoma City to the OSU campus and by holding orientation meetings about the OSU campus and the Stillwater area. For detailed information visit the website at <http://iss.okstate.edu/>, call (405) 744-5459, E-mail: <[su-iss@okstate.edu](mailto:su-iss@okstate.edu)> or write: **International Students and Scholars, Oklahoma State University, 076 Student Union, Stillwater, OK 74078-8467, USA.**

## **Departmental Assistantships**

**TA and RA.** Acceptance in the graduate program does not guarantee financial assistance from the Department of Sociology. Teaching Assistantships/Associateships (TAs) and Research Assistantships/Associateships (RAs) are awarded each year on the basis of academic merit rather than financial need. RA opportunities are typically less common than TA opportunities; RAs normally assist faculty in some research endeavor. Department research or teaching assistantships are awarded each year on a competitive basis. Teaching assistants are M.S. students who normally assist faculty in the classroom. Teaching Associates are Ph.D. students who may either assist faculty or teach a course of their own (most often SOC 1113: Introduction to Sociology). For TAs/RAs, full-time enrollment for the Spring and Fall semesters is based on the percentage of employment. For students employed 50% (half-time) or greater, full-time enrollment for the Spring and Fall Semesters is considered six credit hours and three credit hours for the summer semester. The TA/RA award also includes a tuition waiver provided by the Graduate College. The tuition waiver covers all required credits for the MS or PhD program, but it does not cover fees or courses taken after reaching the required number of credits for the program. TAs/RAs will also receive health insurance through OSU for the duration of the award.

**Duration and Continuation of Awards.** No more than four years of half-time support (20 hrs/week) as a teaching or research associate is available to doctoral candidates and two years of half-time support (20 hrs/week) as a teaching or research assistant for master's candidates. Up to six years of support is available to students who complete their M.S. degree in Sociology at OSU and continue to pursue their Ph.D. at OSU. The Graduate Committee evaluates applicants and recommends TAs/RAs on a year-by-year basis. Awards for subsequent years are contingent on continued academic achievement in the Sociology Graduate Program and favorable evaluations as a TA/RA. In general, poor academic performance (e.g., poor grades, incomplete courses, failure to pass comprehensive exams) may result in the withdrawal of funding as a TA/RA.

**TA Training.** The department provides training and individual experience in teaching methods. Students are expected to complete continuing teaching education through the department, the Graduate College, OSU's Institute for Teaching and Learning Excellence (ITLE), and other resources as appropriate. Beginning M.S. and Ph.D. students may participate in the department's undergraduate program as Faculty TAs. Their duties may include constructing and grading exams, leading discussions, and occasionally delivering a lecture. As early as their first year, Ph.D. students may have the opportunity to teach introductory courses as a Teaching Associate. They may also have an opportunity to teach upper-level courses near the completion of their program.

**Employment Information for International Students.** It is the policy of Oklahoma State University that all persons employed as members of the faculty, as graduate teaching assistants or graduate teaching associates, or for any other assignments involving oral instruction be proficient in spoken English. Non-native English speaking students who have been offered a teaching assistantship must determine eligibility. The test score is used as a condition of employment and is not a condition for admission to the Graduate College. Further information about the ITA exam can be found at this web address: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/ita>.

## **Tuition Waivers**

Each year the Graduate College allocates funds for tuition waiver programs for department use as financial aid to graduate students (TAs/RAs automatically receive tuition waivers as described above). The Director of the Graduate Program will review the eligibility criteria for each applicant and recommend eligible students for these programs. All recipients of these awards must be enrolled full-time in a degree program and must remain in good academic standing for the duration of the award. Tuition waiver forms must be completed on-line prior to the start of each semester.

# Graduate Curriculum

## Overview

The goal of the M.S. and Ph.D. programs in sociology at OSU is to prepare graduates who have the capacity to develop and communicate original scholarly contributions to sociology. This goal emphasizes the belief that sociological perspectives are necessary for the understanding of all areas of modern life. A series of graded experiences including required seminars, directed studies, and exams through the student's thesis are provided to assist students in developing this goal. Upon graduation, you will have completed an original contribution to the discipline in the form of your dissertation or thesis and be ready to start a career of scholarly research, publication, and teaching.

**Core Curriculum.** During the first two semesters of full-time course work, students are required to take classes in basic theory, methods, and statistics to acquire an understanding of the theoretical perspectives and methodologies in sociology. The course work provides an overview of the discipline from its founding to contemporary issues and debates.

The department believes that research is learned through close interaction with faculty members in the student's areas of interest. Students become familiar with the types of data and models used in their specific areas and develop an understanding of the pitfalls researchers encounter. Research assistantships may be used to enhance the research apprenticeship of students.

**Ph.D. Curriculum: Comprehensive Areas.** Beginning the second year of study, doctoral students are expected to specialize in selected areas of sociological inquiry. The Department has developed courses of study that allow students to pursue their immediate interest. Doctoral students must specialize in two specialty areas.

The department has concentrated its interests into five major areas of concentration. These areas provide a broad identification of the major research and teaching interest of the faculty. Each doctoral student must complete at least three hours of course work in each of the two areas and pass a written comprehensive examination. Each comprehensive area has a committee of graduate faculty who are experts in that area and who serve to orient each student to, and subsequently examine each student in, that area. It is important that students take seminars under the faculty involved in their comprehensive areas.

**M.S. Curriculum.** The M.S. in Sociology is a degree that focuses on theory, methods, and statistics and includes no required area of concentration. The nine hours of electives for the M.S. degree should include sociology course work that will assist the student in formulating their Master's thesis.

## Advisor and Thesis/Dissertation Committees

As noted, at the beginning of a student's program, the Director of the Graduate Program will serve as the student's temporary advisor. The temporary advisor will assist the student in selecting appropriate courses. Beginning the second semester of full-time enrollment, each student, in consultation with the Director of the Graduate Program, will select a chairperson and begin to develop an advisory committee of Graduate Faculty. Master's candidates must select a committee of three Graduate Faculty members from the Department of Sociology. Doctoral candidates must select a committee of four Graduate Faculty members, including three from the Department of Sociology and one from another department. The duties of the chairperson and members of the Advisory Committee include providing general advice to the student and assisting them in selecting courses to complete the online Plan of Study for their degree program. After the Plan of Study has been approved and signed by the committee members and the Department Head, a copy is filed in the

Graduate College for approval by the Dean of the Graduate College. For M.S. students, the original Plan of Study must be submitted to the Graduate College prior to the completion of the second semester (excluding summer sessions) of enrollment. For Ph.D. students, the original Plan of Study must be submitted to the Graduate College prior to the end of the third semester (excluding summer sessions) of enrollment. Changes can be made in the Plan of Study with the approval of the Advisory Committee and the Dean of the Graduate College. A final, approved plan must be filed at the beginning of the semester in which the degree is to be conferred.

The Advisory Committee generally becomes the student's thesis (Master's or Ph.D.) committee, and the chair of the Advisory Committee will usually serve as the chair of the thesis committee. The chair of a doctoral thesis committee must be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty. A Full Member or an Associate Member of the Graduate Faculty can serve as chair of a Master's thesis committee. Committees are intended to assist the student in preparing for comprehensive examinations, planning and conducting the thesis/dissertation research, writing the thesis/dissertation, and conducting the final examination. Changes in the composition of the thesis/dissertation committee may be made as the student's plans change.

## **M.S. Course Degree Requirements**

**M.S. Sociology – Thesis Option.** The M.S. Sociology degree (thesis option) requires a minimum of 31 hours of course work. At least 15 hours must be at the graduate 5000 level, exclusive of thesis or individual research courses. The specific requirements are listed below. Please see the “Core Requirements Sheet” for a list of the course options available in each of these categories. Courses outside of the department and Independent Study (SOC 5990) courses require approval from the Graduate Committee through a formal, written request.

- **Sociological Theory - 3 hours**
- **Social Research Methods - 6 hours**
- **Statistics - 3 hours**
- **Additional Sociology Courses - 12 hours**
- **Thesis - 6 hours**
- **Proseminar – 1 hour**

**M.S. Sociology – Non-Thesis Option (terminal degree).** The M.S. Sociology degree, non-thesis option, requires a minimum of 32 hours of course work. At least 22 hours must be at the graduate 5000 level. The specific requirements are listed below. Please see the “Core Requirements Sheet” for a list of the course options available in each of these categories. Courses outside of the department and Independent Study (SOC 5990) courses require approval from the Graduate Committee through a formal, written request. Students on the non-thesis track will complete a creative component project as designated by the student's graduate committee.

**Please Note:** Students on the non-thesis track will be given low priority for departmental funding. In addition, students on the non-thesis track will not be eligible for consideration for the Ph.D. program in Sociology at Oklahoma State University.

- **Sociological Theory - 3 hours**
- **Social Research Methods - 6 hours**
- **Statistics - 3 hours**
- **Creative Component (SOC 5013) – 3 hours**
- **Additional Sociology Courses - 16 hours**
- **Proseminar – 1 hour**

## **Ph.D. Course Degree Requirements**

**Ph.D. in Sociology.** The Ph.D. requirement is a minimum of 91 semester credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree or 60 hours beyond the master's degree. At least 30 hours beyond the master's degree must be earned from course work at the 5000 or 6000 level excluding graduate credit for thesis and individual research courses. Courses outside of the department and Independent Study (SOC 5990) courses require approval from the Graduate Committee through a formal, written request.

- **Sociological Theory, 6 hours, 5000 or 6000 level**
- **Research Methods/Statistics 15 hours as outlined in basic core requirements**
- **Two Comprehensive Areas, 12 hours total at 5000 or 6000 level (6 hours or more in departmental seminars in each of two selected comprehensive areas)**
- **Electives, 8-11 hours**
- **Doctoral Thesis, 15-18 hours (minimum 15)**
- **Proseminar – 1 hour**

## **Ph.D. Comprehensive Examinations**

Each student is required to successfully complete two written comprehensive exams. Comprehensive exams are designed to assess a student's knowledge of two identified areas of specialization (e.g., crime and deviance, environmental sociology, social inequality, social movements, or social psychology).

Students should have taken at least 3 hours in the desired specialty area before establishing their exam committees. Consistent with the advanced scholarship expected of doctoral students, respondents will be expected to be conversant not only with material covered in graduate seminars, but also with the wider literature concerning the particular area of specialization.

### **Exam Format**

Students will complete two 8-hour, in-person exams. In-person comprehensive exams will be offered twice per year: once in January and once in August. Modifications to this exam schedule may be announced by the department at least one full semester prior to the scheduled exam dates.

In semesters in which comprehensive exams are taken, students must be enrolled for at least two credit hours. Students must notify the Graduate Program Director of their desire to take a comprehensive exam at least one semester ahead of the exam date (i.e., by August for students taking a January exam and by January for students taking an August exam).

Students will answer several essay questions over the course of the exam day. Responses are expected to demonstrate mastery of key theoretical and empirical literatures, as well as the ability to critically synthesize and analyze those literatures.

During the exam, students will be permitted to consult (a) a standardized reading list for their area of specialization (developed by the area's faculty committee) and (b) up to five double-sided, single-spaced pages of personal notes, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. AI-generated notes are prohibited. Students will turn in their notes at the end of the exam.

Each area committee will be in charge of selecting three faculty members (a chair plus two committee members) who will grade the student's exam.

### **Assessment**

Based on the assessment of each exam, the Committee must reach one of the following conclusions: Pass with Distinction, Pass, or Fail. **Failure to take or complete a scheduled comprehensive exam is equivalent to failing the exam.**

Students who fail a comprehensive examination will have an opportunity to take it a second time. However, students who fail the exam a second time must petition the Graduate Committee to take the exam a third time. Students will have two weeks from the date of notification of a failed exam to petition the Graduate Committee in writing to request a third attempt. If approved, the exam must be retaken at the next available opportunity. No exam may be taken more than three times. Exceptions to these rules will only be granted under very special circumstances, with written petition and documentation submitted to the Graduate Committee.

## **M.S. Thesis & Ph.D. Dissertation**

The student prepares the Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation in close consultation with the Chair of their thesis committee and other members of the committee as necessary. The student, in consultation with the committee chair, shall choose a thesis topic and prepare a research proposal. Copies of the proposal must be made available to members of the Committee and a meeting scheduled for committee input.

## **Oral Defense**

When the final draft of the thesis is accepted by the student's committee, the oral examination of the thesis may be scheduled provided the candidate has furnished copies of the final draft to all Committee members before the examination. The oral examination is primarily a defense of the thesis. If the defense is judged inadequate, the committee will decide

## **Other Important Policies**

(Some descriptions come from the OSU Course Catalog, “Graduate College,” section)

**Annual Review of Student Progress.** The graduate program in which a student is seeking a graduate degree will provide a mechanism for assessing the student’s progress towards degree completion at least once annually. If the student is assessed not to be making adequate progress, then a specific plan to address and correct any inadequacies in progress will be prepared in a written document provided to the student and the dean of the Graduate College annually by June 30. Failure to correct these inadequacies may result in termination from the graduate program and/or Graduate College.

### **Enrollment Policies**

**Initial and Continuous Enrollment Policy.** A prospective student must enroll for courses at OSU within the time specified in their admission letter to retain active status. A prospective student who does not conform to these conditions must reapply for admission. Any student who interrupts enrollment for one year (i.e., a consecutive period of one fall semester plus one spring semester plus one summer term) must re-apply for admission and will be subject to the regulations in effect at the time of reapplication. See section 6.6 of the OSU Graduate College Course Catalog (<https://catalog.okstate.edu/graduate-college/>) for additional doctoral candidacy enrollment requirements.

### **Full-Time Enrollment.**

To be considered enrolled full time, a graduate student must be enrolled in at least nine hours in either fall or spring semester and at least four hours during the summer sessions. Full-time enrollment for Graduate Teaching/Research Associate/Assistants (GTAs/GRAs) with a 0.50 FTE appointment is at least six hours in either fall or spring semester and at least two hours during a summer session.

**Minimum and Maximum Enrollment.** Students are required to be enrolled in at least two credit hours in each semester in which they are using physical or faculty resources of the University. (Students holding graduate assistantships should note that additional requirements apply; see below.) Regardless of the number of hours taken, a student may not enroll in more than 12 (16 for the Spears School of Business graduate programs) credit hours in the fall or spring semester without permission of the dean of the Graduate College. During the summer session, a student may not enroll in more than nine credit hours taken in any session during the eight-week summer period. No more than three credit hours can be taken during the first summer session (intersession). Summer intersession is defined as any course that begins after the end of the spring semester and ends prior to the beginning of the eight-week summer session. For any short course session less than eight weeks in length, enrollment shall not exceed one credit hour for each week.

International students on F-1 or J-1 visas must maintain full-time status (as defined above) during the first semester of enrollment, and during each fall and spring semester thereafter.

**Graduating Semester Enrollment.** Each degree-seeking graduate student must be enrolled in at least two hours of courses eligible for graduate credit during their graduating semester (defined as the semester in which they satisfactorily complete all degree requirements). However, a student would not need to be enrolled during their graduating semester if they meet the following conditions: 1) has been assigned an “Incomplete” (grade of I) in a non-research or creative component course; 2) the course is required for graduation; and, 3) the course in which the incomplete was received is the only graduation requirement left to fulfill. Students must enroll in research, thesis, or dissertation hours, as appropriate, during each semester in which they are involved in research leading to a thesis or dissertation, irrespective of the number of credit hours of such courses either required or permitted for the degree.

**Master's Degree Enrollment Requirements.** Students with a fall (spring/summer) graduating semester who have research courses (i.e., courses numbered 5000) on their approved Plan of Study must satisfactorily complete no fewer than six hours of courses eligible for graduate credit during the calendar (academic) year which includes the graduating semester. As an example, a student wishing to graduate in a fall semester must be enrolled in a total of at least six hours for that fall semester plus the preceding spring semester and summer session. Doctoral students meet this requirement by virtue of the Doctoral Candidacy Enrollment Requirements noted below.

**Doctoral Candidacy Enrollment Requirements.** Doctoral students who have completed the requirements for admission to doctoral candidacy and had their "Admission to Doctoral Candidacy" form approved by the Graduate College may enroll for a minimum of at least two credit hours during any term and be considered full-time. This post-candidacy reduced enrollment option applies to all qualified graduate students, including GTAs, GRAs, international students and veterans receiving VA benefits. A student is normally expected to enroll primarily in research hours or in program-approved courses after being admitted to doctoral candidacy.

Continuous enrollment post-candidacy is required of all students. Enrollment of a minimum of at least two credits per semester is required for every semester of a student's candidacy (summer session excluded) until graduation. It is ultimately the responsibility of each student to ensure that they meet this enrollment requirement. Students who are not able to maintain active status are strongly encouraged to consult with their program, advisor and the Graduate College to determine whether requesting a Leave of Absence (LOA) is the most appropriate course of action.

**Reinstatement Fee.** Post-candidacy students who do not maintain continuous enrollment will be assessed a reinstatement fee based upon their residency status at the time of last enrollment as follows:

- Resident: \$750/semester (summer session excluded) of non-enrollment
- Nonresident: \$1,900/semester (summer session excluded) of non-enrollment

In addition to the reinstatement fee, students whose continuous enrollment disruption exceeds one academic year also must apply for readmission to the graduate program (see Enrollment).

During the readmission process, previous coursework will be evaluated for applicability in accordance with coursework (10 years) and time-to-degree (9 years) time limits (see Time to Degree Requirements).

Notification of the conditions of readmission and reinstatement will be provided if an acceptance occurs. New program requirements may apply based on the aforementioned enrollment policy. Please note that reinstatement and readmission are not guaranteed and significant challenges may occur that hinder a student's ability to complete a degree after a lapse in enrollment, such as the reapplication process (e.g., new letters of recommendation and unexpired standardize test scores); availability of the same graduate advisor, project and/or grant support; and new/revised program requirements and/or core courses for degree.

**Responsible Conduct of Research.** All graduate students must complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training requirements prior to the submission of a Plan of Study. A student should consult with his/her graduate coordinator as to what these requirements are in his/her graduate program. Graduate programs may impose more stringent requirements. A Plan of Study will not be approved by the Graduate College until the graduate program has certified RCR completion. Information and University policies regarding RCR can be found at <https://research.okstate.edu/research-compliance/rcr/>.

**Academic Integrity Policy.** Oklahoma State University is committed to maintaining the highest level of academic integrity and ethical behavior. It is necessary that all members of the University support and promulgate the values of honesty and responsibility appropriate for an academic community. Not only does such academic integrity and ethical behavior contribute to the status of the University, but it also represents an important component of the educational process. To ensure a high level of integrity among students, behaviors that violate academic integrity (e.g., unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, unauthorized multiple submissions, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person cheat, unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, and fraudulently altering academic records) will not be condoned nor tolerated. Violations may subject the student to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination, or course; receiving an "F!" notation of a violation of academic integrity on the transcript; losing funding/assistantship; and/or being dismissed from the graduate program and/or suspended from the University. All students in the graduate program are expected to make themselves familiar with the University's Academic Integrity policy and follow it strictly. For more information, please visit <https://academicintegrity.okstate.edu>.

**Policy on Generative Artificial Intelligence.** Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools may have several legitimate uses for students in the graduate program. These can include brainstorming, finding resources for particular areas of research (including important authors, theories or data sources), and more. However, the Department of Sociology expects all written work to be an original product from the student. As such, the department prohibits the use of generative AI in any writing for the MS thesis, MS creative component, PhD comprehensive exams, or the PhD dissertation. The use of generative AI in coursework is also prohibited unless explicitly authorized by the instructor. This includes the use of generative AI software such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, Quillbot, and others. The department considers the unauthorized use of generative AI to be an academic integrity violation.

**Plan of Study.** The Plan of Study for the degree must be submitted online to the Graduate College prior to completion of the second semester of enrollment for a master's program. The student should develop the Plan of Study with the advisor using the online Plan of Study application (<http://planofstudy.okstate.edu>.) The online submission request requires approval by the advisory committee and the student's graduate program with final approval by the Graduate College. The Plan of Study is subject to modification. All changes must have the approval of the adviser and the student's graduate program, and a final Plan of Study incorporating all changes should be submitted to the Graduate College by the posted deadline.

**Time to Degree.** Graduate College matriculation starts when a student first enrolls as an admitted degree seeking graduate student. That date will be used in calculating time limits for degree completion. Students are expected to complete the requirements for a graduate certificate, master's, or specialist degree within seven years from first enrollment after admission to the graduate program. Students are expected to complete the requirements for a doctoral degree within nine years from first enrollment after admission to the graduate program. After that time a student must submit a written petition to the Graduate College requesting an extension of time-to-degree limits. Credit for all courses on a graduate Plan of Study must have been awarded within ten years of completion of all degree requirements. Any exception to these time limits must be approved by the dean of the Graduate College.

**Grade Point Requirements.** Each semester the Graduate College audits the grades of all graduate students. Any student receiving a grade below a "B" will receive a letter of warning from the Graduate College. Students whose cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.0 are subject to being placed on Strict Academic Probation (SAP). Students on SAP may be suspended if they receive any grade below a "B." A student must have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in all course work and a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in research hours to graduate. The Graduate College calculates GPAs for course work and research hours independently. Failure to meet GPA requirements will result in the student's suspension from the Graduate College.

**Department of Sociology Addendum:** Additionally, the Sociology Department audits the grades of all graduate students each semester. Students who receive any grade below a "B" will be placed on Strict Academic Probation (SAP) within the Sociology Department, regardless of whether their cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0. Once placed on SAP, students will remain on SAP until the conclusion of their studies within their degree program. Students on SAP may be expelled from the program and lose funding if they receive another grade below a "B" in any subsequent semester during their degree program. Students who violate the terms of SAP will have the right to submit a petition to the consideration



of the graduate committee to avoid expulsion from the program. In this case, they will have one week (seven calendar days) after receiving the final grades that place them in violation of SAP to submit a written statement that includes an explanation for the circumstances that led to their violation and an action plan for improvement. A vote of the graduate committee will determine whether to accept the petition or expel the student from the program.

**Admission to Doctoral Candidacy.** Doctoral students must be admitted to candidacy at least six months prior to completing degree requirements. To be admitted to candidacy, a doctoral student must have (1) an approved Plan of Study on file with the Graduate College, (2) a dissertation proposal or outline approved by the student's graduate committee, and (3) passed all preliminary and comprehensive examinations.

**Graduation Clearance Process.** At the time of enrollment for the last semester or summer session of work toward a degree, graduate students must complete and submit a Graduate Application with the Office of the Registrar. In order to allow opportunity for any class schedule changes, this form - the Graduate Application- should be submitted as early as possible in the graduating semester but no later than the deadlines listed on the Graduate College website.

**Graduate Commencement and Diplomas.** The University holds one Graduate Commencement Ceremony at the close of the fall and spring semesters. Students who plan to meet graduation requirements at the close of the summer session are invited and encouraged to participate in the Graduate Commencement Ceremony at the close of the previous spring semester. Although attendance is not compulsory, the University encourages all candidates for advanced degrees to participate in the Graduate Commencement Ceremony. Candidates should also notify the Office of the Registrar of the address to which the diploma should be mailed.

## Professional Engagement

In addition to fulfilling the requirements associated with the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, the Sociology Department expects graduate students to participate actively in the intellectual life of the department, the university, and the broader discipline.

At the departmental level, professional engagement entails attending research talks, lectures, colloquia, and other scholarly events sponsored by the department, as well as contributing to organizations such as Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) and the Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA).

At the university level, professional engagement involves participation in research talks, lectures, colloquia, and other scholarly events sponsored by the university and involvement in organizations such as the Graduate and Professional Student Government Association (GPSGA).

At the professional level, graduate students are encouraged to participate in statewide, regional, and/or national conferences. The Oklahoma Sociological Association (OSA) holds an annual meeting with opportunities to present papers and interact with sociologists from across the state. A variety of regional and national organizations welcome graduate student participation in their annual conferences (e.g., American Sociological Association, Society for the Study of Social Problems, Mid-South Sociological Association, Midwest Sociological Society, Southern Sociological Society, etc.). Often, the Sociology Department has funding to assist graduate students who travel to conferences for paper presentations.

Your future success in the field will be contingent, in part, on developing the skills involved in presenting papers and publishing research findings. Speak with the Graduate Director or your committee advisor about what conference venues would be appropriate for your participation. Actively contribute to the sociological community!