

## **GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Sociology offers two graduate degrees, the MA, and the PhD. Students pursuing the MA degree can obtain the degree in either the course-based program or thesis-based program.

This handbook is created to cover policies and processes specific to the graduate programs in sociology and not otherwise included or fully described in the Faculty of Graduate Studies calendar and sociology program webpages. However, some policies and processes are duplicated here for purposes of accessibility.

For additional information related to the admissions process and deadlines, program requirements, program costs and funding, **all prospective students** should consult the following website and relevant links: <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/sociology/future-students/graduate/programs> (see especially the links provided in the drop-down menu under “Future Students” and “Graduate”).

In addition to reviewing relevant sections of this Handbook, **current students** are responsible for **familiarizing themselves with the academic regulations for graduate students at the University of Calgary**: [UCalgary Calendar](#)

Students are expected to take charge of their progress through their graduate program and are advised to:

- Meet with the Graduate Program Director if any questions or problems arise;
- Select a supervisor who can ensure the quality, quantity, and flexibility of support and guidance needed;
- Consult with student mentors, as well as other faculty members within and external to the Department to take advantage of the expertise and support available;
- Negotiate clear agreements with supervisors and supervisory committee members on the goals, deadlines, expectations, and work required at each step of the process. Complete the student-supervisor and intellectual property [checklists](#).
- Ensure that regular meetings take place with the supervisor/supervisory committee or agree to other means of regular communication. This is particularly important during absences from campus.

All graduate students must file an online Annual Progress Report each May, as required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This report allows students to state their accomplishments over the past year and their plans for the coming year. In addition, both the Supervisor and the Graduate Program Director must provide a written evaluation of a student’s progress before it is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Students who fail to submit an Annual Progress Report may have their continuing registration denied. The Annual Progress Report is sent out by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and is accessed via the MyUofC Student Centre.

## 2. ADMISSIONS

### 2.1. Admission Requirements

The Department of Sociology admits students for fall semester intake only. Students in the thesis-based MA and the PhD program must enroll full-time. Students in the course-based MA program may enroll part-time on an exceptional basis, with permission of the Graduate Program Director.

In addition to this document, please familiarize yourself with the information provided by the Faculty of Graduate Studies: <https://grad.ucalgary.ca/future-students/how-apply>.

**All prospective students are strongly advised to complete a separate application for scholarships.** These will have different deadlines than the application for admission. You do not need to be accepted into your program to apply for scholarships. Please see the bottom of [webpage above](#) ("after you apply") for further information on scholarship and awards.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies admission requirements include:

- A four-year baccalaureate degree or an equivalent degree from a recognized institution for the master's program admission, and a Master's degree for the doctoral program admission;
- International applicants may be required to provide evidence of proficiency in the English language

The Department of Sociology admissions requirement additionally includes:

- Minimum GPA of 3.5 for the thesis-based programs and a minimum GPA of 3.3 for the course-based master's program, on a 4.0 point system, over the past two years of full-time study (a minimum of 10 full-course equivalents or 60 units) of the previous degree.

The application portal opens in early October each year. The deadline for applying is December 15<sup>th</sup> each year. All applications to the graduate program must include:

- The online application
- Unofficial transcripts for all post-secondary institutions you have attended
- A statement of intent (sometimes also called a study proposal):

This is a written statement that indicates your reasons for seeking admission to the sociology graduate program and proposed area of study. What are your areas of special interest and experience? What research questions motivate you? What theoretical tradition(s) will likely inform or structure your research? Are there specific methodological skills you hope to develop and apply while in the program? Please also, after perusing the departmental website, identify one or more faculty members who you think might be potential supervisors. You are not required to make contact with them. Your statement of intent should be between 500 and 1000 words in length. Applicants who have not completed a prior degree in sociology must include with their statement of intent an additional statement of up to 500 words describing their level of preparedness for graduate study in sociology. This could involve substantial

sociological content in your prior courses, your involvement in sociological research, or reading you've done in sociological literature.

- A writing sample:

This could be a term paper, a research report, a thesis chapter or an article, preferably sociological in content. It cannot be co-authored.

- Two reference letters:

Two references are required. At least one, if not both, should be academic references. The student will enter the referees name, information and email when applying and an email will be sent to them once the application is submitted to have the referees complete an online form.

- A curriculum vitae (CV) (optional)

## 2.2. Application Assessment

All applications to the graduate program are reviewed and assessed by faculty members of the Graduate Studies Committee, led by the Graduate Program Director.

The Department of Sociology selects students on the basis of background in sociology, academic performance, letters of recommendation, fit between student and faculty research interests, and the quality of statement of intent and writing sample. PhD applicants typically have also had the experience of conducting a major research project, such as a thesis or major research paper, at the master's level.

Applications from students with degrees in closely related fields and/or whose previous academic work included significant sociological content will be considered, subject to the minimum admissions criteria indicated above. In such cases, it is recommended that applicants describe their rationale for switching into sociology at the graduate level and their preparation for doing so. Students with questions about the suitability of their prior degrees or coursework should contact the Graduate Program Director. Admitted students who lack competency in core areas of sociology may be required to complete undergraduate prerequisites extra to the requirements of the graduate program in the first year of full-time registration or in a qualifying year/term.

Applicants to the **thesis-based MA program** are not required to find a supervisor before applying. We suggest that you explore our faculty members' research interests by looking at our website and clicking on individual faculty members' profiles. In your statement of intent, you should identify any professors who are working in areas related to your area of research interest and who you see as potential supervisors.

Applicants to the **course-based MA program** are not required to obtain a supervisor for program completion. The major research paper component of the course-based program is completed as

part of two courses in the spring and summer terms, which is taught by one or two faculty members from the department.

**Applicants to the PhD Program** do not need to find a supervisor before applying to the program, but it is important that there be potential supervisors and committee members with expertise related to your expected area of research. Doctoral applicants are advised to explore our faculty members' research interests by looking at our website and clicking on individual faculty members' profiles. In your statement of intent you can identify any professors whom you see as potential supervisors. Students may also wish to contact prospective supervisors, but an expression of interest or support from a prospective supervisor does not guarantee admission to the graduate program.

### **2.3. Requests for Credit for Previous Graduate Coursework**

Application for credit for sociology graduate courses already completed but not part of completed degree, should be made to the Department at the time of admission, so that the Department can take previous work into account when considering a student's program. Normally advanced credit is given for no more than two graduate courses. See:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-d-2.html>

### **2.4. Admission Deferrals**

Successful applicants who wish to defer admission must submit an email request for deferred admission to the Graduate Program Director by May 1. If the deferral is approved, the program may issue a revised funding offer (minimum levels of funding guaranteed set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies will be met). Students who defer their start date will not be eligible to receive scholarships or other financial support until their new program start date and the deferred start date may mean the student will lose some scholarship funding or financial support.

### 3. MA PROGRAMS

The following tables summarize the program requirements and timelines for the MA Programs. Please also see the Faculty of Graduate Studies calendar on MA program requirements:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/sociology-soci.html>

**Table 1. Program Requirements**

| Component                   | MA (thesis-based)                                                                                                                                     | MA (course-based)                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Required course work</b> | Five 3-unit courses plus a 3-unit seminar in professional sociology.                                                                                  | Eight 3-unit courses plus a 3-unit seminar in professional sociology.                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Core Courses</b>         | Three courses (9 units): theory, methods, and statistics.                                                                                             | Three courses (9 units): theory, methods, and statistics.                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Elective Courses</b>     | Two courses (6 units) at the 600 or 700 level, at least one of which must be a substantive SOCI course, and only one of which may be other than SOCI. | Three courses (9 units) at the 600 or 700 level, only one of which may be other than SOCI.                                                                                                             |
| <b>Research component</b>   | Thesis completed according to the requirements and standards of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.                                                      | Research paper (equivalent to 6 units), completed as part of a course, Soci 680, in spring and summer terms. Final research paper reviewed and graded by two tenured or tenure-stream faculty members. |
| <b>Research ethics</b>      | Completion of TCPS 2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics.                                                                                              | Completion of TCPS 2 Tutorial Course on Research Ethics.                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Time to completion</b>   | 24 months                                                                                                                                             | 12 months                                                                                                                                                                                              |

**Table 2. Program Timelines (Full Time)**

|                               | MA (thesis-based)                                                                                                        | MA (course-based)                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Fall term</b>              | Two 3-unit courses<br>1.5-unit seminar in professional sociology                                                         | Three 3-unit courses<br>1.5-unit seminar in professional sociology                   |
| <b>Winter term</b>            | Three 3-unit courses<br>1.5-unit seminar in professional sociology.<br><i>Identify thesis supervisor by late January</i> | Three 3-unit courses<br>1.5-unit seminar in professional sociology                   |
| <b>Spring-Summer term</b>     | Finalize thesis proposal; obtain research ethics approval if needed; begin thesis research                               | One 6-unit course (major research project)<br>Apply for graduation, Fall convocation |
| <b>Fall – Winter (Year 2)</b> | Thesis completed according to the requirements and standards of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.                         | Not applicable.                                                                      |

### **3.1. Course-Based MA Program**

Students in the 12-month course-based MA program complete 27-units of coursework including Soci 680, the 6-unit Major Research Project course, taken during the spring-summer term. Typically, the major research project will result in a paper of 8,000-10,000 words – the length of a standard journal article in our discipline.

The major research project will be conceptualized in consultation with the Soci 680 instructor(s) and Graduate Program Director as part of the professionalization courses in fall and winter terms (Soci 606 & 607) and prepared through a series of structured, graded activities in Soci 680. The activities will be designed to maximize the development of analytic and research skills, but also circumscribed so as to ensure focus and timely completion. Paper options may include (depending on the decisions of the Soci 680 instructor): a critical or narrative literature review; a meta-analysis or systematic review; a secondary analysis of existing qualitative or quantitative data; a sustained examination of an important concept or theory in sociology; or a comparative policy analysis.

Students will not be allowed to carry out research that requires individualized ethics approval, but course instructors will be allowed to organize some students' projects as part of a project-based ethics application (submitted no later than February) when suitable and feasible.

Two faculty members in sociology will assess the research papers, one of whom will be the Soci 680 instructor. In years where Soci 680 is co-taught, then both of the assessors may be Soci 680 instructors. Students will present their papers to the department in an open conference at the end of Soci 680.

### **3.2. Thesis-Based MA Program**

In addition to required coursework, students in the MA-thesis program must satisfy the MA thesis requirement, which involves the following:

Students will arrange for a faculty member to be their thesis supervisor, normally by January of their first year of study. The selection of a supervisor must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and the appropriate documentation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

In consultation with their supervisor, and during Soci 607 (Master's Seminar in Professional Sociology II), students will prepare a thesis proposal. It is recommended that a master's thesis proposal be approximately 15 pages in length. (The proposal may also be developed as part of the requirements for the student's chosen research methods course.) Guidelines for the preparation of a thesis proposal are found below. When the proposal is acceptable to the supervisor, a copy of the entire proposal will be filed in the sociology graduate office. The supervisor's signature on the title page constitutes formal departmental approval of the proposal.

This must be completed before the thesis research begins. The Graduate Program Director will approve the Thesis Oral Examination only if the proposal has previously been approved and filed with the Department. The GPA will retain the proposal, and all proposals can be made available to any departmental faculty member or graduate student who wishes to read them.

MA thesis students are funded for the first two years in program. The Faculty of Graduate Studies allows up to four years for the completion of a master's degree.

Students will prepare a satisfactory Master's thesis and pass an Oral Examination designed to test their knowledge of the thesis subject matter. It is recommended that a Master's thesis be approximately 100 pages in length. The thesis oral examination committee will consist of the supervisor and at least two other examiners from the University of Calgary, one of whom should normally be external to the Department of Sociology. Examiners must meet FGS criteria in section [M.3.2 of the graduate calendar](#). It is the supervisor's responsibility to recruit the examiners and establish a mutually agreeable date and time for the oral examination. The supervisor is responsible for arranging a neutral chair for the exam. The supervisor can obtain a list of faculty members who are due to serve as neutral chairs from the GPA and is expected to include the potential neutral chair(s) in the process of establishing a date and time for the oral examination.

At least five weeks prior to the oral exam, the supervisor will inform the Graduate Program Advisor and Graduate Program Director of the date and time of the oral exam, as well as the composition of the examination committee and title of the thesis. The GPA must find a location for the exam and submit the Notice of Oral Examination to the Faculty of Graduate Studies by four weeks prior to the exam. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that each examiner receives a copy of the thesis no later than three weeks prior to the oral exam. This copy can be electronic or hard copy, according to the preference of each individual examiner.

Normally, according to Faculty of Graduate Studies policy, thesis oral examinations are open. This means that the examination is a public event but only examiners question the student. Observers exit the room before in-camera deliberation begins.

### **3.2.1. Suggested Outline for a Master's Thesis Proposal**

It is recommended that students preparing their thesis proposal look at examples of proposals for research using similar methods or analytic approaches. Master's thesis proposal are typically in the range of 15 pages in length (double-spaced, excluding bibliography).

- 1) Title Page (including title, student's name, supervisor's name, signature & date and these two sentences: "In compliance with the Department of Sociology Graduate Handbook regulations, only the cover sheet of this proposal is being circulated. A complete copy of the thesis proposal is on file in the Graduate Office.")
- 2) Statement of Problem (general hypothesis if applicable)
- 3) Theoretical Context
- 4) Preliminary Literature Review (highly selective major sources)
- 5) Research Design
  - (1) Data Source (e.g. library, secondary analysis, interviews, survey)
  - (2) Sample (if applicable)
  - (3) Measurement instruments or plan to generate data (interviews, observations, etc.)
  - (4) Anticipated methods of data analysis
- 6) Proposed Chapter Outline (an MA thesis will commonly have 5 chapters: an introduction,

a literature review and methods chapter, two chapters of data analysis, and a conclusion)

- 7) Work Timetable
- 8) Preliminary Bibliography

### **3.3. Transfer Between MA Programs**

Transfers from the MA course-based program to the MA thesis program are not permitted.

Students in the MA thesis program may request a transfer to the MA course-based program at any time after completion of at least 9 units of graduate-level coursework in the MA thesis program. The following conditions apply:

- Students must be in good academic standing (minimum GPA of 3.0 and no single grade less than B-).
- When transferring into the course-based program, any funding guarantees made as part of the offer admission to the MA thesis program will be void. The student may be offered funding support in the course-based program at the discretion of the Graduate Program Director.
- The student will remain responsible for paying all tuition and fees, under the structure for course-based programs [as detailed in the graduate calendar](#).
- Students must complete the required coursework for the MA course-based program [as detailed in the graduate calendar](#), including the 6-unit major research project course (Soci 680), which is offered only in the spring-summer term each year.
- Depending on the timing of the transfer, the student may need to independently complete preparatory work for Soci 680 that is normally assigned to course-based MA students as part of the two-term professionalization seminar (Soci 606-7). This work will be overseen by the graduate program director and, if possible, the instructor of Soci 680. Failure to complete necessary preparatory work for Soci 680 will mean the student will not be permitted to register for Soci 680.
- Once transferred, the maximum time to completion of the MA program (four years) is not extended. The student has a maximum of four years to complete their program from the initial date of enrollment in the MA thesis program.

## 4. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

### 4.1. Program Requirements

The research interests of faculty members in the Department of Sociology facilitate study at the PhD level in a variety of substantive areas. A list of faculty members and their respective areas of interest can be found on the department's website. In addition to the development of substantive specializations, the doctoral program in Sociology emphasizes the core areas of sociological theory and qualitative and quantitative methodology, through a range of course offerings.

The expected time to completion for the PhD program is 4-5 years. Funding is guaranteed for the first four years in program only.

In order to graduate, students must meet criteria set out by both the Department of Sociology and the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Students must meet course requirements as stated in the Graduate Calendar, which consists of 6 3-unit courses plus two 1.5-unit seminars in Professional Sociology. Students are required to take courses in sociological theory, statistics, research methods, and substantive areas of sociology. In addition to coursework, PhD students must complete the requirements for candidacy (see below), and complete and successfully defend the thesis.

### 4.2. PhD Program Overview

| Program Timeline | Semester                             | Requirements                                                                                             |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Year 1           | Fall and Winter<br>September – April | Complete all course requirements                                                                         |
|                  | By April 30 <sup>th</sup>            | Declare supervisor                                                                                       |
|                  | Within the next three months         | Declare supervisory committee and begin work on doctoral thesis proposal                                 |
| Year 2           | Sept – Nov year 2                    | Complete dissertation proposal                                                                           |
|                  | November                             | When proposal is approved, the three substantive areas for the Field of Study exams should be identified |
|                  | November – March                     | Prepare for and complete FoS Written Exam                                                                |
|                  | Within one month later               | FoS oral exam                                                                                            |
| Year 2 – Year 4  | May year 2 – April year 4            | Ethics approval, data gathering, thesis writing                                                          |
| Year 4           | May – August                         | Final thesis revisions, oral defence                                                                     |

PhD students are funded for the first four years in program. The Faculty of Graduate Studies allows up to six years for the completion of a doctoral degree.

### **4.3. Supervision**

Students will arrange for a faculty member to be their supervisor and file the required Appointment of Supervisor form, normally before April 30th of their first year of study. In consultation with their supervisor, they will then select two additional supervisory committee members, and the paperwork establishing the supervisory committee should be filed within three months of initiating the paperwork appointing their supervisor. It is recommended, though not required, that members of the supervisory committee be from within the Department, but one member may be from outside the department or external to the University. (See section J.5 of the graduate calendar.) It is strongly recommended that at least one member of the supervisory committee have had the experience of supervising a doctoral student to completion. The selection of a supervisor, and supervisory committee members, must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and all appropriate forms submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

### **4.4. Language Requirement**

Other than proficiency in the English language, there are no formal language requirements for the PhD program in Sociology. If a student proposes to do research in an area that requires a language other than English, however, the supervisory committee will set a requirement that the student acquire the needed proficiency. This decision will be made at the time of the approval of the thesis proposal.

### **4.5. Candidacy Regulations**

To achieve Candidacy, doctoral students in the Sociology Graduate Program must successfully complete the following components, in the order listed:

1. Course requirements as stated in the Graduate Calendar
2. Thesis proposal, approved by the Supervisory Committee
3. Field of Study (FoS) Written Examination
4. Field of Study (FoS) Oral Examination

#### **4.5.1. Thesis Proposal**

An approved thesis proposal demonstrates:

- The ability to clearly articulate a research project (i.e. a theoretical orientation, a research question, a literature review, and an appropriate methodological plan);
- An awareness of the conceptual and methodological scope and limitations of the project;
- A timetable and plan for moving from the proposal stage to final submission of the thesis.

Normally students should aim to have an approved thesis proposal within fifteen months of initial registration in the doctoral program. The thesis proposal should be 20–30 double-spaced pages, not including bibliography or appendices. The student prepares the proposal in consultation with members of the supervisory committee. It is strongly recommended that the student meet with the full supervisory committee to discuss the general idea for the research and obtain suggestions from the committee members prior to beginning work on the proposal. The student then works on the proposal under the guidance of the supervisor. When the supervisor and the student feel that

they have a strong draft of the proposal, this draft will be circulated to the committee members. The supervisor will then schedule a meeting between the student and the supervisory committee to discuss the proposal. Approval may be given at this time, but it is more usual for the supervisory committee to offer suggestions for strengthening the proposal.

Approval of the proposal must be unanimous. If the proposal does not receive unanimous approval at the first meeting, the student has up to three months to consult further with the supervisor and individual committee members, revise the proposal and re-submit it to the supervisory committee. Approval of a revised proposal may be given by the committee members by way of email correspondence. If any of the committee members continue to have concerns about the proposal, the supervisor will convene another meeting with the student and the supervisory committee for the purposes of discussing the proposal. If the proposal is not unanimously approved at this second meeting, the student will be required to withdraw from the program. The graduate program will send the *Recommendation of Required Withdrawal from Graduate Program for Failure to Maintain Academic Progress* to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. When the proposal is approved, all supervisory committee members sign the title page of the proposal, and a hard copy of the proposal is submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor to be filed electronically in the Sociology graduate program office. The GPA will retain the proposal, and all proposals can be made available to any departmental faculty or graduate students who wish to read them.

#### **4.5.2. Field of Study (FoS) Examination**

##### **Reading List of Substantive Areas of Specialization (Approved Field of Study Reading List)**

Each doctoral student, with the help of their supervisor, determines three substantive areas of specialization that must be approved by the supervisory committee. The supervisory committee should begin discussing possible Field of Study areas at the first meeting of the supervisory committee with the student, so that the three areas can be approved when the proposal is approved. These substantive areas will serve as the basis of the reading list connected to the Field of Study (FoS) written examination and the Field of Study (FoS) oral examination. The student and the supervisor will draw up a reading list covering the three areas, which will be circulated electronically to the supervisory committee after the completion and approval of the thesis proposal. The supervisory committee may suggest additions and revisions to the reading list and will indicate their approval of the reading list, via email, no later than three months prior to the FoS written examination. The reading list will be composed of academic sources such as books and journal articles and will normally contain 50-100 items. Once the supervisory committee has approved the reading list, a copy must be filed with the department. The Graduate Program Director may require that reading lists with fewer than 50 or more than 100 items be revised to fit appropriate length standards.

The FoS written and oral examinations are based on the substantive areas of specialization and can include relevant theoretical and methodological literatures. The reading list will go beyond the student's proposed thesis research and will reflect these broader areas of substantive, theoretical and methodological specialization.

##### **Scheduling of the Field of Study Written Examination and Oral Examination**

The FoS oral examination should normally be completed within 20 months, and must be completed

within 28 months, of the student's first registration in the PhD program. The FoS oral examination must be completed no more than one month after commencement of the FoS written examination.

At least four months prior to the FoS written examination, the student should advise the supervisor of the intention to take the examination.

A final reading list – approved by the supervisory committee in consultation with the student (see above) – must normally be provided to the Graduate Program Director at least three months prior to the FOS written examination.

Two months before the FoS written examination, the composition of the FoS examination committee, and the date and time of both the FoS written and oral examinations should be established. The Sociology Graduate Program Director will normally not approve the examination committee composition earlier than two months before, or later than five weeks before, the written examination.

The supervisor is responsible for arranging a neutral chair for the exam. The supervisor can obtain a list of faculty members who are due to serve as neutral chairs from the GPA and is expected to include the potential neutral chair(s) in the process of establishing a date and time for the oral examination.

#### Composition of the Field of Study Examination Committee

Both the FoS written and oral examinations will be evaluated by the same FoS examination committee. The composition of the FoS examination committee is as follows:

- Supervisor and any co-supervisors – voting
- All other members of the supervisory committee – voting
- Two additional members – voting

Normally, one of these members will be internal to the Department of Sociology and one will be external to the department (but internal to the University of Calgary).

#### **FIELD OF STUDY (FoS) WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

##### Format of the Field of Study Written Examination

The FoS written examination is prepared by the supervisory committee and covers the substantive areas of specialization of the student. The FoS written examination requires the student to write three essays, each 2500 - 3750 words in length (approximately 10-15 double-spaced pages), exclusive of references and attachments. The student will receive the questions and then have seven days to write the essays. The examination offers the student three sets of two questions, with one set for each area of specialization; the student chooses one question from each set of two.

##### Process and Evaluation of the Field of Study Written Examination

The student has one week to complete the FoS written examination. The student will receive the

examination by email from the Graduate Program Advisor, at an agreed-upon time during business hours on day one of the examination. The examination must be received by the Graduate Program Advisor, either by email, by the same time on day eight.

Following the student's submission of the completed FoS written examination, copies of the exam and of the student's answers will be provided to each member of the FoS examination committee. The examination, the student's essays, and the approved FoS reading list will form the basis of the FoS Oral Examination.

Success on the FoS Written Examination is defined as:

1. Displaying knowledge of and appropriate use of literature on the approved reading list;
2. Demonstrating a sound understanding of major debates, controversies and relationships identified in the relevant literature;
3. Demonstrating an ability to assess and critique the relevant literature with respect to specific issues and themes; and to exercise critical judgement, including an understanding of strengths and weaknesses of various points of view;
4. Producing answers that are coherent, internally consistent and supported by the relevant literature;

Each examiner will evaluate the written examination as an overall Pass or Fail, based on a reading of all three essays. Examiners will submit an assessment of "pass" or "fail" on the written component to the Graduate Program Advisor no later than the day prior (during business hours) to the scheduled FOS oral examination.

## OUTCOMES

One vote to fail will result in a pass, but two or more failing votes will result in a fail and the oral examination will be postponed until such time as a passing written exam is completed.

### Failing the FoS Written Examination

If a student is judged to have failed the written component, they will be permitted one retake. In the case of a fail:

- **The Graduate Program Director** informs the student, and the examining committee, of the failure of the written component and the postponement of the oral component;
- **The examiners** submit, within five working days of the examination, brief memos to the Graduate Program Director, explaining the reasons for their votes;
- **The Graduate Program Director** sends the *Notice of a Failed Candidacy Component* to the student within ten working days of the date of the examination and summarizes the essential points from the memos for the student, copied to the supervisor.

### Re-take of Written Examination

Only one re-take is permitted. The re-take must take place no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the first examination. Normally, the composition of the examining committee will remain the same.

The re-take examination will be based on the approved FoS reading list. A re-taken written exam will have the same format as the first FoS written examination. New questions will be set by the supervisory committee. The oral component of this re-take will be based on the FoS reading list and the new written exam.

The re-take examination will be assessed by the same criteria as the original examination. Again, each examiner will evaluate the written examination as an overall Pass or Fail, based on a reading of all three essays. Examiners will submit an assessment of “pass” or “fail” on the written component to the Graduate Program Advisor no later than the day prior (during business hours) to the scheduled FoS oral examination. One vote to fail will result in a pass, but two or more failing votes will result in a fail and the student will be required to withdraw from the program.

A recommendation of "fail" on the re-take exam requires that:

- **The Graduate Program Director** inform the student, and the examining committee, of the failure of the written component and the cancellation of the oral component;
- **The examiners** submit, within five working days of the examination, a confidential written report to the Graduate Program Director, copied to the supervisor, detailing the reasons for their votes;
- The graduate program will send the *Recommendation of Required Withdrawal from Graduate Program for Failure to Maintain Academic Progress* to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

## **FIELD OF STUDY (FoS) ORAL EXAMINATION**

### Format of the Field of Study Oral Examination

The FoS oral examination lasts a maximum of two hours. This does not include the deliberation time of the committee or breaks approved by the neutral chair. The entire FoS written examination and approved FoS reading list may be addressed in the FoS oral examination. Thus, the examiners may ask questions related to (1) the essays the student wrote for the FoS written examination, (2) the questions on the FoS written examination that the student chose not to answer, and (3) the approved FoS reading list.

### Process and Evaluation of the FoS Oral Examination

A Neutral Chair presides over the FoS oral examination and is non-voting. The Department Head or equivalent, or designate (e.g., Graduate Program Director), and the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Dean's representative may choose, or be asked, to participate as non-voting observers. Only members of the examination committee question the student. All examiners should be given an opportunity to question the student during the early part of the examination, by rounds of questioning.

Questions to the student should be clear and succinct. The student should be given reasonable time to answer. If the student has understood the question and cannot answer, the examiner should pass to another question and not attempt to extract an answer by prolonged interrogation, or by leading the student. The Neutral Chair should guard against any tendency of examiners to

interact with each other instead of concentrating on the examination of the student.

The Neutral Chair must stop the exam if one of the examiners needs to leave the room and will reconvene the exam when all examiners are present.

At the end of the FoS oral examination, the student is asked to withdraw from the room. Before any discussion of the student's performance, each examiner must identify, by secret ballot, which recommendation (pass/fail) they favour. This procedure provides the committee with a frame of opinion upon which to base a full discussion of the student's performance. The examiners then conduct a post-examination discussion. The Department Head or equivalent, or designate (e.g., Graduate Program Director), and the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Dean's representative may participate in the discussion, although they have no vote.

Success on the FoS oral examination is defined as:

- Displaying knowledge of and appropriate use of literature on the approved reading list;
- Demonstrating a sound understanding of major debates, controversies and relationships identified in the relevant literature;
- Demonstrating an ability to assess and critique the relevant literature with respect to specific issues and themes; and to exercise critical judgement, including an understanding of strengths and weaknesses of various points of view;
- Producing answers that are coherent, internally consistent and supported by the relevant literature.

## OUTCOMES

### Passing the FoS Oral Examination

Every effort should be made to reach a unanimous recommendation. Should the outcome of the final vote include one negative vote, the student will pass the oral examination.

### Failing the FoS Oral Examination

Should the outcome include two or more negative votes, the student will fail the oral examination. In this case, the student will be permitted to re-take the oral component. In the case of a fail on the oral exam:

- **The Neutral Chair** informs the student of the committee's recommendation immediately following the vote of the examination committee;
- **The Neutral Chair**, within one working day of the failed examination, records the final recommendation of fail on the Examination Report form and submits it to the Graduate Program Director
- **The examiners** submit, within five working days of the examination, brief memos to the Graduate Program Director, explaining the reasons for their votes;
- If the Graduate Program Director Upholds the fail, **the Graduate Program Director** sends the *Notice of a Failed Candidacy Component* to the student within ten working days of the date of the examination and summarizes the essential points from the memos to the

student, copied to the Supervisor.

#### Re-take of FoS Oral Examination

Only one re-take is permitted. The re-take must take place no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the first examination. Normally, the composition of the examining committee will remain the same.

The re-take examination will be based on the same FoS reading list and the FoS written examination as was the first oral examination.

The re-take examination will be assessed by the same criteria as the original examination.

An outcome of fail on a second attempt of the examination is a recommendation of the examination committee to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The final decision will be at the discretion of the Dean. If the Dean of Graduate Studies upholds the fail, the student will be required to withdraw.

A recommendation of "fail" on the re-take exam requires that:

- **The Neutral Chair** informs the student of the committee's recommendation immediately following the vote of the examination committee;
- **The Neutral Chair**, within one working day of the failed examination, records the final recommendation of fail on the Examination Report form and must have it submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies;
- **The examiners submit**, within five working days of the examination, a confidential written report to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Graduate Program Director and Supervisor, detailing the reasons for their votes;
- **The Neutral Chair** must submit, within five working days of the failed examination, a written report of the examination procedures to the Dean and copy it to the Graduate Program Director

#### Appeal of Failed FoS Examination

Appeal after the first fail: the student may appeal of the first fail of any component of the candidacy examination directly to the FGS Appeals Committee following the appeal procedure (see <https://grad.ucalgary.ca/current/managing-my-program/appeal>).

Appeal after the second fail: A failed retake of a candidacy examination requires the student to withdraw. Student appeals of decisions that result in a student being immediately required to withdraw may be made to the University Appeals Committee as an academic progression matter decision. See section Student Appeals to the University Appeals Committee and University Appeals Tribunal of the University of Calgary Calendar at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>.

### Sociology Field of Study Examination Process Overview

|                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Four months prior to Field of Study Written Examination    | Student must advise the supervisor of the intention to take the FoS written examination and FoS oral examinations (with the oral component to occur no more than one month after the written FoS examination).           |
| Three months prior to FoS Written Examination              | Final reading list approved by supervisory committee. FoS written examination and FoS oral examination are scheduled.                                                                                                    |
| No sooner than two months prior to FoS written Examination | GPD approves of the composition of the FoS examination committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervisor (s)</li><li>• Other members of the supervisory committee</li><li>• Two additional members</li></ul> |
| At least four weeks prior to FoS Oral Examination          | GPA completes Notice of FoS Oral Examination, including required signatures from student, supervisor and GPD. Neutral chair is identified by the GPA. Suitable examination room is booked by the GPA.                    |

## **4.6. Doctoral Thesis**

Faculty of Graduate Studies thesis guidelines can be found [here](#).

A doctoral thesis must make a significant contribution to knowledge in a field of study, embody the results of original investigation and analysis, and be of such quality as to merit publication. The length of a doctoral thesis is normally 200-250 pages. Students should aim to complete the dissertation within 48 months of entering the program. Students have the option of submitting a traditional thesis or a manuscript-based thesis.

### **4.6.1. Traditional Thesis**

The traditional thesis is a major work, which represents the student's demonstration of his/her ability to use the tools learned in their PhD program in an original sociological research project. The thesis may be a theoretical study but usually is an empirical investigation that includes a comprehensive analysis of data (primary or secondary). In either case, the thesis should make a solid and direct contribution to sociological knowledge and be of such quality as to merit publication, either as a full-length manuscript or in several article-length pieces, and it should lead the student to numerous professional presentations as well.

### **4.6.2. Manuscript-Based Thesis**

A manuscript-based thesis comprises three or more scholarly articles stemming from a common project plus introductory and concluding chapters that integrate the contributions of the articles. Examining committees will evaluate a manuscript-based thesis using the same criteria as are applied to the traditional thesis.

The guidelines for a manuscript-based thesis in the Department of Sociology are as follows:

- The request to submit a manuscript-based thesis must be approved by all members of the supervisory committee and the Graduate Program Director. The request, including approval of all members of the supervisory committee, must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director no less than six months prior to the anticipated date of the final oral defence. At the time of the submission of the request to the Graduate Program Director, all included articles must, at the very least, have been submitted for review to peer-reviewed scholarly journals with a solid academic reputation. The supervisory committee is the final authority on whether a particular journal has a “solid academic reputation.”
- The articles in a manuscript-based thesis are roughly equivalent to the “findings” or “analysis” or “thematic” chapters of a traditional thesis. If crucial contextual information has been left out of an article in order to meet a journal’s submission specifications, such information should be included in an appendix in the dissertation.
- In addition to three or more scholarly articles, the main body of a manuscript-based thesis must include introductory and concluding chapters. The introductory chapter should outline the general theme and objectives of the thesis by specifying the over-arching sociological problem that is addressed. It should also specify the original contributions of the thesis to sociological knowledge. The concluding chapter should draw out the overall implications of the thesis, demonstrate how the thesis as a whole advances sociological knowledge, identify limitations in the project and suggest future avenues of research. The

introductory and concluding chapters need to be substantial in content, depth and length and clearly communicate how the findings of the articles are complementary and interconnected.

- The PhD candidate must be the sole author of all of the articles included in a manuscript-based thesis.
- To be included in a manuscript-based thesis, articles must represent original work, have been researched and written in the course of the student's doctoral program, and have been circulated for comment to the entire supervisory committee prior to submission to a scholarly journal.
- The articles in a manuscript-based thesis are to be evaluated by the oral examination committee in the same manner as other parts of the thesis, regardless of their publication status. The oral examination committee may require modifications even if an article has already received final acceptance from a journal or already been published.

#### **4.6.3. Thesis Oral Examination**

The doctoral oral examination normally cannot be scheduled until all members of the supervisory committee have reviewed the entire thesis document and approved it for defence. Such approval must be communicated to the GPA by email or written memorandum.

The thesis oral examination committee shall consist of the student's supervisory committee and at least two other examiners, one of whom shall be external to the University. It is highly recommended that at least one member of the examination committee be from a discipline other than sociology. This examiner can be a supervisory committee member or one of the two examiners.

Normally, according to Faculty of Graduate Studies policy, thesis oral examinations are open. This means that the examination is a public event, but only examiners question the student. Observers exit the room before in-camera deliberation begins.

Students must complete and successfully defend a doctoral thesis according to the procedures specified by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

At least eight weeks prior to the oral exam, the name and CV of the external examiner must be submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor. At least five weeks prior to the oral exam, the GPA should be informed of the date and time of the oral exam, as well as the composition of the examination committee. The supervisor is responsible for arranging a neutral chair for the exam. The supervisor can obtain a list of faculty members who are due to serve as neutral chairs from the GPA and is expected to include the potential neutral chair(s) in the process of establishing a date and time for the oral examination.

The GPA must find a location for the exam and submit the Notice of Oral Examination to the Faculty of Graduate Studies by four weeks prior to the exam. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that each examiner receives a copy of the thesis no later than three weeks prior to the oral exam. This copy can be in digital form or hard copy, according to the preference of each examiner.

Academic regulations governing the thesis defense may be found in the graduate calendar.

#### **4.6.4. Copyediting Policy**

Students may hire an editor to copyedit their theses. The student, supervisor and editor must abide by the following regulations:

- Prior to hiring a copy editor, permission from the supervisor(s) must be obtained. An agreement outlining the permitted scope of editing must be signed by the student and the supervisor(s).
- A disclosure statement is required in the thesis (e.g., a sentence in the preface or acknowledgment stating that the thesis has been professionally edited).
- Under no circumstances should the copyediting alter the content, structure or contribution of the thesis.

## 5. FUNDING POLICY

**Note:** The graduate funding levels indicated in this document are the minimum amounts; financial support to individual students may exceed these amounts.

### Guaranteed Minimum Funding Levels (effective February 2022)

- There is no guaranteed minimum funding for MA students in the course-based program. Students in the course-based MA program may be offered funding, in which case this funding policy applies.
- The minimum guaranteed funding for thesis-based MA students who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents is \$20,000 for the first 24 months in the program.
- The minimum guaranteed funding for thesis-based MA students on student visas is \$24,000 for the first 24 months in the program.
- The minimum guaranteed funding for PhD students who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents is \$22,000 annually for the first four years.
- The minimum guaranteed funding for international PhD students on student visas is \$24,000 annually for the first four years.
- If an international student's visa status changes during their funded time in program, the student's minimum guaranteed funding will be adjusted accordingly.

To be eligible to receive financial support, a student must be registered full time and active in program. In addition,

- Students receiving scholarship funding from their supervisor's grant must fulfil their supervisor's reasonable expectations regarding attendance and activity in the research environment.
- Employment income as a Graduate Assistant (Teaching), or Graduate Assistant (Non-Teaching), is included in the guaranteed funding amount offered to students. Students must be available to take this employment if offered; otherwise, the amount of the GAT or GANT will be deducted from the annual funding offered to the student for that academic year.
- Students must maintain satisfactory progress in their program as defined by the Faculty of Graduate Studies Graduate Calendar (see "Academic Standing") and obtain a rating of "satisfactory" or better on their annual progress report.
- Instances of academic or non-academic misconduct may result in the re-evaluation of prior funding commitments, subject to the minimums established above.

All of the following count toward meeting the student's guaranteed funding amount (i.e. the amount guaranteed in the student's offer of admission):

- Stipend/scholarship payment from supervisor's research grant
- Graduate Assistantships Teaching (GAT) and non-Teaching (GANT) income
- Graduate Assistantships Research (GAR) income of \$3,000 or more annually
- External scholarships, including SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR/AIHS/AITF/AGES

- Internal scholarships, including from program, or university competitions such as the Graduate Awards Competition
- Income for up to two sessional appointments as outlined in the TUCFA Collective Agreement.

All students must apply for external funding for which they are eligible, such as tri-council funding (SSHRC, CGRS-M or CGRS-D), and the University's Graduate Awards Competition (GAC).

Income from the following sources is *not* counted toward the student's guaranteed funding amount:

- Income as sessional instructor beyond the two courses outlined in the TUCFA Collective Agreement.
- Income earned through unrelated paid employment external to the University.

Success in external and internal scholarship competitions will affect the student's guaranteed minimum funding in the following way:

- Cumulative awards of \$3,000 or less per annum will not count toward a student's guaranteed minimum funding. The student receives the award(s) in addition to the funding package for that year.
- If the combined total of scholarships a student holds in a given year is equal to or less than the student's guaranteed minimum funding plus \$10,000, the student's funding package for that year will be increased by a top up of 10% of the amount of competitive awards received.
- If the combined total of scholarships a student holds in a given year exceeds the student's guaranteed minimum funding by more than \$10,000, there is no top up.
- Scholarships and awards for which the Department of Sociology nominates the recipient will not be topped up.

Students are Responsible for Paying Tuition and Fees

- Tuition and Fees are listed in the graduate calendar: [P.2 Graduate Tuition and General Fees | UCalgary Calendar](#)
- Students with funding from university sources can apply for a payment plan: [Payment Plan | Office of the Registrar | University of Calgary](#)

## **6. DETAILS OF ASSISTANTSHIPS AND OTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### **6.1. Graduate Assistantships – Teaching (T) and Non-Teaching (NT)**

A Graduate Assistantship (GA) appointment is made to assist a student to pursue their studies toward a graduate degree. Departments appoint Graduate Assistants to perform work directly related to areas of a department's academic discipline and teaching responsibilities. The GA (Teaching/Non-Teaching) position is an apprenticeship for an academic or professional career. A Graduate Assistantship is considered partly scholarship and partly employment.

The funding for a Graduate Assistantship is currently set at approximately \$9,316.89. This rate is subject to annual review by the University. No more than 204 hours of service (an average of 12 hours per week over 17 weeks) may be required of Graduate Assistants.

GA(T) appointments are awarded to students to assist with the instructional responsibilities of the Department. Students are assigned to particular instructors in order to assist with, for example, tutorial or lab sessions, grading, etc.

A Graduate Assistantship (NT) (Non-teaching) is an appointment made to assist departments and/or professors with non-teaching responsibilities. The duties of a GA(NT) may include, for example, collecting research data, interviewing research subjects, bibliographic work, or general research services.

GA(T) and GA(NT) positions are governed by a [Collective Agreement](#) negotiated between the Graduate Students Association and the Board of Governors of the University of Calgary.

### **6.2. Graduate Assistantships – Research (GAR)**

Graduate Research Scholarships are awarded to students to support a faculty member in their research through funding that the faculty member(s) hold. No teaching or service duties are required. To be eligible for a GAR, students must be registered as full-time students.

## 7. SCHOLARSHIPS

The Department of Sociology requires graduate students to apply for both internal and external scholarships. Our graduate students have been particularly successful in both the internal and external scholarship competitions. Students should consult [the Faculty of Graduate Studies website](#) for further information on external and internal (University) awards.

### 7.1. External Scholarships

External scholarships are external to the University of Calgary, and are offered by government, industry and other sources. In the Department of Sociology, the most common sources of external scholarship funding are through the federal tri-agencies, especially the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Information about these and other awards is available from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, but please note the following:

- The deadline for the master's tri-agency awards (CGRS-M) is usually December 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Students must normally have achieved a 3.5 or higher GPA in the last two years of study to be eligible. These awards are adjudicated at the University level, with University quotas for each award established federally. CGRS-M awards can be carried over to the first year of doctoral studies *at the same institution*. Students may apply for this award the year prior to starting a master's program (i.e., they may apply in December if they intend to start a master's program the following September).
- The deadline for tri-agency doctoral awards (CGRS-D and SSHRC/CIHR doctoral) is usually October 1<sup>st</sup> each year, but starting in 2025 students must submit a Preliminary Assessment Form (PAF) **by August 11th**. Eligibility regarding time in program differs for the CGRS-D and SSHRC/CIHR doctoral awards. Please consult the agency websites. These awards are adjudicated first at the University level, with finalists sent to a federal-level committee for final adjudication. Students may apply for these awards the year prior to starting a doctoral program (i.e., they may apply in October if they intend to start a doctoral program the following September).
- Students who apply for tri-agency awards are also automatically considered for the [University "Research" AGES awards](#) program.

All students must apply for external scholarships for which they are eligible or required to apply. Students are urged to consult with the Graduate Program Director and Advisor well before application deadlines.

### 7.2. University Internal Scholarships

The Faculty of Graduate Studies [lists](#) a variety of scholarships internal to the University for which Sociology students may be eligible.

University Internal Scholarships are almost always adjudicated through the Graduate Awards Competition (GAC). The departmental deadline for these applications is mid-January each year. Please note the following:

- The GAC competition is not restricted by citizenship. AGES awards for international students are distributed through GAC.
- At this time, students in course-based MA programs at the University of Calgary are not permitted to apply to GAC
- Along with any awards for which they will be automatically considered, students can self-select for consideration for certain special awards in the GAC competition.
- Each year the Department is given a quota for nominating students for the [Izaak Walton Killam Doctoral Scholarship](#). Typically, the Department has been allowed to nominate one student for the Killam. The nominees are selected by the Graduate Admissions Committee (faculty members of the Graduate Studies Committee) from among students who applied to GAC and indicated they were eligible for these awards. Nominees are then forwarded to the Faculty of Graduate Studies to enter university-wide competition.

### **7.3. Departmental Scholarships and Awards**

Sociology Department Scholarships are handled by the Department Awards Committee or by the Graduate Program Director, depending on the award.

- **Donald L. Mills Graduate Scholarship**  
Open to students registered full-time in a master's or doctoral program in the Department of Sociology with exemplary participation in scholarly activity or meritorious participation in activity that supports or advances the discipline. It assumes high quality course performance but is not based on GPA. The scholarship recognizes excellence in any of the following ways: a) an unusually outstanding research paper presented in a course; b) the presentation of a significant paper(s) at scholarly meetings; c) the publication of scholarly work d. documented leadership in organizational activity associated with the discipline or the department; e) outstanding performance in contribution to a research project; f). exemplary participation in professional sociological activities. No person will receive the award more than once within a degree program.
- **James Frideres Award in Quantitative Sociology**  
Open to students registered full time in a graduate program in the Department of Sociology. Offered to the most outstanding graduate student in the area of quantitative sociology. Consideration will be given to academic merit, preparation of a paper, involvement in research or other forms of scholarship, which the committee recognizes as outstanding achievement in the area of quantitative sociology.
- **Suzanne Kanuka Memorial Graduate Scholarship**  
Open to students registered full time in the second year of the master's program in the Department of Sociology who is pursuing research in the area of mental health and wellness. If there is no eligible student in a given year, the award will be open to all graduate students pursuing the relevant area of research.
- **Drs. George and Susannah Kurian Doctoral Scholarship in Sociology**

Dr. George Kurian, professor emeritus in the Department of Sociology, was founding editor of the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, and a noted scholar in family sociology. Dr. Susannah Kurian is a Calgary physician. This award, designated for an international student, is made possible through their generosity and commitment to the doctoral program in sociology at the University of Calgary.

- Sociology Professors Doctoral Entrance Scholarship

Open to students in the first year of the doctoral program. This award is made possible by the generosity of past and present faculty in the Department of Sociology, as well as other donors.

#### **7.4. Department Graduate Awards**

- Graduate Research Symposium Award

This award is presented to a graduate student or students who have made a significant contribution in organizing the Graduate Research Symposium.

- Graduate Teaching Award

A special award is given every April to honour outstanding performance as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. Recognizing that all graduate students with teaching responsibilities must carry out their tasks with care and diligence, the Graduate Teaching Award is meant to recognize *exceptional* contributions to the teaching functions of the Department.

No person will receive the award more than once within a degree program.

- MA Research Recognition Award

The MA Research Recognition Award is offered to an MA student who has shown outstanding academic merit, preparation of a research paper or conference presentation or outstanding participation in research activities or a research project.

- Special Recognition Award

This award is presented to a graduate student or students who have made a significant contribution to the Department.