



Sociology Graduate Handbook 2019-2020



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Department Head Welcome Statement

Welcome to the Department of Sociology's Graduate Program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville! The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize graduate students with the content, admissions procedures, policies, and requirements of the program. Faculty members teach, conduct research, and perform service in ways that are consonant with the Department's Vision:

Our sociological research and teaching are inspired by our understanding of social justice and our drive for excellence. Social justice can only be realized when the causes of injustice are clear. Such clarity is gained through rigorous empirical analysis guided by theory. Analysis can then enrich teaching and learning, and contribute to public policy formation, and serve in various social settings to achieve a just society.

and our Mission Statement:

The Department of Sociology strives to be an exemplar of an academic unit focused on social justice. Our mission is to maintain excellence and further strengthen our national and global reputation in and across four specialty areas: Criminology, Environmental Sociology, Political Economy and Globalization, and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies. Of these specialty areas, three are not commonly found in US Sociology departments, and the combination of the four is not found in any. This distinction provides a unique identity and supports our determination to recruit and retain highly capable and motivated graduate students from around the nation and the world who are committed to advancing the kind of knowledge the Department stands for and is pursuing. In addition, this identity presents an array of unique opportunities to our students. We are dedicated to collaboration across those core areas.

Our four specialty areas allow us to address questions of social justice and injustice by examining institutions and practices that are at the root of both. Social justice requires rigorous examination of data and focused theoretical analysis of the structural causes of injustice, harm, and hardship. Our research directly translates into continuous enhancement of teaching and learning, formulation of public policies (especially in our four specialty areas), and organization of forums dedicated to promoting a just society. In a just society, opportunities are determined according to abilities and drive rather than locations within the social structures into which people are born. Furthermore, in a just society, the interests of nonhumans are promoted along with the interests of humans.

The Department of Sociology also aims to exemplify the value and benefits of diversity. In both our work and our departmental community we endeavor to foster: remediation of persistent inequalities suffered by those who are oppressed and marginalized, broad representation of positions and identities and qualitative social transformation, and active participation in such transformation as teachers and researchers. We consciously work toward understanding the roots of oppression and harm, and we conscientiously use this knowledge to recruit, attract and retain faculty and students from diverse populations and marginalized and oppressed groups.

The Department offers programs leading to the MA and the PhD degrees. The primary objectives of the Graduate Program are: 1) to offer coursework that equips students with a strong foundation in sociology and social justice issues and with a depth of knowledge in the basic tools of the discipline; 2) to promote high-quality teaching; and 3) to provide professional socialization that prepares students for careers in the discipline. The Department's overarching focus on social justice unites faculty members' research interests with graduate curricula.

The Interest Areas

As listed in the mission statement, faculty members' research centers on the following interest areas:

- Criminology/Criminal Justice
- Environmental Sociology
- Political Economy and Globalization, and
- Critical Race and Ethnic Studies

Faculty members specializing in **Criminology/Criminal Justice** apply a sociological approach to the study of crime and criminal justice, exploring the linkages between crime phenomena, justice practices and strategies, and the elusiveness of social justice—both conceptually and practically. In addition, faculty members investigate how race/ethnicity, class, and gender affect criminal offending and victimization as well as criminal justice experiences. They consider the historically- and politically-specific processes whereby some actions are criminalized. Finally, they examine innovative harm reduction strategies, including restorative justice and responsive regulatory mechanisms. Their scholarship explores interpersonal, corporate, and state offending.

Faculty members specializing in **Environmental Sociology** analyze the historical and social bases of environmentalism, the mobilization of grassroots environmental movements, and environmental justice at local and global levels. Environmental policies are examined as contributing to social justice in some circumstances, and as contributing to social injustice, at other times. Faculty members maintain research ties with a large number of organizations and programs outside the department.

Political Economy and Globalization faculty members analyze the political and economic foundations of change in global society, examining contemporary issues in the context of large-scale and long-term historical shifts, to understand continuity and change both in global society and in local communities. Seminars focus on the sociology of development, and political, economic, and social institutions and categories such as class, state, race and ethnicity, gender, markets, and social, nationalist, and revolutionary movements.

The faculty in **Critical Race and Ethnic Studies** interrogate how racial and ethnic categories coalesce around structural inequalities and across multiple geographies. Race and ethnicity are foundational social structures influencing nearly every process in which human beings are engaged. These markers of difference shape social life. Seminars focus on enabling students to demystify the claims of dominant groups about race and ethnicity and to understand overarching themes of social stratification, harm, and humanity.

Jon Shefner
Professor and Head

Introduction

The Graduate School

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students.

Based on *Best Practices* offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department/program be disseminated.

The Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies (tiny.utk.edu/grad-policies) noted in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide all graduate students in the Department of Sociology a list of procedures and policies required for successful degree completion.

Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university. Students should be directed to the Graduate Catalog (tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog), to *Hilltopics* (hilltopics.utk.edu), and the publications on the Appeals Procedure (gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/understanding-your-rights-and-obligations/).

Administration of the Graduate Program

The Department's Director of Graduate Studies is the primary administrator of the graduate program, who operates in conjunction with the three members of the Graduate Committee to admit new students, monitor the progress of current students, and operate the program within the charge of the full departmental faculty. Meetings of the Graduate Committee are open to elected representatives of the Sociology Graduate Student Association (except discussions of individual graduate students). The Director of Graduate Studies arranges an annual Department Orientation for new graduate students.

Director of Graduate Studies:
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Professor Stephanie A. Bohon

Graduate Committee:
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Professor Robert E. Jones

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Graduate Program Administrator

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General Duties/Responsibilities

Individual faculty members as research directors are responsible for providing students with appropriate recognition for their contributions at conferences and in professional publications. It is the faculty member's responsibility to clarify the principles for determining authorship and recognition at the beginning of any project.

Students are responsible for communicating with the college and their graduate program about changes in their circumstances that affect their status and progress toward the degree. Students are responsible for discussing their expectations regarding acknowledgment of research contributions or intellectual property rights with the appropriate person(s) in the research team, preferably early in the project.

Departments and graduate programs define specific opportunities for student participation on committees as they deem appropriate. The University recognizes graduate students' important contributions to governance and decision making at the levels of program, department, college,

Graduate School and University; specific roles for participation are defined at each level by the relevant governing bodies. Students are responsible for participating in University governance and decision making that enrich the campus community. Most importantly, students are responsible for satisfying all university regulations in a timely fashion.

Admission Requirements and Application Procedures

Admission to the Department of Sociology involves two processes, through the Department and through Graduate Admissions. Please consult the Graduate Catalog (tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog) for specific information about a number of features to assist applicants, including advanced search options, intuitive navigation, and a personal portfolio to store favorite programs and courses.

Admission through Graduate Admissions

Procedures include the completed Graduate Application for Admission (gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/); a non-refundable application fee; one official transcript from all colleges and universities attended; and scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language or IELTS, if native language is not English.

Scores from the Graduate Record Examination are not required.

Admission to the graduate program is through the Office of Graduate Admissions (and not through the Department of Sociology)!

Admission to the Sociology Program

The Department of Sociology requires for admission to the graduate program a minimum grade point average of 3.00 and completion of an appropriate previous degree. Students' admission to the program may be contingent on confirmation that the degree is completed. The following application materials must be received via online application at (applyweb.com/utg) by January 15: the completed Graduate School and Departmental application form; three letters of recommendation from persons suited to evaluate applicants' potential for graduate work; a Statement of Purpose of attending graduate school in Sociology; a writing sample; and, for international students, TOEFL or IELTS scores.

Applicants are notified of admission status as the decisions are made. The deadline for applications is January 15. Announcements of awards of financial support are typically made by early April. By state law, international students are eligible for funding only *after* their English proficiency scores are tested and meet the English proficiency standards set by the University.

Change of Program

Students who complete a master's degree in the Department of Sociology and who wish to be entered into the doctoral program must file a Change of Program form (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/change-of-program/>) with the Graduate School as soon as possible after submitting their thesis to TRACE and pay the appropriate fees. The Thesis Committee must take a vote on whether or not to admit the student to the PhD program, and the Graduate Committee will admit the student based on the recommendation of the Committee.

Financial Support

Graduate Assistantships and Associateships

The Department Head awards Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Teaching Associate, and Graduate Research Associate positions to new and continuing students selected on the basis of merit. Appointments are usually made for an academic year but, occasionally, the appointment is made for one-semester only. These positions provide a stipend for service, as well as health insurance and a remission of tuition as

designated by the University. Extraordinary circumstances may require a student awarded an assistantship to resign his/her position during the academic year. In such cases, the student must file a letter with the Department Head describing the circumstances necessitating resignation and work with the Director of Graduate Studies on necessary paperwork. Students who are not accepted into a degree program are not eligible for departmental assistantships/graduate associate positions or for loans through the Financial Aid Office.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships are typically awarded to select entering graduate students who have completed fewer than 18 graduate credit hours in Sociology. Graduate Teaching Assistants assist with teaching and advising activities and engage in supervised teaching in Introduction to Sociology and in Social Justice and Social Problems courses.

Graduate Teaching Associateships are awarded to selected students who have completed at least 18 graduate credit hours in Sociology or a related field. Graduate Teaching Associates are granted sole teaching responsibility for sections of Introduction to Sociology or Social Justice and Social Problems. In special cases of departmental need, Graduate Teaching Associates may occasionally be granted the opportunity to teach upper-division courses in the student's area of specialization.

Graduate Research Associate positions are awarded as funding is available. Faculty members whose research is funded and includes a stipend for a Graduate Research Assistant makes those selections in consultation with the Department Head; the Graduate Program Committee does not make related decisions.

Funding decisions are made on the basis of the Annual Review (see **Policies** below) and reflect two goals: to support and reward continuing students who progress through the program in a timely fashion; and to admit and support the most qualified new applicants in numbers sufficient to sustain the program in the future. Students admitted without funding may re-apply in the next year and are encouraged to seek funding from various sources across the university. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies for assistance. To be awarded and to maintain departmental funding, MA students are expected to remain on-track to earn the degree in two years and PhD students are expected to remain on-track to earn the degree in four years.

The Department typically funds graduate students for two years at the MA level and four years at the PhD level. In some circumstances, assistantships are awarded for additional years of study. No such request will be granted if it exceeds the time limits for completion of graduate programs (6 years for the MA program and 8 years for the PhD program).

Graduate Students receiving assistantships are appointed at 25 percent time or 50 percent time. Those receiving a .25 FTE appointment are required to spend an average of ten hours of work per week over a 15-week semester. Those receiving a .50 FTE appointment are required to spend an average of twenty hours of work per week over a 15-week semester.

The Graduate School

Other funding opportunities are managed through the Graduate School, which also awards a limited number of Fellowships each spring, or outside of the university and posts descriptions of available open assistantships on their webpage (<http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-assistantships/>).

Additional information and application materials on Fellowships are available from November through January in the Graduate School (<http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-assistantships/>). Awards are typically announced by March 15. There also are

opportunities for on-campus employment; see the Graduate Catalog for policies for on-campus employment (<http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog>).

Funded students are strongly discouraged from taking on additional income-generating work is likely to slow or jeopardize progress in the graduate program.

Travel Support

Travel awards for graduate students participating in national and regional professional conferences are available through the university's Graduate Student Travel fund administered by the Graduate Student Senate. For the university's Graduate Student Travel awards, see the Graduate Student Senate (<http://gss.utk.edu/travel-awards/>)

Dissertation Research Funds

As of 2014, the Department has funds to provide limited support for PhD students needing assistance with research related expenses, including but not limited to travel to field sites, purchase of equipment, and purchase of data. Applications are accepted by the ad hoc committee composed of Department Head and Director of Graduate Studies once per semester (depending on student interest) in Fall and Spring semesters. Deadlines will be announced in advance.

Early Withdrawal

If a student is terminated or withdraws from a program prior to the end of the semester, the student will be responsible for payment of tuition and other fees from the termination/withdrawal date until the end of the semester. The responsibility for paying tuition and fees will apply to all students, including those who have tuition waivers during the semester in which they are terminated/withdraw early. Please see the graduate catalog for additional information about early termination/withdrawal (onestop.utk.edu/withdraw). If you are considering early withdrawal, you should contact the Bursar's office to inquire about the financial ramifications for early withdrawal.

Information for New Student Cohorts

In July, newly admitted students receive letters from the Director of Graduate Studies providing information on registration, the departmental orientation, and contacts for a temporary academic advisor and the leader of Sociology Graduate Student Association or SGSA (the department's graduate student organization). New students are asked to report upon arrival to the Graduate Secretary in 901 McClung Tower.

Full-time students must complete 6 credit hours per semester of approved, graduate-level coursework (amended by faculty in 2012), but the number of credit hours required for full-time status varies with appointments and with loan terms. How many credits you register for may impact your health insurance benefits.

Graduate students funded at 25 percent must be enrolled for 9 or more credit hours per semester to be considered as full-time students by the Department and the University. Graduate students funded at the 50 percent level must be enrolled for 6-11 credit hours per semester to be considered full-time students by the Department and the University. *The definition of "full-time study" may be different for students with Stafford loans.*

Students may elect to attend graduate school on a part-time basis, but should be advised that courses are not readily available: few required courses are offered every year, few graduate seminars in sociology are offered in the evenings and summers.

The Graduate School maintains time limits for the completion of graduate programs: 6 years for the MA degree and 8 years for the PhD degree.

Registration

New students should register as soon as possible (usually May) by using MyUTK. You will need your nine-digit UT identification number (beginning in 000) from the application process. You may need to set a password for your NetID (oit.utk.edu/netid).

Faculty Advisors

The Graduate School will automatically assign the Director of Graduate Studies to be your advisor. He or she, in turn, will assign you an advisor from among the faculty. The initial assignment of a faculty advisor is intended as temporary. Students may change advisors at any time simply by securing consent from the chosen advisor and notifying the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Administrative Assistant. Often the newly chosen advisor and the thesis or dissertation chair are the same, but they need not be. Students are expected to work closely with advisors and/or chairs, meeting at least once per semester, but usually more often, to complete and regularly update the Plan of Study form and to gain approval of each semester's course-load. The Plan of Study form, available from the Graduate Administrative Assistant, is used to establish a tentative course of study leading to completion of the degree. The form must be completed by the student in consultation with the chair, signed by the chair, and placed by the chair in the student's permanent file.

Graduate Student Employee Insurance

Graduate Teaching Assistants and Associates and Graduate Research Assistants who are employed at least 25% FTE will automatically be enrolled in the Graduate Student Employee Insurance program. The university pays 100% of the premium for these students. These students may elect to add spouse or dependent coverage at their own expense. If students already have insurance coverage through another insurance carrier, this policy functions as additional coverage. The Student Health Clinic manages the Graduate Student Employee Health Insurance Program. For information, see <http://studenthealth.utk.edu/insrecstudentinsurance.php> or call 865-974-3135.

Thesis and Dissertation

Graduate students are advised to familiarize themselves with thesis/dissertation requirements as soon as possible. The Graduate School publishes the *Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations*, available for downloading at <http://gradschool.utk.edu/documents/2016/03/guide-to-thesesdissertations.pdf>.

Departmental Courses

Substantive departmental seminars are offered in: Criminology, Environmental Sociology, Political Economy and Globalization, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Sociological Theory; and Research Methods. Since seminars are typically offered once every two years, it is advisable to take required courses at the earliest opportunity. The core required Theory and Methods courses typically are offered annually while advanced methods courses are typically offered every other year. These courses need not be taken in numerical sequence. Statistics courses, offered in the Statistics Department, *must* be taken sequentially.

In addition to substantive seminars, other course numbers appear in the catalog.

500 Thesis Hours. (6) P/NP. Required.

502 Registration for Use of Facilities. (15) S/NC. Permits use of library and other university facilities when you are not otherwise registered. Use for the summer only. Hours do not count toward a degree.

- 593 Independent Study. (15) A-F. Student-initiated course that requires faculty member's approval and agreement to direct. Course requirements determined by faculty member. Requires form to be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies. Use this course to arrange for a class you would like to take but which is not offered by faculty.
- 599 Readings. (6) A-F. Student-initiated course that requires faculty member's approval and agreement to direct. Course requirements determined by faculty member. Requires form to be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies. Use this course number to permit time to read a body of literature.
- 600 Doctoral Research and Dissertation. (24) P/NP. Required.
- 629 Supplementary Readings in Sociological Theory. (3) S/NC. Allows preparation time for the qualifying examination in theory while maintaining full-time status.
- 639 Supplementary Readings in Methodology. (3) S/NC. Allows preparation time for qualifying examination in methodology while maintaining full-time status.
- 649 Supplementary Readings. (3) S/NC. Allows preparation time for one specialty examination while maintaining full-time status.
- 695 Advanced Special Topics. (6) A-F. Typically faculty-initiated but sometimes students-initiated course in which students pursue a specific, narrowed focus within the literature.
- 699 Tutorials in Advanced Topics. (6) A-F. Student-initiated course for doctoral student's pursuit of a special topic- often involves the examination of a potential dissertation topic. Requires faculty member's approval and agreement to direct. Course requirements determined by faculty member. Requires form to be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies. This course is essentially an independent study course for doctoral students who are ABD (have completed All But Dissertation requirements).

No more than 12 total credit hours from the following courses will count toward the degree: Sociology 510, 593, 599, 695, and 699. Plans for those courses, with the exception of 510, must be approved by the faculty person directing the course. Plans must specify (1) the nature of the work to be done, and (2) how the work will be evaluated for purposes of assigning a grade.

Registration and Advising

New Student Class Registration

New graduate students first need to consult the Director of Graduate Studies before registering for the first semester of coursework. The Director explains and clarifies the curriculum, helps plan a schedule, advises on Master's and PhD degree requirements. The course timetable and registration is on the MYUTK at <http://myutk.utk.edu/>. Once new students receive their University ID number (9 digits) and Net ID they can register on MTUTK.

New students are assigned a work place and new Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Teaching Associates are informed of their assignment and directed to their graduate teaching supervisor(s) or graduate mentor.

Work places must be completely cleared of all materials by July 1st of the year you graduate. Any alterations to the work place that you inhabit must be reversed in preparation for the next graduate students.

Advising and Class Pre-Registration

Each student must consult with his/her concentration area faculty advisor prior to registering for classes; the faculty advisor reviews each student's progress in his/her course work and advises him/her accordingly as to specific courses and course load. Students are urged to pre-register so that class offerings and teaching schedules can be adjusted to suit actual needs. The Department Head in consultation with the DGS determines the coordination of GTA assignments.

The MA Degree in Sociology

The MA degree in Sociology requires a minimum of 30 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree. At least 21 total credit hours must be completed in 500- and 600-level courses. MA students may take 9 credit hours in 400-level courses that carry graduate credit (in consultation with their advisor). Twelve credit hours may be taken outside the Department, with the advisor's consent. Students must complete all requirements within 6 calendar years of enrollment.

Required Course Work

All MA students must complete the following requirements (6 courses for 15 credit hours):

- Sociology 506 Social Justice and Public Policy (2 hours);
- Sociology 511 Pedagogy and Graduate Instruction (1 hour);
- Sociology 521 Sociological Theory (3 hours);
- Sociology 531 Research Methods in Sociology (3 hours); and
- Two Courses (Foundations and one other) in one specialty area (Criminology, Environmental Sociology, Political Economy and Globalization or Critical Race and Ethnic Studies). - Choose one from Sociology 503 Foundations of Environmental Sociology, 504 Foundations in Political Economy, 505 Foundations in Criminology, Sociology 509 Foundations of Critical Race plus one additional course in the same area.

Students entering the MA program who have not completed at least one undergraduate course in Statistics or its equivalent must take Statistics 531 prior to enrolling in Sociology 631. Students may additionally elect to complete requirements for the Statistics Minor. A minor in statistics consists of 9 hours of statistics courses. See the Intercollegiate Graduate Statistics Program in the Haslam College of Business. MA students are required to complete 9 credit hours of coursework in addition to the required 15 credit hours described above and 6 credit hours of 500 Thesis Hours. When a decision is reached about the thesis topic, the student should consult with the faculty member whose interests most closely match the student's and with whom the student can establish a strong working relationship and request that the faculty member chair the thesis committee.

Thesis Committee:

Application for admission to candidacy for the master's degree should be made as soon as possible after the student has completed required prerequisite courses and 9 hours of graduate course work with a 3.0 average or higher in all graduate work. The student acquires and completes the Admission to Candidacy Application Master's or Specialist Degree (<http://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/admission-to-candidacy-masters-or-specialist-degree/>), obtains signatures from the thesis committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies, and submits the form to the Graduate School no later than commencement day of the semester preceding the semester in which he/she plans to graduate.

The thesis committee is composed of the major professor and at least two other faculty members at the rank of Assistant Professor or above. Students pursuing a minor must have one committee member from the minor department. Any change in the composition of the thesis committee must be formally made at least **one month** prior to the final oral examination to provide the new committee member with time to become familiar with the thesis work.

The student works on the thesis primarily with the major professor. Other committee members serve as a resource base, offering suggestions at the proposal hearing, evaluating the student's written thesis and oral

defense of the thesis, assessing the student's potential as a prospective doctoral student, and writing reference letters.

Thesis Proposal Meeting:

Students must submit a written thesis proposal to all committee members at least one week before a proposal meeting with the thesis committee is convened. At the hearing, committee members provide suggestions on the proposed research. Committee approval of the proposal is required.

Thesis Defense:

Copies of the complete thesis must be submitted to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the thesis defense. During the thesis defense the thesis committee members conduct an oral examination on the student's thesis and evaluate it as Pass/Fail. The committee may require revisions of the written thesis prior to final approval and may withhold signatures of approval until the revisions are satisfactory. Deadlines for the thesis defense and for final submission of the thesis to the Graduate School are regularly posted in the Department and through the Graduate School. A notice of the time and place of the thesis defense must be circulated to the Department at least **one week** in advance. Anyone may attend the defense. It is advisable to meet prior to the deadline with the Thesis/Dissertation Consultant in Graduate Student Services (thesis@utk.edu) to assure that the thesis is correctly formatted but no later than the announced deadline. Many students arrange the consultation at the same time as submitting the thesis to committee members.

Students must obtain the appropriate forms prior to the thesis defense and submit to the thesis committee chair. After the thesis defense, the thesis committee chair submits a signed form to the Graduate School, documenting the student's performance in the oral examination, and a memo to the Director of Graduate Studies, indicating the thesis committee's recommendation on the candidate's suitability for doctoral study. The committee chair also reports the results of the thesis defense to the faculty.

All theses and dissertations accepted by the University as partial fulfillment of master's and doctoral degrees must conform to formatting standards. Therefore, it is required that all graduating theses and doctoral students be in contact with the Graduate School's thesis/dissertation [consultant](#) to discuss how formatting guidelines apply to their document.

At the end of the review and approval process, students will upload the final, official copy of their **Theses and Dissertations** to the Graduate School's collection in [Trace](#), the university's electronic repository. The Graduate School will post students' theses and dissertations to the internet after graduation. For more detailed instructions, see [http://web.utk.edu/~thesis/files/Trace ETD uploading guide.pdf](http://web.utk.edu/~thesis/files/Trace_ETD_uploading_guide.pdf). Students can request an embargo on open-access publishing for a limited time. See <http://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/publication-policies/>.

The PhD Degree in Sociology

A minimum of 51 credit hours beyond the Master's degree is required for the PhD degree: These hours include 24 credit hours of Doctoral Research and Dissertation and a minimum of 27 hours in graduate course work (9 courses). Students must also complete an approved Major Area Paper in one of the four areas of concentration (criminology, environmental sociology, critical race and ethnic studies, and political economy and globalization), pass the defense of their dissertation proposal, write a dissertation based on original research, and pass a final oral examination on the dissertation.

Students without thesis or with thesis from other disciplines

Any student accepted into the PhD program who has not completed a Master's thesis must complete a thesis-length research paper within the first two years in the PhD program. An ad hoc committee that is comprised of at least two sociology faculty members must approve this paper. Any student who has completed a thesis in a field or discipline other than sociology must have their thesis approved by the graduate admissions committee as comparable to a sociology master's thesis. If the thesis is not approved, the student must complete a thesis-length research paper within the first two years in the PhD program. An ad hoc committee that is comprised of at least two sociology faculty members must approve this paper.

Required Course Work

If not completed at the MA level, students must complete SOC 506, SOC 511, SOC 521 and SOC 531. However, note that these hours will not count toward the minimum number of hours required for the PhD.

At least 12 credit hours (4 courses) must be completed at the 600 level.

The following requirements must also be met:

- Three core courses (9 hours): SOC 621; SOC 631; one from SOC 633, SOC 636, SOC 638, or SOC 640
- Three courses (9 hours), including foundations class, in one area of concentration
 - The criminology concentration includes SOC 505, SOC 652, SOC 654, and SOC 655
 - The environmental sociology concentration includes SOC 503, SOC 661, and SOC 665
 - The political economy and globalization concentration includes SOC 504, SOC 541, SOC 543, SOC 644 and SOC 645
 - The critical race and ethnic studies concentration includes SOC 509, SOC 552, SOC 616, and SOC 694
- 9 hours in second area (another concentration in Sociology, a foreign language, interdisciplinary social theory graduate certificate, statistics minor or MS, or an additional area proposed by the student in consultation with their advisor and approved by the graduate committee.
- At least 24 hours of SOC 600 Doctoral Research and Dissertation

No more than six credits outside of Sociology can count for number of credits required for the PhD, although more credits can be taken.

Students pursuing a dissertation in an area requiring statistical competence beyond forms of regression are strongly encouraged to take appropriate advanced methods and/or statistics courses from other departments.

The Dissertation

Students may not enroll in Sociology 600 (Doctoral Research and Dissertation) until they have completed their coursework and have an approved Major Area Paper (see below). Once a student enrolls in Sociology 600, s/he must maintain continuous enrollment (fall, spring and summer terms) until graduation. The dissertation process involves: selecting a dissertation committee, holding a dissertation proposal hearing, completing the dissertation project, admission to doctoral candidacy, and the oral defense of the dissertation.

Dissertation Committee

Students choose a dissertation chair according to shared research interests. The committee is composed of the dissertation chair as the chairperson and at least three other faculty members, one of whom is from a department other than Sociology. Three of the four committee members must be approved by the Graduate Council for directing doctoral research. Any changes in the dissertation committee must be approved by the Department Head and the Graduate School at least **one month** prior to the oral defense of the dissertation.

The dissertation chair provides guidance at every stage of the research process and in the preparation of the written dissertation. Committee members also provide consultation. The dissertation committee evaluates the dissertation proposal, acts as a resource base, evaluates the written dissertation and the student's oral defense of it, and writes recommendation letters for job applications.

The Department strongly encourages all PhD students to write proposals to obtain funding for their dissertation research. Faculty members are available to advise and otherwise assist students, as needed.

Dissertation Proposal Hearing

Students are required to write a proposal for the dissertation research and to schedule a formal hearing for the committee's review of the proposal. A minimum of **two weeks** must be allowed between the time the proposal is received by committee members and the hearing. The proposal must be approved before the student proceeds.

Admission to Candidacy

The Graduate School must approve admission to candidacy for the PhD degree at least one full semester prior to the date on which the degree is to be conferred. Admission to candidacy forms should not be filed until all qualifying and comprehensive examinations are passed and the doctoral committee is approved.

Dissertation Defense:

Copies of the complete dissertation must be submitted to all committee members at least two weeks before the oral defense is held. The dissertation defense is a meeting in which committee members conduct an oral examination of the student's dissertation and evaluate it as Pass/Fail. The committee may require revisions of the written dissertation prior to final approval and may withhold signatures of approval until the revisions are satisfactory.

Deadlines for the dissertation defense and for final submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School are regularly posted in the Department and through the Graduate School. A notice of the time and place of the dissertation defense must be circulated to the Department at least one week in advance. Anyone may attend the defense. (Only members of the dissertation committee may vote on the outcome of the examination.) It is advisable for students to meet prior to the deadline with the Thesis/Dissertation Consultant in Graduate Student Services (thesis@utk.edu) to assure that the dissertation is correctly formatted. Many students arrange the consultation at the same time as submitting the dissertation to committee members, as long as they meet the Graduate School deadline for doing so.

Students must obtain the appropriate forms prior to the dissertation defense and submit them to the dissertation advisor. After the defense, the dissertation advisor submits a signed form to the Graduate School, documenting the student's performance in the oral examination. The committee chair also reports the results of the dissertation defense to the faculty.

Two copies of the final draft of the dissertation, with original signature sheets, must be deposited with the Graduate School. An electronic copy must be deposited with the Director of Graduate Studies for placement on our website. Rules for embargoes apply. Additionally, members of the dissertation committee frequently request copies of the dissertation.

Examinations: The Major Area Paper

In order to demonstrate that the student possesses a mastery and breadth of the scholarship in a specialization (criminology, critical race & ethnic studies, environmental sociology, and political economy & globalization) or one of its major subareas, students must complete an approved Major Area Paper. All faculty members who comprise the primary faculty within each specialization will determine whether students in their specialization must write on the specialty area itself (e.g., the canon of literature considered important by critical race faculty) or on a major subarea (e.g., social movements, environmental justice, whiteness, carceral studies). As MAPs are designed for students to demonstrate a *breadth* of knowledge, this paper is NOT intended to be a literature review for the dissertation but a demonstration that the student understands the broad umbrella under which their dissertation will fall.

MAP Timing

Students must turn their area papers into their Committee one semester after finishing required and relevant course work. [As we transition to this new exam format, students who (as of January 2020) have already completed their coursework but have not yet taken a specialty exam should work with their MAP committee to determine an appropriate date for delivery.]

Makeup and Function of the MAP Committee

Students should select a MAP Committee no later than the end of their fourth semester in the PhD program. The MAP Committee must approve the student's MAP topic (for example, if a student plans to write on state violence, the Committee must say that's okay) and determine whether the student should write based on a faculty-curated list of readings, a student-selected list of readings, or some combination of the two.

The Committee must consist of three faculty members who agree to serve. At least two faculty member must have a primary specialization in the student's specialty area (critical race, PE, etc.); the other faculty member must have at least a secondary specialization in the student's specialty area (see chart below).

MAP Reading List

The MAP Committee must review and approve the reading list before a student begins writing. Typical reading lists will have about 50 citations but may have more.

Content of the MAP

In the MAP, the student must provide a clear statement of the concentration area, a structured review of the literature, a review of foundational research, a review of contemporary research, and an identification of gaps in theory and methods. The MAP cannot be a simple review of the literature; it must provide a synthesis or integration of theory and research on the topic and be issue- or idea-focused. The paper should be original and not derivative of another paper already published or unpublished but known to the student. The paper should be publishable quality. That is, it should be well-written, coherent, persuasive, and scholarly.

Format of the MAP

The paper must be typed, double-spaced, and written in 12-point font. Page numbers should be included on pages. The student must use the American Sociological Association citation format (see February issues of *American Sociological Review*). Papers must be at least 20 pages in length. Maximum length (exclusive of bibliography and cover page) will be determined by the MAP Committee in consultation with the student. **Papers are intended for the student to demonstrate *their* knowledge and ability.**

Faculty must not be asked to read drafts of the area paper. Students can use the Writing Center for assistance. When the student turns in their area paper, they should also submit a signed MAP Academic Honesty Statement that reads as follows: *By signing this document, I affirm that I have not received help from any other person(s) on the content and writing of this area paper beyond the Writing Center. I acknowledge that I have access to various knowledge-based resources, including but not limited to books, articles, journals, class notes, and the internet; however, the work I submit is fully my own. I also confirm that I reviewed the Department of Sociology's Graduate Handbook regarding the procedures for this area paper, and that I complied with the procedures.*

MAP Evaluation

The MAP Committee will read and evaluate the papers as pass, pass with distinction, or fail. They will try as much as possible to evaluate papers within two weeks of submission. Faculty are not required to evaluate MAPs during summer months (e.g., from mid-May graduation through mid-August beginning of fall semester). Papers will be evaluated based on the a) breadth of knowledge demonstrated; b) accuracy of information presented; and c) demonstrated ability to write at a level sufficient for publishing. Faculty will evaluate the paper based on coverage of the approved reading list and will not penalize students for failing to include work or ideas not on the list.

Students who fail the MAP evaluation will have six weeks to revise and resubmit their area paper. They will be given written comments from their MAP Committee detailing the deficiencies of their first attempt. Faculty will read and evaluate the revised paper as pass or fail. Students should generally expect their evaluation within two weeks of submission.

Termination Process

Students who fail to deliver a passing MAP paper after two attempts will receive written notice from the Department Head of their removal from the program. Termination will be effective the semester following the failure to submit an approved paper after two attempts. Students who believe that their paper was evaluated in violation of procedures may appeal to the Graduate Committee who will appoint an ad hoc committee to review the examination and MAP Committee procedures. They will issue a decision in writing within two weeks.

Graduate Faculty by Area of Specialization (January 2020)*

Area	Primary	Secondary
Criminology	Brown Kurti Presser Wall	Destine Henricks
Environment	Ergas Gellert Jones	Bohon
Political Economy	Christian Dahms Gellert Jalata Shefner	Bohon Destine Henricks Kurti
Race	Bohon Christian Destine	Brown Ergas Kurti

	Jalata Henricks Williams	Wall
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*MAP committees must be comprised of two faculty in an area’s primary list and one faculty who is in an area’s primary or secondary list.

Standing and Appeals

Annual Reviews

Each Fall, graduate students are required to submit an annual report on their progress to the faculty along with teaching evaluations (if any), unofficial transcripts, and a CV. As part of the report, students must indicate which Graduate Handbook edition year they are following (either the year they entered or a subsequent edition). Students are only allowed to switch Handbook years one time. Faculty advisors and chairs are responsible for completing the Advisor Report and Chair’s report, respectively, which provides the faculty member’s written assessment of the student’s progress in the graduate program. Faculty work supervisors—if any—are also required to report progress for students on Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Graduate Research Assistantships.

All graduate students’ files are reviewed to evaluate progress in the program and eligibility for funding. The files contain course grades, qualifying/specialty examination grades, Plans of Study records, Advisors’ Reports, Chairs’ Reports, and Supervisors’ Reports. Advisors and faculty members who have worked with students submit evaluations of students. The faculty evaluations address class performance, teaching effectiveness, assessment of the student’s strengths and weaknesses, and progress toward the degree. Teaching evaluations, performance of duties, presentations at professional meetings, and publications are taken into account in funding decisions.

All graduate students will receive a written summary of their evaluation, which they must sign and return to the Graduate Administrative Assistant. This written evaluation will be discussed in a face-to-face meeting between graduate students and their advisor. The letter concludes with signature lines for the advisor and for the student, indicating the date when this meeting occurred. The student’s signature confirms only that they have received the evaluation. It does not confer agreement with the assessment. Instead the student signature appears over the statement: “Your signature below indicates that you have reviewed this feedback and discussed it with your advisor.”

Students who fail to meet the normal progress benchmarks must work with their chair or advisor to develop a written plan for achieving the benchmarks missed. This plan must be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies in early October. The remediation plan must detail why the student is not meeting the goals and the steps they will take to ensure normal progress by the end of Spring semester. A student who believes that they have been assessed unfairly can file an appeal with the Graduate Committee. Students should then implement the plan.

If a student does not successfully implement their remediation plan so that they have met the missed benchmarks by the next annual review, or if they otherwise fail to meet the normal progress benchmarks for two years in a row, they may face sanctions which can include loss of Departmental funding or removal from the program.

In late February, students failing to meet normal progress goals (as assessed in the September meeting) will submit a report to the Director of Graduate Studies detailing their progress toward following their

remediation plan. During the March faculty meeting, the faculty will discuss students who are failing to meet normal progress goals (as assessed in the September meeting). If students are still not meeting their goals, the faculty will take two votes. The first vote is to decide whether or not the student should continue in the program. This vote is based on the students' assessed ability to successfully complete a thesis or dissertation in a timely manner. If a student is retained, a second vote will recommend to the Head whether or not the student should be funded (if currently funded). This vote is advisory. The Director of Graduate Studies will convey the outcome of the votes to the student via letter.

Normal progress

Normal progress goals are as follows:

MA-End of First Year

Student has completed course work with no grade lower than a B- and an overall GPA in excess of 3.0.
Student has selected a thesis chair
Faculty agree that student's writing and analytical ability will allow them to complete a thesis
Faculty agree that the student actively contributes to the intellectual discourse of his/her courses

MA-End of Second Year

Student has completed course work with no grade lower than a B- and an overall GPA in excess of 3.0.
Student has attended a professional meeting
Student has held a committee meeting to approve the thesis proposal
Student has successfully defended the thesis
Faculty agree that the student actively contributes to the intellectual discourse of his/her courses

MA-End of Third Year or Later

If student has not completed degree by end of first semester of third year, normal progress is not being made.

PhD-End of First Year

Student has completed course work with no grade lower than a B- and an overall GPA in excess of 3.0.
Student has presented a paper at a regional or national professional meeting
Faculty agree that student's writing and analytical ability will allow them to complete a dissertation
Faculty agree that the student actively contributes to the intellectual discourse of his/her courses

PhD-End of Second Year

Student has completed course work with no grade lower than a B- and an overall GPA in excess of 3.0.
Student has presented a paper at a regional or national professional meeting
Student has submitted a manuscript for review to a journal
Student has assembled her dissertation committee and submitted paperwork to graduate school
Students has assembled a Major Area Paper (MAP) Committee
Student has begun compiling a MAP reading list
Faculty agree that student's writing and analytical ability will allow them to complete a dissertation
Faculty agree that the student actively contributes to the intellectual discourse of his/her courses

PhD-End of Third Year

Student has presented a paper at a national professional meeting
Student has submitted a manuscript for review to a journal
Student has submitted an approved MAP
Student has successfully defended dissertation proposal

Student has begun work on dissertation
Faculty agree that student's writing and analytical ability will allow them to complete a dissertation

PhD-End of Fourth Year

Faculty remains confident in student's ability to successfully complete a dissertation
Student has made significant progress on dissertation data collection
Student has written at least two chapters of a dissertation that have been reviewed by the chair

PhD-End of Fifth Year

Student has actively sought employment
Student has defended the dissertation

PhD-End of Sixth Year or Later

If student has not completed degree program by end of sixth year, normal progress is not being made.

Other Evaluations

In compliance with University requirements, students learning objectives (SLOs) have been established by the faculty for M.A. and PhD program students. These SLOs include knowledge of sociological theory; knowledge of sociological methods; effective communication of research results; design and implementation of independent research and effective teaching. In meeting the reporting requirements for these SLOs, the faculty have created various rubrics to evaluate students. The purpose of these evaluations is to determine the progress of the program, overall, and it is not meant to be used to evaluate the performance of any individual student.

Human Subjects Review

Graduate students whose research outside of course work uses human subjects are required to submit the appropriate forms to UT's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval prior to data collection. Submission of IRB approval requires CITI Training, which can be obtained through the Office of Research. Note that research completed for a course still needs IRB approval if part or all of the work is presented in a public forum such as posted online, presented at a professional meeting, or submitted for review. Students should consult with their thesis/dissertation advisor on the human subject review process.

Dismissal from Graduate Program

Plagiarism is a grave offense and is the basis for dismissal from the program. Penalties for plagiarism and procedures for handling cases are outlined in *Hilltopics*.

Students whose GPA drops below 3.00 are placed on probation by the Graduate School and are not permitted to graduate until the GPA is above 3.00. Students who receives three grades of C+ or lower in any university courses taken for graduate credit are dropped from the program at the end of the semester in which the third C+ or lower grade is received.

A grade of incomplete automatically converts to an "F" after two semesters. Changing the "F" to a higher grade requires written justification to the Graduate School, and that office decides whether to approve the grade change.

Petitions and Special Requests

Requests pertaining to the waiver of departmental requirements should be submitted in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will report information about waivers to the faculty.

Complaints about unfair treatment should be addressed first to the student's advisor and then to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head. If no resolution is obtained at the departmental level, consult *Hilltopics* for grievance procedures.

Work Requirements for Funded Students

- (a) All funded students are required to attend Department colloquia, lectures, and job talks as a condition of employment.
- (b) All funded students are required to register for courses prior to the start of the semester in which course commence; funded students are also required to register for summer courses.
- (c) Graduate Teaching Assistants must inform the faculty member who they are assigned to, and Graduate Teaching Associates must inform the Department Head of a planned absence from scheduled instructional activity. Teaching Associates are generally not allowed to cancel a class without rescheduling it at a suitable time for students enrolled in the class or arranging for alternative coverage.
- (d) Graduate Teaching Associates and Assistants are expected to hold regular office hours early and should inform their students of impending absences and alternative times, if possible. Study sessions, office hours, and other class activities with undergraduate students should be scheduled and held in university spaces and facilities.
- (e) Graduate Teaching Assistants who believe that academic dishonesty or scientific misconduct has occurred should report it to the faculty member to whom they are assigned; Graduate Teaching Associates should seek guidance from the Department Head.
- (f) Graduate students in direct contact with undergraduates must adhere to university rules for protecting student privacy.

Grievances and Appeals

Students considering filing a grievance or an appeal should consult the Graduate School policy statement available here: <http://gradschool.utk.edu/documents/2016/02/student-appeals-procedures.pdf>

Note: This policy applies “only after grievances have been duly processed, without resolution, through appropriate appeals procedures at the department and college levels.” Thus, two additional elements are required that should proceed reference to the Graduate School procedure: (a) a detailed description of your department’s grievance and appeal procedure, emphasizing that the initial appeal must be filed no later than 30 days after the incident that occasions the appeal, and (b) a statement informing students that if the department procedure does not lead to resolution of the complaint, the next level is an appeal at the College level. This appeal must be filed within 30 days of a final decision at the department level.

Graduate Faculty

Professors

Stephanie Bohon (PhD Pennsylvania State University, 1998) Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Social and Applied Demography, Research Methods, Latino Migration, and Ethnic Economies, sbohon@utk.edu

Michelle Brown (PhD Indiana University Bloomington, 2003) Criminology, Law and Society, Visual Criminology, Carceral Studies, mbrow121@utk.edu

Harry F. Dahms (PhD New School for Social Research, 1993) Political Economy & Globalization, Theory, Comparative-Historical Sociology, hdahms@utk.edu

Asafa Jalata (PhD SUNY-Binghamton, 1990) Political Economy & Globalization, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Race/Ethnic Minority Relations, Development, ajalata@utk.edu

Robert E. Jones (PhD Washington State University, 1990) Environmental Sociology, Survey Analysis, mountain@utk.edu

Lois Presser (PhD University of Cincinnati, 2002) Criminology, Corrections, Qualitative Methods, Narrative, lpresser@utk.edu

Jon Shefner (PhD University of California-Davis, 1997) Political Economy & Globalization, Social Movements, Development, jshefner@utk.edu

Associate Professors

Paul K. Gellert (PhD Wisconsin-Madison, 1998) Environmental Sociology, Political Economy & Globalization, Comparative-Historical Sociology, pgellert@utk.edu

Michelle Christian (PhD Duke University, 2011) Political Economy & Globalization, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Racial Stratification, Labor, Tourism, mchris20@utk.edu

Assistant Professors

Shaneda Destine (PhD Howard University, 2017) Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Social Inequality, Medical Sociology, Gender, sdestine@utk.edu

Christina Ergas (PhD University of Oregon, 2013) Environmental Sociology, Environmental Justice, Sustainability, Stratification, Political Economy, Urbanization, cergas@utk.edu

Kasey Henricks (PhD Loyola Chicago, 2016) Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Public Finance, Research Methods, henricks@utk.edu

Tyler Wall (PhD Arizona State University, 2009) Criminology, Policing and Social Order, State Violence, Race and Class, twall3@utk.edu

Deadric Williams (PhD, University of Nebraska, 2013) Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, Family Sociology, email TBA.

Contact Information

- international students
 - Center for International Education (international.utk.edu)
 - International House (ihouse.utk.edu)
 - ITA Testing Program (tiny.utk.edu/ita-testing)
- professional development & training
 - Office of Graduate Training and Mentoring (gradschool.utk.edu/training-and-mentorship)
 - Best Practices in Teaching Program (tiny.utk.edu/bpit)
 - UT Libraries Information for Graduate Students (libguides.utk.edu/graduate)

- Center for Career Development (career.utk.edu)
- Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center (tenntlc.utk.edu)
 - UT CIRTl: Center for Integration of Research and Teaching (tlc.utk.edu/cirtl-program-center-for-integration-of-research-and-teaching/)
- Experience Learning (experiencelearning.utk.edu)
- funding
 - costs and funding opportunities (tiny.utk.edu/grad-funding)
 - Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards (gss.utk.edu/travel-awards)
 - Financial Aid and Scholarships (onestop.utk.edu/financial-aid)
- student resources
 - Counseling Center (counselingcenter.utk.edu)
 - departments and college websites
 - Graduate School (gradschool.utk.edu)
 - Graduation Deadlines (tiny.utk.edu/grad-deadlines)
 - Graduate School Forms (gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central)
 - Graduate Catalog (tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog)
 - Student obligations and appeals process (tiny.utk.edu/rights-obligations)
 - Graduate Student Senate (gss.utk.edu)
 - Office of Graduate Admissions (gradschool.utk.edu/admissions)
 - Student Conduct and Community Standards (studentconduct.utk.edu)
 - Office of Equity and Diversity (oed.utk.edu)
 - Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking (sexualassault.utk.edu)
 - Office of Multicultural Student Life (multicultural.utk.edu)
 - Office of Research Integrity (research.utk.edu/compliance)
 - Thesis/Dissertation Consultant (gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations)
 - Office of Information Technology (oit.utk.edu)

Forms and Additional Resources

All forms are available on the Graduate School Website (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>).

Current URL links are provided below.

- Graduate Student Travel Award Forms
<http://gss.utk.edu/travel-awards/>

- Graduate Student Senate Website
<http://web.utk.edu/~gss/>

Master's student forms

- Admission to Candidacy Application - Master's Degree
<http://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/admission-to-candidacy-masters-or-specialist-degree/>
- Graduation Application - found on MyUTK / "Student Records" / "Apply to Graduate"
- Revision to Candidacy Application - Master's
<http://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/revised-admission-to-candidacy/>
- Report of Final Examination <http://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/report-of-final-examination-masters/>
- Thesis Approval Form
<http://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/thesisdissertation-approval/>

Doctoral student forms

The following forms are available on the Graduate School website
(<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>)

- [Admission to Candidacy](#)
- [Revised Admission to Candidacy](#)
- [PhD Committee/Revise PhD Committee](#)
- [Doctoral \(Non-PhD\) Committee/Revise Doctoral \(Non-PhD\) Committee](#)
- [Schedule of Dissertation/Capstone Defense](#)
- [Report of Final Examination/Defense of Dissertation/Project/Capstone](#)
- [Request for Concurrent Master's Degree](#) • [Revised Admission to Candidacy](#)
- [PhD Committee/Revise PhD Committee](#)
- [Doctoral \(Non-PhD\) Committee/Revise Doctoral \(Non-PhD\) Committee](#)
- [Schedule of Dissertation/Capstone Defense](#)
- [Report of Final Examination/Defense of Dissertation/Project/Capstone](#)
- [Request for Concurrent Master's Degree](#)