

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
1126 EAST 59TH STREET  
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

(July 2018)

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

### REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR M.A. AND Ph.D. DEGREES IN SOCIOLOGY

#### Degree Program

The Department offers a program of studies leading to the Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology and cooperates with the College in providing undergraduate education leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree.

A student entering the program with a B.A. degree can in principle complete the Ph.D. degree in four academic years of study, though more typically the degree takes five to seven years. Satisfactory completion of the first phase of the Ph.D. program is signified by the awarding of an M.A. degree.

#### Admissions and Fellowships

All applicants for admission are required to submit general Graduate Record Examination scores. Applicants who are not U.S. citizens or U.S. permanent residents must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the test administered by the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The Department of Sociology encourages graduate study by students who have done their undergraduate work in sociology as well as other social sciences, mathematics and other fields. The Department also encourages students who have had work experience, governmental or military service, or community and business experiences to apply.

Application must be made through the University's Online Application for Graduate Studies, beginning in early September for the following academic year. All applicants who indicate on the graduate application that they would like to be considered for financial aid will be reviewed for merit-based scholarships and fellowships; there are no separate forms to complete. Applicants to our program are considered for all fellowship resources at the University of Chicago for which they are eligible, including diversity fellowships, Title VI Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships, and fellowships offered through a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences, as well as Divisional fellowships. Fellowships are allocated based on the criteria of academic record and scholarly promise; financial need and United States citizenship are not factors. Some graduate students also receive fellowship support from outside sources.

The deadline for application is December 1.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR M.A. AND Ph.D. DEGREES

### Overview of General Requirements

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### 1. Advisors

We expect Sociology Ph.D. students to be responsible and independently self-driven scholars. This includes establishing good working relationships with faculty by taking and excelling in their classes and seeking faculty advice during their office hours. In addition the department has established a formal system of academic advising in which every student has a personal academic advisor to help plan their course of study, to discuss potential and actual research projects, and to discuss their progress in the program. There are three types of faculty advisors during the student's graduate school trajectory: a formal faculty advisor, a qualifying paper advisor, and a dissertation committee chair. They can all be the same person, or they can all be different.

For ease of initial orientation in the program and the university, students are **upon arrival** assigned a 1<sup>st</sup>-year **formal faculty advisor** to serve as their contact person for the first year of their studies in the department. The role of the formal advisor is to counsel the student on all academic issues including the suitability of course options, study strategies, and potential research projects. The administratively assigned faculty advisor can be changed at any point to a faculty member more aligned with the interest of the student (see below for procedure).

During the Spring quarter of the first year, students are encouraged to **select a qualifying paper advisor** from among the Sociology faculty who will henceforth serve as their formal faculty advisor in all capacities. Naming the advisor for their qualifying paper before the summer following the first year will allow students to begin the process of identifying a qualifying paper topic in a timely fashion, including using a part of the summer between first and second years for initial qualifying paper research. The qualifying paper advisor must be declared at the latest at the end of second week Autumn quarter of the second year. Unless the student effects a further change after the qualifying paper has been submitted, the qualifying paper advisor will remain in the role of formal faculty advisor until a dissertation chair is named by the student with the consent of the concerned faculty.

**A dissertation chair can be named any time after the qualifying paper has been submitted**, but must be named at the very latest in Spring quarter of the third year to help the student prepare a proposal and assemble a suitable committee. As soon as a dissertation chair is named she or he will assume all advising roles. It is possible to name two faculty members conjointly as dissertation chairs.

Students should make contact with their advisors at least once per quarter during their office hours. The formal advisor also tracks the student's progress in the program and should be consulted as soon as potential delays in program progress become apparent. In such a case advisor and student can work

together on remedies (see section 12 “Timely completion of requirements”). Program delays that exceed the length of one quarter also need to involve the Director of Graduate Studies.

All **changes in advisors** must be effected by notifying the old advisor by e-mail (cc graduate studies administrator) and by declaring the new advisor who has given her or his consent to the graduate student administrator in writing (cc new advisor and the graduate studies administrator).

## **2. Number of Courses Required**

Students matriculating at Chicago without a prior M.A. degree must pass eighteen courses, exclusive of language instruction, at the level of B- or higher for the Ph.D. Nine of these must be passed at the B- or higher level for the M.A. These students are expected to complete nine courses in the first year, at least six courses in the second year, and a total of eighteen by the end of the third year.

Students matriculating at Chicago who already have a master's degree. (in sociology or another field) from another institution or who have a master's degree from Chicago in a field other than sociology must pass fifteen courses, exclusive of language instruction, at the level of B- or higher for the Ph.D. degree. These students are expected to complete nine courses in the first year and six courses in the second year.

## **3. Core Courses**

Entering students are required to take SOCI 30002 Principles of Sociological Research and SOCI 30003 History of Social Theory during their first year of residence. Entering students must also register for and participate in the required non-credit first-year colloquium: SOCI 60020 1<sup>st</sup>-year Colloquium: Research Questions and Design in Autumn of the first year of residence. The Colloquium does not count toward the 18 required graded courses. In the second **and** third years, all students must complete the Writing Seminars (SOCI 30006/30007); each seminar is one course spread over Winter and Spring quarters. The Writing Seminars will support 2<sup>nd</sup>-years as they develop their qualifying papers and 3<sup>rd</sup> years as they revise their qualifying papers for publication.

## **4. Statistics Requirement**

A basic literacy in statistical methods is necessary to read much of the sociological literature. For the Ph.D., therefore, all students are required to complete for graded credit two quarters of coursework in statistical methods in the first year of studies. Students whose background in statistics is at or below that offered at the introductory course level are required to take SOCI 30004 and 30005 (Statistical Methods 1 and 2), or, in any year that SOCI 30004 is not offered, STAT 20000 (Elementary Statistics) and SOCI 30005. Those who have some knowledge of calculus may consider substituting STAT 22000 (Statistical Methods & Their Applications) for SOCI 30004. Those with solid command of calculus (preferably multivariate) may consider the sequence of STAT 24400 and 24500 (Statistical Theory and Methods 1 & 2) as a substitute for the sociology sequence. (This statistics-department sequence is preferable for students who may intend to taken an MS in statistics in parallel with a PhD in sociology.) Those who have successfully completed statistical coursework elsewhere at or above the level of SOCI 30004 and 30005 may fulfill the department's statistics requirement by taking at least two 40000-level courses covering advanced statistical techniques and/or applications. Entering students should consult the department before registering as to which option is appropriate given their prior coursework and scholarly plans, since the sociology sequence starts in Winter while some of the alternatives start in the Autumn.

## **5. Grade Requirement**

In order to be admitted to the second year of study, a student must have letter grades posted in all nine first-year courses (P's, I's, R's are not counted) and must have a **B** average or better on the best seven grades.

## **6. Residency**

We expect students to be in residency in Chicago or its environs during the academic year until they are admitted to Ph.D. candidacy. Exceptions may be made to accommodate field research or specialized training, but those exceptions must be discussed with a student's academic adviser and approved by both the adviser and the Director of Graduate Studies.

## **7. M.A. Examinations Requirement**

First-year Ph.D. students are required to take a total of **five** sociology (SOCI) courses designated as "exam courses" among their nine graded courses; designated exam courses will vary from year to year. The courses are divided into ten topic areas. Students are required to take SOCI 30003 History of Social Theory as their first exam course. For the remaining four courses, students select ONE course each from four additional subject areas. Students are not allowed to count multiple courses from the same subject area or to substitute in courses that are not on the list of designated exam courses for their cohort year. Additional information concerning the M.A. Examinations requirement is given in Appendix A.

## **8. The M.A. Degree**

The master's degree is awarded for completion of nine courses (including the required first-year courses) at the level of B- or higher and completion of the M.A. Examinations requirement, including the petition process outlined in Appendix A.

To apply for the degree, the student should apply on-line for the degree via the Registrar's my.uchicago.edu website *by the beginning of the quarter in which the degree will be awarded* and inform the Department's Graduate Studies Administrator. Department certification that the student is eligible to take the degree must be given to the Office of the Dean of Students three and a half weeks before convocation. It is the responsibility of the student to make certain all requirements for the receipt of the degree have been fulfilled on time. If all requirements are not met by that date, the student is automatically dropped from the graduation list.

## **9. Qualifying Paper**

The qualifying paper should represent an *original* piece of scholarship or theoretical analysis and must be written in a format appropriate for submission to a professional publication. Note that the requirement is "publishable," not "published," although many recent papers have been presented at professional conferences and eventually published. The paper is prepared under the direct supervision and approval of a faculty member and may be written or revised in connection with one or more regular courses. Qualifying papers are single authored. Students entering with M.A. papers may petition to submit a supervised revision to meet the qualifying paper requirement.

Once the paper is approved by a faculty member, the student is responsible for presenting to the Departmental office an electronic copy of the paper and an approved abstract of the paper. The paper remains on file in the Departmental office.

Students should formulate a proposal for the paper by the time of the progress review in spring of their second year. The qualifying paper is to be completed before the end of the Spring Quarter of the second year of study. If a student does not complete the qualifying paper by that time, the Department will formally assess his/her ability to make satisfactory progress in the program. Subsequent actions will range from focused intervention to counseling the student to withdraw.

## **10. Special Field Requirement**

Ph.D. students are required to demonstrate competence in two special fields. The Special Field Requirement is to be met during the third year of graduate study. Students must complete the M.A. Examinations requirement before meeting the Special Field Requirement. A "conditional pass" on a Special Field must be made up before the end of the quarter following the quarter in which the

examination was taken. No student may complete a second exam or review essay until he has successfully passed the first one.

This requirement may be met in three ways: by examination, with a review essay, or through a specified sequence of methods courses.

A. Exam or review essay. Both the examination and review essay options are prepared on an individual basis in the fields of sociology in which the student wishes to develop research competence; one should be related to the subject of the subsequent Ph.D. dissertation. Each exam/review essay special field must be overseen by two faculty readers of the student's choice (see "Procedures" in Appendix C). The examinations cover both theoretical and substantive materials as well as the methods required for effective research. Preparation takes the form of specialized courses and seminars, supplemented by independent study and reading. For either the exam or essay, the student must first construct a bibliography to be approved by both faculty readers; readers must also agree in advance to either the examination or review essay format. Examples of previously approved bibliographies are kept on file in the department office and can be made available to other students upon request. In recent years, the fields most commonly taken are urban sociology, organizational analysis, sociology of gender, sociology of education, culture/STS/knowledge, sociology of health and medicine, economic sociology, political sociology, stratification, social movements/change, and sociology of religion.

B. Sequence of Courses. One of the two special field requirements may be met with a sequence of methodology courses. Three types of special fields in methodology are recognized: (1) social statistics, (2) survey research methods, and (3) qualitative methods.

One of the two Special Field Requirements may be taken in a related field outside of sociology. Additional information concerning the Special Field Examination is given in Appendix C.

### **11. Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal Hearing**

The Ph.D. dissertation is judged by its contribution to sociological knowledge and the evidence that it shows of a candidate's ability to carry out independent research. The student prepares a research proposal for the dissertation under the guidance of a special faculty committee. The dissertation proposal hearing is to take place no later than the end of Autumn Quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> year. If a student does not complete the dissertation proposal by that time, the Department will formally assess his/her ability to make satisfactory progress in the program. Subsequent actions will range from focused intervention to counseling the student to withdraw.

Normally, a Ph.D. thesis committee consists of a chair plus minimally two but up to four additional faculty members. The chair of the committee must be a member of the Department of Sociology; in cases where the chair retires or leaves the University, a co-chair must be designated from the current department faculty. Students are encouraged to include faculty from other departments and schools on their thesis committee where they have special competence and relevant interests. It is assumed that in the case of theses which draw heavily from a particular research program, at least one member of the committee will not be affiliated with that program.

The proposal is subject to review by the faculty committee to determine whether the project is feasible and to assist the development of the research. Guidelines for preparation of the proposal are given in Appendix D.

Early in the development of a Ph.D. thesis, a hearing of at least one hour is held with the student and the members of the committee, plus any additional interested faculty. At this hearing, the student's proposal is accepted if it meets Department standards. Graduate students are given assistance in modifying, focusing, or expanding their research plans. It is essential that the student pass all other requirements before the Ph.D. proposal hearing is held. It is also expected that the dissertation committee will approve the proposal before the hearing is scheduled.

The student should distribute copies of the proposal to committee members. The proposal should also be

submitted to the Department office in electronic format plus one printed copy at least ten days, preferably two weeks, before the hearing. The cover page should follow the format available in the Department office and specifically should include a list of the members of the dissertation committee. The printed copy of the proposal is kept on file in the department; the electronic copy is available upon request to other interested sociology faculty.

Additional information on the proposal hearing is given in Appendix D.

## **12. Timely Completion of Requirements**

In the interest of getting students more quickly through the pre-dissertation phase of the program, the department provides a framework to support students in the timely fulfillment of all academic requirements (course work, M.A. examinations, qualifying paper, special fields, dissertation proposal hearing). This framework consists in the **provision of clear deadlines** (compare appendix E for an overview); **orientation meetings** at the beginning of the academic year for first-, second-, and third-year students that address strategies to meet the requirements; **the provision of formal faculty advisors** (see section one) with whom difficulties in meeting deadlines should be discussed as early as they become apparent; the **annual performance review** conducted by the department and the notification of students and their advisors that deadlines have been met or missed.

To underline the department's seriousness about deadlines, there is a **process of remedying failures to meet them** through petitions and discussions with advisor and/or DGS to help students work towards the deadlines that may, however, ultimately lead to **sanctions**. Extensions of deadlines up to the Thursday of ninth week in the quarter following the quarter in which the fulfillment of the requirement is due may be requested in a written petition (cc: graduate studies administrator) to the formal advisor(s) overseeing the work of the student (in case of course requirements, the DGS). This petition must be submitted no later than the end of 7<sup>th</sup> week in which the requirement has to be fulfilled and needs to state the reasons for not meeting the deadline and a realistic work plan to meet the requirement within the next quarter. Petitions are granted or denied (where necessary after a discussion of the work plan and adjustments) by the formal faculty advisor in writing (cc: graduate studies administrator). Should this one quarter extension to Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> week the following quarter not suffice, both the formal advisor and the DGS need to be involved in a second written petition submitted no later than the end of 7<sup>th</sup> week (cc: graduate studies administrator) of the quarter for which the extension was granted accompanied by reasons for renewed delay and a realistic work plan. These petitions are discussed with the student and if necessary adjusted and granted or denied by the DGS and the advisor in writing (cc: graduate studies administrator).

**Students failing to successfully petition their advisors/DGS for an extension are subject to automatic stipend holds beginning in the quarter following the original or extended deadline of the requirement. Failures to meet the second deadline are followed up with a discussion between student, DGS and formal faculty advisor about the student's place in the program considering that a withdrawal from the program may be in the best interest of the student.**

## **13. Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D.**

Upon formal acceptance of the dissertation proposal and completion of the other requirements listed above, the Department recommends that the Division of the Social Sciences admit the student to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

**If a student fails to meet the deadline for any of the above program requirements, the Department will formally assess his/her ability to make satisfactory progress in the program. Subsequent actions will range from focused intervention to counseling the student to withdraw.**

#### **14. Teaching Requirement**

All University of Chicago doctoral students must complete the equivalent of five teaching points, a University-wide requirement. Teaching assistantships are equivalent to one point each; graduate lectureships are equivalent to two points. Students are expected to begin to fulfill this requirement in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year and complete the requirement by the end of their 5<sup>th</sup> year.

#### **15. Final Defense of the Dissertation**

The final Ph.D. oral examination is scheduled after the draft of the thesis has been approved by the committee chair and other committee members. The student sets the date and time of the defense with the dissertation committee members and informs the Department's graduate studies administrator of the schedule; a room is then assigned by the Department for the defense. An abstract of no more than 350 words is to be submitted, along with the cover page and table of contents of the dissertation, to the graduate studies administrator by email attachment (MSWord or pdf document) no less than one full week before the defense. These items are included in an announcement of the defense to the department's faculty.

It is required that the dissertation committee chair and at least two additional committee members be present with the student for the defense unless there are special circumstances. The student is responsible for ensuring that the arrangements for the defense meet departmental requirements.

The Dissertation Office's website at <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/research/scholar/phd/> provides information on online submission of both the draft and final version of the dissertation as well as information on University-wide formatting requirements. The student is responsible for having the dissertation draft thoroughly copy-edited following acceptance by the dissertation committee and prior to submission to the Dissertation Office. The dissertation is to include a bibliography though this is not specified in the University-wide requirements. The student should consult with the Department's graduate studies administrator regarding submission deadlines and the process for obtaining departmental approval of the dissertation. The Departmental deadline for dissertation submission is always earlier than the deadline posted on the Dissertation Office's website – our deadline supersedes any deadline noted there. The student should register on-line for the degree via the Registrar's [my.uchicago.edu](http://my.uchicago.edu) website *by the beginning of the quarter in which the degree will be awarded* and inform the Department's graduate studies administrator. Department certification that the student is eligible to take the degree must be given to the Office of the Dean of Students three and a half weeks before convocation. It is the responsibility of the student to make certain all requirements for the receipt of the degree have been fulfilled on time. If all requirements are not met by that date, the student is automatically dropped from the graduation list.

Students are encouraged to submit a bound copy of the approved thesis, which will join our historic collection of departmental dissertations in SS 310. We cannot accept spiral-bound copies for this purpose. It is a traditional courtesy for a new Ph.D. to give a bound copy of his or her dissertation to each committee member.

## REGISTRATION

*See the University of Chicago's Student Manual for complete registration information.*

## STATEMENT ON CONDUCT

Students' attention is drawn to the Student Manual, University Policies [<http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university>]. The University expects of all students responsible social conduct reflecting credit upon themselves and upon the University. Such offenses as simple theft and violation of housing or library regulations will not be tolerated by the University. Students' attention is especially directed to the statement on non-discrimination and sexual harassment in the Manual. Infractions will result in disciplinary action by the University which may lead to suspension or dismissal. See <http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/page/policy-harassment-discrimination-and-sexual-misconduct> for the University's Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

As students and faculty of the University of Chicago, we belong to an academic community with high scholarly standards of which we are justly proud. Our community also holds certain fundamental ethical principles to which we are deeply committed. We believe it is contrary to justice, to academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit the statements or ideas or work of others as one's own. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously and punishments for them may range up to permanent expulsion from the University.

Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas is expected, whether that use is by direct quotation or by paraphrase, however loose. In particular, if any written source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number at minimum. Any doubts about what constitutes "use" should be addressed to the instructor.

## EMBARGO

The public sharing of original dissertation research is a principle to which the University is deeply committed, and dissertations should be made available to the scholarly community at the University of Chicago and elsewhere in a timely manner. If dissertation authors are concerned that making their research publicly available might endanger research subjects or themselves, jeopardize a pending patent, complicate publication of a revised dissertation, or otherwise be inadvisable, they may, in consultation with faculty in their field (and as appropriate, research collaborators), restrict access to their dissertation for a limited period of time according to the guidelines outlined by the Dissertation Office. If a dissertation author needs to renew an embargo at the end of its term or initiate an embargo after graduation, the author must contact the Dissertation Office with the embargo request.

*The complete University of Chicago Student Manual may be found at <http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/>*

## Student Handbook – Appendix A

### M.A. Examinations Requirement

#### **First Year M.A. Examinations Requirement**

First year PhD students are required to take a total of **five** sociology courses designated as “exam courses” among their nine first-year graded courses. Incoming students will be provided with a chart that lists the designated exam courses for the upcoming year. The courses are divided into ten topic areas. Students will be required to take SOCI 30003 History of Social Theory as their first exam course. For the remaining four courses, they will be asked to select ONE course from four additional subject areas. Students will not be allowed to count multiple courses from the same subject area or to substitute in courses that are not on the list of designated exam courses for their cohort year.

The first year schedule of courses:

<i>Autumn</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>
Theory (Exam 1)	Stats 1	Stats 2
Principles	Exam 3	Exam 4 (or Elective)
Exam 2	Exam 4 (or Elective)	Exam5

Designating Exam Courses: The Director of Graduate Studies will be responsible for creating the chart of designated exam courses each year. An exam course must meet the following criteria: 1) be taught by a sociology faculty member or faculty associate (cross-listed in SOCI); 2) provide a substantial introduction to debates and developments within a general field of sociological inquiry; 3) provide an exam option for first-year PhD students that tests their general knowledge of the field of the course. The structure of the exam is up to the instructor. Scoring of the M.A. exam is to be on a 1-100 scale.

M.A. examination scores will be collected and recorded throughout the first year by the Graduate Studies Administrator as part of the student’s departmental record and will be included with each student’s M.A. petition (see below).

#### Petitioning for the M.A. Degree

After completing the nine required courses of the first year with a quality grade of B- or higher, students will submit a petition for an M.A. degree. The M.A. petition will be due no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> before the start of their second year. In the first faculty meeting of the autumn quarter, the M.A. petitions will be discussed and voted upon. Students who have incompletes or no grade recorded for any of their nine first-year courses will not be eligible to submit the M.A. petition.

For students who are unable to meet the September 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, there will be a second and final M.A. petition deadline of January 5<sup>th</sup> of their second year. In the first faculty meeting of winter quarter, second-round M.A. petitions will be discussed and voted upon. Students who are unable to meet this deadline due to incompletes or no recorded grades from their first year will not be permitted to move on to the advanced program requirements and will be counseled out.

## STUDENT HANDBOOK – Appendix B

### Qualifying Paper

#### 1. Excerpts from Student Handbook

A requirement for the Ph.D. is the qualifying paper. This paper should represent an *original* piece of scholarship or theoretical analysis and must be written in a format appropriate for submission to a professional publication. Note that the requirement is "publishable," not "published," although many recent papers have been presented at professional conferences and eventually published.

The paper should be prepared under the direct supervision and approval of a faculty member and may be written or revised in connection with one or more regular courses. Students entering with M.A. papers may petition to submit a supervised revision to meet the qualifying paper requirement.

Once the paper is approved by a faculty member, the student is responsible for presenting to the Departmental office an electronic copy of the paper and an approved abstract of the paper. The paper remains on file in the Departmental office.

Students should formulate a proposal for the paper by the end of Spring Quarter of their first year. The qualifying paper is to be completed before the end of the Spring Quarter of the second year of study.

**If a student fails to meet deadlines for program requirements, the Department will formally assess his/her ability to make satisfactory progress in the program. Subsequent actions will range from focused intervention to counseling the student to withdraw.**

#### 2. Some Suggestions for Preparing the Paper

Publishable papers take a number of forms. Some of these can be listed:

1. presentation and analysis of quantitative data
2. review of literature leading to an argument for theoretical advance
3. ethnographic analysis of a particular case or cases
4. comparative historical analysis of a particular case
5. proposal and defense of a methodological advance

The best way to find reasonable forms is to read recent journals such as the *American Journal of Sociology*, the *American Sociological Review*, *Social Forces*, and the like. Typically a publishable paper in such journals consists of 35 to 50 manuscript pages of material, including text, tables, notes, and references. Note that a pure review paper is not acceptable as an qualifying paper.

All good papers involve a puzzle and a solution. It is wise to begin discussions with a faculty member as soon as you have begun to identify the puzzle about which you wish to write. Identify important references early and read them. Prepare an extended proposal for the paper and present it to your advisor for suggestions.

#### 3. Format for Abstract

A format for the abstract of the qualifying paper is given below. It includes the following information:

- Title of paper
- Student's name
- Faculty advisor's name
- Quarter in which the qualifying paper is submitted

ABSTRACT OF QUALIFYING PAPER

[Title of Paper]

by [student's name]

Advisor: [Faculty Advisor]

[Quarter/Year]

[text of abstract]

Format for Title Page of the Qualifying Paper

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

TITLE OF PAPER

A QUALIFYING PAPER SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
TOWARD THE FULFILLMENT OF  
DOCTORAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

BY

NAME OF STUDENT

FACULTY ADVISOR: NAME

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

QUARTER, YEAR

## STUDENT HANDBOOK – Appendix C

### Special Fields

#### **1. Excerpts from Student Handbook**

Ph.D. students are required to demonstrate competence in two special fields. The Special Field Requirement is to be met during the third year of graduate study. Students must complete the M.A. Examinations requirement at the Ph.D. level before meeting the Special Field Requirement. A “conditional pass” on a Special Field must be made up before the end of the quarter following the quarter in which the examination was taken. No student may complete a second exam or review essay until he has successfully passed the first one.

This requirement may be met in three ways: by examination, with a review essay, or through a specified sequence of methods courses.

A. Exam or review essay. Both the examination and review essay options are prepared on an individual basis in the fields of sociology in which the student wishes to develop research competence; one should be related to the subject of the subsequent Ph.D. dissertation. Each exam/review essay special field must be overseen by two faculty readers of the student’s choice (see “Procedures,” below). The examinations cover both theoretical and substantive materials as well as the methods required for effective research. Preparation takes the form of specialized courses and seminars, supplemented by independent study and reading. For either the exam or essay, the student must first construct a bibliography to be approved by both faculty readers; readers must also agree in advance to either the examination or review essay format. Examples of previously approved bibliographies are kept on file in the department office and can be made available to other students upon request. In recent years, the fields most commonly taken are urban sociology, organizational analysis, sociology of gender, sociology of education, culture/STS/knowledge, sociology of health and medicine, economic sociology, political sociology, stratification, social movements/change, and sociology of religion.

B. Sequence of Courses. One of the two special field requirements may be met with a sequence of methodology courses. Three types of special fields in methodology are recognized: (1) social statistics, (2) survey research methods, and (3) qualitative methods.

One of the two Special Field Requirements may be taken in a related field outside of sociology.

**If a student fails to meet deadlines for program requirements, the Department will formally assess his/her ability to make satisfactory progress in the program. Subsequent actions will range from focused intervention to counseling the student to withdraw.**

#### **2. Procedures for Exam / Review Essay Special Fields**

A. The special field requirement may be met by *either* a one-week take-home examination scheduled by the individual special field committee or by a review essay comparable to those published in the *Annual Review of Sociology*. Review essays should not simply summarize but should be analytical, critical, and synthetic.

B. The student is expected to prepare for the special field by participation in advanced seminars and intensive individual study. The Department recommends both of these avenues of preparation. To set up a special field:

1) Select a committee of two faculty members and get their approval of the special field area and the format (exam or review essay). Prepare a plan of study; this should include courses and seminar work in the area and a bibliography of items to be read through individual study. As a guideline, the *Annual Review of Sociology* expects a bibliography of approximately 100 items, which is included in the total essay length of 10-12,000 words. Bibliographies compiled by other students are available through the Department Office. The plan should be approved by the special field committee and will be a guide for preparation of the examination or essay. (The chairman of the special field committee must be a member of the sociology faculty. If the field involves cross-disciplinary study, the second member of the committee may be a faculty member from another department in the University.) In no case should a faculty member serve on both of a student's special field committees.

- 2) Register with the Department office for a special field in this area. The registration form for either the exam or review essay can be obtained from the administrator for student affairs. If the special field is to be met with a take-home exam, the form must be submitted at least two full weeks before the date on which the examination is to be taken; attach a copy of the bibliography that has been approved by your committee. For review essays, students must submit an approved bibliography and special field registration form prior to completing the essay.
- 3) Exam/Essay content is at the discretion of the examining faculty, but by department policy every special field, whether exam or essay, should cover the following topics:
  - a. Recently published journal articles and books. The candidate is expected to be up to date at the time of the examination.
  - b. The most important controversies, issues, and problems – in theory, empirical findings, and research methods – that exist in the field.
  - c. Evaluation of existing theory and research methodology with suggestions of new lines of work.

### 3. Procedures for Special Fields via Approved Sequences of Methods Courses

Most students (around 70%) in the program satisfy one of the special field requirements via a sequence of courses guaranteeing mastery of some particular area of methodology. These change dynamically with the courses offered by faculty, and so are updated from time to time. Also, there is an increasing tendency across all social science departments to recognize methodology courses of other departments. However, the Sociology Department prefers to provide its own methodology training, and so it has created a number of actual sequences for methodology special fields. These are discussed here.

Ordinarily, methodology special fields must follow one of the lists below. Sometimes because of course availability, it may be necessary to substitute one course. All substitutions must be cleared in advance with the chair of the Methods Committee. In general, a student should expect to count only one special-petition course not in the following lists. That a special-petition course has counted in the past does not guarantee that it will be counted again. Syllabuses change, and since the special field aims to guarantee a broad command of methods, a petitioned course must further that end as it is currently taught. Once a student has completed enough courses to fulfill one of the following sequences and grades are posted, the student must file a petition to count these courses as a sequence fulfilling the special field requirement.

Three sequences of courses listed below have been approved as meeting the requirements of a special field in methods and models. Students must have a grade of B or better in every course used for the field in order to pass the special field. Courses taken on a Pass/Fail or R (registered) basis do not count toward the special field. Courses taken outside the University of Chicago (for example, as part of a prior master's program) may be counted under special circumstances, but no more than two of them in any case. Under some circumstances, students may petition to have one related teaching assistantship count toward the total required courses. See the department's graduate studies administrator for details. Note that the department's two required statistical courses (or the two more advanced courses taken as substitutes for them by students who can bypass them) cannot count toward any of the methodology special fields, including the special field in social statistics.

#### A. Special Field No. 1 (Social Statistics). Any five of the following:

SOCI 30112	Application of Hierarchical Linear Models
SOCI 30318	Introduction to Causal Inference
SOCI 40109	Loglinear Analysis
SOCI 40101	Basic Demographic Analysis
SOCI 40103	Event History Analysis
SOCI 40199	Applied Regression
SOCI 40202	Advanced Topics in Causal Inference
SOCI 40204	Categorical Data Analysis

The following courses in other departments have in the past sometimes been counted by petition:

ECON 31100	Empirical Methods 2 (PQ basic probability theory)
ECON 31200	Empirical Methods 3 (econometric methods for demog. phenomena)
GSBC 41202	Analysis of Financial Time Series
GSBC 41910/STAT 33500	Time-series Analysis for Forecasting & Model Building
PBHS/HSTD 31001	Epidemiologic Methods
PLSC 43100	Maximum Likelihood
STAT 22400	Applied Regression Analysis
STAT 22600	Analysis of Categorical Data
STAT 31200	Introduction to Stochastic Processes
STAT 32900/BUSF 41912	Applied Multivariate Analysis
STAT 34000	Gaussian Processes
STAT 34300	Applied Linear Statistical Methods
STAT 34700	Generalized Linear Models
STAT 35600, PBHS/HSTD 33100	Applied Survival Analysis
STAT 36900, PBHS//HSTD 33300	Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis

**NOTE:**

If students obtain a Master's degree in Statistics at the University of Chicago during their Ph.D. program in sociology, they should consult with the chair of the Methods Committee about the courses required for the Special Field No. 1. While pure statistics courses may offer a deep foundation for sociological methods, the Special Field also envisions a mastery of practical application.

**B. Special Field No. 2 (Survey Research Methods).** The special field in survey research methods consists of completing five courses from the following list, two from Group 1 and three from Group 2:

Group 1

SOCI 30118	Survey Research Overview
SOCI 40164	Involved Interviewing
PPHA 41800	Survey Questionnaire Design
STAT 33100	Sample Surveys

Group 2

SOCI 30318	Introduction to Causal Inference
SOCI 40101	Basic Demographic Analysis
SOCI 40109	Loglinear Analysis
SOCI 40103	Event History Analysis 1
SOCI 40188	Advanced Methods in Survey Research
SOCI 40199	Applied Regression
SOCI 40202	Advanced Topics in Causal Inference
SOCI 40204	Categorical Data Analysis
SOCI 50096/PLSC 57200	Network Analysis
PPHA 42100	Applied Econometrics II
STAT 36900, PBHS/HSTD 33300	Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis

**C. Special Field No. 3 (Qualitative Methods).** The special field in qualitative methods consists of at least five courses in the following list:

SOCI 30118	Survey Research Overview
SOCI 40112	Ethnographic Methods
SOCI 40133	Content Analysis
SOCI 40142	Library Methods for the Social Sciences

SOCI 40157	Hermeneutic Sociology II
SOCI 40164	Involved Interviewing
SOCI 40174	Researching Gender and Sexuality
SOCI 40177	Coding and Analyzing Qualitative Data
SOCI 40198	Economy and Ethnography
SOCI 50096/PLSC 57200	Network Analysis
SOCI 50121	Seminar: Ethnography-2
GEOG 38201	Introduction to GIS
GEOG 38400	Intermediate GIS/Cartography
PLSC 50900	Comparative Case Study Method

The following courses in other departments have in the past sometimes been counted by petition:

AASR 36000	Fieldwork Methodology
ECON 42100	Intro: Empirical Microeconomic Research Methods
CHDV 39300	Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences
CHDV 42214	Ethnographic Writing
MUSI 33800	Ethnographic Methods
PLSC 33300	Interpretive Methods in the Social Sciences
PLSC 43509	Conceptualizing/Measuring Ideology
PLSC 43700	Comparative Historical Analysis
PLSC 437115	Readings in Comparative Historical Analysis
SSAD 54300	Qualitative Research Methods

## STUDENT HANDBOOK – Appendix D

### Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal

#### 1. Excerpts from Student Handbook

The Ph.D. dissertation is judged by its contribution to sociological knowledge and the evidence that it shows of a candidate's ability to carry out independent research. The student prepares a research proposal for the dissertation under the guidance of a special faculty committee. The proposal is subject to review by the faculty committee to determine whether the project is feasible and to assist in the development of the research. The dissertation proposal hearing is to take place no later than the end of Autumn Quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Normally, a Ph.D. thesis committee consists of a chairman plus two or three additional faculty members. The chairman of the committee must be a member of the Department of Sociology; in cases where the chair retires or leaves the University, a co-chair must be designated from the current department faculty. Students are encouraged to include faculty from other departments and schools on their thesis committee where they have special competence and relevant interests. It is assumed that in the case of theses which draw heavily from a particular research program, at least one member of the committee will not be affiliated with that program.

Early in the development of a Ph.D. thesis, a hearing of at least one hour is held with the student and the members of the committee, plus additional faculty. At this hearing, the student's proposal is accepted if it meets Departmental standards. Graduate students are given assistance in modifying, focusing, or expanding their research plans. It is essential that the student pass two Special Field Examinations before the Ph.D. proposal hearing is held. It is also expected that the dissertation committee will approve the proposal before the hearing is scheduled.

The proposal should be submitted to the to the Department office – one printed copy and electronically (by email attachment to the Graduate Studies Administrator) – at least ten days, preferably two weeks, before the proposal hearing. The cover page should follow the format on page three of this appendix and specifically should include members of the dissertation committee. The printed copy of the proposal is kept on file in the department; the electronic copy is available upon request to other interested Sociology faculty. The student should deliver a copy to each committee member.

**If a student fails to meet deadlines for program requirements, the Department will formally assess his/her ability to make satisfactory progress in the program. Subsequent actions will range from focused intervention to counseling the student to withdraw.**

#### 2. Some Suggestions for Preparing the Proposal

- a) State the general idea, describing it in outline form to give an overall picture of the nature and scope of the research. This should not be more than about 200 words.
- b) Describe briefly what has been done by previous investigators in the field which is closely relevant to your proposal. The purpose of this section is to explain to the reader just how your work will add to or improve the existing literature. Normally, one should cite several specific studies, but not a large number.
- c) Expound briefly the theoretical ideas being used, and the abstract nature of the process being studied. Indicate the relations between this specific study and broader issues in sociology.

Mention specific hypotheses to be examined, or questions to be answered by the research.

- d) Indicate the type of data to be used and their availability. Some reference should be made to the possibility of alternate forms or sources of data, and to the completeness and reliability of the data being used.
- e) Describe the analytical organization and the specific techniques to be employed. For any unorthodox or dubious aspects, indicate briefly what your operating assumptions are. When possible explain why the techniques being used were adopted as compared with some alternative ones.
- f) Present an outline, even if only rough or approximate, of the finished dissertation.
- g) Make generous use of section headings and subheadings to improve readability of the proposal.
- h) The typical proposal should run about 15-20 pages. There is no need to report specific results or detail of preliminary runs in the proposal, however, one or two tables can often be used advantageously. The bibliography for the proposal should be brief and illustrative only.
- i) The cover page should include the type of information included on the attached sample: (1) Ph.D. proposal; (2) student's name; (3) title of dissertation; (4) committee members; (5) quarter and year. A format for the cover page of the proposal is given on the next page.

[Format for cover page of Dissertation Proposal]

University of Chicago  
Department of Sociology

TITLE IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS

by  
Student Name

Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal

Quarter Year

Committee:

Faculty Name (Chair)  
Faculty Name  
Faculty Name

Student Handbook, Appendix E: Program Requirements Schedule  
Department of Sociology

Quarter → Year	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Tasks/Summer
<b>1</b>	<i>Theory Principles of Social Research Exam Course 2</i>	<i>Stats 1 Exam Course 3 Exam Course 4 or Elective</i>	<i>Stats 2 Exam Course 4 or Elective Exam Course 5</i>	*9 courses/MA exam courses *Research for QP in the summer *Submit petition for MA degree by Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup>
<b>2</b>	Elective (Workshop)	<i>Writing Sem I Elective</i>	<i>Writing Sem I Elective  SUBMIT QUALIFYING PAPER</i>	*6 (min) – 9 courses *Submit QP *Reading for Special Field
<b>3</b>	Elective (Workshop)  <i>COMPLETE SPECIAL FIELD 1</i>	<i>Writing Sem II Elective</i>	<i>Writing Sem II Elective  COMPLETE SPECIAL FIELD 2</i>	*Complete 2 Special Fields * Finish course work * Preliminary Dissertation Research
<b>4</b>	Research  <i>DEFEND DISSERTATION PROPOSAL</i>	Research	Research	*Defend Proposal *Conduct research
<b>5</b>	Research	Research	Research	*Research *Apply for 6 <sup>th</sup> year funding
<b>6+</b>	Job Market/ Writing	Writing	Writing	