NORMAL PROGRESS BENCHMARKS
UTK Department of Sociology
Revised February 15, 2022

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 their 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 their 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 their 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 their MAP committee and received approval of their topic and their 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 their 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 successfully completed an approved MAP. Student has assembled her dissertation committee and submitted paperwork to graduate school. Student has successfully defended dissertation proposal. 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
(NOTE: Most students will complete their dissertation at the end of Year 4 and should plan on seeking employment at the beginning of Year 4. Although this is not required for normal progress, please note that funded students may not be able to retain their assistantships after Year 4 because of budget limitations.)

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.