

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

GRADUATE PROGRAM GUIDE

Last revision, December 18, 2020: These requirements apply to all students, unless otherwise noted. Students are responsible to learn departmental degree requirements, to be familiar with rules for determining standing in the program, and understand the consequences of not meeting these standards. Failure to meet these standards may lead to incidents of probation, termination of one's funding, and, ultimately, dismissal from the program.

FACULTY ADVISORS FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

The Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) appoint faculty members to serve as advisors for first-year students. The mission of the program is to train future top scholars in sociology. To achieve the mission, faculty advisors will advise first-year students on their professional, intellectual, scholarly, and social transition into and integration with the department, the college, the graduate school, the university, and the discipline.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S (M.A.) DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY

A non-terminal ("degree-in-passing") Master's Degree in Sociology is earned as part of the work toward the doctorate. The following requirements for the M.A. degree are to be completed before the beginning of students' fifth semester in the program. Students who do not complete their M.A. degree after two years in the program, unless there are extenuating circumstances, will be terminated from the program, but will be allowed to complete the M.A. degree as a terminal M.A. degree.

- S6301. Classical Sociological Theory
- S6302. Contemporary Sociological Theory
- S6310. Sociological Inquiry: Intro to Research Methods
- S6311. Multivariate Analysis I
- S6312. Multivariate Analysis II
- S7500. Workshop on Sociological Criticism
- 18 hours of elective course work
- Pass Master's Paper
- Department Colloquium Series
- First-Year Professionalization Seminars

Total credit hours required for M.A.: 36

All required courses (S6301, S6302, S6310, S6311, S6312, and S7500) must be passed with a grade of B or better to make satisfactory progress in the program. Grades lower than B will appear in the graduate student's record at the Graduate School as having earned the student the credit hours corresponding to the course in question. However, if it was a required course, students earn zero hours toward the department's required 36 hours for the M.A. (72 hours for the Ph.D.) degree and must retake the course. Failing to earn a minimum course grade of B in the retaken course will result in the student's termination from the program. Students, who have to retake required courses, should consider taking four classes (12 credits) in at least one semester in order to earn 36 credits by the end of the fourth semester.

Participation in Department Colloquium Series and First-Year Professionalization Seminars is required. Consistent unexcused absences, lateness, or early departures are indicators of unsatisfactory performance and will result in an automatic instance of probation.

MA Required Courses

Sociological Theory. Two theory courses are required for the M.A. degree: Classical Theory (S6301) and Contemporary Theory (S6302). These courses give students a foundation in the classic works of the discipline and in recent developments in social theory. The two courses will be offered sequentially every other year and both are 3-credit hour courses.

Research Methods. All students will take Sociological Inquiry (S6310) which is an introduction to research methods, including theory construction, sociological reasoning, study design, and specific research techniques. This course will be offered at least every other fall semester and is worth 3 credits.

Statistical Analysis. Two statistics seminars are required for the M.A. degree: Multivariate Analysis I (S6311) and Multivariate Analysis II (S6312). The courses provides students with a firm foundation in statistical analysis, with special attention to the general linear model and the use of computer-based statistical programs. Students will take these courses in the fall and spring semesters of their first year in the program; both are 3-credit courses.

Sociological Criticism. The Workshop on Sociological Criticism (S7500) is an intensive introduction to peer review for publication, using materials from journal submissions to editorial correspondence. The 3-credit course will be offered at least every other spring semester.

MA Elective Courses

Students must take eighteen hours of elective credit. Twelve of these credits must include any combination of Sociology's Special Methods Workshops, Survey Seminars, or Special Topic Seminars. The remaining credits may be drawn from either directed study courses taught by Sociology faculty, one 3000-level undergraduate Sociology course that has been approved for graduate credit, or one graduate course in another department. Students must submit a Course Petition Form to the DGS for approval in order to take graduate courses in other departments. The Course Petition Form is available in Vanderbilt Box (the SOC. GRAD STUDENTS folder).

Special Methods Workshops. The department offers two special methods workshops: the Quantitative Methods Workshop (S7600) and the Qualitative Methods Workshop (S7700). These courses introduce students to specific research methods including, but not limited to, the following: comparative historical methods, ethnographic methods, survey construction, and advanced statistical methods such as event-history analysis, categorical analysis, and time series analysis. One of these courses will be offered at least every other year.

Survey Seminars. These courses (S8329 – S8359) introduce students to a particular field of sociology and require them to write on aspects of that field. The seminars cover the major areas in sociology as they are represented at Vanderbilt and facilitate students' ability to accumulate broad knowledge in a range of sociological literatures. At least four of these classes will be offered each year.

Special Topic Seminars and Directed Studies Courses. Both Special Topic Seminars (S9361 – S9371) and Directed Studies courses (S9888-S9889) provide the opportunity for students and faculty to focus on substantive topics of mutual interest. Students may enroll in more than one section of either of these courses in a semester. Special Topic Seminars are 3-credit formal offerings which will be listed—with their special

focus—in the course catalog. Directed Studies courses are tutorial relationships one or more students arrange with an individual faculty member; students may earn only up to 3 credits of directed study in a semester. Students must file a Request for Directed Studies with the Graduate School (https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/request_for_independent_study_form.pdf). In the form, students must indicate the final products of the requested Directed Studies courses.

3000-Level Undergraduate Courses. For the M.A., students may petition to take one 3000-level substantive area (i.e., non-methods or theory) course taught by Sociology graduate faculty. They must receive the consent of both the instructor and the DGS. The faculty member shall decide which undergraduate requirements the graduate student must meet, but the petition must reflect a higher level of requirements (e.g., assignments, readings) than those met by undergraduate students. A student can only take one of these during their graduate career and it must be taken in the first two years of the program.

Master's Paper

Purpose. The master's paper is intended to involve the student actively in research early in his/her graduate career. It is conceived as a high quality, empirical study that demonstrates the student's mastery of research design and analysis. It may use original (qualitative or quantitative) data collected by the student or be an original analysis of secondary data. The bulk of the work on the paper should be carried out after the student's matriculation to the program.

Timing. The student will develop the idea for a proposal for the master's paper by the end of his/her first year, in consultation with a faculty member who will act as advisor to the project. The student will name his/her master's committee chair and submit a two-page abstract of the proposed project by May 1 in the first spring semester to the DGS (with a copy to his/her committee chair). This abstract must include a timeline for completion of the project; work in the summer between the first and second year should be a major factor in this timeline. The student must begin proactively and consistently working with the chair of the master's committee at this point. By October 1 in the first semester of the student's second year, s/he will identify the additional members of the master's paper committee for the DGS. The master's paper committee will consist of at least two, but no more than three, faculty members including the chair. If the student includes a faculty member from outside the department on the committee, then s/he must include two faculty members from the Sociology department. The committee will guide and give feedback on the project as it develops. In order to facilitate this, committees may establish deadlines for drafts and revisions of the paper in advance of the evaluated version's deadline.

The master's paper will be due to the committee for evaluation no later than June 1 following the spring semester of the student's second year. The committee will evaluate the paper by June 15 (see Procedures below). If the paper does not receive a unanimous pass, a revision is due by June 30. A final version of the master's paper must be completed by July 15 in order for the student to meet the filing deadline for an August conferral of the M.A. degree.

Procedures. All committee members should provide comments on earlier drafts of the paper. First exposure to the paper at the June deadline is likely not sufficient for the student to meet the requirement. The master's paper will be read independently by the members of the student's master's paper committee, who will evaluate it as "pass with distinction," "pass," "conditional pass," or "fail." Students will receive explicit feedback from the examining committee on their papers. Evaluations of and comments on the student's master's paper will be available no later than two weeks (June 15) after it is submitted to the committee. In order to receive a unanimous "pass," the paper must be of high quality (i.e., after revision in light of committee members' comments, the paper could be submitted to a journal for publication). The suggested length will be 25 pages or more (i.e., typical length for submission to a journal).

Any evaluation other than unanimous “pass” or “pass with distinction” means that the student must revise the paper. The revised paper will be due on June 30. Again, evaluations of and comments on the student’s paper will be available no later than two weeks after it is submitted to the committee. If a student receives a “conditional pass” or “fail” on the revised master’s paper, s/he will be required to leave the program before the beginning of their third year.

If the paper is of such poor quality as to receive an evaluation of “fail,” the student must leave the program before the beginning of their third year. If the student misses the June 1 deadline, they will go on probation immediately, but will still be required to meet the July 15 deadline for revisions. If that deadline is missed, the student must leave the program before the beginning of their third year.

Submitting The Master’s Paper. A student who completes the master’s paper entirely in the Department must submit the paper to the Graduate School for cataloging. A student whose master’s thesis from another university is accepted by the department should not submit the paper to the Graduate School, but is eligible (once s/he completes or transfers the coursework required for the master’s) for the M.A. degree in Sociology from Vanderbilt.

In order to remain in FERPA compliance, please see the following guidelines for electronic approvals and the submission of the Completion of Master’s Degree form.

1. Student - Complete the fillable initial information of the Completion of Master’s Degree form (Student's Name, Student's ID Number, Department/Program, and Academic/Research Adviser) and email the form to the Committee Chair (https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/Completion_Masters_Degree.pdf)
2. Committee Chair - Fill in other fillable required information and share the form with the entire committee, the DGS, and the program coordinator in Vanderbilt BOX
3. Committee Members - Sign for approval *electronic signature accepted
4. DGS - Sign for approval *electronic signature accepted
5. Program Coordinator - Submit the Results of Qualifying Examination form to the Graduate School (<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=HRYHJWR7L9>).

TRANSFER OF M.A. CREDITS OR THESIS FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Transfer Credits. Students can petition to waive up to three of the courses required for the M.A. degree. These courses can be waived if the student has taken the course or its equivalent elsewhere with a grade of B or better. The decision to waive the course requires a review of the replacement-course syllabus and, when applicable, written materials produced for the course by both the DGS and a faculty member who teaches the course being waived. Students receive course credit for each waived required course and the grade earned in the previous incarnation of the course is added to the calculation for the student’s Vanderbilt GPA.

The 18 elective credits for the M.A. cannot be waived or replaced by transfer credit. Students can petition the DGS to transfer up to nine (9) hours of elective credit for graduate coursework which they have earned at an accredited institution and in which they have earned a minimum course grade of "B." These credits would substitute for courses taken in fulfillment of the 36 hours required for the Ph.D. degree, but will not count toward the M.A. degree.

Credit transfers require approval by the DGS, Department Chair, and Graduate School. The DGS is authorized to recommend to the Department Chair transfers of credit hours. The Graduate School makes the

ultimate determination of the number of transfer credit hours which may be applied toward Vanderbilt Sociology degree requirements.

Waiving The Master's Paper Requirement. Students who enter Vanderbilt's program with an M.A. and who have already completed a master's thesis in sociology may petition the DGS to have the requirement of a master's paper waived. The DGS, in consultation with at least two faculty experts in the areas covered in the thesis, will approve or disapprove this request.

ADVANCEMENT TO DOCTORAL STUDY

The receipt of a VU Sociology M.A. degree is required for a student to obtain a Ph.D. at Vanderbilt. All M.A. degree candidates, whether the degree is terminal (rare) or the student is receiving the M.A. degree-in-passing, must file an Intent to Graduate Form with the Graduate School. Students receiving the degree-in-passing are able to, but not required to, participate in Commencement. Students are expected to file this form by the Graduate School's mid-June deadline for an August conferral of the M.A. degree. In exceptional circumstances, this form will be filed by the Graduate School's mid-September deadline for a December conferral of the M.A. degree.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTORAL (Ph.D.) DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY

In addition to meeting the aforementioned requirements for the Master's Degree in Sociology, students pursuing the doctorate (Ph.D.) in Sociology must meet the following requirements:

15 Credit Hours of Elective Course Work

18 Or Fewer Credit Hours of Pre-Dissertation (\$8999) and Dissertation (\$9999) Research

Pass 3-Credit Teaching Workshop (S7400)

Pass Two Special Area Examinations

Pass Qualifying Examination (Oral Dissertation Proposal Defense)

Satisfactory Completion and Oral Defense of Dissertation

Department Colloquium Series

Total credit hours required for Ph.D.: 72 (including 36 for the M.A.)

Participation in Department Colloquium Series is required, except for students conducting field research. Consistent unexcused absences, lateness, or early departures are indicators of unsatisfactory performance and will result in an automatic instance of probation.

PhD Required And Elective Courses

Teaching Workshop. The required Teaching Workshop (S7400) is an introduction to all aspects of effective teaching and to the techniques of oral presentation. For those students who lack demonstrated proficiency in teaching, the Workshop is a prerequisite of teaching at Vanderbilt. This 3-credit course is taken Pass/Fail and is offered every other year. Students with considerable experience teaching or who have taken a similar course at another institution may petition to waive this requirement. A waiver does not replace the credits; the student will have to make up the credits with another course.

Elective Course Work. Students must take 15 hours of elective credit beyond the M.A. requirements. These credits may be drawn from any combination of the following options (see descriptions above): Special Methods Workshops, Survey Seminars, Special Topic Seminars, Directed Study courses, graduate

courses in other departments, or courses accepted for transfer credit from previous institutions. A maximum of 9 credits can be earned for courses not taught by Vanderbilt Sociology graduate faculty. This limitation does not preclude taking more courses outside of the department (e.g., for a certificate), but extra credits will not count towards the Ph.D. requirements. The 15 credits must be completed by the end of the student's sixth semester in the program. Students can take more than 15 elective course credits to reach the 72 credits required for the Ph.D. degree.

Pre-Dissertation and Dissertation Research. Students must register for Pre-Dissertation Research (SOC 8999) after passing the two Special Area Examinations (normally during the fourth year) and Dissertation Research (S9999) after successfully defending the dissertation proposal (normally during and after the fifth year). Students must take no more than 18 credits of Pre-Dissertation Research (S8999) or Dissertation Research (S9999) in order to reach the 72 credits required for the Ph.D. degree. Once they have met the credit requirement, students should register for zero credits of research in order to maintain their full-time student status.

Special Area Examinations (SAE)

Purpose. The Special Area Exams enable the student to demonstrate the mastery of two broad and different substantive areas. Each Special Area Exam requires a student to read, organize, and critically assess key ideas and findings in a broad area. Reading and preparation for the exams should lay solid foundations for future research and teaching in these fields. Students are strongly urged to take relevant survey seminars or special topic seminars in their special area fields prior to meeting the exam requirements. Ideally, both areas of specialization should be tied to his/her dissertation interests, but this is not a requirement.

Timing. Students are required to take both Special Area Exams prior to the beginning of their seventh semester in the program. Exams will only be offered on one of three dates each year. While specific dates will be announced annually at the beginning of each academic year, these dates will always be scheduled for the middle of each semester. Third-year students must take their first SAE on either the fall (normally in November) or spring semester date (normally in March). Their second SAE must be taken on either the spring or summer date (normally in July).

Format. One exam will be a take-home, 72-hour exam, restricted to a total of 3 to 4 questions to be answered, with a page limit of 10-12 double-spaced pages per question. The second exam may be the same format, or, if the student chooses, may be a special area paper instead. A special area paper is similar to an article in the *Annual Review of Sociology*; it should organize, summarize/synthesize, and critique a broad literature.

Procedures. The exams will be based on no less than 2,500 pages and no more than 3,500 pages of reading per area. With the assistance of the DGS, the student will ask two faculty members in sociology to serve on his/her exam committee (not all members of the committee need to be specialists in the topic area). One faculty member will serve as chair. With the agreement of all concerned, and after the reading list has been approved in the department, an additional (third) committee member may be drawn from faculty outside the department. The student will likely select a partially or wholly different set of committee members and chair for his/her second exam.

The student defines each broad area in consultation with his/her Special Area Exam Committee Chair. Reading lists will be developed by the student and exam committee members jointly. Copies of earlier Special Area reading lists are kept online in Vanderbilt Box (the SOC. GRAD STUDENTS folder), to assist subsequent students in developing their own lists.

The student must include with the Special Area Exam reading list a brief (no more than one page)

description of the substantive focus (or foci) of the readings, and an identification of the student's specific interests within the broader area of the exam. This statement should be written early in the process of developing the reading list and provided (both with draft and final readings lists) to faculty on the committee and to the DGS.

The student will have a meeting with his/her committee to finalize the reading list for the exam; this meeting should occur no later than three months prior to the exam date, and preferably by the beginning of the semester in which the exam will be taken. Students are encouraged to meet regularly with committee members to discuss questions, insights, and progress as they read materials on the reading list. Two weeks before the exam, students are encouraged to construct their own exam questions and discuss them with their committee members. These questions (or revised versions of them) may be used as exam questions at the discretion of the examining committee.

The examining committee chair will email the student and the DGS the exam. The examination consists of 3 or 4 essay questions to be answered within a 72-hour period. Students will be given some choice in the questions to be answered; typically, they will be asked to choose 3 or 4 of six or eight possibilities. With the aid of the DGS, students will secure appropriate space and computers (if they choose) for the exam. The student will email the examination to the examining committee and the DGS at the end of the 72-hour period. Those who write their exams on computers may turn in storage media (e.g., CD or flash drive) containing their exam answers or submit them electronically to the examining committee and the DGS at the end of the 72-hour period.

Students may bring any notes, books, or other printed matter that they may wish to consult during the period. The Honor Code is in effect and the student taking the exam may not ask for or receive any assistance in answering the exam questions. Any person helping a student during the exam period is as guilty of an Honor-Code violation as is the person asking for assistance.

The Special Area Exam will be graded by the faculty members on the student's exam committee. Possible grades on the exam will be: pass with distinction, pass, conditional pass, or fail. Committee evaluations of "pass" must be unanimous, or the student must rewrite part or all of the exam. A "conditional pass" means that a student must rewrite one of the exam questions; a satisfactory rewrite will change the exam grade to a pass. Students who conditionally pass or who fail the exam will receive explicit feedback and advice from the examining committee. (Those who pass or who pass with distinction may seek feedback or advice from the examining committee, if they wish.) The examining committee chair will notify the student and the DGS the grades on the exam no later than three weeks after it is taken.

Students who fail the first Special Area Exam must retake and pass it by the end of the seventh semester in order to remain in the program; those who fail the second Exam must retake and pass it by the end of the eighth semester. Students who rewrite a question must complete that rewrite within two weeks of receiving their exam grade and committee feedback; the student will have a 24-hour period in which to rewrite the question. Students who fail a Special Area Exam or a question on the Special Area Exam twice will be terminated from the program.

Qualifying Examination/Dissertation Proposal

After completion of the second Special Area Examination, the student prepares a dissertation proposal describing his or her dissertation topic and the project's research question(s), the extant literature further developed or challenged by the project, and the methodological approach(es) used to answer the project's questions. The dissertation proposal must also include a timeline for completion which details a schedule of tasks including data collection, writing, and revisions.

In consultation with their dissertation advisor, the student will recruit a dissertation committee of 3 or more graduate faculty. The student must file a Request To Appoint Ph.D. Committee (https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/request_appoint_phd_committee_rev7-18.pdf) with the Graduate School (<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=HRYHJWR7L9>). The committee must include a faculty member outside of the Sociology department. If this scholar is not Vanderbilt faculty, the student must provide a rationale (in third person writing style) for their inclusion and a copy of their CV to the DGS. The DGS writes a short letter of justification. The student then submits the copy of their CV and the DGS justification letter together with a Request To Appoint Ph.D. Committee to the Graduate School online (<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=HRYHJWR7L9>).

The student should submit their full dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee no later than two weeks prior to the oral qualifying examination. The student's dissertation advisor should receive a full dissertation proposal well prior to this allowing time for the advisor to comment on the proposal and the student to make revisions. This committee administers the oral qualifying examination and, once the student passes it, guides the student in his or her dissertation research.

Two weeks prior to the oral proposal defense, the student must file a Request To Schedule Qualifying Examination (https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/request_schedule_qualifying_exam_rev7_18.pdf) with the Graduate School (<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=HRYHJWR7L9>). The proposal must be defended and approved no later than the end of the student's eighth semester (May 15). The student is allowed one retake of the proposal defense. Passing the dissertation proposal defense constitutes admission to candidacy. Students who fail to pass the retake of the proposal defense will be terminated from the program.

In order to remain in FERPA compliance, qualifying exam results and approvals may not be emailed. Please see the following guidelines for electronic approvals and submissions.

1. Student - Complete the fillable initial information of the Results of Qualifying Examination form (except for signatures and the grade, Passed or Failed) and email it to the Committee Chair (https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/qualifying_examination_results_form_rev10_17.pdf)
2. Committee Chair - Fill in the grade, Passed or Failed, and share the form with the entire committee, the DGS, and the program coordinator in Vanderbilt BOX
3. Committee Members - Sign for approval *electronic signature accepted
4. DGS - Sign for approval *electronic signature accepted
5. Program Coordinator - Submit the Results of Qualifying Examination form to the Graduate School (<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=HRYHJWR7L9>).

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation must be completed within four years after a student has been admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. Upon petition to the Graduate School, a one-year extension of candidacy may be granted. If such a period has expired without successful completion of the dissertation, the student may be dismissed from the Graduate School. Readmission to the Graduate School, and to candidacy, requires application to the Graduate School, with approval of the faculty in the Sociology department. In such cases the student may be required, by the Graduate School or by the Ph.D. committee, to demonstrate competence for readmission by taking a qualifying examination or additional course work.

The student must submit the completed dissertation to the dissertation committee at least one month prior to the oral dissertation defense. Well prior to this the student's dissertation advisor should receive drafts of the dissertation to allow the advisor to comment on the dissertation and the student to make revisions.

Two weeks prior to the oral defense of the dissertation, the student must file a Request To Schedule Final Defense (https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/request_schedule_dissertation_defense_rev7-18.pdf) with the Graduate School (<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=HRYHJWR7L9>). The committee reviews the dissertation and conducts the final oral dissertation defense examination. After successfully defending their dissertations, students obtain signatures and approvals on dissertation title pages and abstracts via email.

1. Students - Email the title page and abstract to the entire committee for approval, copy etdadmin@vanderbilt.edu
2. Committee Members - REPLY ALL with their approval or disapproval.
3. Students - Combine the title page, abstract, and all email responses into one PDF and upload to their VIREO submission as an Administrative file.

In order to remain in FERPA compliance, dissertation defense results and approvals may not be emailed. Please see the following guidelines for electronic approvals and submissions.

1. Student - Complete the fillable initial information of the Results of Dissertation Defense form (except for signatures and the grade, Passed or Failed) and email it to the Committee Chair (https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/forms/dissertation_defense_results_form_rev10_17.pdf)
2. Committee Chair - Fill in the grade, Passed or Failed, and share the form with the entire committee, the DGS, and the program coordinator in Vanderbilt BOX
3. Committee Members Sign for approval *electronic signature accepted
4. DGS - Sign for approval *electronic signature accepted
5. Program Coordinator - Submit the Results of Dissertation Defense form to the Graduate School (<https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=HRYHJWR7L9>).

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Residency. Full-time students are expected to enroll in the Graduate School during each fall and spring semester. After completion of the required 72 hours for the Ph.D. degree, full-time students register for 0 hours of dissertation research at the minimum tuition rate of \$200 each semester. Candidates for the Ph.D. degree who are away from the University must continue to register for 0 hours of dissertation research to remain in good standing.

Grade Point Averages. In order to make satisfactory progress in the program, students must earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) and departmental grade point average (DGA) of 3.00 by the end of each semester. The GPA does not include research courses (e.g., S8999) or transfer credits (unless the course substitutes for an MA requirement). The DGA does not include directed studies courses (S9888-S9889) or undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit.

Graduate and Research Assistantships. Graduate (GA) and research (RA) assistantships are awarded in order for students to obtain academic and/or research experience beyond their coursework. This is a professional role and will be evaluated as such at the end of each semester. Consistent evidence of incompetence, neglect of duty, inefficiency, or other deficiencies are indicators of unsatisfactory performance of your assigned duties and responsibilities. Assistantships are renewable, not guaranteed, and are subject to termination by the Department Chair and the DGS if the student's performance is deemed substandard. For students in the 2019 or earlier cohorts, they work for 12 hours per week in each semester as graduate assistants plus 8 hours per week for the Research Collaboration Agreements (see the following paragraph). For students in the 2021 or proceeding cohorts, they work for 20 hours per week in each semester as graduate assistants.

Research Collaboration Agreements. The Research Collaboration Agreement (RCA) program applies only to students in the 2019 or earlier cohorts. The department instituted the Research Collaboration Agreement (RCA) program in order to help students develop/strengthen working relationships with faculty members while working on a submission for a journal. The goal for each RCA is the production of a publishable paper, with submission of the paper to a peer-reviewed journal within a year as the evidence of that RCA's completion. Successful submissions will enhance students' competitiveness in the job market.

The RCA program applies to students on GA funding, who are beyond their first year in the program, and who have not defended their dissertation proposals. Students must establish a formal working relationship with faculty that explicitly accounts for the 8 hours/week of funding not devoted to GA work. The nature of these working relationships will be laid out in signed agreements. Each RCA will be between one or two students and one faculty member.

The agreement will be valid for a calendar year (Jan-Dec). It will explicitly specify that the goal to be achieved is the production of a publishable paper, with submission of the paper to a peer-reviewed journal by the end of the year. The agreement will also specify the responsibilities of the two parties over the life of the agreement toward the achievement of this goal. Faculty and students are encouraged to design RCAs that prioritize pragmatism and feasibility. RCAs cannot support the production of the master's paper or be used to meet course paper requirements (including directed studies). An RCA cannot be a time extension on the previous year's RCA.

Students must provide the DGS with a signed agreement by the end of January. The manuscript must be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal within a year of that date. The student must forward the submission acknowledgement email received from the journal to the DGS as proof of completed work. It is not sufficient to state that the manuscript will go out for review at a later date. Each time this deadline is missed, the DGS will consult with the collaborating faculty member about the student's contributions to the project. If there are deficiencies, they will be noted in the student's spring letter of standing. Consistent (two or more) faculty reports of the student's unsatisfactory performance will trigger an instance of probation.

STANDING IN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

It is each student's responsibility to learn and comply with department degree requirements, to be familiar with rules for determining standing in the program, and understand the consequences of not meeting these standards.

At the end of each semester, a student may be either "in good standing" or "on probation" in the graduate sociology program. Academic standing is determined by: a) timeliness in completing the minimum required number of semester credit hours; b) timeliness in completing coursework and other requirements; and c) the quality of performance in coursework and in other requirements.

If a student is on probation at the end of two consecutive semesters, the student will be reviewed by the full faculty for potential termination from the program. This review will also take place if the student is on probation three times, regardless of the sequencing of the incidents. Extenuating circumstances will be taken into account.

After the end of each spring semester, each student in the program receives an end of the year letter of standing (LOS) from the DGS telling the student whether or not the student is in good standing and reminding the student of upcoming deadlines. At the end of each spring semester, the full faculty collectively review the progress of each student in the program at the annual evaluation meeting, and that discussion is reflected in the DGS's memos to students.

Smaller student-specific meetings are required before the annual evaluation meeting, in order to get more focused evaluations of students and streamline (and shorten) the full-faculty meeting. These student-specific meetings will also encourage greater responsibility among the students for discerning their progress in the program and for establishing goals for the coming year.

Each student will meet with a small committee of a few selected faculty members (typically, the student's committee members—dissertation, M.A. thesis, special area exams, or first-year faculty advisors) for 30-45 minutes near the end of the spring semester. In preparation for this meeting, the student will submit a statement of their accomplishments over the past year and plans/goals for the coming year. This will serve as input for the small faculty committee to offer guidance/mentoring to the student regarding their progress in the program.

The committee chair (typically, the student's committee chair) then prepares a paragraph of advice for the student to be incorporated into the DGS-signed LOS for the student. This paragraph of advice (and anything else the DGS believes needs to be discussed with the faculty at large) will be read at the annual evaluation meeting to check with the rest of the faculty if they have additional suggestions. With all this input, the DGS will complete the LOSs after the full-faculty meeting. After a final check by the Department Chair, the LOSs will be sent to the students.

With the exception of the Research Collaboration Agreements, failure to meet any of the following deadlines will result in an automatic instance of probation. Students earn probation for the 2nd unsatisfactory evaluation of their contributions to an RCA project.

Requirement	Date	Semester
First-Year Professionalization Seminars		First and second semesters
Department Colloquium Series		Each semester
Earned cumulative GPA of 3.0 or more	December 15, May 15	Annually
Earned departmental GPA of 3.0 or more	December 15, May 15	Annually
Completion of 9 credits	December 15, May 15	Annually (to semester 8)
Completion of 36 M.A. credits	May 15	Fourth semester
Completion of 15 Ph.D. elective credits	May 15	Sixth semester
Completion of 72 Ph.D. credits	May 15	Eighth semester
M.A. Chair, Abstract & Timeline	May 1	Second semester
Selection of M.A. Committee	October 1	Third semester
Completed M.A. Paper	June 1	After fourth semester
Revisions and Filing of M.A. Paper	July 15	After fourth semester
Special Area Examination I	May 1	Sixth semester
Special Area Examination II	August 1	After sixth semester
Dissertation Proposal Oral Defense (QE)	May 15	Eighth semester
Dissertation Oral Defense	May 15	Four years post-QE
Research Collaboration Agreement	January 30	Annually in years 2-4
Research Collaboration Submissions	January 30	Year after signed RCA

OTHER MATTERS

Leaves of Absence. After commencing graduate studies at Vanderbilt, a student may be granted a leave of absence by the Graduate School for a maximum of one year. This is granted upon the recommendation of the department and must be agreed to by both the DGS and the Department Chair. The student must provide the DGS a formal leave of absence request letter using the departmental letterhead and describe the reason for the request and the beginning and end of the requested leave. After the Graduate School approves a leave of absence, the DGS contacts the College of Arts and Science for the approval of deferred funding for the student.

Incompletes. An incomplete must be completed and a grade officially recorded no later than eight weeks from the first day of classes in the semester following the one in which a student received an incomplete. A student who receives an incomplete at the end of the semester must complete the required work and deliver it to the supervising faculty member in time for the faculty member to read and evaluate the work, and file the final grade, by the eighth-week deadline. Any incomplete course not finished within this time frame will result in an F for the course. It will be the responsibility of students to ensure that they deliver work in time for the supervising faculty member to submit a grade by the deadline, and the responsibility of faculty to notify the DGS (not just the Graduate School) of the grade. At the beginning of each semester, the DGS will remind students and faculty of the deadline for completing and grading incompletes. Students may appeal, in writing, to the GPC for more than eight weeks in which to finish incompletes (and have them graded). Appeals should be delivered to the GPC no later than October 1 (for incompletes due to expire in a fall semester) and February 15 (for those expiring in the spring).

Remote Assistantships. Under exceptional circumstances, students may petition the DGS and the Department Chair to meet the work requirements of their graduate assistantship or research assistantship remotely. The student must provide the DGS a formal petition letter using the departmental letterhead. This petition must be accompanied by a faculty sponsor's signed agreement letter to accept the student as their GA/RA for the duration of the student's time away from campus. This agreement must also make clear that the faculty member understands that this student may be the only GA/RA assigned to them during this period. Students are strongly discouraged from asking faculty other than their primary advisor to agree to this arrangement. If a student asks faculty other than the primary advisor to agree to this arrangement, a formal support letter using the departmental letterhead from the primary advisor is required.

Petitions. Only under exceptional circumstances may a student petition the DGS and the Graduate Program Committee to modify program requirements or deadlines listed above. If approved, the program modification will be included in the student's file. The Graduate Program Committee rules on all petitions other than course substitutions; the DGS alone decides on course substitutions.

Terminal Master's Degrees. Occasionally, early-career students make the determination that they should not advance further in the PhD program. Students should consult with the DGS to determine if the receipt of a terminal M.A. degree is necessary and possible as soon as s/he is convinced that this may be the best course of action. This is especially important because—as explained above—all of the requirements for the M.A. (terminal or not) must be completed by July 15 following the second year.

Concerns and Issues. Students are welcome to discuss concerns and issues (in confidence) with the faculty advisor(s), the DGS, or the Department Chair. If the student's concerns and issues cannot be resolved at the departmental level, "the student may schedule a meeting with the Graduate Life Coach, Graduate School Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, or the Dean of the Graduate School to discuss further steps. Situations may arise in which students believe that they have not received fair treatment by a representative of the University, or they may have a complaint about the performance, action, or inaction of a member of the

staff or faculty that has affected them. Students who wish to have a complaint addressed by the University should first use the Complaint Procedure. If the Complaint Procedure proves unsatisfactory, then students may use the Grievance Procedure” (see page 5 in the Graduate School Resource Guide https://gradschool.vanderbilt.edu/documents/students/GradSchool_Resource_Guide_Rev_2-2019.pdf). Relevant information is also available in the Graduate School Catalog (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/catalogs/documents/graduate.pdf>) and the Student Handbook (https://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/).