



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Department of Sociology
University of North Carolina

Graduate Studies Program Handbook

The Graduate Studies Committee

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PREFACE

UNC Chapel Hill's Department of Sociology is proud of its exceptional graduate program. We are committed to providing a rigorous, enriching, and affirming training experience for our students. We recognize that institutions of higher education have long been less accessible and supportive of members of underrepresented and minoritized populations, and we therefore continue to work on addressing this through practices designed to build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community and program. We commit to provide a safe and stimulating learning and research environment for all students. Graduate students are invited and encouraged to get involved in our community building efforts, including graduate student recruiting, faculty hiring, curriculum planning, and more.

This document offers guidance and outlines key policies for students. For help or additional information, please consult the following resources:

1. The [UNC Graduate School Handbook](#) contains specific details on Graduate School requirements and procedures. You should always consult it *first* when you have a question about Graduate School requirements -- it is the final word!
2. Your Department of Sociology faculty advisor is the person you should turn to first for advice and assistance about academic matters. Please meet with your initial advisor early in the fall term as soon as you arrive on campus. After that, you should meet regularly with your advisor -- at least once a month. Your initial assigned first-year advisor is transitory. If you find another faculty member you would like to work with, please have your advisor's verbal agreement and notify the Graduate Student Services Manager.
3. Please contact the Graduate Student Services Manager if you have questions about administrative procedures.
4. Please contact the Director of Graduate Studies if you are experiencing problems with the graduate program that cannot be resolved through your advisor or the Graduate Student Services Manager.
5. The department is committed to providing a safe, diverse, and equitable environment. Please familiarize yourself with the [University's Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment and Related Misconduct](#). Individuals are encouraged to report incidents of prohibited conduct to the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#), [the Office of the Dean of Students](#), or [the UNC Police](#). As an alternative, an individual can also seek confidential assistance that does not involve notice to the University. If the conduct you have experienced is sexual violence or other criminal activity, including interpersonal (relationship) violence or stalking, you are also encouraged to report the incident to local law enforcement. Visit safe.unc.edu for a comprehensive list of support and reporting options.
6. Please keep your own record of your progress through the program, including requirements you have met and letters to/from the Department and the Graduate School, in case a discrepancy arises in the files.

TYPICAL PROGRAM TIMELINE

Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer
1	<p>COURSEWORK 3 courses plus proseminar: Theory (SOC 700) Statistics (SOC 708) One additional course Proseminar (SOC 950, 1-credit)</p> <p>TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP</p>	<p>COURSEWORK 3 courses plus proseminar: Methods (SOC 707) Statistics (SOC 709)) One additional course Proseminar (SOC 950, 1-credit)</p> <p>TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP</p> <p>Begin formulating Master's Thesis, select thesis advisor, discuss written summary of research question and data with advisor by end of semester</p>	<p>Work on Master's Thesis Proposal</p>
2	<p>COURSEWORK 2 or 3 courses</p> <p>MASTER'S THESIS PROPOSAL Defend by end of semester</p> <p>TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP</p>	<p>COURSEWORK 2 or 3 courses</p> <p>MASTER'S THESIS</p> <p>TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP</p> <p>Select Comprehensive Exams, begin preparations</p>	<p>Prepare for Comps</p>
3	<p>COURSEWORK Master's thesis hours (SOC 993)</p> <p>MASTER'S THESIS Defend by Oct. 1</p> <p>COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS</p> <p>TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP</p> <p>Prepare Dissertation Proposal Apply for dissertation fellowships</p>	<p>COURSEWORK Teaching course (SOC 980)</p> <p>COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS</p> <p>TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP</p> <p>Prepare Dissertation Proposal</p>	<p>Possibly teach Summer Session after 3rd year?</p> <p>Prepare Dissertation Proposal</p>
4	<p>DISSERTATION PROPOSAL</p> <p>TEACHING FELLOWSHIP or DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP</p>	<p>DISSERTATION PROPOSAL Defend by end of semester</p> <p>TEACHING FELLOWSHIP or DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP</p>	<p>Work on dissertation, prepare for job market</p>
5	<p>DISSERTATION WRITING</p> <p>TEACHING FELLOWSHIP or DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP</p>	<p>DISSERTATION WRITING</p> <p>TEACHING FELLOWSHIP or DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP</p>	<p>Complete dissertation, prepare for job market</p>
6	<p>Possible additional year if funding is available.</p>	<p>Possible additional year if funding is available.</p>	

Name:

PID:

Cohort Year:

MASTER'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

Area	Course	Credits	Date Completed (Semester/Year)
Theory (1 course)	SOCI 700	3	
Methods (4 courses)	SOCI 707	4	
	SOCI 708	4	
	SOCI 709	4	
		3	
Proseminar (2 courses)	SOCI 950	1	
	SOCI 950	1	
Content (4 courses)	SOCI xxx	3	
	SOCI xxx	3	
		3	
		3	
MA Thesis Hours	SOCI 993	3	

Area	Title	Date Completed (Month/Year)
MA Thesis Proposal Defense		
MA Thesis Final Defense		

****Note:** Students must register for SOCI 993 the semester they defend their MA Thesis Proposal/Final MA Thesis. If a student completes both defenses the same semester, they need only register for SOCI 993 once.

PH.D. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

Area	Course/Area	Credits	Date Completed (Semester/Year)
Teaching Seminar	SOCI 980	3	
Comp Exam #1	[Area]		
Comp Exam #2	[Area]		
Doctoral Research & Dissertation Hours	SOCI 994	3	
Doctoral Research & Dissertation Hours	SOCI 994	3	

Area	Title	Date Completed (Month/Year)
Dissertation Proposal Defense		
Dissertation Proposal Defense		

****Note:** Students must take at least 2 semesters (6 credits) of SOCI 994. Students must be enrolled in SOCI 994 to defend their Dissertation proposal and should remain enrolled in 994 through their dissertation defense.

In-State Residency Requirement (semester/year):
(Not applicable to International Students)

THE ADVISOR-ADVISEE RELATIONSHIP

The quality of graduate education depends on a productive and supportive advisor-advisee relationship. Building this relationship is an essential task for both faculty and students, along with research, teaching, and other duties, and it is the responsibility of both the advisor and the advisee to maintain good communication about this relationship.

Students have three advisors during their graduate career. These advisors may or may not be the same person:

- *Initial advisor.* This faculty member is assigned in the months before the start of your first year in the graduate program to help students get acclimated to the Department, assist with and approve course selections, and work with students as they begin planning for the Master's Thesis. Students may transition from their initial advisor to a Master's Thesis advisor when they settle on a direction for the thesis. Often, but not always, the initial advisor serves also as Master's Thesis advisor – if not, please have your new advisor's verbal agreement and notify the Graduate Student Services Manager.
- *Master's Thesis advisor.* Students select their Master's Thesis advisor by the end of the spring semester of their first year. This faculty member chairs the Master's Thesis committee, assists with and approves course selections, and advising students as they begin planning for comprehensive exams and finding a dissertation project.
- *Doctoral Dissertation advisor.* Students select their Doctoral Dissertation advisor within one semester of completing their Master's Thesis. This faculty member chairs the Doctoral Dissertation committee, works with students on their comprehensive exams and the dissertation, and works with students to prepare for life after graduation.

The Department expects advisors and advisees to meet at least once a month throughout the academic year. At the beginning of each semester, they meet to review the student's accomplishments, set goals for the upcoming semester, and schedule meetings to put on their calendars for the semester. The expectation of having regular meetings is the same for advisors and advisees who are on leave or away from campus for extended periods.

Students who have concerns about their advising relationship may wish to schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Responsibilities of the advisor/advisee relationship include:

The Advisor . . .

1. Is responsive to advisee's needs.

- Responds to e-mails in a timely manner.
- Helps integrate the student into the department and the profession.
- Reads and comments on drafts of student's materials; provides feedback, positive and negative, of student's progress.

2. Assists in establishing a research agenda.

- Guides student's thinking toward research questions, provides examples of successful projects, works with student to develop feasible and timely plans for graduate work.
- Discusses advisor's research projects, provides opportunities for student involvement if possible.

3. Works with student to develop career goals.

- Assists in development of goals for academic progress, professional socialization, publication, grant-writing, and post-graduate career opportunities.

The Advisee. . .

1. Is pro-active in forging a sociological career.

- Responds to e-mails in a timely manner.
- Seeks network connections in the department and the profession.
- Hears assessments and asks questions about how these affect goals and progress.
- Seriously considers comments.

2. Solidifies research interests and goals.

- Actively pursues research interests, asks questions to learn about the management of a research agenda.
- Is aware of institutional deadlines and informs advisor of goals and progress towards them.
- Learns from advisor's research experiences.

3. Develops career goals.

- Actively sets and pursues goals in training, education, and professional life.

THE MASTER'S DEGREE

The UNC Department of Sociology offers a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree to students who are admitted to its doctoral program. The department does not admit students for a terminal M.A. degree. The requirements for the M.A. constitute the first phase of the requirements for the doctoral degree.

Some of the rules for a M.A. in Sociology are established by the Graduate School; others are departmental rules. Only a few of the Graduate School requirements are reproduced below. For a full listing of the Graduate School's rules, please read the *Graduate School Handbook* carefully. All rules are subject to revision by the Graduate School or the Department of Sociology.

Credit hours

The M.A. degree involves a minimum of 10 courses, including at least three and no more than six hours of Master's Thesis credit (SOCI 993), for a total of 36 credit hours. Students take three courses per semester in their first year, plus the first-year proseminar, and two or three courses per semester in their second year, with additional courses optional throughout their graduate career.

Methodology courses

Students take three methodology courses in their first two semesters. Each of these courses carries 4 credits:

SOCI 708	Statistics for Sociologists (Fall)
SOCI 707	Measurement and Data Collection (Spring)
SOCI 709	Linear Regression Models (Spring)

Students also take at least one specialized 3-credit methodology course in Sociology (numbered between 711 and 799, and SOCI 814).

Other methodology courses inside or outside of the Department may also meet this requirement – they will be considered by the Department's Graduate Studies Committee on a case-by-case basis. Please consult the Director of Graduate Studies in advance of the course if you would like it to be considered.

Theory course

Students take History of Social Thought (SOCI 700) in their first semester.

Proseminar

First-year students take the Department's Proseminar in Sociological Research for one credit hour each semester. The proseminar meets each week for an hour with different faculty members reporting on their current research and discussing topics such as departmental expectations and professionalization. The course is listed as SOCI 950, with a section number that may change each semester – please get the section number from the Graduate Student Services Manager.

Additional courses

Students take at least four other 3-credit courses for the M.A. It is especially worthwhile for students to take courses in subject areas they may want to teach in the future, and subject areas in which they may want to take comprehensive exams. Prior to each semester, students should consult with their advisor about their course selection and schedule.

Two of these four courses may be “flex” courses:

- Graduate courses taken outside of the UNC Department of Sociology that are directly related to the student’s areas of specialization, including transfer credits.
- Graduate-level independent study in the Department (one course maximum).

All “flex” courses taken during the graduate program need to be approved in advance by the student’s advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Course Bypass

Students who have taken comparable graduate methodology or theory courses before enrollment may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies in advance for a bypass, though the Department prefers that students join their cohort-mates in the required courses. Bypass applications should include the syllabus and the student’s written assignments. Faculty appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies will determine whether the student’s performance in the previous course should be considered comparable to the Department’s required course. Students who bypass required courses are required to take a comparable number of methods or theory courses in order to fulfill the requirement.

Transferring course credits from another institution

During their first year in the graduate program, students may request credit for up to two 3-credit graduate-level courses that they have taken at another institution before entering the Department’s graduate program. The Director of Graduate Studies, the student’s advisor, and the instructor of a comparable course at UNC will review the syllabus and the student’s written assignments to determine whether the student’s performance in the previous course(s) should be considered comparable to passing work in the Department’s graduate courses. If all agree that credit should be granted, the request will be submitted to the Graduate School for review and approval. The student may not count a similar course in the Department toward fulfillment of requirements. See also the Graduate School’s rules on [Transferring Course Credit](#).

International students

International students whose first language is not English are encouraged to make use of the resources on campus to improve their English-language abilities, including the Graduate School’s [the Preparing International Teaching Assistants Program](#) and [the English Language Support program](#) at UNC’s [Writing Center](#). The ability to communicate fluently in English is a requirement for teaching positions in the Sociology Department.

The Master’s Thesis: A definition

The Master’s Thesis is an original research project that is limited in scope. The Master’s Thesis demonstrates your ability to review pertinent literature and integrate it into a body of theory, design a feasible study, analyze data, and report the research in the form of a mainstream sociology journal article.

The Master’s Thesis must be completed within five years, according to Graduate School rules, but the Department of Sociology’s goal is for students to defend their Master’s Thesis by the fall of their third year (see the Program Timeline in this document). In order to stay in good academic standing with the department, students must defend the Master’s Thesis by the end of March of their third year.

Forming a Master’s Thesis committee

The Master’s Thesis is supervised and approved by a three-person committee of faculty members – the Master’s Thesis advisor and two other committee members. The Master’s Thesis advisor may be,

but does not have to be, the same person as the student's initial advisor. The Master's Thesis advisor and at least one other committee member must be faculty members of the Department of Sociology at UNC-Chapel Hill and full members of the UNC graduate faculty. The Graduate School must approve committee members who are not members of the graduate faculty.

Students should consult with their initial advisor and their Master's Thesis advisor about forming the Master's Thesis committee. The committee must be approved by the Master's Thesis advisor and the Department's Director of Graduate Studies.

Preparing a Master's Thesis proposal

The Master's Thesis proposal is a written document that is submitted to the Master's Thesis committee at least two weeks in advance of the Master's Thesis proposal defense. There is no set length for proposals – students consult with their Master's Thesis advisor on this and all other aspects of the proposal. Proposals generally include the following sections:

- A succinct statement of the main problem that the thesis will address (one page or less).
- An overview of the scholarly literature that has addressed this problem to date.
- An indication of the paper's contribution to the literature, such as specific hypotheses it will test or novel insights it will provide.
- A description of data sources.
- A discussion of methods of analysis.
- A timetable for completing each stage of the project.
- A bibliography of the scholarly literature relevant to the thesis.

Models of Master's Thesis proposals are available on [the Sociology Graduate Students site on Sakai](#). Students are invited to contribute their own successful proposals for other students to consult.

All Master's Thesis projects in sociology must submit plans for human subject protection to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in advance of the proposal defense. University regulations stipulate, "No research with human subjects shall take place at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill without the prior approval of an IRB." (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, [Human Research Protection Program, Standard Operating Procedures](#), June 21, 2012, p. 13)

Master's Thesis proposal defense

The Master's Thesis proposal defense is held before the student proceeds with full-scale data collection and analysis. Its purpose is to assess the feasibility of the proposed research and give students the benefit of suggestions from committee members. The Proposal should be submitted to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the proposal defense. Summer defenses are discouraged. Students must be enrolled in SOCI 993 during the semester of proposal defense.

Graduate School rules require all Master's Thesis committee members to be in attendance, although teleconferencing or videoconferencing may be allowed with the approval of the Master's Thesis advisor. Students should contact the Graduate Student Services Manager as soon as they begin to consider dates and times for the defense, in order to check the availability of the "defense room" and reserve it. The Graduate Student Services Manager will provide the student with forms that need to be signed by the committee at the conclusion of the defense.

Master's Thesis credit hours

Students take at least three and no more than six credit hours of Master's Thesis credit (SOCI 993). Students may register for additional credit hours, but the hours will not be counted towards credit for the M.A. degree. Registration for these credit hours requires prior approval from the student's advisor. Students must be enrolled in 993 in order to defend their proposal, and should remain enrolled in 993 through their thesis defense.

Master's Thesis final defense

When a student's Master's Thesis is ready, the advisor will indicate that it is time to schedule a final defense with the Master's Thesis committee. The Graduate School requires that students be registered during the semester of the defense and enrolled in SOCI 993. The thesis should be submitted to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the final defense, and the defense should be scheduled at least two weeks before the deadline for graduation, and preferably longer, so that there is sufficient time for revisions suggested by the committee. Summer defenses are discouraged.

Graduate School rules require all Master's Thesis committee members to be in attendance, although teleconferencing or videoconferencing may be allowed with the approval of the Master's Thesis advisor. Students should contact the Graduate Student Services Manager as soon as they begin to consider dates and times for the defense, in order to check the availability of the "defense room" and reserve it. The Graduate Student Services Manager will provide the student with forms that need to be signed by the committee at the conclusion of the defense.

The Master's Thesis committee judges by majority vote whether the Master's Thesis is acceptable as a piece of original research in the form of a mainstream sociology journal article. The committee may decide:

1. The Master's Thesis is acceptable in its current form.
2. The Master's Thesis requires minor revisions to be considered acceptable. The committee may ask to review the changes individually, or it may delegate this responsibility to the Master's Thesis advisor. The committee signs the approval form in anticipation that the changes will be made successfully, and the form is held by the Graduate Student Services Manager until the revisions are approved by the Master's Thesis advisor.
3. The Master's Thesis requires such substantial revisions that the committee prefers to meet for a second defense. Graduate School rules require that the committee wait at least three months before a second defense. The Graduate School does not allow a third defense.

When the Master's Thesis is approved, the committee recommends to the Director of Graduate Studies whether the student's performance demonstrates a reasonable promise of success in the doctoral program. This judgment is based on the quality of the Master's Thesis, the timeliness of the preparation of the thesis, and the student's ability to work autonomously. The Director of Graduate Studies typically accepts the committee's judgment. If the Director of Graduate Studies decides that the student does not have sufficient promise of success, the student receives a "terminal Master's degree" and is not permitted to continue in the doctoral program. The committee's decision may be appealed in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies within two weeks of the decision, and the Director of Graduate Studies' decision may be appealed in writing within two weeks to the Chair of the Department of Sociology.

When the Master's Thesis is approved by the committee, the student must submit a final copy to the Graduate Student Services Manager to be posted on the Department's Sakai site and for internal records.

In order to make adequate progress towards your PhD degree, students must defend their MA thesis by March 31st of their third year. Students who miss this deadline will be ineligible for departmental support, such as teaching assistantships or fellowships.

According to Graduate School rules, students who are given permission to proceed beyond the Master's Thesis must register for doctoral studies in the following regular semester (fall or spring).

Graduation deadlines

In preparation for the Master's Thesis defense, students should check the [Graduate Deadlines](#) established by the Graduate School. In order to receive the M.A. degree in the same semester as the defense, the Graduate School requires that students apply early in the semester. These deadlines may come before the Master's Thesis defense – students are encouraged to discuss the timing of the defense and graduation with their advisor.

Bypass of Master's Thesis

Students who have completed a Master's Thesis at another institution may apply for a bypass of the Department's Master's Thesis requirement if their advisor feels this is appropriate. The student submits their previous Master's Thesis to the Director of Graduate Studies, who appoints a three-person committee to evaluate it. If the committee decides that the thesis is of such a caliber that it would be approved as a Master's Thesis in our Department, then the bypass will be granted. Revisions are not permitted for the bypass – if the committee feels that revisions are necessary, the project should be handled through the usual proposal and defense procedures for Master's Theses in the Department.

GRADUATE MINOR IN SOCIOLOGY

Graduate students in other departments at UNC-Chapel Hill may earn a minor in sociology by taking five graduate-level sociology courses, including Sociological Theory (SOC 700) and Research Methods (SOC 707). These two required courses and at least one additional course must be taken in the UNC Department of Sociology. Up to two courses may be taken in the Sociology Departments at Duke or N.C. State. Students should choose their courses in consultation with their faculty “minor advisor” in the Sociology Department. The minor advisor sends a memo to the Director of Graduate Studies, certifying that the five courses represent an appropriate program for that student.

Sociology majors are given first preference as enrollees in all sociology graduate courses, and minoring in sociology does not guarantee that a student will have access to a particular class.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND PART-TIME STATUS

Students who are unable to make progress in the program for substantial periods of time – perhaps because of family responsibilities or illness – should request a leave of absence from the Graduate School, which pauses the Graduate School’s time to degree “clock.” The procedures for requesting a leave of absence and readmission to the program are available on the Graduate School’s [website](#). For procedural assistance, please see the Graduate Student Services Manager. Students should discuss these steps, like all aspects of their graduate career, with their advisor.

Doctoral degree graduate students who must be away from campus completing academic requirements can petition to be charged at the Part-Time Classroom Studies College of Arts & Sciences graduate tuition and fee rate, instead of requesting a leave of absence. This rate will require approval by the student’s primary advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, or Chair, as well as The Graduate School.

Students eligible for consideration for the Part-Time Classroom Studies College of Arts & Sciences graduate tuition and fee rate must meet all the following requirements:

- Enrolled in a doctoral graduate degree program in the College of Arts and Sciences
- Engaged in full-time academic work that must be conducted off campus as determined by the requirements of your academic program

Students must first register for their coursework through [ConnectCarolina](#) as usual. Once the students are registered, the Petition for Off-Campus Rate Adjustment form must be reviewed by the program, who will take the student’s progress to date, academic plan for the semester, and need for university resources, including faculty time, into consideration. Approved petitions must then be submitted to The Graduate School for review. If approved, the Cashier’s Office will bill students at the appropriate rate. For procedural assistance, please see the Graduate Student Services Manager.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

After completing the Master's degree requirements, the next stage in the doctoral program is the comprehensive examinations, also known as qualifying exams. While the Master's Thesis demonstrates a student's depth of knowledge in a relatively specialized research area, comprehensive exams evaluate students' preparation for research and teaching in a broad area of the discipline of sociology. Students need not be intimately familiar with all research in the subfield; rather, they should offer a cogent assessment that demonstrates understanding of its history, main works, debates, and current concerns. Students should expect to spend approximately four months preparing for each examination.

Exams are held during two periods, once in the fall semester (usually on the first and third Fridays in October) and once in the spring semester (usually on the second and fourth Fridays in March, the Friday before and Friday after Spring Break). Students sign up for the fall comprehensive exams at the end of the spring semester and sign up for spring exams in the middle of the fall semesters. Students must pass comprehensive exams in two fields before they can submit their Doctoral Dissertation proposal. The Graduate School requires that students be registered during the semester of each comprehensive exam.

The list of exams offered each year is available from the Graduate Student Services Manager. This list also includes the faculty committee members for each exam.

Exams are open-book, open-note exams with six broad questions about theories, concepts, approaches, debates, and major authors in a given area. Students are asked to write on four of the six questions. Students are not permitted to receive assistance during the examination.

Scheduled exams become available on Sakai at 8:00 a.m. and must be returned via Sakai by 5:00 p.m. Late exams will not be accepted. Exams must be typed, not handwritten. Students who have special considerations, may request up to two hours extra time by writing to the Director of Graduate Studies when signing up for the exam. In order to receive disability accommodations, students must register with ARS (ars.unc.edu) and notify the Graduate Student Service Coordinator at least two weeks before the scheduled exam.

Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of a subfield in their answers. as Answers must be factually correct, but need not rise to the level of writing expected of theses or course papers. A fully formatted reference list is not necessary, although the exam committee will appreciate enough bibliographic detail to understand the essays' references to published work.

Preparation for the exam

At least three months before the exam, students should submit a reading list of the top 100 works in the field for the approval of the exam committee, which will use this list as the basis for exam questions. This reading list should be based on past reading lists, which are available on the Graduate Student Sakai site, and should be updated to include the latest published work in the area, as well as a pruning of work that has become less relevant. The reading list should be organized around major themes or literatures within the exam area. It should also include a list of approximately five major journals in the exam area; students are expected to be familiar with the last five years' worth of articles in these journals. After the exam committee has an opportunity to request and approve revisions, the updated reading lists must be submitted to the Graduate Student Services Manager to

be posted on the Department's Sakai site. If several students are taking the same exam during the same semester, they may collaborate on this task.

At least three months prior to the exam, students contact the faculty exam committee members to discuss preparations, including a review of graduate courses taken by the student and offered by the faculty in the exam area and the student's interests in research and teaching in the exam area. Students are encouraged to collaborate while preparing for comprehensive exams and to write practice essays using old exams, which are available on the Department's Sakai site. However, the written examinations themselves must be the work of an individual.

Evaluation of the exam

Comprehensive exams are evaluated on the extent to which they demonstrate broad competency in the chosen subfield. A passing grade indicates confidence in the student's competency. Faculty exam committees decide the standards and procedures they will use to make this determination, including procedures for instances when committee members are not unanimous. For each student, the committee makes a determination of Fail, Pass, or (in rare circumstances of performance far superior to the norm) Pass with Distinction. Revisions are not permitted. However, for exams that are marginal, the committee may schedule an oral examination. The committee may also ask the Director of Graduate Studies to appoint an outside reader to review the exam.

The committee's decision, including feedback to students' answers, is due within two weeks of the exam. When necessary, oral examination or evaluation by an outside reader should proceed in a timely manner and the deadline for exam evaluation is extended by two weeks.

When a failing grade is issued, the committee should provide specific feedback detailing the shortcomings of the examination. Students who fail are allowed one chance to re-take the exam or choose a different exam in the following semester. If the student changes exam area, the new exam counts as the second try. Two failed exams prevent a student from continuing in the doctoral program.

New exam areas

The Director of Graduate Studies will approve a new comprehensive exam area at the request of either faculty or students, when three faculty members are willing to form a new ongoing committee in an area of breadth similar to the current exams, on the basis of their expertise. The Department has a policy not to offer exams that are tailored for particular students.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All student work at UNC is covered by [the Honor Code](#), which requires academic honesty, personal integrity, and responsible citizenship. Improper or insufficient citation or paraphrasing of other people's words and ideas is considered a violation of the Honor Code. All work in the Department of Sociology is also bound by the American Sociological Association's [Code of Ethics](#).

Students who commit academic dishonesty in either their coursework, comprehensive exams, proposals, or theses will be ineligible for departmental funding and asked to leave the program.

THE DOCTORAL DEGREE

The Doctoral Dissertation is the culmination of the Department's graduate training. It is an extensive, professional, original research project that demonstrates independent thought in the formulation and treatment of an important sociological problem.

Teaching course

Students take the Department's Teaching Sociology Seminar (SOCI 980) by the spring of their third year. This course reflects the Department's commitment to quality teaching and is required before students serve as a Teaching Fellow and teach their own courses. This three-hour course covers educational psychology, the philosophy of teaching, a wide variety of teaching methods, and course design, based on an active learning model. Graduate students take the lead in organizing class meetings, serve as guest teachers in Department courses, lead group discussions, design and grade examinations, create their own class exercises, learn how to choose textbooks (if they decide to use them), and learn how to deal with problem students, among other pedagogical issues.

Forming a Doctoral Dissertation committee

Planning for the Doctoral Dissertation should begin right after defending the Master's Thesis, while studying for the comprehensive exams, in consultation with the student's dissertation advisor and potential dissertation committee members. The committee is composed of five faculty members. The chair and at least two other committee members must be faculty members of the Department of Sociology at UNC-Chapel Hill and full members of the UNC graduate faculty. The Graduate School must approve committee members who are not members of the graduate faculty.

Doctoral Dissertation proposal defense

The Doctoral Dissertation proposal defense is scheduled as soon as possible after passing the comprehensive exams -- generally in the same semester or the following one. The purpose of the defense is to assess the feasibility of the proposed research and to give students the benefit of suggestions from dissertation committee members. The proposal is submitted to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the defense. The Graduate School requires that students be registered during the semester of the proposal defense. Summer defenses are discouraged.

Graduate School rules require all Doctoral Dissertation committee members to be in attendance, although teleconferencing or videoconferencing may be allowed with the approval of the Doctoral Dissertation advisor. Students should contact the Graduate Student Services Manager as soon as they begin to consider dates and times for the defense, in order to check the availability of the "defense room" and reserve it. The Graduate Student Services Manager will provide the student with forms that need to be signed by the committee at the conclusion of the defense.

Proposals generally include the following sections:

- A succinct statement of the main problems that the dissertation will address.
- An overview of the scholarly literatures that have addressed these problems to date.
- An indication of the paper's contribution to these literatures, such as specific hypotheses it will test or novel insights it will provide.
- A description of data sources, including preliminary findings or pre-tests.
- A discussion of methods of analysis.
- A timetable for completing each stage of the project.
- A bibliography of the scholarly literatures relevant to the dissertation.

Models of dissertation proposals are available on the Department Sakai site. Students are invited to contribute their own successful proposals for other students to consult.

All Doctoral Dissertation projects in sociology must submit plans for human subject protection to the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in advance of the proposal defense. University regulations stipulate, "No research with human subjects shall take place at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill without the prior approval of an IRB." (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, [Human Research Protection Program, Standard Operating Procedures](#), June 21, 2012, p. 13)

In order to make adequate progress towards your PhD degree, students must defend their dissertation proposal by March 31st of their fifth year. Students who miss this deadline will be ineligible for departmental support, such as teaching fellowships.

Doctoral Dissertation formats

Doctoral Dissertations in the Department of Sociology may take two forms: book-format and article-format. The format of the dissertation is approved at the proposal defense.

Book-format dissertations generally involve five or six interrelated chapters, each of which makes a significant contribution to the overall argument.

Article-format dissertations are comprised of at least three chapters that are suitable for publication in a refereed professional journal, plus introduction and concluding chapters that describe the unifying themes in the chapters. All dissertation chapters must be sole-authored work.

Doctoral Dissertation credit hours

Students take at least two semesters (six credit hours) of Doctoral Dissertation credit (SOCI 994). Registration for these credit hours requires prior approval from the student's advisor. Students must be enrolled in 994 in order to defend their proposal, and should remain enrolled in 994 through their dissertation defense.

Doctoral Dissertation final defense

When a student's Doctoral Dissertation is ready, the advisor will indicate that it is time to schedule a final defense with the Doctoral Dissertation committee. The Graduate School requires that students be registered during the semester of the defense. The dissertation must be submitted to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the final defense. Summer defenses are discouraged.

Committee members should be consulted as the dissertation proceeds, so that they can approve changes to the research plan and know when to expect the final defense. The dissertation should be submitted to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the defense, and the defense should be scheduled at least two weeks before the deadline for graduation, and preferably longer, so that there is sufficient time for revisions suggested by the committee.

Graduate School rules require all committee members to be in attendance, although teleconferencing or videoconferencing may be allowed with the approval of the Doctoral Dissertation advisor. Students should contact the Graduate Student Services Manager as soon as they begin to consider dates and times for the defense, in order to check the availability of the "defense room" and reserve it. The Graduate Student Services Manager will provide the student with forms that need to be signed by the committee at the conclusion of the defense.

The Doctoral Dissertation committee judges by majority vote whether the Doctoral Dissertation is acceptable as an original contribution to knowledge. The committee may decide:

1. The Doctoral Dissertation is acceptable in its current form.
2. The Doctoral Dissertation requires minor revisions to be considered acceptable. The committee may ask to review the changes individually, or it may delegate this responsibility to the Doctoral Dissertation advisor. The committee signs the approval form in anticipation that the changes will be made successfully, and the form is held by the Graduate Student Services Manager until the revisions are approved by the Doctoral Dissertation advisor.
3. The Doctoral Dissertation requires such substantial revisions that the committee prefers to meet for a second defense. Graduate School rules require that the committee wait at least three months before a second defense. The Graduate School does not allow a third defense.

Graduation deadlines

In preparation for the Doctoral Dissertation defense, students should check the [Graduation Deadlines](#) established by the Graduate School. In order to receive the Ph.D. degree in the same semester as the defense, the Graduate School requires that students apply early in the semester. These deadlines may come before the final defense – students are encouraged to discuss the timing of the defense and graduation with their advisor.

Doctoral degrees are awarded at the end of the spring, summer, and fall semesters, but commencement exercises are held only in May.

Time limit

The Graduate School requires that students complete both the Master's and doctoral degrees within eight years from the date of first registration in the Department.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Departmental support

The Department provides financial support for all incoming students for 10 semesters, not including summer sessions, contingent on satisfactory performance of their responsibilities. Among other responsibilities, satisfactory performance includes defending the Master's Thesis by March 31st of the third year and defending the Doctoral Dissertation proposal by March 31st of the fifth year, in order to maintain departmental support. The Department is sometimes able to continue this assistance beyond 10 semesters, depending on departmental needs, the availability of financial resources, and the student's performance in the program.

The primary forms of financial support available to students are teaching assistantships (TA) and teaching fellowships (TF), which are assigned each semester by the Associate Chair.

A less common form of financial support involves fellowships and part-time administrative positions that the Department is occasionally able to offer from special sources, either as a replacement or a supplement for the usual forms of support. These opportunities will be announced via the Graduate Student Services Manager as they become available.

Tuition, Health Insurance and Fees

The Department pays the University tuition, Health Insurance (GSHIP) and Fees for graduate students who are serving as teaching assistants or teaching fellows. Tuition payments for external fellowships and grants depend on the specifications of the granting agency – students should read the agency's guidelines carefully when they apply to see whether tuition is covered, and if there are limits to the coverage. When possible, the Department will pay the remaining portion of students' tuition when they receive awards from prominent national funding sources that do not cover the full cost of tuition.

Other sources of funding

The Department encourages graduate students to seek other sources of fundings, such as working as a research assistant for faculty, and fellowships and grants provided by the University or external agencies. Semesters in which a student receives full funding from a research assistant position or from a fellowship do not count against the 10 semesters of departmental funding.

Research assistantships are filled by individual faculty members with sponsored research projects. Faculty members are responsible for selecting research assistants (RAs) for their projects. Funds from sponsored research come from a variety of extramural sources and on-campus research units. The nature, scope, and schedule of the work, and the time commitment required, depends on the need of specific research projects. See below for more details on RA responsibilities and guidelines.

The **Graduate School awards** [fellowships and grants](#) for dissertation and summer research, tuition support, and travel assistance. For awards that require departmental nomination/ranking, the department sets internal deadlines at two weeks before [the Graduate School ones](#). The [Graduate Funding Information Center](#) (GFIC) distributes funding information and assists students with finding funding and collaborative opportunities. In addition, the Department maintains a list of funding opportunities for students and organizes discussion panels on how to apply for funding support outside of the department.

Holding multiple positions at once

Students are discouraged from holding more than one position at a time, because the extra work can interfere with their performance in the graduate program. Under exceptional circumstances, however, students may request permission from the Director of Graduate Studies to work “over-time.” The Director of Graduate Studies will consult with the student’s advisor and the Associate Chair in considering the request.

Summer funding for the first and second year

The Department provides summer stipends for all incoming students following the first and second year except for those who already have fellowships or other summer support. Students are expected to use this summer support to develop research projects, especially the MA thesis project. To receive summer stipends, students submit a brief research plan to the Graduate Student Services Manager by April 30th of their first and second year. This plan for summer research must be approved/supported by their adviser.

Summer teaching and on-line teaching

A limited number of courses are available for graduate student instructors through the Summer School and the Friday Center for Continuing Education. Students who have completed the Department’s seminar on teaching sociology (SOCI 980) are eligible to teach these courses. These positions do not count against the 10 semesters of departmental funding. Students following their third year are prioritized in the assignment of summer teaching assignments.

North Carolina residency

To remain eligible for tuition remission, students must apply for North Carolina residency before the start of their second year in the program, and re-apply each semester that their application is not approved. In-state residency saves the Department tens of thousands of dollars each semester and allows the program to fund additional graduate student positions.

Students who do not apply for in-state residency will be responsible for the out-of-state portion of their tuition. This requirement does not apply to international students, who are not eligible for in-state residency under North Carolina law. For further information on residency requirements and procedures, please consult the Graduate School “[North Carolina Residency](#)” webpage.

Conference travel funding

Students in good academic standing are eligible to receive up to \$1,000 per fiscal year from the Department for travel to the annual conferences of scholarly organizations such as the American Sociological Association (ASA), the Population Association of America (PAA), and the Southern Sociological Society (SSS). To receive these funds, the student must participate in the conference program, for example as a panelist, discussant, roundtable member, or poster session exhibitor, or be on the job market and meeting with prospective employers at the conference. This funding is not available to students on leave or who have received an extension in their time to degree. Funding is non-transferable between fiscal years.

Funding approval is automatic for students participating in the annual meetings of the ASA, PAA, or SSS. For all other conferences, students should submit an application that provides details on the conference, and the student’s role and rationale for participation. The application should be signed by the student and the student’s advisor and be submitted to the Graduate Student Services Manager at least two weeks before the conference.

This funding is provided to students as reimbursements. Students should submit their reimbursement request within two weeks of the conference. For details on what sorts of expenditures are eligible for reimbursement and procedures for requesting reimbursement, please speak with the Graduate Student Services Manager and/or the Accounting Technician.

Research and skill development funding

Students may apply for up to \$1,000 per fiscal year from the Department for projects that contribute toward their professional development or serve as a pilot project for a subsequent grant application. Applications may be submitted to the Department Chair at any time during the year. Consideration of applications will continue until the year's funding is exhausted. A graduate student who receives funding can apply a second time while still in the graduate program. These funds may not be used for travel to conferences.

The application consists of a proposal of no more than three pages, including a brief budget, plus a message of support from the student's advisor. In cases when students apply for funding for the second time, the application should provide details on what they accomplished with their prior funding, in addition to the information listed above.

Three types of proposals will be considered:

- *Skill development proposals* should explain why the training is important for professional development and the student's research plans, the cost of the training, whether there are other possible funding sources for this training, or whether there are opportunities for similar training at a lower cost. Should skill development funding be awarded, documentation of attending the professional development training must be submitted to the Accounting Technician within one week of attendance.
- *Pilot project proposals* should explain the importance of the work, how this pilot project might contribute to a grant application, the likelihood of funding for the grant application, including possible funding sources, and whether there are other possible funding sources for the pilot project. The Department favors proposals that show evidence of a search for outside support and a consideration of targets to which a grant application could be sent. Should pilot project funding be awarded, students should consult with Business Officer and/or Accounting Technician regarding expected expenses and required documentation submission.
- *Open-access publishing support proposals* should explain how an open-access publication contributes to the student's professional development. Proposals should also explain whether there are other possible funding sources to cover the cost of publication, or whether there are opportunities for publishing the paper at a lower cost. Should open access publishing support funding be awarded, students should consult with Business Officer and/or Accounting Technician regarding required documentation submission.

Lindsay Guzowski Fund

This fund is supported by a former graduate student and is focused on students who are interested in non-academic careers. The application process will follow the same model as the pilot funds with students submitting short applications for projects that will be reviewed by the executive committee. Possible uses of these funds include travel to conferences related to non-academic careers, meeting with potential employers, financial support while holding an internship, and other proposals. Please contact the department chair with any questions or if you would like to brainstorm about potential funding proposals. In addition, the Guzowski fund will also support informal talks/meetings with

alumni who have gone on to careers outside academia. These events will serve as opportunities to connect with alumni and learn about different career pathways in non-profits, government, and the private sector.

Parental leave

The department works with and strongly supports the Graduate School's [parental leave policy](#). The Graduate School provides up to six (6) weeks of paid parental leave for eligible students. Application for leave should be submitted at least eight (8) weeks prior to anticipated childbirth or adoption. Students are encouraged to share their plan with their advisor and the Graduate Student Services Manager as early as it is appropriate. The Graduate Student Services Manager will help in checking eligibility, gathering signatures, and coordinating with relevant parties in the department for managing expectations and responsibilities before and following the leave period. In addition, students in year four and above will be assigned a TA position for two semesters after becoming a parent.

Emergency Support

Various entities on campus provide emergency support, including financial assistance. The Graduate School's [Resilience & Resources](#) page is a good starting point. The Graduate Student Services Manager or the Director of Graduate Studies can help connect students to resources available on campus.

TEACHING TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching training is an integral part of our professional training. Knowing how to effectively deliver and communicate sociological knowledge in a classroom context is an essential skill for a career in both academic and non-academic fields. Teaching assistants and teaching fellows are junior professionals in training, as well as employees. The main goals of teaching training are to support graduate student professional development and support undergraduate education. Relations between faculty members and students in training, and all work-related conduct, rest on a full commitment to the ethical principles laid out in the [Code of Ethics](#) formulated by the American Sociological Association, including professional competence, integrity, responsibility, and respect for people's rights, dignity and diversity.

Teaching assistant (TA) positions are provided to graduate students during their first three years in the program, contingent on satisfactory performance of their responsibilities. TAs work an average of 15 hours per week. They may help instructors with grading, preparation of exams, lecturing, and other teaching-related tasks assigned by the course instructor. They may also be assigned as discussion leaders, with responsibility for teaching weekly discussion groups. Teaching assistants are not permitted to tutor students in their course, except with the permission of the instructor.

Teaching fellow (TF) positions are provided to graduate students after they have completed the Department's seminar on teaching sociology (SOCI 980), contingent on satisfactory performance of their responsibilities. Teaching fellows teach their own undergraduate courses. Teaching fellows may have graduate students from other departments in their course, but not graduate students from the Sociology Department. Teaching fellows are not permitted to tutor students in their course.

Procedures to request and decline a teaching position

To request a teaching position, either TA or TF, including summer courses and on-line courses, students submit a form distributed by the Administrative Assistant, normally two semesters before the teaching semester. Incoming students submit this form in the spring before their arrival. The form asks students to name the courses they are most interested in and qualified to teach. The Associate Chair of the Department takes this information into account in assigning teaching assistants and teaching fellows but must sometimes assign students to other courses in order to meet departmental instructional needs. Turning in teaching request forms on time is critical to ensure a teaching position will be assigned.

To decline a teaching position, students should notify the Associate Chair of the Department at least three months prior to the start of the semester so that a replacement can be found. Graduate students who withdraw from a teaching position without notifying the Associate Chair promptly will be moved to the bottom of the Department's priority list for teaching positions during the subsequent two semesters.

Teaching Assistant and Faculty/Instructor Responsibilities

TAs are "professionals in training." They play a vital role in assisting faculty and instructors to fulfill the University's education mission. Faculty/Instructors and TAs are expected to work as a team and treat each other in a professional, courteous, and fair manner. Prior to each semester, the Department reminds faculty and graduate students of the expectations and responsibilities of instructors and assistants in the form of **TA Assignment Letter**, which includes guidelines for TA workload expectation, and mutual responsibilities. It is important to emphasize that teaching is not a

standardized process, and TAs are professionals in training, not simply 9-to-5 workers, thus it requires both parties to exercise flexibility and mutual consideration.

The time commitment for a full time TA-ship is on average 15 hours per week for 16 weeks each semester, thus a total of 240 hours per semester. The distribution of work will vary from week to week. Faculty instructor and teaching assistant should work out this distribution early in the semester to plan for heavy grading periods and potential schedule conflicts (e.g., planned academic conferences). While the work is generally confined to the period beginning with the first day of the semester and submission of final grades, TA may be asked to help prepare the course before the beginning of the semester. The hours committed to the preparation work should be counted towards the total of expected work hours.

In general, a TA has one or more of the following responsibilities:

1. Self-preparation. Prospective TAs should avail themselves of orientations and other training (e.g., use of instructional technology) offered by the Department and/or the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE).
2. Attend all course lectures and read the materials used. These duties are integral to a TA's ability to help students in the class. They introduce the TA to sociological subfields outside of their own expertise and different styles of teaching and learning.
3. Class preparation. Assisting in preparing data, graphs and notes used in class and managing the class's Learning Management System (i.e., Canvas).
4. Classroom assistance. TAs might be asked to take attendance, assist with mechanical activities such as setting up of microphones, laptops, and showing films or videos.
5. Exam preparation. By assisting in constructing tests, the TA learns testing procedures in general and how to distinguish between good and bad questions.
6. Grading assignments and exam. Grading gives TAs experience with making analytical judgments about the materials and learning how to provide useful feedback to students.
7. Holding regular office hours, answering students' emails/questions and learning discussions.
8. Documenting hours and working with faculty/instructor to manage workload.

TAs are not just assistants to faculty members/instructors' classes, but also professionals in training under their supervision. Faculty should advise and support TAs in balancing their assistantship and other responsibilities involved in their graduate education. Faculty/instructors are reminded that:

1. Faculty should meet with their TAs at the beginning of semester to review the course plan and come up with a mutually acceptable workload.
2. Faculty should meet with their TAs regularly to discuss issues in class, including assessments of TA workload.
3. Faculty should be mindful of the expectation that TA duties should average 15 hours per week. It is the instructor's responsibility to adjust the various demands on TA time to keep total effort within expectations. If a TA's duties significantly exceed (or fall short of) the expected time commitment, then assignments should be adjusted by mutual agreement between the TA and faculty member.
4. To the extent possible, assistantship duties and assignments should be performed during the normal working hours. Faculty should avoid last-minute requests or assignments to their TAs.
5. It has been a tradition within the department to excuse students from assistantship duties during periods of serious illness or other personal or family emergencies or crises. This type of courtesy is part of the collegial nature of relations in this department.

6. Faculty must conform to university rules distinguishing Research Assistantships from Teaching Assistantships.

Teaching Fellow Responsibilities

Teaching fellows teach their own undergraduate courses. TFs have primary responsibility for a course, including planning the course, preparing the syllabus, presenting lectures, and keeping records. The simultaneous experiences of lecturing, reviewing, creating exams, grading, and engaging with students provide the best opportunity for graduate students to learn the art of teaching. To ensure the quality of the experience for both the TF and the undergraduate students, the department assigns supervisors to undergraduate courses taught by graduate students. TFs should:

1. Meet with course supervisor well in advance to discuss matters such as assigned reading, course syllabus and format, and teaching strategies specific to the material.
2. Meet with course supervisor before the semester begins to review the course syllabus, provide feedback, or recommend changes.
3. Fulfill all university regulations and codes, including:
 - a. Presence during final exams.
 - b. Keep course records for at least 1 year after the course is completed.
 - c. Submit a written syllabus to the Online Syllabus Management system before the first day of the semester. Syllabi should define course requirements, dates of examinations, and other information specific to the course.
 - d. Submit final grades within 72 hours of the completion of the final exam.

TF Support

Classes taught by Teaching Fellows will be capped at 40 students. Any errors in course enrollments can be resolved by contacting the department's Undergraduate Student Services and Administrative Coordinator.

Administrative support. The department will maintain a list of resources for administrative tasks related to teaching.

1. Final Exam and grading policies are available at the UNC Registrar website.
 - a. <https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-calendar/#examsched>
 - b. <https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/grading-policies-and-regulations/>
2. Training for Connect Carolina is available on the UNC Registrar web site.
 - a. <https://registrar.unc.edu/training-office/document-repository/connectcarolina-basics/>
3. Training for Canvas and other teaching technology is available through Instructure or the Center for Faculty Excellence
 - a. https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Instructor/ct-p/canvas_instructor
 - b. <https://cfe.unc.edu/teaching-and-learning/teaching-and-technology/>
4. Teaching training and resources. Teaching Fellows will receive training through a variety of channels, including the department teaching seminar and Teaching Assistantships. Additional trainings and resources are available through the [Center for Faculty Excellence](#).

If Teaching Fellows have questions about classroom management or concerns about student behavior (e.g., plagiarism, classroom incivility), they can discuss the situation with the course supervisor, the Associate Chair, or the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

Evaluation of TA and TF performance

Evaluation of TA/TF performance is primarily intended as an aid to the student's professional development. The evaluation process will provide feedback to the TA about areas of strength and weakness and may also provide materials for a teaching portfolio that can be used when the student enters the job market.

Evaluation of TAs/TFs by students in the class is a regular part of any course evaluations conducted at the end of the semester. Instructors are encouraged to review the course evaluations of each TA's sections and then provide feedback to the TAs for their information and teaching portfolio.

The chair and associate chair review course evaluations each semester. When needed, steps are taken to help graduate students improve their skills in teaching.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

While TA and TF assignments and funding are awarded by the Department, Research Assistant (RA) positions are awarded by individual faculty members. These positions may substitute for a TA or TF position by providing a full stipend, tuition support, and other fees during an academic semester. In addition, faculty may employ students in supplementary positions during the summer or as part-time appointment alongside a TA or TF position. These positions are paid on an hourly basis in most cases, and the minimum rate has been \$25 in recent semesters.

Recipients of a research assistantship award work with a specific faculty member on a particular research project or set of tasks associated with various research projects. RA duties may be highly variable (e.g., literature review, library research, data collection and preparation, data entry, data analysis, computer or internet related tasks, collecting materials for project development) and depend on the nature and scope of the faculty project to which the RA is assigned. Frequently specialized skills are needed to undertake the required work. The schedule of the work and time commitment required may also vary by nature of the project. The general guideline is for RA duties to not exceed the stipulated number of hours (normally 15 hours/week for a full-time assistantship), be performed during the normal academic work week, and not assigned at the last minute or include personal services for the faculty member. To the extent possible, an RA's duties should provide professional training for the student as well as facilitate the faculty members' research.

The Department has specific guidelines recommended for best practices in RA positions. The specificity of research projects and corresponding apprenticeships prohibits a uniform template for defining and regulating the contractual relationships between faculty members and RAs. In the Appendix, we provide general guidelines and recommendations for establishing agreements and successful working relationships between the faculty members and RAs about job expectations, training, and related issues such as rules of co-authorship. These are meant to function as a general framework to facilitate discussions and foster productive collaborative relationships.

RESOLVING PROBLEMS RELATED TO RA AND TA POSITIONS

Whenever possible, students and faculty should first make every attempt to resolve conflicts between themselves. If there is a conflict between students, students involved may confer with the Director of Graduate Studies, who can offer advice and/or informally intercede. If there is conflict between a student(s) and faculty, or the student(s) or faculty member has problems or issues that they are not comfortable raising with the other party, they may confer with the Associate Chair, who can offer advice and/or informally intercede. Where either party believes that such measures have not resolved the problems, the following steps should be followed for redress:

1. For conflicts involving students and faculty, both should meet with the Associate Chair. If the Associate Chair is a party to the grievance, the chair will appoint an alternate in his/her place. Either of the aggrieved parties can initiate an informal mediation procedure with the Associate Chair by contacting him/her. Both parties may meet individually with the Associate Chair before meeting collectively. After this mediation stage is completed, the Associate Chair will write a short, informal summary of the proceedings including the agreement reached or the issues still in dispute. For conflicts involving only students, the procedure will be the same except the DGS, instead of the Associate Chair, will act as mediator.
2. If the parties cannot come to an agreement with the help of the Associate Chair, the dispute can be taken to the Department Chair. The Chair will then form a grievance committee, including two other faculty members selected by the Chair, and two graduate students elected by the GSA. The parties involved shall prepare written statements of their positions prior to the meeting of the grievance committee. The grievance committee serves a mediation function, attempting to facilitate an agreement between the two parties.
3. If no agreement can be reached between the two parties, then the grievance committee shall prepare a written recommendation. This recommendation will be referred to by the Department Chair to aid in implementing an appropriate course of action.
4. The grievance parties have the option of appealing to an ad hoc faculty-student committee established by the Dean of the Graduate School, as described in Appendix C, The Faculty Code of the University Government, July 1999; the faculty member also has the option of contacting the committee.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A. Supervisors, Undergraduate Courses Taught by Graduate Students (Updated on 2/3/2023)

Soci 101 (Sociological Perspectives) Caren
Soci 111 (Human Societies) Guo
Soci 112 (Social Interaction) Aldrich
Soci 121 (Population Problems) Cai
Soci 122 (Race and Ethnicity) Fitzgerald
Soci 124 (Sex and Gender in Society) Weisshaar
Soci 130 (Family and Society) Su
Soci 131 (Social Relations in the Workplace) Jenkins
Soci 172 (Intro to Pop Health in the U.S.) Hummer
Soci 180 (Intro to Global Population Health) Frankenberg
Soci 250, 460 (Sociological Theory) Kurzman
Soci 251 (Research Methods) Entwisle
Soci 252 (Data Analysis) Bollen
Soci 273 (Social and Economic Justice - EE) Caren
Soci 274 (Social and Economic Justice) Caren
Soci 410 (Formal Orgs & Bureaucracy) Aldrich
Soci 412 (Social Stratification) Weisshaar
Soci 415 (Economy and Society) Mouw
Soci 422 (Soc of Mental Health and Illness) Hargrove
Soci 427 (Labor Force) Kalleberg
Soci 469 (Health and Society) Hummer
Soci 123 (Crime and Delinquency) Duxbury
Soci 125 (Sociology of Sexualities) Fitzgerald
Soci 133 (Sociology of Politics) Caren
Soci 277 (Societies and Genomics) Guo
Soci 411 (Social Movements) Andrews
Soci 416 (Intl Migration & Soc. Membership) Entwisle
Soci 419 (Sociology of the Islamic World) Kurzman
Soci 420 (Political Sociology) Andrews
Soci 429 (Religion and Society) Pearce
Soci 431 (Aging) Yang
Soci 444 (Race, Class, and Gender) Malone Gonzalez
Soci 445 (Sociology of Emotions) Hargrove
Soci 468 (U.S. Poverty and Public Policy) Harris

Appendix B. TA Appointment Letter

Dear [STUDENT NAME]:

I am pleased to offer you an appointment as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Sociology for Spring 2023. It is expected that the position will require an average of 15 hours per week. Your stipend for Spring 2023 will be \$12,000 and you will be paid according to the [University's monthly pay schedule](#).

For the Spring 2023 semester, you will be working with **Professor [Prof Name]** for [Class]. This class will be taught in-person, with the expectation that you attend all meetings of the course (though some exceptions may apply). You should meet with the professor teaching the course soon to clarify other responsibilities, which may include meeting regularly with the Instructor, holding office hours for students, leading course discussions, and grading papers and examinations. Unless you have made other arrangements with the Instructor, you are expected to be locally present and available to work a few days before the class starts and through the final exam grading deadline for this class.

Attached to the letter is a sample agreement outlining the anticipated responsibilities of both the TA and Instructor. You and the professor teaching this course will finalize this contract in consultation with one another prior to the first day of class. This contract should be revisited periodically throughout the semester, making any adjustments necessary based on mutual consideration and agreement. **Please contact me if you have questions or concerns regarding your Teaching Assistant assignment.**

If you are considered a North Carolina resident by the [Residency Determination Service](#) and meet all eligibility requirements, your in-state tuition will be fully covered by a tuition award. If you are not a North Carolina resident, you may receive tuition remission, to cover the additional cost of out-of-state tuition, based on the availability of Department funds. To remain eligible for tuition remission from the Department, out-of-state students must apply for North Carolina residency before the start of their second year in the program and re-apply each semester that their application is not approved. In-state residency saves the Department tens of thousands of dollars each semester and allows the program to fund additional graduate student positions.

For tax purposes, neither a tuition award nor remission represent compensation for the service component of your assistantship. The Department's recommendation regarding tuition remission is subject to approval by the Graduate School and is contingent on the availability of funds. Your service appointment must be in effect for a period of not less than one full semester. If you should fail to complete a full semester appointment, you will forfeit your full tuition remission and/or tuition award. In addition to your tuition award and any remission, the University will cover your health insurance premiums contingent on this appointment.

By signing and returning this letter to the Department via the [TA Award Letter Form](#) by you confirm your commitment to teaching the course.

Best wishes for a very good semester at UNC.

Associate Chair

Enclosures cc:

_____ (Your signature)

Appendix C. Teaching Assistant Policies and Procedures

Stipend Payment	Your stipend will be disbursed in monthly installments through Payroll Services. You will be required to set up a direct deposit account with UNC through ConnectCarolina, if you have not already done so. You will receive your first installment at the end of August.
Tuition and Fees	Tuition cost for AY 2022- 2023 (including fees) can be found at this link and should be posted by the end of June. In addition to your stipend, your Teaching Fellowship covers the cost of tuition, which will be paid directly to the University Cashier for the period of this award.
Student Health Insurance	For AY 2022-2023 , the premium cost per student for health insurance coverage is \$4,740.60 per year (\$395.05 per month). Health insurance is provided during the tenure of this award, including the summer (if enrollment continues in the fall). Your Teaching Fellowship covers the full cost of your insurance premiums.
Full-Time Enrollment	You must be a fully-enrolled, degree seeking, on campus student. Full enrollment is 9 credit hours OR 3 credit hours of either MA Thesis Hours (SOCI 993) or Dissertation Research (SOCI 994).
Income Tax Withholding	Graduate students who hold Teaching Fellowships, which require the performance of teaching, research or other comparable academic service are subject to federal income tax withholding.
Eligibility	<p>Your funding is contingent upon (1) full-time enrollment as a graduate student, (2) making satisfactory progress towards your degree, and (3) satisfactory performance in your duties as a Teaching Assistant.</p> <p>If you should fail to complete a full semester appointment, you will forfeit your full tuition remission and/or tuition award.</p>
FERPA Training	<p>In your role as a Teaching Assistant, you will work closely with students, have access to student data, and be responsible for fostering a good learning environment. To guide you in those responsibilities you will be required to complete training before your appointment officially starts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete FERPA training <p>These trainings are only required for first-time Teaching Assistants or Teaching Fellows in the department. If you have already completed this training, you do not have to do complete it again.</p>

Appendix D. Sample Agreement for Graduate Teaching Assistants

Student _____
Supervising Professor _____
Course _____
Semester _____

Section 1. General Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants (unless otherwise specified by mutual agreement of the TA and Instructor)

1. Attend all lectures, arrive promptly for all lectures.
2. Do assigned course reading.
3. Hold regular office hours.
4. Maintain attendance and grade record.
5. Monitor quizzes and exams.
6. Notify the supervising professor as soon as possible if she or he cannot be present for class (e.g., in the event of illness, attending an annual meeting, etc.).
7. Grade and return assignments, quizzes, and exams by a deadline agreed upon by the TA and supervising professor.
8. Notify students in advance if she or he cannot hold scheduled office hours.
9. Attend meetings of course TAs arranged by the supervising professor.
10. Stay on campus through the grading of final exams and handing in of grades to the Registrar for the semester.

Section 2. General Responsibilities of supervising professor

1. Total workload assigned to TAs does not exceed an average of 15 hours per week over the semester.
2. Arrange for regular meetings to discuss the course with TAs.
3. Obtain desk copies of the required texts for TAs before the beginning of the semester.
4. Provide clear guidelines (such as rubrics or sample answers) for the grading of all exams and assignments.
5. Provide guidance for the coordination of the lectures and recitation sections (if applicable).

Section 3. Responsibilities of Graduate Teaching Assistants specific to this course.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 4. Responsibilities of supervising professor specific to this course.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

To allow TAs time to complete their own academic obligations over the course of the semester, Instructors should make certain that no more than 240 hours of work are expected. TAs and Instructors should use the table below **as a guide for anticipating** how long tasks throughout the semester will take and make necessary adjustments. It is important to note that TA tasks, especially grading, vary from class to class, and from task to task. Hours/tasks should be set and adjusted based on the specific requirements of the course.

Allowed totals	240 Hours	15 Hours/week for 16 weeks
Attend lecture	37.5	2.5 hours/week for 15 weeks
Read course material	30	2 hours/week for 15 weeks
Office hours	30	2 hours/week for 15 weeks
Admin/emails	15	1 hour/week for 15 weeks
Grade 3-page paper	16	20 minutes 48 papers
Grade 6-page paper	24	30 minutes 48 papers
Grade midterm exam	16	20 minutes 48 exams
Grade final exam	24	30 minutes 48 exams
Meetings with Instructor	15	1 hour/week for 15 weeks
Proctor Final Exam	3	Exam hours
Others		

Appendix E. Sample Graduate Research Assistants Plan

**Department of Sociology
Graduate Research Assistant Plan**

Student _____

Supervising Professor _____

Project Title _____

Semester _____

Section I. Commitments of Research Assistant

a. General:

1. Commit to take responsibility for the successful completion of assigned project and maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, curiosity, and ethical standards.
2. Meet with the professor prior to the start of the project to set up expectations for job responsibilities, hours, authorship, and related activity outcomes; and meet weekly with professor to provide him/her with updates on the progress and results of RA activities at the meetings.
3. Work with professor to establish a timeline for each phase of work and strive to meet the established deadlines and be on time for all meetings associated with RA research work.
4. Be knowledgeable of the policies and requirements of graduate program and department, comply with these policies, and meet these requirements for training and research responsibilities.
5. Follow all university and departmental policies regarding data security, confidentiality, and review procedures related to presentation of work and co-authorship (e.g., ASA guideline on "[Authorship](#)").
6. Discuss and ensure consensus regarding expectations on authorship, submission and attendance at professional meeting for any project the RA is involved in during the assistantship with the professor; and work with the professor to submit all relevant research results that are ready for publication in a timely manner.
7. Discuss policies on work hours, sick leave and vacation with the professor, consult with the professor, and notify him/her in advance of any planned absences.

b. Specific to this project (including the hourly RAship): (to be listed in the space below)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section II. Commitments of the Supervising Professor

c. General

1. Commit to the education and training of the RA as a member of the research team and future independent members of the scholarly community; and provide guidance and support on conducting project related research.
2. Help plan and direct the RA's work for the project, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion of the project.
3. Meet with the RA on a regular basis and as needed through in-person mentoring meetings, or zoom conferences when not in the office.

4. Provide resources for the RA as appropriate or according to the sponsor's guidelines (e.g., office space, computing support, etc.) in order for him/her to conduct the RA research.
 5. Encourage the RA to seek additional opportunities in career development training around issues of oral and written communication skills, grant writing, project management, ethical conduct of research, and scientific professionalism.
 6. Discuss authorship policies regarding publications with the RA at the beginning of projects, acknowledge the RA's contribution to projects, and work with the RA to publish the work in a timely manner. Note also that these arrangements are subject to change if the roles on the project are not fulfilled or change over the project period.
 7. Provide honest letters of recommendation for RA's future professional development and be accessible to give advice and feedback on the job performance for the project as well as career goals.
 8. Provide the RA an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, and free of harassment to the best of our ability.
- d. Specific to this project (including an hourly RAship): (to be listed in the space below)
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____

Professor's signature: _____

Date: _____