

# Program Document: UH Manoa Sociology Department Graduate Studies

The accompanying text describes current Department of Sociology rules and procedures for its MA and PhD program. In addition to what is listed here, both programs are also run in accordance with all rules and procedures set by the University of Hawai`i Office of Graduate Education as well as those set by [general university policy](#). Questions of interpretation on department rules should be addressed to the graduate chair of the department.

## PhD Program

The Ph.D. Program is designed to give the student systematic exposure to sociological theories and methods of social research (including statistics), as well as the opportunity to develop special competence within an area of concentration. The areas of interest in the department are reflected in the [course offerings](#) and [research activities](#) of the faculty. Holders of the Ph.D. in sociology have entered careers as professors of sociology at the college- or university-level, and in research positions related to their areas of special interest in government and the private sector.

### Phase I

Phase I of the Ph.D. program consists of basic training in theory, methods, and research.

#### Temporary Advisor

When students enter the doctoral program, they are assigned a temporary advisor from the department faculty, based on the student's experience and interests. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment to see the advisor to discuss courses, formation of a [guidance committee](#) and taking the [qualifying review](#). The temporary advisor serves in this capacity until the student forms a guidance committee.

#### Course Work

During Phase I of their program, students must complete at least 30 credits of course work as follows:

- Sociology 605 (Intermediate Statistics) plus 605L (Lab) [4 Credits]
- Sociology 606 (Research Methods and Design) [3 Credits]
- Sociology 611 (Classical Sociological Theory) [3 Credits]
- Sociology 612 (Contemporary Sociological Theory) [3 Credits]
- One additional methods or statistics course [3 Credits] 600 level or above
- Four substantive courses [12 Credits] 600 level or above
- Sociology 699 (Directed Reading) [3 Credits].

Please see the documentation on [course identification](#) for more detail about theory (SOC 611, 612), methods (SOC 475, 478, 606, 607, 608, 609, 701), statistics (SOC 476/L, SOC 605/L, 705), and substantive courses. All courses must be passed at the B level or above to count towards the degree.

If an entering student's transcripts do not show evidence of appropriate coursework in sociological theory and/or statistics, as determined by the graduate chair, then the student needs to demonstrate preparation in the deficient subjects before proceeding to the corresponding graduate-level courses. Passing Sociology 321 (Sociological Theory) or 476/L (Statistics) with a grade B or higher will be seen as sufficient to demonstrate preparation for Sociology 611/612 or 605, respectively. Alternative methods for demonstrating competence may be deemed sufficient at the discretion of the graduate chair. For students without previous methods coursework, Sociology 300 is useful but not required as preparation for Sociology 606.

Students with previous graduate-level coursework at other universities may bypass required theory, methods, or statistics courses upon written confirmation from the graduate chair that the required courses are equivalent to the earlier work. Students who have taken [post-bachelor unclassified courses](#) at UHM do not need to take these courses again. In either case, however, the bypassed courses must be replaced with alternative courses as follows: A course must be replaced by another department course in the theory, methods, or statistics category, unless the student obtains written approval from the graduate chair.

As part of their course requirements, students must take a directed reading course (Soc 699) to prepare an academic article-length paper, typically in their third semester. This paper can (but is not required to be) the source of one of the papers for the [qualifying review](#). The faculty member with whom the student takes Sociology 699 is usually one of the members of the student's guidance committee, and the topic and format of the paper must be approved by the faculty member in advance. The purpose of this requirement is to acquaint students with independent research and to help prepare them for their QR. For papers involving collection of data from other people, it is recommended that, with the advice of the faculty member, students obtain [prior human subjects approval](#) from the university's Committee on Human Studies. This ensures that use of the data on a later dissertation, conference paper, and/or publication does not violate university and federal guidelines.

## **Guidance Committee**

By the third enrolled semester in the PhD program, a student must form a guidance committee of three or more faculty members (usually three), with one member designated as the committee chair. The committee takes over primary responsibility for academic counseling from the student's temporary advisor. It can but does not need to include the temporary advisor as a member. The guidance committee usually forms the core of the student's later [dissertation committee](#), hence its members should typically be university graduate faculty, and the chair should be a regular or affiliate faculty member of the Department of Sociology. One member (other than the chair) from outside the department is permitted, but an outside member is not required until the Phase II dissertation committee stage. Students are strongly advised to exercise great care and forethought in selecting committee members. Each student should attempt, as much as

possible, to include faculty with expertise in each scholarly subject that she or he is looking to pursue and the ability to provide professional counseling and mentoring relevant to her or his aspirations.

The guidance committee is not officially established until the student has obtained the signatures of all members on the internal department [Guidance Committee Form](#) and has submitted it to the graduate secretary, so this should be done promptly. If at some later point a student wishes to change the composition of the committee, she or he must submit a new form with the signatures of all members of the revised committee.

## **Qualifying Review**

For the qualifying review (QR), one paper that has been completed while the student has been in the PhD program is submitted for evaluation by the department. Students are required to pass the QR to move on to Phase II of the program. Students are encouraged to take the QR by the fourth semester of enrollment in the program, and must do so by the sixth semester to remain in the PhD program. The QR will test whether a student has developed the following skills at a sufficient level for doctoral level work in sociology: understanding and creating theoretical and methodological material, thinking analytically, and writing effectively.

It is recommended that students discuss candidate QR papers with their guidance committee chair by the beginning of the semester in which they plan to take the QR so that they may receive feedback on which paper is most suitable and revise their paper as necessary. By a deadline specified in advance by the graduate chair (typically the seventh week of the semester), final drafts of the QR paper must be submitted by the student to her or his guidance committee. If the student is in the fifth semester or earlier, the committee can determine that the student is not ready and require that the student wait until a subsequent semester to take the QR.

If the student is proceeding with the QR, she/he must submit the completed QR paper to the department via the graduate secretary within two weeks after the deadline for submitting them to the guidance committee (typically the ninth week of the semester). Those who fail to do so will not be allowed to take the QR. Within the same two week interval, each member of the student's guidance committee should write a separate confidential evaluation of the paper and the student using the department [QR Guidance Form](#) and turn the form in to the graduate secretary. Other than copyediting, the only changes a student may make between the final drafts turned in to the guidance committee and the completed paper turned in to the department are those that have been explicitly and specifically approved by the guidance committee.

Every semester, the graduate chair will select a qualifying review panel composed of three or more faculty members in the department. This panel reads the papers and committee evaluations for all candidates undergoing the qualifying review that semester, and decides whether each student passes the review, using the department [QR Evaluation Form](#). Members of the panel will recuse themselves from judging papers for a candidate if they are on the candidate's guidance committee, and the panel must be constituted in a way so that all candidates' papers are read and evaluated by at least three members. A student passes if and only if she or he receives an average score of "acceptable" for their

paper from the panel. The panel's decision and comments are conveyed to each student and the student's guidance committee.

If a student passes the qualifying review, she or he may be admitted to candidacy in the doctoral program. The student must prepare the top portion of the Office of Graduate Education Doctorate [Student Progress Form I](#) and submit it to the graduate secretary in order for this to occur.

Students who have passed the qualifying review and have completed their Phase I course requirements are eligible to receive an MA en route to PhD, unless they already have an MA in sociology from UH or another institution. The MA en route is recorded on the transcript as an MA in sociology. Once the student is eligible to receive the MA en route and the graduate chair has submitted that information to the Office of Graduate Education(OGE), the student must apply directly to the OGE to graduate en route and pay a small graduation fee.

Students who fail the qualifying review on their first try are allowed to retake the QR one more time in the enrolled semester subsequent to the one in which they first took the exam. They may submit the same or a different paper for the second review, based on advice from their guidance committee. Students who fail the qualifying review a second time are dropped from the doctoral program. PhD students who have not passed the QRs are eligible for a terminal MA degree from the department, provided they have completed their Phase I course requirements and their guidance committee deems that the QR paper provides evidence of MA-level skills in theory and methods, analysis, and writing.

## **Phase II**

Phase II of the program consists of advanced training in areas of concentration and a dissertation.

### **Course Work II**

Completion of Phase I course requirements, along with passing the QR exam, place a student in Phase II of the PhD program. The only course requirement beyond this is one additional [substantive](#) course (3 units) at the 600 level or above, for a total of 5 substantive courses for Phases I and II. However, it is typical and recommended that PhD students take more courses than is required in order to obtain a broader academic background and knowledge.

### **Dissertation Committee**

Subsequent to entering Phase II of the program, a student forms a dissertation committee, subject to all [Office of Graduate Education requirements](#). The dissertation committee replaces the guidance committee as the student's main source of academic supervision. Members of a student's guidance committee may serve on the dissertation committee as well, but this is not required. Attention should be paid to finding members with expertise in specific areas that the student expects to cover in her or his dissertation. The dissertation committee typically has five members (the Office of Graduate Education minimum), and it is recommended that

additional members be included only if they provide expertise that is missing in the rest of the committee.

In order for the committee to be formally established, a student must obtain the department [Dissertation Committee Form](#), obtain signatures from each committee member, and turn the form in promptly to the department graduate secretary. A student who wishes to subsequently modify the composition of his or her dissertation committee must submit a new form with signatures of all members of the modified committee, as well as the Office of Graduate Education [Petition to Revise Thesis or Dissertation Committee](#).

## **Comprehensive Exam**

After the dissertation committee has been formed, the student is allowed to move to the comprehensive examination stage. The comprehensive exam is a week-long take-home essay examination on two fields of sociology, followed by an oral examination before the dissertation committee. The student selects the two fields for the exam, subject to approval by the committee. The fields should be selected to define broad areas of specialization and to provide sufficient background for the student's planned dissertation research. The fields should also align with the expertise of the dissertation committee sufficiently so that the committee is in a position to very competently judge the student's mastery of the fields.

Once the fields are approved, the student prepares a bibliography for each field, and submits them to the committee members for review and approval. Each bibliography must provide a complete overview of the main theories, debates, and findings in its field and include the field's most influential works. A field bibliography will therefore be significantly longer than the reading list for a typical advanced graduate-level seminar. When a field has widely accepted and well-defined subfields, each major subfield should be represented and the bibliography divided accordingly into sections. The student is responsible for reading and being familiar with each work listed in the bibliography, so the list should not be so long that this is not feasible.

Upon approval of the bibliographies, a date for commencement of the written exam (typically on a Monday) is agreed upon by the student and committee, with sufficient lead time to allow the student to gain familiarity with the readings in the bibliographies. This date can be rescheduled by similar agreement if it later turns out to be unworkable.

At least three weeks before the written exam is scheduled, the committee chair solicits essay questions from each of the committee members, and writes one or more questions as well. The questions should together provide a thorough and rigorous test of the student's knowledge of and ability to analyze the set of readings. They should focus on the two fields and not require knowledge of material outside the bibliographies, beyond what would be expected of any student in good standing at a similar stage in the PhD program. The chair may specify to members the fields and subfields for which each should ask questions, in order to ensure full coverage of the readings. The chair can request revision or replacement of questions.

All the questions, including the chair's own, are assembled into an examination. The exam should require the student to write essays in response to three or four questions, with possible latitude for choice. The questions are submitted to the department graduate

secretary at least one week prior to the scheduled start date for the exam. The graduate chair then reviews them and can either approve or request changes. Although the graduate chair and committee should make every effort to come to agreement on the questions in time for the scheduled start date, if this is not possible the start date can be rescheduled.

The student picks up the exam from the graduate secretary on the morning of the day the exam commences, and has until the same time one week later to answer the questions and return the completed exam to the department secretary. Students may consult existing written sources, but may not receive assistance from anyone in preparing their answers. Essay length should be enough to state a clear argument and provide convincing evidence from the readings. Typically, this is 2500 words or more per essay. When the exams are returned to the department, they are distributed to the committee members.

An oral exam is scheduled approximately two weeks after the end of the written exam, by which time the committee members should have read all the answers. The oral exam is an extension, but not repetition, of the student's written exam. Hence it should focus primarily on having the student clarify, elaborate, and extend their written answers to the exam questions. The committee may probe perceived weakness in logic or evidence in the answers, and ask the student to defend them. It may also ask the student to discuss the implications of the ideas expressed in their answers for related theoretical and empirical debates in the two fields. It is permitted to extend the exam over more than one meeting if sufficient time is not available to complete the oral exam to the satisfaction of the committee.

When the oral exam is completed, the student is again asked to leave the room while the committee evaluates the exam. The committee may reach a consensus to issue a pass, fail, or conditional pass for the combined written and oral exam. In the case of a conditional pass, the committee should specify necessary and sufficient remedial actions that must be taken, as well as a deadline for fulfilling these conditions. If a consensus cannot be reached, a majority decision is made on whether to pass or fail the student. The student is then invited back in and informed of the committee's decision. If the student has passed the comprehensive exam, it is typical for the committee to use the final part of the meeting to briefly discuss the student's dissertation topic and schedule for writing a dissertation proposal.

Subsequently, the committee chair submits a letter to the department graduate chair reporting the dates and outcomes of the comprehensive exam, including any requirements applied to a conditional pass. In case of a conditional pass, the chair must also submit a second memo informing the graduate chair whether the student has met the conditions specified by the deadline. A student who fails to meet the conditions by the deadline is judged to have failed the exam unless the committee by consensus agrees to extend it prior to its expiration.

Should the student fail the comprehensive examination, she or he may take it a second time, in which case she or he should follow a similar procedure as with the first exam to schedule the dates for the written and oral portions. A second failure means that the student is dropped from the PhD program.

## **Dissertation Proposal**

After successful completion of the comprehensive examination, a student proceeds to the dissertation proposal stage. A dissertation proposal must provide enough information to show that the student's dissertation has major intellectual promise for the field of sociology, can feasibly be completed in a timely fashion, and is consistent with professional ethical norms. The proposal must introduce the research topic, review the relevant literature, and outline the methods that will be used for the dissertation. It must also contain a proposed chapter outline and timetable for completion. Where applicable, the proposal must include plans for obtaining [human subjects approval](#) for data collection from the Committee on Human Studies. The length of the proposal can vary, but it should be sufficient to provide the committee with sufficient information to make a decision with confidence. A student's proposal must be evaluated and approved by consensus of the dissertation committee before she or he can move to the dissertation stage.

After approval from the committee, a student must complete the top portion of the Office of Graduate Education Doctoral [Student Progress Form II](#), obtain approval signatures from all members of their committee, and submit this to the graduate secretary. If applicable, a student must also obtain human subjects certification and submit this certification along with the form. Completion of these requirements makes the student eligible to register for Sociology 800 (Dissertation Research), which allows students who must maintain full-time enrollment to do so while only enrolled for a single unit.

## **Dissertation**

A dissertation should not be approved until the dissertation committee by consensus believes that it makes a major original scholarly contribution to the field of sociology and brings credit to the student, the department, the university, and the committee members whose signatures appear on its cover page. While the lengths of dissertations can vary, they should be comparable in length to a typical scholarly book in the field of sociology. A student must also pass an oral defense of the dissertation. Please remember that the Office of Graduate Education has a seven year limit on a student's time to PhD, so each student is encouraged to aim to complete their dissertation well in advance of this limit, thus allowing for additional time in case of unexpected obstacles.

Initial examination of dissertation chapter drafts should be undertaken by the chair, with other committee members brought in as needed for expertise. Once the chair believes that the complete draft is reasonably close to being ready, it is submitted to the entire committee, who indicate whether they believe the student is ready for an oral defense or further major revisions are needed. At that point or earlier, the student should be informed whether it is possible that she/he may graduate in the following semester, so that proper arrangements can be made (see documentation on [graduation procedures](#)). Once the entire committee feels they know when the dissertation is likely to be ready, a date for the oral defense should immediately be scheduled by mutual agreement, well in advance. The defense is open to the public, and the committee chair should submit to the department a memo at least three weeks in advance, addressed to the Office of Graduate Education, announcing the defense.

The student should bring to the oral defense the signature page of the dissertation, which she or he has prepared in accordance with Office of Graduate Education [style requirements](#), as well as Office of Graduate Education doctorate [Student Progress Form III](#) with the top portion filled out.

The oral defense begins with a 15-20 minute presentation by the student of the dissertation’s main points, aimed at a general social science audience that is not familiar with the dissertation. Each committee members then has the student respond to questions about the dissertation, following a format designated by chair. Questions should focus primarily on summarizing or elaborating on the content of the dissertation, as well as defending against any perceived weaknesses. Efforts should be made to couch questions and answers in a manner that is appropriate for a public forum. After the committee members have completed their questions, the floor is opened for questions or comments from the audience, until there are no more questions or the time allocated for the defense (which must be at minimum one hour, and typically longer) is running out.

For further instructions, please refer to the section on [Dissertation and Thesis Procedures](#).

## Example Progress

Note: This sequence represents one possible plan which will satisfy PhD program requirements in six years. The Office of Graduate Education time limit for completion of the degree is seven years. Substantive courses listed here are at the 600 level or higher, as is the additional methods or statistics course. Candidates who come in without coursework in theory and/or statistics may take longer to complete coursework. Time for preparation of a dissertation will depend in part on the nature of topic and research methodology. Please discuss matters with your advisor if you have any questions.

<u>Semester 1</u>	<u>Semester 2</u>
<b>Year I</b>	
SOC 611 SOC 605 Substantive Course	SOC 612 SOC 606 Substantive Course
<b>Year II</b>	
Additional Methods or Statistics Course Substantive Course SOC 699 <b>Form Guidance Committee</b>	Substantive Course  <b>Qualifying Review</b>

<b>Year III</b>	
Substantive Course Form Dissertation Committee Comprehensive Exam Reading List	SOC 699 Comprehensive Examination
<b>Year IV</b>	
SOC 699 Dissertation Proposal Defense	SOC 800
<b>Year V</b>	
SOC 800	SOC 800
<b>Year VI</b>	
SOC 800	SOC 800 Dissertation Defense

## MA Program

For the MA program, the department offers an MA Plan A (thesis) and MA Plan B (non-thesis) degree.

### Plan A

The Plan A MA program is designed for students who wish to acquire academically-oriented graduate-level sociology training.

### MA Coursework

The course requirement for the Plan A M.A. program comprises the following:

- One theory course (3 credits)
- One methods course (3 credits)
- One statistics course (3 credits)
- Five more substantive courses (15 credits)
- Soc 700 (Thesis Research) (6 credits)

For definitions of theory, methods, statistics, and substantive, see the [section on course identification](#). The theory, methods, and statistics courses can be at the 400 level or higher. However, of the 15 credits of substantive courses, at least four courses (12 credits) must be at the 600 level or above. Soc 700 (Thesis Research) can only be taken when a

student has formed a thesis committee and has received approval for her or his [thesis proposal](#), though under some circumstances Soc 699 (Directed Reading and Research) may be substituted. MA students who are planning to transfer to the PhD program should take all their courses at the 600 level to prepare themselves for the PhD coursework. All courses must be passed at the B level or above to count towards the degree. Students who have taken all required courses (including Soc 700) are eligible to enroll in one unit of SOC 700F and can remain at full enrollment status until the thesis is completed.

Any student who does not have previous training in sociological theory and cannot otherwise demonstrate competence in the subject, as determined by the graduate chair, must take Sociology 321 before taking a theory course at a higher level. Transfer of credits from other universities generally is not allowed for the MA, though the department will support petitions for transfer of up to two [post-bachelor unclassified courses](#) at UH Mānoa that fit the program coursework requirements.

### **MA Temporary Advisor**

Upon entry into the program, students are assigned a temporary advisor from the department faculty, based on the student's experience and interests. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment to see the advisor and discuss what courses the student should take.

### **MA Candidacy**

By the end of the first semester, the student must submit to their [formal advisor](#) a written course plan for the remaining semesters in the program, as well as a very short description of possible topics for a thesis. As long as the formal advisor does not find this plan unrealistic for the student's remaining course of study, she or he informs the student and sends a memo to graduate chair to this effect. If not, the advisor should recommend modifications, and the student must resubmit the plan for approval.

Immediately following approval of their plan, a student should fill out the top part of the Office of Graduate Education MA [Student Progress Form I](#) and provide this to the graduate secretary.

### **Thesis Committee**

By the end of the second semester, students should form a thesis committee, subject to [Office of Graduate Education requirements](#). The committee typically has three members. A majority of members should be from within the sociology department, and the chair must be from or affiliate faculty with the department. The thesis committee takes over responsibility for the student's academic supervision from the temporary advisor. The student must fill out a copy of the department MA [Thesis or Guidance Committee Form](#) in order for this to occur.

### **Thesis Proposal**

The student develops a thesis proposal with guidance from the thesis committee. The proposal should introduce the research topic, briefly review the relevant literature, and outline the methods that will be used for the thesis. It should also contain a timetable for completion. Thesis research that involves human subjects in any way requires approval

from the University's Committee on Human Studies before the research begins. Hence, where applicable, the proposal should include plans for [obtaining human subjects certification](#). The proposal is approved only when the committee by consensus believes that the thesis has intellectual promise for the field of sociology, can feasibly be completed in a timely fashion, and is consistent with professional ethical norms. Students are encouraged to aim to have their dissertation proposals approved by the end of their second semester in the program.

Once the committee has approved and human subjects certification obtained, the student should fill out the top portion of the Office of Graduate Education Masters [Student Progress Form II](#), obtain approval signatures from all members of their committee, and submit this to the graduate secretary. If applicable, a student must also obtain human subjects certification and submit this certification along with the form.

Completion of these requirements makes the student eligible to register for Sociology 700 (Thesis Research), for which a total of six units is required in the program. Once the student has completed these units and all other department MA course requirements, they are also eligible to enroll in the special section 700F, which allows students who must maintain full-time enrollment to do so while only enrolled for a single unit. A special [Office of Graduate Education form](#) must be filled out and submitted to the graduate secretary in advance in order for this to occur.

## **Thesis**

A student writes the MA thesis under the supervision of the thesis committee, and is responsible for keeping the chair of the committee apprised of its status. An MA thesis should be an original and substantial intellectual work with clear writing and organization and have substantial sociological content. It should be written in the style of an extended academic journal article, but should generally be substantially longer than a typical journal article. An MA thesis is approved only if the thesis committee feels such that it is satisfactory by such standards, and the student has passed an oral defense of the thesis. Though the Office of Graduate Education year limit for students in the MA program is the same as for PhD students, MA students are encouraged to aim to complete their thesis by the end of their fourth semester.

Prior to the semester when she or he intends to graduate, the student should begin to make proper [arrangements for graduation](#). Once the committee believes that the thesis is close to completion, an oral defense should be scheduled. The defense can be open to the public, but this is not required.

The student should bring to the oral the signature page of the thesis, which she or he has prepared in accordance with Office of Graduate Education [style requirements](#), as well as Office of Graduate Education masters [Student Progress Form III](#) with the top portion filled out.

The structure of the defense is flexible, but should include questions from the committee asking the student to elaborate on the content of the exam as well as defend it against any perceived weaknesses. After questioning is over, the student is asked to leave the room. The committee then makes separate decisions on the oral defense and written thesis. The procedure from then out for the Student Progress Form III and thesis signature is analogous to that used for PhD dissertations.

For further instructions, please refer to the section on [Dissertation and Thesis Procedures](#).

## MA Example Progress

Note; This sequence represents one fairly typical way, but not the only way, in which the program requirements for the MA Plan A degree can be satisfied within two years. In general, it is highly recommended that the theory, methods, and statistics courses be taken by the end of your first year, as well as any substantive courses that are directly relevant to the topic on which you plan to write your thesis. Your thesis proposal should be completed as early as possible in the third semester, so that sufficient time remains to write your thesis. Please discuss matters with your advisor if you have any questions.

<u>Semester 1</u>	<u>Semester 2</u>
<b>Year I</b>	
Theory Course Methods Course Substantive Course	Statistics Course Substantive Course Substantive Course <b>Form Thesis Committee</b>
<b>Year II</b>	
Substantive Course SOC 700 <b>Thesis Proposal</b>	Substantive Course SOC 700 <b>Thesis Defense</b>

## Transfer to PhD

Students in the MA Plan A program may apply to transfer into the PhD program. However, to be considered, the bulk of their required coursework and a rough draft of their MA thesis should be completed so that the graduate committee can use these to evaluate their readiness to enroll in the PhD program.

In order for a student enrolled in the MA Plan A program to apply for transfer to the PhD program, the student must inform the graduate chair and supply the following by October 15 for Spring transfer and April 15 for Fall transfer to the graduate secretary:

- approximately 500 word statement of purpose describing the student's goals and plans for a PhD degree.
- current unofficial UH transcript (MyUH printout fine)
- copy of the current draft of the student's MA thesis, and optionally any other written materials reflecting on their ability to do PhD level work

- letters of recommendation from the chair and at least one other member of the student's MA thesis committee addressing the student's progress towards MA completion and suitability for doctorate study - additional letters may also be included

Decisions on transfers will be made by vote of the graduate committee. If a favorable decision has been made, under most circumstances a student should complete their MA program before the transfer actually takes place. Prior to completion, a student should fill out a Office of Graduate Education [Petition for Admission to a Doctorate in Same Discipline](#) to the graduate secretary for signature by the graduate chair. Students should also submit [all other required Office of Graduate Education documents for transfer](#), either to the department or directly to Office of Graduate Education. If for some reason it is necessary to transfer prior to completion of the MA, the student should contact the graduate chair to discuss this, and permission may be granted for the MA to be completed while the student is already in the PhD program.

## Plan B

The Plan B is intended as a terminal degree for students who have no intention of transferring into the PhD, but who have interest in using sociological skills in an applied setting.

The requirements for the Plan B are generally similar to the Plan A, but do not involve a thesis or two semesters of SOC 700. Instead, a student must take one additional 600-level course in theory, methods, or statistics, as well as three units of SOC 699. They will write an applied research report under the supervision of a MA guidance committee. Please see the requirements for the [Plan A MA](#) before reading the following sections.

By the end of the first semester, the student should decide whether she is pursuing a Plan A or B. In general, it is much easier to transfer from Plan A to Plan B than in the other direction, so a student follow the Plan A requirements if there is any chance she would like to pursue this option. If she is planning to pursue a Plan B, she simply needs to submit a memo to that effect to the graduate secretary. By the end of the second semester, the students should form a research report guidance committee, using the department MA [Thesis or Guidance Committee Form](#). The committee should have three or more members, of which the majority should be from the sociology department, with one member serving as the chair.

Prior to the semester when she or he intends to graduate, the student should begin to make proper [arrangements for graduation](#).

## Final Report

In their final semester in the program, the student should enroll in SOC 699 under their guidance committee chair. While taking this course, the student should write a professional-quality research report analyzing a real-world social problem specific to a particular community or organizational setting, using knowledge gained from her or his sociology coursework. The topic should be determined by mutual agreement between student and committee chair. The report should summarize the nature of the problem, and propose a solution from a sociological perspective. When the chair deems that the report draft is ready, it is presented to the entire committee, who may either approve or suggest

further revisions. The requirements for the final report are met when the committee by consensus approves it.

## General Matters

This section describes issues that are relevant to more than one degree program.

### Course Identification

The following are considered to be TMS (theory/methods/statistics) courses for the purposes of graduate study:

- statistics: Sociology 476/L, 605/L, 705
- research methods: Sociology 475, 478, 606, 607, 608, 609, 701
- theory: Sociology 611, 612

Substantive courses are defined to include all other Department of Sociology courses at level 400 or higher other than those just listed, and also excepting 491, 495, 495B, 496, 499, 500, 699, 700, and 800. Broadly speaking, the term “substantive” is defined as referring to courses that focus on applications of social science knowledge to real world problems, and not are primarily aimed at teaching new techniques. They may also include courses outside of the department, subject to the following criteria:

- Each course is at the equivalent level (400, 600, etc.) or higher than the course it is replacing
- The student's [formal advisor](#) writes a memo to the graduate chair documenting and confirming that the course has substantive social science content (though it does not necessarily have to be taught within the College of Social Sciences) and is consistent with the student's planned area of study within sociology.
- No more than three courses outside of the sociology department can be counted towards the substantive courses required for either the MA or PhD degree

Both the MA and PhD programs impose additional requirements regarding the minimum level of TMS and substantive courses.

For a full list of courses, see the [course catalog](#).

### Formal Advisor

A graduate student's formal advisor is the faculty member who has the largest role in advising a student academically and is the main intermediary keeping the department apprised of the student's academic progress. For MA students, the formal advisor is initially their temporary advisor, and subsequent their thesis (Plan A) or guidance (Plan B) committee chair after the committee has formed. Likewise, for PhD students, the formal advisor is, in sequence, their temporary advisor, guidance committee chair, then dissertation committee chair.

The formal advisor is responsible for reporting on a student's academic progress to the faculty as a whole during the department [annual review](#) of graduate students, and is sometimes called upon to write memos to the graduate chair, as specified elsewhere in department rules and procedures.

## Annual Review

Each year, early in the Spring semester, the department holds a mandatory faculty meeting to review the progress of every student in the graduate program. Although students do not attend the review meeting, they should report their current progress to their committee chair or advisor by the beginning of the semester. Regular faculty members in the department who have any contact with graduate students are required to attend the annual review meeting, and affiliate faculty who work closely with graduate students are invited and encouraged to attend. During the meeting, student's [formal advisor](#) reports briefly on how the student is progressing, and whether there are any issues that need to be addressed, and other faculty may also comment or ask questions. The department then places the student in one of three categories: "A" indicates a satisfactory rate of progress, "B" indicates that the student has fallen behind the satisfactory rate, and a "C" indicates a serious problem that places a student in jeopardy of being dropped from the program. The criteria for satisfactory progress is based roughly upon advancement through the requirements at a rate that will lead to an MA in two years or a PhD in six, but other factors that the faculty deem relevant may be taken into consideration as mitigating circumstances.

After the meeting, students are sent a memo explaining their review status, and describing any improvements that they are expected to make. Students who are in "C" status will be given specific instructions on what they must accomplish prior to the subsequent annual review, and if they fail to do so they will be dropped from their program. Unsatisfactory progress in light of the department annual review is not the only reason that a student may be dropped from their program. Failure twice to pass a QR, comprehensive exam, or dissertation defense will also cause a student to be dropped. Failure to meet university requirements, such as Office of Graduate Education standards for [progress](#) and [conduct](#) or the UH Mānoa [Student Code of Conduct](#), can also result in dismissal.

Despite the potential for such negative outcomes, the annual reviews are designed primarily to provide students with concrete assessments and constructive mandates to facilitate their movement through the program, and thus avoid situations where dismissal is called for. Students who fall substantially behind department expectations for progress put themselves in a position where it will be difficult or impossible to eventually meet university requirements for graduation, and the reviews are designed to help prevent this from happening.

## Human Subjects

It is a matter of federal law that most university research involving human subjects must go through an approval process to ensure safe and ethical treatment. The university [Committee on Human Studies](#) (CHS) is the organization at the university that monitors and enforces compliance with such mandates. All graduate students should become familiar with the documentation available on the CHS site, as well as the American Sociological Association [Code of Ethics](#). Students should also be familiar more generally with [Office of Graduate Education rules](#) for research and publication. Typically, student research that takes place solely within a course context does not require human subjects approval. However, there is an exception of any research that could later be published or presented

in a conference or other public forum. Failure to obtain approval may cause the university to prohibit a student from publishing or presenting data arising from such research. If still unsure after reading the CHS rules, the student should consult with the faculty member(s) for whom they are preparing the research. If still in doubt, prior CHS approval should be sought. For many kinds of relatively non-intrusive research the approval process is fairly simple, and may involve issuance of an exemption certificate by the CHS.

## Graduation Procedures

At the beginning of a semester in which a student, based on counsel from the committee, believes she or he has a good chance of completing all degree requirement by deadlines specified in the [academic calendar](#), she or he should examine Office of Graduate Education [graduation policies](#) before submitting an application for graduation along with the appropriate fees.

For those in PhD or Plan A MA programs, be aware that deadline for submitting a thesis or dissertation is typically about a month prior to the end of the semester. It is possible to petition for extension of this deadline until as late as the end of the semester, though this should not be seen as the default option. To make such a petition, the student should write a request addressed to the Office of Graduate Education, noting when they have or will have their oral examination, but submit the request to the sociology graduate secretary for filing and approval by the sociology graduate chair.

In case the student is unable to complete all graduation requirements as expected, she or he must register and re-file an application in any subsequent semester she or he plans to graduate.

## Dissertation Procedures

There are a number of common elements to both dissertations and theses: There are strict Office of Graduate Education [guidelines on the defense](#) of a dissertation or thesis, including its composition and timing. Among other things, all committee members must attend personally unless permission has been given for remote participation through a Office of Graduate Education [Petition for Remote Committee Participation](#) form submitted through the department or permission has been given by the graduate chair for use of a proxy. However, the use of a proxy is discouraged except when there are no other feasible alternatives.

The result of the oral defense is either a pass or fail, while the decision on the written dissertation or thesis is to accept as is or demand further specified revisions. The defense should be passed if the committee feels that the dissertation or thesis is already acceptable, or is confident that that the candidate will be able to carry out all necessary revisions without further examination. An attempt should be made to reach a consensus on this issue. The student is invited back into the room, and informed of the result and recommendations. In any case, committee members (and any proxy) who are present sign the Student Progress Form III, indicating their individual judgment on the defense, and arrangements are made to obtain the signature of any member participating remotely. The defense is judged as a pass overall if and only if the majority vote of participating faculty vote to pass. In case of a failure, the student may write a memo to the department

graduate studies committee requesting a second and final defense. In case of a successful defense, the completed Form III should be submitted without delay by the student to the department graduate secretary for routing to Office of Graduate Education.

If the decision is to accept the written dissertation or thesis as is, the committee members sign the document's signature page, which is given to the student, who duplicates the page and inserts into the copies of the dissertation that will be [turned in by the student](#) to the Office of Graduate Education. If revisions are requested, then members of the committee may at their individual discretion not sign the signature page or sign conditionally, which means that they entrust the page to the committee chair for safekeeping until the student is deemed by all to have completed the required revisions. The dissertation or thesis should also follow all Office of Graduate Education guidelines, including those on [content](#), [style](#), [format](#), and [acknowledgements](#). Among things that are disallowed is writing that has been co-authored with someone else, or secondary data that has not been used in a way that is not explicitly authorized by the original researcher.