

THE GUIDE TO GRADUATE STUDY
(THE BLUE BOOK)

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
BOSTON COLLEGE

REGULATIONS
AND REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE MASTER S
AND DOCTORAL
DEGREES

REVISED
FEBRUARY 2025

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

For the policies of the Boston College Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, see

THE FACULTY ADVISOR

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

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

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

MASTER S THESIS OR MASTER S PAPER

The Master's Thesis/Paper is required for all students in the Ph.D.

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

Meet formatting and other administrative criteria established by the Morrissey G65 by the

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

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

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: DOCTOR OF P

their transcripts) can be waived.

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

Faculty Clusters

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

To be listed as a faculty cluster, a minimum of three Boston College faculty members must agree to serve on Area Examination committees in a sociological subfield, including assisting in preparing reading lists, on a regular basis. A minimum Paper

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

The reading list that serves as the basis for a take-

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

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

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

Review Essay Option

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

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

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

Final Steps for Specialty Area Examinations

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

Doctoral Dissertation

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

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

As part of the Comprehensive Examination, students must complete a Dissertation proposal, present that proposal to the

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

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

Other Dissertation Requirements

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

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

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

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

Administrative Deadlines

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

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

- Students should verify that Student Services has their correct graduation date on Agora, by clicking on “Graduation Information - View/Update.” If the student plans on graduating sooner than the date given in Agora, the student should email the responsible person at the Grad School (currently Mara Stahl, stahlmar@bc.edu) and request a date change. If the graduation date is later than the date given on Agora, the student should fill out a Petition for Extension form (<https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/mcas/gsas/pdf/Petition%20For%20Extension%20of%20Time.pdf>), get the appropriate electronic signatures, and e-mail to Mara Stahl, copying the Director of Graduate Studies.
- Students should check the the Grad School website (<https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-graduate-students/dissertation-checklist.html>) for instructions on completing and submitting the dissertation.
- 2-4 weeks in advance:
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A TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETING PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED QUANTITATIVE METHODS

TA ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Priority will be given for TAs to be assigned to the following cla

TEACHING SOCIOLOGY

The Department normally funds first, second, and third year doctoral students through Teaching Assistantships (TAs), and fourth and fifth year doctoral students through Teaching Fellowships

- By July 1, syllabi for all courses taught by new TFs will be reviewed by the PTM (for content) and submitted for review to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (for Core alignment).

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FUNDING ISSUES FOR PH.D. STUDENTS

Tuition Remission and Stipends

TAKING COURSES OUTSIDE BOSTON COLLEGE SOCIOLOGY

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

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

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

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

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

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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

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

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

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

In adjudicating the process, the Graduate School will normally involve the student's principal advisor and other Sociology De0000912 0 612(ta.)70 614bother on a paid or

HARASSMENT

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

INCOMPLETE COURSE GRADES

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

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

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

ANNUAL EVALUATION

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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

Students with approved leaves of absence will remain in the graduate program, although neither enrolled in courses nor registered for doctoral continuation credits. Students who remain unregistered for more than one year without an approved extension of their leave by the Graduate Program Director will be removed from the program, and may reapply in the event that

GOOD STANDING POLICY FOR PH.D. STUDENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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