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INTRODUCTION

The KSU/AU Joint Doctoral Program in Sociology has been in operation since September 1973. In March of 1973 preliminary accreditation was awarded by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Final or full accreditation was awarded in April 1977. This unique concept in graduate education allows the student to enroll through either Kent State University or The University of Akron and function as a student at both schools. Students take course work and interact with faculty members from both schools and have access to the facilities located in both departments.

The joint program in sociology leads to the PhD degree. Although the MA is awarded in the course of working toward the PhD, students are not admitted who are only interested in pursuing a terminal Master’s degree. Admitted students, regardless of degree are expected to complete all required coursework. Applications are considered once a year, during the spring semester, for admission to the program starting the following fall semester. The program is generally intended for students enrolled full-time (i.e., 9-10 credit hours per semester).

Students enter into the program through either Kent State University or The University of Akron. Administratively a student is located in one of the departments but he or she does have certain privileges in both departments. The program is structured in such a way that the major requirements at both campuses are identical.

The daily operations of the program are handled by the Graduate Directors/Coordinators of the respective departments. When students have questions or concerns, they should see the Graduate Director of the department in which they are administratively based. Admission, assistantships, registration, record keeping, and degree clearance are handled by each respective administrative department.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

What We Expect from Graduate Students

The purpose of this section of the handbook is to outline expectations of all graduate students in the Sociology Department at Kent State University. To be successful in our program, it is important that you read what follows thoroughly and carefully. You should also review the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics: http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm

In addition to the handbook, you should also familiarize yourself with two web pages in the "Graduate Program" section of the Sociology Department's website:

(1) The "Forms and Docs" page provides you with easy access to annotated documents and forms that will facilitate your progress through the program and call your attention to important rules, procedures, and regulations. It is very important for you to know the rules, regulations, and deadlines. We have developed the "Forms and Docs" page to ensure that you have all the information you need. The current URL for the "Forms and Docs" page is: http://www.kent.edu/sociology/forms-and-resources

(2) The answers to questions that many students have had over the years can be found on the "Current Students" page. This page provides you with answers to the most commonly asked questions by graduate students—including those concerning coursework, procedures for theses and dissertations, etc. This page is "live" and updated regularly, so please check it first when you have a question. The URL is: http://www.kent.edu/sociology/current-students

This document is a modified and customized version of a document developed by Dr. Alissa Sherry, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Texas at Austin.
Being informed about the expectations others have of you and planning your work both in the short-term (e.g., weekly) and in the long-term (e.g., over the semester, the duration of your time in the program) is part of being a professional. Please read carefully through the entire Graduate Student Handbook and review the department website.

**Addressing Professors**

Upon entering the program, many students wonder about how to address the faculty. Even when you hear other graduate students call a professor by her/his first name, it is always professional to use the professor's title unless s/he indicates to you that it is okay/preferable to use first names. Specifically, unless a faculty member tells you to use her or his first name, you should use the titles of "Dr." or "Professor."

**Respect**

In our department, as in any professional setting, it is very important to behave respectfully and use appropriate language. This is particularly important when it comes to areas of diversity. There are some behaviors that will not be tolerated—behaviors involving things "unbecoming to a future sociologist," such as (but not limited to) making racial, sexual orientation, or gender slurs, making other inappropriate jokes at the expense of others, yelling at or losing your temper with faculty, staff, or students or otherwise showing disrespect, and other such behaviors.

**Trusting Faculty and "The Process"**

Professors do things for a reason. You may not always be aware of these reasons until after a class has ended or even until after you've graduated and have been working in the field for a while. It is very important that you place trust in your professors and believe that what they do is in your best interests. Professors are teaching the courses they are teaching and researching the topics they are researching because they are experts in these areas. Trust the expertise of faculty and make it your fallback position that things are done for a reason. If you do not agree with pedagogical styles or decisions made in courses, you will have your opportunity to provide feedback through course evaluations.

**E-mail Communication**

- Keep e-mails short, courteous, and to-the-point: Professional e-mail (that includes e-mail to a professor) has a specific purpose such as making information requests, setting up a meeting, or communicating an important fact.
- Write the purpose of your email in the ‘subject’ line.
- Use proper greeting and ending: Start with ‘Dear Professor X,’ or ‘Hello Prof. X.’ End your message with a ‘thank-you’.
- Check your grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Write back promptly: Nothing is worse than getting a reply to an email you sent 3 weeks ago. Not only does it show you don’t care, but it is confusing to the original sender who has since forgotten why they emailed you in the first place. Do let people know that you received their e-mail.
- Remember that e-mail is not private: When you send an e-mail to someone, it goes through many networks before it reaches your recipient and may even leave copies of your e-mail on a server, where it may later be retrieved.

**Meetings with Faculty**

You should meet with faculty during their office hours if possible. Office hours are posted next to each faculty member's door at the start of every semester. If you want to make an appointment with a
faculty member, you should e-mail and ask to drop by her or his office hours, or if that is not possible, then indicate the days/times when you are otherwise available to meet (e.g., days/times that do not conflict with your courses).

Assistantship Duties

Students who are funded by the department will be assigned to work for specific faculty members for a certain number of hours each week, usually 10 or 20 hours. For example, if you are assigned to a particular faculty member for 10 hours, you should expect to spend an average of 10 hours of your time each week doing what that faculty member asks you to do as part of your assistantship. Remember, you are being compensated to do this work. It is your responsibility to budget your time such that you are able to complete your assistantship tasks efficiently and to the best of your ability. Your continued funding is contingent upon you satisfactorily completing the assigned responsibilities that come with your assistantship.

Assistantship Assignments and Additional Responsibilities

You will be given an opportunity to express your preference for GA assignments during the summer. While we make every effort to align these preferences, that is not always possible. Being involved in research is an excellent way to get to know professors and develop relationships with them. While your assigned GA tasks should always come first, we encourage you to participate in other faculty members' research. We encourage you to be proactive and entrepreneurial about your research interests.

Your assistantship duties begin when the semester officially begins, and they end when the semester officially ends. You must be available to perform your duties as a GA for this entire period. For example, it is not acceptable for you to leave for winter vacation before or even during exam week (i.e., before the semester officially ends), in which case the faculty member to which you are assigned may end up performing a number of tasks that would otherwise have been assigned to you.

If you have an illness or life problem that interferes with your ability to complete your assistantship for two weeks or less, you need to contact your assigned professor and the Graduate Coordinator and file the paperwork for a short-term absence. For absences longer than two weeks, you should discuss taking a leave of absence. In either case, it is important that you keep your GA professor, your advisor, and the Graduate Coordinator informed regarding circumstances that prevent you from completing your assigned duties.

Class Attendance and Punctuality

Class attendance is mandatory. If you have to miss class occasionally (e.g., because you are sick), contact the professor by e-mail as soon as possible to inform her/him of your absence, preferably before the class. Please read all of your syllabi carefully so that you are fully aware of each faculty member's expectations when it comes to absences and how they are to be handled. Please endeavor to be on time for class.

Coursework Preparation

A general rule of thumb in graduate school is: for every one hour of class, students should be spending three hours studying/reading/doing homework outside of class. Since most graduate classes are three hours, this means that you should be spending, on average, about 9 hours per week studying and working for each class.
Embracing Evaluations and Feedback

External evaluation, self-evaluation, and criticism are the "life blood" of the Academy. Every member of the faculty has been exposed to both constructive and often difficult criticism and feedback. You may find this central feature of graduate school quite difficult to adjust to because you would not be in this program if you had not excelled as an undergraduate. In graduate school and in academic work generally, even high quality work is critiqued. Learning to use criticism of your work from professor’s and in some cases, from the evaluations of your peers, constructively without taking it personally is one of the most important things you will learn to do in graduate school. There is a great deal of learning and growth that can be done if you are open and mature about the process of evaluation and criticism. So, put your feedback into perspective. Being open to feedback, even if it requires taking a few deep breaths, is one of the most important skills you need to develop right away as a graduate student, and as a professional more generally.

Writing and Other Fundamental Skills

Being a good writer does not come easily to everyone, but it is absolutely critical to your success in graduate school and beyond. Your professors and thesis/dissertation advisors should not be put in the position of being copy editors that spend valuable time line-editing your work so that your substantive ideas are communicated effectively. If you receive feedback indicating that your writing needs work, it is important for you to make use of the university's "Writing Commons" (http://www.kent.edu/writingcommons). Especially in the case of theses and dissertations, a faculty member may ask you to work on your writing with staff at the Writing Commons before reading and commenting on drafts of your work.

In addition to the Writing Commons, the university also offers consulting support for statistical and qualitative software, research methods and data analysis, grant writing, the publication process, and scholarly writing. If you would like additional support in these areas, we encourage you to take advantage of KSU's "Statistical & Qualitative Software Instruction and Consulting Services." The URL for this service is here: http://libguides.library.kent.edu/content.php?pid=303862&sid=2490751

Participating in Department Life

As Durkheim pointed out long ago, people who participate in the same activities and "rituals" develop a common outlook and an energy that is vital for to the overall success and health of our department. Every semester there will be a number of department events outside the normal routine of coursework, assistantship duties, and other research- and teaching-related activities, including lunches with visiting job candidates, job talks, campus visits for prospective graduate students, colloquia, and department banquets. We consider participation in the life of the department to be a crucial dimension of your professional socialization and so you are expected to attend as many of these activities as possible.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND TIMELINE

The joint program in sociology begins with regularly scheduled courses and seminars. To maximize progression and success in the program, it is important that students follow the prescribed sequencing of courses. This foundation, which includes a course to prepare students for professional careers in sociology, is supplemented by faculty advising and supervision of research projects, departmental colloquia, teacher training, and a supportive peer environment. Development of research expertise is fostered through required course offerings in theory, research design, qualitative and quantitative methodologies and statistics as well as elective offerings in a variety of substantive areas.
Enrollment requirements for the degree are 90 semester credit hours. These include 28 credit hours of required courses, 26 hours of elective courses (9 hours in the student’s first/primary area, 9 hours in her/his second area, and at least 8 hours outside the student’s two areas\(^3\)), 6 Thesis I hours, and 30 Dissertation I hours. Please note that starting fall 2014, no more than 3 credits of individual investigation or research hours may be applied toward the degree as elective credits (until then it is 6 credits). Further, no more than 3 credits of 500-level (UA) or 50000-level (KSU) coursework may be applied toward the degree as elective credits. These 500- or 50000-level credits may only be taken at the home institution. Finally, no more than 6 credits of graduate-level classes taken outside the joint program may be applied toward the degree as elective credits.

Students who desire to take any graduate-level electives outside the joint program must submit a written request to the graduate education committee in their home department and receive formal written approval prior to enrolling in the class. In the request the student must indicate (1) the course name and number, (2) the department in which the course is being offered, (3) the instructor’s name, (4) the official graduate catalog description of the course (or equivalent if the course is not listed in the graduate catalog), (5) if relevant, the department area with which the course is most closely aligned (inequality, social psychology, medical sociology/mental health, and criminology/deviance), and (6) a brief explanation detailing how the course (a) contributes to the student’s program of study/interests and (b) supplements joint program course offerings. If available, the student should also include a copy of the course syllabus along with the request. First-year students who wish to take an outside course must explain why they perceive a need to take the outside course in their first year of study instead of taking the course at a later time.

The schedule below reflects "normal" progress in the joint program for full-time students. Required courses may be completed earlier than recommended (i.e., in an “elective” course slot) but should not be completed later than in the sequencing below. More specific information about completing each facet of the program is located in later sections of the handbook. Graduate students are responsible for ensuring that required forms and paperwork are submitted on time and as required. Please see Appendix D for a complete list of the paperwork required for each step of the program.

### Program Schedule

**Year 1: Fall (10 hours)**
- Professional and Ethical Issues in Sociology (3 credit hours)
- Early Sociological Theory (3 credit hours)
- Quantitative Research Methodology (4 credit hours)

**Year 1: Spring (10 hours)**
- Multivariate Techniques in Sociology (4 credit hours)
- Elective Course in primary area (3 credit hours)
- Elective Course (3 credit hours)

**Year 2: Fall (10 hours)**
- Advanced Data Analysis (4 credit hours)
- Elective Course in primary area (3 credit hours)
- Elective Course or Thesis Hours (3 credit hours)

**Year 2: Spring (9 hours)**

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\(^2\)In addition to the recommended sequencing of courses, students should refine and develop their course plans in regular consultation with their advisors.

\(^3\) Beginning fall 2014.
Contemporary Sociological Theory (3 credit hours)
College Teaching of Sociology (3 credit hours)
Elective Course or Thesis Hours (3 credit hours)

*(For those entering program without a thesis-based Master’s degree in Sociology, adequate progress requires thesis research to be completed and defended by the end of this semester)*

**Year 3: Fall (9 hours)**
Elective Course (3 credit hours)
Elective Course (3 credit hours)
Elective Course or Individual Investigation/Research Hours (recommended for revising thesis or other paper for publication) (3 credit hours)

**Year 3: Spring (10 hours)**
Qualitative Research Methods (4 credit hours)
Elective Course (3 credit hours)
Elective Course (3 credit hours)

*(For adequate progress, the student should advance to candidacy by the end of this semester)*

**Year 4: Fall (9 hours)**
Elective course (3 credit hours)
Individual Investigation/Research Hours or Elective course (3 credit hours)
Individual Investigation/Research Hours or Elective course (3 credit hours)

*(The elective course taken during this semester will bring the student up to the required number of hours for elective courses. While they will not count toward the degree, the student is advised to take 6 hours of Individual Investigation/Research Hours this semester to work on publications.)*

**Year 4: Spring (15 hours)**
Dissertation (I) Hours (15 credit hours per semester)

*(For adequate progress, dissertation proposal defended by end of this semester; the student should enroll in 15 hours of Dissertation I for the summer)*

**Year 5: Fall**
Dissertation (II) Hours (15 credit hours per semester)

**Year 5: Spring**
Dissertation (II) Hours (15 credit hours per semester)

*(Defend dissertation by end of Spring Year 5)*

**Course Work: Breadth Requirement**

The Joint Ph.D. Program offers courses in four areas of concentration:

1. Criminology and Deviance
2. Inequality (Race, Class, and Gender)
3. Medical and Mental Health
4. Social Psychology
Students are required to identify two of the department’s four program areas and take nine (9) hours of coursework in each area. The remaining elective hours for the degree can be distributed in any of the four areas. In order to determine which courses count toward specific areas, students should consult with their advisor and the Graduate Director/Coordinator.

The Coursework Approval Form must be submitted to the Graduate Director/Coordinator via the Graduate Secretary early in the semester in which the student is finishing their course work. The Graduate Director/Coordinator determines whether the course requirements have been or will be fulfilled. The Coursework Approval Form cannot be approved unless the student has completed at least 6 credits in the first program area and at least 3 credits in the second program area. Where ambiguities arise, the Graduate Director/Coordinator should consult with the relevant area committee.

A student who enters the program having taken a graduate course that they wish to count toward their two areas must petition the Graduate Coordinator/Director who, in consultation with the graduate committee, will decide if the course meets an area requirement. Appeals regarding a decision of the Graduate Coordinator/Director may be made to the Department Chair.

The designation of independent investigations is made by the instructor of record. Only 3 hours of independent investigation or research hours may count toward fulfillment of degree requirements.

Choosing an Advisor

All incoming students are required to choose an advisor and submit the required form by the end of the first year. The Professional Seminar, which is taken in the first semester of the first year is designed to help you with this decision.

EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING

As part of the evaluation of student progress, all graduate students teaching a course will be evaluated every semester by a faculty member appointed by GEC. The review is intended to provide constructive feedback, to be an opportunity for continual improvement, and in keeping with the view that high quality pedagogy is best achieved when we share our teaching experiences. Please Appendix C for the forms that are used for the evaluation.

The GEC will appoint a faculty member to complete the evaluation no later than the tenth week of the semester. The faculty member will meet with the graduate student prior to scheduling the classroom visit. During that meeting, the faculty member and graduate student will review the course syllabus, discuss areas of focus for the evaluation, and review the collegial evaluation form that will be used by the faculty member. The form is provided below. After the classroom visit, the faculty member and graduate student will hold a post-evaluation meeting. The faculty member will complete the collegial review form and submit to the GEC no later than the Friday of the penultimate week of the semester.

COMPLETING THE MASTER’S DEGREE

The Master’s Thesis

Completing a Master’s thesis is the final MA requirement for students who are making adequate progress toward the doctoral degree. The aim of this requirement is to produce a journal-length empirical paper (i.e., a thesis) that can be revised and sent out for review soon after completion of the
In completing this requirement the student may conduct original empirical research, replication research, or secondary analysis. **Care should be taken to select a topic and question that allows for the thesis to be completed by the end of the spring semester of the student’s second year in the program.**

**NOTE:** All research projects must be submitted to the appropriate Institutional Review Board. **No data collection and/or analysis should proceed on any empirical project until the IRB has given formal approval (or exemption) of the project.**

**Thesis Advisor**

Each student should select a member of the graduate faculty whose areas of specialization correspond to the student’s own research interests. Students may select a graduate faculty member from either campus to serve as their thesis advisor. The selection of a thesis advisor may occur at any point in time prior to the completion of the first year of study (i.e., 20 hours of completed course work), but no later than end of the spring semester of the first year.

When a faculty member agrees to serve as advisor, the student should complete the appropriate form and submit it to the Graduate Studies Coordinator/Director of the student’s home campus via the Graduate Secretary (see the forms page on departmental website). The graduate director will then sign the form, make copies for the student and faculty member, and place the original document in the student’s file.

**Thesis Committee**

The student, in connection with his or her thesis advisor, shall select two additional graduate faculty members within the joint program to serve on the thesis committee. The thesis committee should consist of graduate faculty members from the joint program who are best suited to provide advice and guidance regarding the proposed topic under investigation.

At UA, once the three-person committee has been formed, the student is responsible for completing the necessary form(s) constituting the committee and submitting it to the Graduate Studies Coordinator/Director (see the forms page on departmental website).

**Thesis Proposal**

A written thesis proposal is to be developed by the student in consultation with her or his advisor. The proposal shall include a statement of the problem, theory and hypotheses, intended methodology, data source and data analytic techniques. Appendices may be included.

The student is to submit the written thesis proposal to all members of the thesis committee no less than 10 days (but preferably two weeks) in advance of a proposal meeting date. The full committee must then meet with the student to discuss and approve/disapprove of the written proposal.

Approval of the proposal will be indicated by the signature of each member of the committee and kept on file in the student’s home department office (see the forms page on departmental website). The proposal meeting should occur no later than the semester prior to the thesis defense. Further, the approval form must be signed and IRB approval must be obtained before the student begins data collection.

**Final Thesis Defense**

When the thesis is believed to be in completed, defensible form, it is left to the discretion of the thesis advisor whether to call a formal pre-defense meeting of the committee or to poll committee members
as to the likelihood of a successful oral defense of the document. At least 10 days prior to conducting the pre-defense meeting or poll, a copy of the thesis must be distributed to each committee member. When the pre-defense meeting is held or the poll is conducted, the committee may reject the thesis, require major or minor revisions, or accept it for oral examination. A thesis may be reconsidered for defense as soon as recommended revisions (if any) have been made. The thesis advisor will schedule the oral defense no sooner than 10 days after the (revised) thesis document has been accepted for oral examination by the committee. **A notice of the time and place of the defense will be circulated among the joint program’s faculty and graduate students at least 10 days prior. Any interested departmental members may attend the meeting.**

At the conclusion of the thesis defense, the committee will vote to accept the thesis as is, accept the document once specific conditions have been met, or to reject the thesis. The thesis advisor, and any committee members who wish to do so, will examine the final thesis document to ensure compliance with the committee’s recommendations. For the thesis to be formally accepted, all committee members must sign the signature page of the thesis. **Be sure to see departmental website for all necessary forms related to thesis and degree completion.**

**Final Requirements and Submission of Thesis to the Graduate School**

Students should consult the appropriate graduate school website for required formatting instructions, submission guidelines, due dates, and thesis binding. **It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of the deadlines set by their Graduate School for graduation.** The deadline to apply for graduation is early in the semester you plan to graduate (see [http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-deadlines](http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-deadlines)). Missing this deadline can result in a fee or denied application. Be sure that your thesis advisor receives a final electronic copy of the completed document that is accepted by the Graduate School.

**ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY**

Advancement to candidacy is accomplished when the student has written and successfully defended a 9,000 word Candidacy Paper. To be judged as making adequate progress in the program, students entering the program with an MA degree should complete this process in their third year. Students who enter the program with a BA should start the candidacy process in the spring of the third year and finish in the fall of the fourth year.

**Overview**

Advancement to candidacy is completed in four steps. **First**, the student identifies one program area and a substantive focus and requests a candidacy exam committee be formed. **Second**, the student writes a 2,500 word Candidacy Proposal which is evaluated by the committee. **Third**, based on feedback from the committee, the student writes a longer 9,000 word Candidacy Paper. **Fourth**, an oral exam is held. Each of these steps is described below, followed by the expected timeline for this process. **To pass the exam process, the student must not receive more than one “fail” outcome on the proposal, paper, and oral exam.**

**Steps**

**Step 1: Identification of Program Area/Substantive Focus and Committee Formation:** Doctoral students should identify a specific area of study from their two chosen program areas. This area of study should, in turn, be narrowed to a specific substantive focus. Examples include the stress process (medical sociology/mental health), mass incarceration (deviance/criminology), group processes (social
psychology), and social mobility (inequality). Once the area of study and the specific substantive focus have been identified, the student should submit a Candidacy Committee Request Form to the Graduate Director/Coordinator via the Graduate Secretary. On this form, the student will identify the Committee Chair and one other faculty member and obtain their signatures, indicating they have agreed to serve on the committee. Both of these faculty members will have self-identified as specialists in the student’s program area. The JEC will appoint the two remaining committee members from the relevant joint program area.

**Step 2: The Step 2 Candidacy Proposal and Reading List:** Following the Advancement to Candidacy Timeline (see below), the student will submit to her/his Committee Chair a Candidacy Proposal of 2,500 words maximum, excluding works cited in the proposal, tables, or appendices. The student is advised to take advantage of the full word count. The Step 2 proposal should be double-spaced with a 12-point font and one-inch margins. The proposal is an overview description of the research agenda and the projects that will be developed in the more detailed Step 3 candidacy paper. In addition, along with the 2,500-word proposal, the student must at the same time submit a bibliography-style reading list of the references that s/he plans to draw on in developing the longer Candidacy Paper. This will include readings in addition to those cited in the Candidacy Proposal. The reading list should be organized, as appropriate, by the relevant areas of literature. In other words, the reading list should be organized with headings in terms of the various literatures that will be reviewed, similar to the sub-sections found in the literature review of a journal article.

*The formal exam process officially begins once the student submits the proposal and reading list to the committee.* That is, once the proposal and reading list are submitted to the committee, this is counted as an exam attempt. If the student then withdraws or fails to complete any of the steps, this is counted as a failure of the exam. However, and importantly, if the student changes her/his mind about the topic before submitting the Step 2 proposal/reading list to the committee, this is not counted as a failure, and the student must return to Step 1 of the process without delay.

Because this process is considered an “exam,” it is expected that the student will develop the Step 2 proposal and reading list with limited consultation with the Committee Chair and other committee members. Neither the Committee Chair nor committee members shall read a draft of the proposal or reading list before they are handed in. However, it is appropriate for the Committee Chair of the committee to consult with the student and the committee members about the scope of the proposal.

In response to submission of the Step 2 Candidacy Proposal, each committee member will provide an evaluation similar in style to a review of a journal article. These evaluations should be sent to the Committee Chair via email. The evaluations will be collated and sent to the student by the Committee Chair according to the Advancement to Candidacy Timeline (see below). In their evaluations, each committee member should provide a judgment of pass, conditional pass, or fail. A vote of 3/4 is required for a pass. A “Conditional Pass” counts as a “pass” in terms of the needed 3/4 vote; however, the student is expected to formally address concerns raised by specific evaluator(s), as described in more detail below.

*If the student passes Step 2 (i.e., at least three “pass” votes, none of which are “conditional pass”), the Committee Chair should record the “pass” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain it. The outcome and evaluations should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. Proceed to Step 3.*
If the student conditionally passes Step 2 (i.e., one or more of the three required pass votes are "conditional"), the Committee Chair should indicate this outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain it. The outcome and rubrics should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

Within four weeks (excluding breaks and holidays) of receiving feedback, the student should revise and resubmit the Candidacy Proposal and/or reading list (as required based on the evaluation(s)) to her/his Committee Chair and provide an additional memo documenting how the concerns have been addressed. As soon as possible after receiving the revised proposal and/or reading list along with the memo, the Committee Chair should distribute the documents to the committee member(s) who voted "Conditional Pass." Within two weeks, the committee member (or members) who originally voted "Conditional Pass" should provide written feedback to the Committee Chair (e.g., by email) indicating whether the student has successfully revised the proposal and/or reading list. The committee member(s) should provide an updated pass or conditional pass vote as part of the written feedback. This process is repeated until the student is deemed to have adequately addressed the feedback and the "Conditional Pass" vote(s) is (are) updated to "Pass." At that point the Committee Chair should update the vote(s) to "Pass" on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain the form. The outcome should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. Proceed to Step 3.

If the student does not pass Step 2 (i.e., more than one “fail” vote), the Committee Chair should record the “fail” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain it. The outcome and evaluations should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

After receiving the feedback the student should make fundamental revisions/changes suggested by the committee and resubmit the candidacy proposal within four academic weeks (excluding breaks and holidays). After receiving the revision, committee members should provide a written re-evaluation (including pass/conditional pass/fail judgement) to the Committee Chair via email within four weeks.

If the student passes the second attempt at Step 2 (i.e., at least three “pass” votes, none of which are “conditional pass”), the Committee Chair should record the “pass” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain it. The outcome and evaluations should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

In proceeding to Step 3, the student should allow at least 15 weeks for development and submission of the longer Candidacy Paper. This will, of course, require departure from the expected timeline laid out below, and so every effort should be made to move forward and complete the process in a timely fashion.

If the student conditionally passes the second attempt at Step 2, proceed as described above for a conditional pass of Step 2.

If the student does not pass the second attempt at Step 2, the Committee Chair should record the “fail” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form, have all committee members print and sign their names on the form, and submit the form to the Graduate Secretary for placement in the student’s file. The outcome and evaluations should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. At this point, because the student has received more than one “fail” outcome, a dismissal recommendation to the Department Chair will be
forthcoming from the Graduate Education Committee. The student should be made aware of this. Finally, the Report of Candidacy Examination form (not to be confused Report of Comprehensive Examination form used to record outcomes all throughout the process) should be signed by the student’s advisor, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Chair and then be sent on to the Registrar and the College Dean (with copies sent to the chair and the student).

**Step 3: Candidacy Paper:** The required length of the final Candidacy Paper is 9,000 words maximum, excluding bibliography, tables, or appendices. The purpose of the paper is to provide the student with the opportunity to develop their expertise in a sub-field of one of the department’s program areas. The topic should be narrower than an entire program area but broader than a specific dissertation topic. The paper shall include a review of the literature of the student’s substantive focus as well as a description of at least two research projects that represent the student’s research agenda. The student shall discuss the significance of the proposed projects, demonstrate how the projects will address gaps in the existing literature, identify research questions, and describe an appropriate research methodology. The student shall also include a dissemination plan for the projects. For instance, the student will briefly discuss plans for how the candidacy paper will be modified into independent papers for publication and/or chapters within the dissertation.

It is expected that the student will work independently to incorporate the suggestions of the committee members provided in response to the earlier Step 2 proposal/reading list into their final Candidacy Paper, but s/he may meet with individual committee members to seek clarification on specific points. The student is expected to address the committee’s feedback in the form of a supplementary response memo in which the student explains how the critiques have been addressed. The response memo should be submitted to the Committee Chair and the committee as a separate document along with the Step 3 Candidacy Paper.

Note: *The Candidacy Paper must not depart from the Candidacy Proposal. If the committee determines that the paper is substantially different than the proposal, this counts as a failed attempt, and the student will need to redo the paper to make it consistent with the original proposal and feedback received on it.*

Committee members will assess the paper using the “Doctoral Program Candidacy Paper Grading Rubric” (available as an electronic form on the Department website; hereafter referred to as the rubric). The Candidacy Paper must be distributed to the committee at least three weeks before the date of the oral examination. Committee members must provide their rubrics to the Committee Chair within two weeks of receiving the paper (i.e., no later than one week prior to the date of the oral exam). A vote of 3/4 is required for a pass. If the candidacy paper does not receive a “pass” outcome, the Committee Chair should immediately cancel the oral defense (i.e., the day the feedback is received). The various outcomes are described in detail below.

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that as with the Step 2 Candidacy Proposal, a “Conditional Pass” category is included on the grading rubric. Again, a “Conditional Pass” counts as a “pass” in terms of the needed 3/4 vote (and so the student may proceed to Step 4); however, the student is expected to formally address concerns raised by specific evaluator(s), as described below.

If the student passes Step 3 (i.e., at least three passing votes, none of which are “conditional”), the Committee Chair should indicate this outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and
retain it. The outcome and rubrics should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. Proceed to Step 4.

If the student conditionally passes Step 3 (i.e., one or more of the three required pass votes are “conditional”), the Committee Chair should indicate this outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain it. The outcome and rubrics should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

Within four weeks (excluding breaks and holidays) of receiving feedback, the student should revise and resubmit the paper to her/his Committee Chair and provide an additional memo documenting how the concerns have been addressed. Upon receiving the revised paper and memo, the Committee Chair should immediately distribute the documents to the committee member(s) who voted “Conditional Pass.” Within two weeks, the committee member (or members) who originally voted “Conditional Pass” should provide written feedback to the Committee Chair (e.g., by email) indicating whether the student has successfully revised the paper. The rubric is not required here, but committee members should still provide an updated pass or conditional pass vote as part of their feedback. This process is repeated until the student is deemed to have adequately addressed the feedback and the “Conditional Pass” vote(s) is (are) updated to “Pass.” At that point the Committee Chair should update the vote(s) to “Pass” on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain the form. The outcome should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. Proceed to Step 4.

If the student does not pass Step 3 (i.e., more than one “fail” vote), the Committee Chair should, as mentioned above, immediately cancel the oral exam (i.e., the day committee members’ feedback and votes are received).

If the student had to redo a failed attempt at Step 2, failing Step 3 is considered a second failed attempt at the process. At this point the Committee Chair should record the “fail” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form, have all committee members print and sign their names on the form, and submit the form to the Graduate Secretary for placement in the student’s file. The outcome and rubrics should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. At this point, because the student has received more than one “fail” outcome, a dismissal recommendation to the Department Chair will be forthcoming from the Graduate Education Committee. The student should be made aware of this. Finally, the Report of Candidacy Examination form (not to be confused Report of Comprehensive Examination form used to record outcomes all throughout the process) should be signed by the student’s advisor, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Chair and then be sent on to the Registrar and the College Dean (with copies sent to the chair and the student).

If the student did NOT fail Step 2, failing Step 3 is the first failed attempt at the process. The Committee Chair should indicate this outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain it. The outcome and rubrics should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

After receiving the feedback the student should proceed by making fundamental revisions/changes suggested by the committee and resubmit the paper within 15 weeks (excluding breaks and holidays) and at least three weeks before a rescheduled date for the oral examination.
After receiving the revision, committee members should use a new copy of the grading rubric and provide a re-evaluation (including pass/fail judgement) to the Committee Chair within two weeks of receiving the revised paper (i.e., no later than one week prior to the date of the oral exam). Again, a vote of 3/4 is required for a pass.

If the student passes the **second attempt** at Step 3, the Committee Chair should record the “pass” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain it. The outcome and evaluations should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. Proceed to Step 4.

If the student **conditionally passes** the **second attempt** at Step 3, proceed as described above for a conditional pass of Step 3.

If the student **does not pass** the **second attempt** at Step 3 the Committee Chair should record the “fail” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form, have all committee members print and sign their names on the form, and submit the form to the Graduate Secretary. The outcome and rubrics should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. At this point, because the student has received more than one “fail” outcome, a dismissal recommendation to the Department Chair will be forthcoming from the Graduate Education Committee. The student should be made aware of this. Finally, the Report of Candidacy Examination form (not to be confused Report of Comprehensive Examination form used to record outcomes all throughout the process) should be signed by the student’s advisor, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Chair and then be sent on to the Registrar and the College Dean (with copies sent to the chair and the student).

**Step 4: The Candidacy Oral Examination:** The final step in the candidacy process is the oral examination, which is attended by all committee members, and which will be approximately two hours in length.

The oral examination is divided into two parts. In the first part, the candidate’s general knowledge in their specific substantive focus is assessed. This includes the major theoretical and empirical contributions, debates, and methodological issues, including but not limited to coursework. Candidates should expect to be asked questions pertaining to their program area that are relevant to their substantive focus. In the second part of the exam, the candidate will answer questions concerning their research agenda paper. This will include discussion of the research questions, the theoretical frameworks, significance of the projects, the research designs, and the dissemination plans.

At the end of the exam, the committee will confer in private to discuss the oral defense. In order to pass, the student must receive at least a vote of 3/4 pass. As with the paper (Step 3), a committee member may vote to conditionally pass the oral defense.

If the student passes Step 4 (i.e., at least three passing votes, none of which are “conditional”), the Committee Chair should indicate this outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form, have all committee members print and sign their names on the form, submit it to the Graduate Secretary, and notify the student within 24 hours that s/he has successfully completed the entire process. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

If the student conditionally passes Step 4 (i.e., one or more of the three required pass votes are “conditional”), the Committee Chair should indicate this outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and retain the form until the student successfully completes the entire process. A
“conditional pass” vote on the oral defense suggests a weakness/problem (e.g., an acute issue preventing the student from expressing her/his knowledge of the topics) that the committee feels could be addressed with a very high likelihood of success in a redo of the oral defense. The Committee Chair should notify the student in writing (e.g., by email) of the “conditional pass” outcome within 24 hours of the oral defense. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

Within two weeks, the Committee Chair will send a written correspondence (e.g., by e-mail) that explains the reason(s) for the outcome and suggestions for improvement, as conveyed by committee members. After receiving the feedback, the defense should be rescheduled as soon as possible based on committee member availability, ideally within four academic weeks (excluding breaks and holidays). This process is repeated until the student is deemed to have adequately addressed the issues/concerns raised. At that point the Committee Chair should update the vote(s) to “Pass” on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form, have all committee members print and sign their names on the form, submit it to the Graduate Secretary, and notify the student within 24 hours that s/he has successfully completed the entire process. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message.

If the student does not pass Step 4 (i.e., more than one “fail” outcome), the Committee Chair should record the “fail” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form.

If the student had to redo a failed attempt at Step 2 or Step 3, failing Step 4 is considered a second failed attempt at the process. At this point the Committee Chair should have all committee members print and sign their names on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and submit it to the Graduate Secretary. The student should be notified of the outcome within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. At this point, because the student has received more than one “fail” outcome, a dismissal recommendation to the Department Chair will be forthcoming from the Graduate Education Committee. The student should be made aware of this. Also, within two weeks, the Committee Chair will send a written correspondence (e.g., by e-mail) that explains the reason(s) for the outcome. Finally, the Report of Candidacy Examination form (not to be confused Report of Comprehensive Examination form used to record outcomes all throughout the process) should be signed by the student’s advisor, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Chair and then be sent on to the Registrar and the College Dean (with copies sent to the chair and the student).

If the student did NOT fail either of the earlier steps (2 or 3), failing Step 4 is the first failed attempt at the process. The Committee Chair should notify the student in writing (e.g., by email) of the “fail” outcome within 24 hours of the oral defense. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. Also, within two weeks, the Committee Chair will send a written correspondence (e.g., by e-mail) that explains the reason(s) for the outcome and suggestions for improvement, as conveyed by committee members. The defense should be rescheduled as soon as possible based on committee members availability, ideally within four academic weeks (excluding breaks and holidays). See above for how to proceed if the student ultimately passes or conditionally passes Step 4.

However, if the student fails the oral defense a second time, this is considered a second failed attempt at the process. The Committee Chair should record the “fail” outcome on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form, have all committee members print and sign their names on the form, and submit the form to the Graduate Secretary. The outcome should be e-mailed to the student within 24 hours. The Graduate Coordinator should be copied on this message. At this point, because the student has received more than one “fail” outcome, a dismissal recommendation to the Department Chair will be forthcoming from the Graduate Education Committee. The student should be made aware of this.
Finally, the Report of Candidacy Examination form (not to be confused Report of Comprehensive Examination form used to record outcomes all throughout the process) should be signed by the student’s advisor, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Chair and then be sent on to the Registrar and the College Dean (with copies sent to the chair and the student).

**IMPORTANT:** If the students passes BOTH the paper and the oral defense with 4/4 “pass” votes and no “conditional” passes at either step, the student is eligible to pass the candidacy examination process “with distinction.” While conferring in private at the conclusion of the student’s oral examination, any committee member may call for a “pass with distinction” vote. In order to pass with distinction, the vote must be unanimous and may be conducted openly or anonymously at the committee’s discretion. If the student passes with distinction, this should be noted on the Report of Comprehensive Examination form.

**Advancement to Candidacy Timeline**

Years 1 to 3: Working with his/her advisor, the student should identify appropriate courses in the two areas of interest. As the student completes these courses, they should be noted on the “Coursework Approval Form.” As soon as the student has completed the coursework in both their areas, they should submit this form to the Graduate Coordinator via the Graduate Secretary.

Below is the expected two-semester timeline for those who start the Advancement to Candidacy process in the fall or spring of the academic year. The timelines assume that the student is engaging in this process in Year 3, although for those who start in the spring the process will continue into Year 4. Students may complete any of these requirements earlier, on the advice of their advisor.

**End of the Third Week of the First Semester:** Complete the Candidacy Committee Request Form and submit it to the Graduate Coordinator via the Graduate Secretary.

**End of the Fifth Week of the First Semester:** Submit the Step 2 Candidacy Proposal to the Committee Chair. The Committee Chair will immediately distribute the proposal to the entire committee.

**End of the Ninth Week of the First Semester:** The Committee Chair will distribute committee reviews to the student.

**End of the Ninth Week of the Second Semester:** The Step 3 Candidacy Paper and response memo are submitted to the Committee Chair. The Committee Chair will immediately distribute these documents to the entire committee.

**End of the Fifteenth Week of the Second Semester:** Last date to complete the Step 4 Oral Exam.

**Responsibilities and Expectations**

For the Student:

1. You will identify your timeline and communicate to the Graduate Coordinator of your intention and timeline for completing your Advancement to Candidacy.
2. You will identify your Candidacy Committee Chair and one additional faculty member.
3. You will ensure that you have taken three substantive courses in the program area in which you intend to write your Candidacy paper.
4. You will consult with your Candidacy Committee Chair on the scope and focus of your Candidacy Paper.
5. You will follow the proposed timeline.
6. You will work independently on all aspect of the process. While you may seek advice and consultation regarding decision points or areas of concern regarding your paper from Candidacy Committee Chair, you should not expect the Committee Chair to read and provide comments on drafts.

For the Candidacy Committee Chair:

1. You are responsible to assist the student with respect to the scope and focus of their paper. This includes advising the student on the initial 2,500 word Proposal.
2. You are responsible to advise the student throughout the process, as it is expected that the student will have questions regarding the development of both the 2,500 word Proposal and the final Candidacy Paper. This advice includes helping the student resolve issues regarding the direction, breadth and depth of the paper.
3. Since this is an exam, you should not read and comment on drafts of the Proposal or Paper.
4. You will coordinate the Candidacy process with the other members of the committee.
5. You will convene the Candidacy Committee for the Oral Defense.
6. You will track the student’s progress throughout the process using the Report of Comprehensive Examination form and communicate outcomes at each step to the Graduate Coordinator via email.
7. You will ensure that the separate university-level Report of Candidacy Examination form is submitted to the Graduate Secretary when the student successfully or unsuccessfully completes the entire process.

For the Candidacy Committee Members:

1. You are responsible to reading and commenting on the 2,500 word Proposal and the final Paper in a timely manner.
2. You are expected to attend the oral defense.
3. You are not expected to advise or consult with the student on the Proposal or Paper.
4. You are not expected to read or comment on drafts of the Proposal or Paper.
Forms

Coursework Approval Form (available HERE)

Prior to advancing to candidacy, students must complete coursework in three of the four substantive areas offered by the joint graduate program (Criminology/Deviance, Inequality, Medical Sociology/Mental Health, or Social Psychology). Students are required to take 9 hours of electives (three courses) in a program area, and 9 hours of electives (three courses) in a second area.

After the completion of these requirements submit this form to the Graduate Coordinator / Director via the Graduate Secretary at your home campus.

Student Name: ____________________________ Date __________

1. First Program Area ____________________________

   Course 1: _______________________________ Completed __________
   (Course Number and Title) (Semester / Year)

   Course 2: _______________________________ Completed __________
   (Course Number and Title) (Semester / Year)

   Course 3: _______________________________ Completed __________
   (Course Number and Title) (Semester / Year)

2. Second Program Area ____________________________

   Course 1: _______________________________ Completed __________
   (Course Number and Title) (Semester / Year)

   Course 2: _______________________________ Completed __________
   (Course Number and Title) (Semester / Year)

   Course 3: _______________________________ Completed __________
   (Course Number and Title) (Semester / Year)

Approval: ____________________________ (Graduate Coordinator / Director) (Date approved)
Candidacy Committee Request Form (available HERE)

Please fill out the first four sections and submit to the Graduate Director / Coordinator via the Graduate Secretary at your home campus by the end of the third week of the semester in which you propose to begin this process. After the appointment of the full committee, you will receive a copy of this form so you can contact your committee members.

Name_________________________________ Date__________________________

1. Area of Specialization ____________________________
(Criminology/Deviance, Inequality, Medical Sociology/Mental Health, or Social Psychology)

2. Specific Substantive Focus______________________________

3. Courses within first program substantive area (two courses must be taken before Step 1 of advancement to candidacy)
   Course 1:_____________________________ Completed______________ (Semester / Year)
   Course 2:_____________________________ Completed______________ (Semester / Year)

4. Course within the second program substantive area (one course must be taken before Step 1 of advancement to candidacy)
   Course 1:_____________________________ Completed______________ (Semester / Year)

5. Student Committee Selections
   Chair: __________________________        __________________________        __________________________
           (print / type name)                      Signature of faculty            Date
   Member: __________________________        __________________________        __________________________
           (print / type name)                      Signature of faculty            Date

6. Appointed Members:
   Member: __________________________        Member: __________________________
Committee members should print and sign their names after the overall outcome is recorded. The form should be turned in to the Graduate Secretary at that time. The Committee Chair should record (above) and notify the Graduate Coordinator by email of the outcomes at each step.

**Report of Comprehensive Examination** (available HERE)

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<tr>
<th>Area (Criminology/Deviance, Medical Soc., etc.):</th>
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<th>Specific Substantive Focus:</th>
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### Step 2: Proposal

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<td></td>
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Date: __________

#### (second record

if needed)

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Date: __________

### Step 3: Paper

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Date: __________

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<td></td>
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<td>Fail</td>
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Date: __________

### Step 4: Oral Exam

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<td>Cond. Pass</td>
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<td>Fail</td>
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Date: __________

#### (second record

if needed)

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<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cond. Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fail</td>
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</tbody>
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Date: __________

### Notes:

1. More than one “fail” vote = fail outcome. No more than one “fail” vote and one or more “conditional pass” votes = conditional pass outcome. At least three “pass” votes and no “conditional pass” votes = pass outcome.
2. An overall outcome (noted below) of “fail” results if the student receives two “fail” outcomes above.
3. If a student passes the paper and the oral exam without any “conditional pass” or “fail” votes, a vote may be called at the end of the oral exam to pass the student “with distinction.” The vote must be unanimous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall outcome:</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Pass w/Distinction</th>
<th>Fail</th>
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Committee members should print and sign their names after the overall outcome is recorded. The form should be turned in to the Graduate Secretary at that time. The Committee Chair should record (above) and notify the Graduate Coordinator by email of the outcomes at each step.
An electronic version of this form is available [HERE](#). File this one with the university.
An electronic version of this form is available [HERE](#).

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**Doctoral Program Candidacy Paper Grading Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Faculty Name:</th>
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The candidacy paper should include a literature review in the student’s substantive focus and description of at least two research projects that represent the student’s research agenda. The paper needs to identify clear research questions, discuss the significance of the proposed projects, and outline a research plan using appropriate methods. In addition, the student should also discuss dissemination plans for her/his projects (see Graduate Handbook for more details).

In evaluating the candidacy paper, committee members are to assess the organization, depth, completeness, and clarity of writing (see below for operationalization of these criteria). Each category (Organization, Depth of Answer, etc.) should be assessed as Exceptional, Good, Adequate, or Poor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category</strong></th>
<th><strong>Criteria</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The paper has a logical order and arrangement of paragraphs, with a logical arrangement of material within paragraphs and a smooth transition between them. The organization of the answer enhances the reader’s understanding of the topic and how the proposed research would address significant questions in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depth of Answer</strong></td>
<td>The paper clearly demonstrates the student’s mastery of the extant literature. The student develops important research questions that fill an existing gap in the literature. The student discusses appropriate research plans and methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completeness and Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>The paper includes all parts of the required paper, including a clear literature review, identification of clear research questions, a discussion of the significance of the projects, a research plan, and dissemination plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity of Writing</strong></td>
<td>The paper has been proofread and corrected, thus containing no errors in spelling, grammar, sentence structure, or punctuation. The use of vocabulary and terminology are appropriate to the answer. The writing style is effective, and the writer's voice demonstrates professionalism and an engagement with the content of the answer.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Overall Grade for Paper</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cond Pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION

Each doctoral candidate must complete a dissertation demonstrating his or her ability to conduct scholarly research. This dissertation should be an original contribution to the field of sociology. The dissertation work is formally begun upon completion of all course work and the comprehensive examinations.

**Dissertation Director**

The dissertation director may be from either department of the joint program and does not have to be the same person who advised the student up through the comprehensive examination process. The only restrictions are that the dissertation director must be a full-time faculty member of the joint program in sociology, and either have graduate faculty status in Category II at The University of Akron or be approved for dissertation direction at Kent State University with an F-4 graduate faculty status. If a student chooses to select a dissertation advisor who is from the other university, then a member of the committee from the student’s home university will be responsible for the administrative details associated with completion of the dissertation. The dissertation process will follow the guidelines of the university at which the student is administratively based in regard to formatting and completion deadlines. Once the dissertation director has agreed to serve, written notification of this decision to the Graduate Coordinator or Director is required (see the forms page on departmental website).

**Dissertation Committee**

The selection of the dissertation committee members is made jointly by the student and dissertation director. The members of this committee approve the dissertation proposal, work closely with the student as the dissertation progresses, and serve on the final oral defense examining committee.

All dissertation committees shall have at least 5 committee members, including a member from outside the joint sociology program. A majority of the committee membership must have a status on the graduate faculty that allows them to direct doctoral dissertations (i.e., Category II or F-4). In addition, a majority of the committee members (including the director) must be from the joint program in sociology.

One member of the committee must be from a department other than sociology at the student’s home university – this member must also hold Category II (UA) or F-4 (KSU) graduate faculty status. This member ought to be selected so as to be maximally beneficial to the student in the design and conduct of the research, providing a perspective from a related discipline.

Dissertation committees may include other graduate faculty members but these minimum requirements must be met. The dissertation committee should be formed as soon as possible after the dissertation director is selected. The intent is that the committee will have full input into the dissertation project as it is being planned and initiated, not after it has been substantially completed. At the University of Akron, once the committee is formed (including the outside member) the student must notify the Graduate Coordinator or Director, in writing, of the committee’s composition and the title of the dissertation proposal (see the forms page on UA’s departmental website). The committee composition must also be submitted to and approved by the UA graduate school. At The University of Akron, this committee notification must be submitted and approved no later than 3 months prior to the dissertation defense. In other words, the dissertation defense may not take place until at least three
months after the form is filed. Failure to file the form three months prior will, therefore result in a delay of a student’s defense and, potentially, commencement.)

The outside member of the committee shall function as a regular member of the committee, attending all meetings and receiving preliminary drafts or chapters as do other committee members. The outside member of the committee is usually someone who may provide additional expertise to the dissertation research from a related field and is also someone who assures that the dissertation process is conducted fairly and that quality standards are maintained.

The schedules of all committee members, including the outside member, shall be considered when selecting a time for all committee meetings, including the final dissertation defense.

**Dissertation Proposal**

A dissertation proposal is to be prepared by the student and approved by the dissertation committee. The proposal meeting should occur no later than the semester prior to the thesis defense. Further, the research proposal must be approved by the Institutional Review Board of the student’s home university prior to the initiation of data collection or analysis.

The details of the proposal are to be determined by the dissertation director and committee but would typically include:

1. Identification and explanation of the general problem or issue to be investigated.
2. A brief review of the literature.
3. A listing of the research questions or hypotheses to be investigated.
4. A brief explanation of the major concepts and/or variables involved and their operationalization.
5. The design, methodology and analytic techniques to be used.

A meeting will be held with all committee members and the student to approve or disapprove of the proposal. This meeting must take place within no less than 10 days, and no more than three weeks of the committee receiving the completed document. The proposal can be approved or returned to the student for further revision.

Approval of the proposal will be indicated by the signature of each member of the committee on the appropriate form and kept on file in the department office (see the forms page on departmental website). All committee members reserve the right to withhold their signatory approval until all changes to the proposal have been made and are deemed satisfactory.

**Examination and Oral Defense of the Dissertation**

When the dissertation is completed, the Dean of Arts and Sciences must be notified at KSU so that a Graduate Faculty Representative may be appointed. Once the appointment is made (KSU), a printed copy in final form must then be submitted to each committee member and the Graduate Faculty Representative (at KSU) for their evaluation. The dissertation director should schedule a preliminary meeting of the committee, known as the pre-oral, to decide if the dissertation is ready for defense. If the dissertation committee and the (KSU) Graduate Faculty Representative judge the dissertation ready
for defense, a date and time for the defense will be established. The oral defense date must be no less than 10 days (but preferably two weeks) after the pre-oral meeting. The dissertation director must inform the student of the result of the pre-oral and any changes that may have been requested to be made to the document prior to the oral defense. The director will also inform the student as to whether a new written version of the dissertation is to be submitted to the committee prior to the oral defense. If so, such written work should be given to the committee at least 10 days prior to the oral defense date so that the committee members have a chance to review the document.

Notification of the dissertation defense must be sent to all members of the joint program in sociology. This notification must include dissertation title, date, time, place and an invitation to attend (but not vote). This notification should occur at least 10 days prior to the scheduled defense. At the oral defense, the committee and outside Graduate Faculty Representative (at KSU) will examine the student on all relevant and pertinent aspects of the dissertation.

The committee may reject the dissertation document, require major or minor changes, or accept the dissertation. At the end of the oral defense, all committee members will be polled for their vote on the oral defense (pass or fail). A maximum of one “fail” vote is allowed for the student to pass. More than one “fail” vote constitutes failure for the student. A failed dissertation defense may not be repeated. If further changes to the dissertation document are necessary, they should be made as quickly as possible. All committee members reserve the right to withhold their signatory approval until all changes have been made and are deemed satisfactory.

All committee members will affix their signatures to a single form signifying their vote (see the forms page on departmental website). The completed form will be sent to the Graduate School indicating that the defense has been held, and that the student has passed or failed. All appropriate forms must be on file in the Graduate School at the appropriate times. It is the responsibility of the student to know which forms must be completed and filed, and at what times.

**Dissertation Credits**

Students must complete at least 30 semester hours of dissertation credit. More than 30 hours may be taken but only that amount will count toward the degree. These credits will be assigned to the dissertation director.

**Final Requirements and Submission of Dissertation to the Graduate School**

Guidelines for preparing a dissertation can be found on the home university’s graduate school website. These requirements will specify the final details of submission, including binding fees, submission fees, and other administrative details for final submission. **It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of the deadlines set by their Graduate School for graduation.** The deadline to apply for graduation is early in the semester you plan to graduate (see [http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-deadlines](http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-deadlines)).

**Awarding of the Doctoral Degree**

The Ph.D. degree will be awarded from the school at which the student is administratively based. The fact that either the dissertation director may be from the other campus does not affect where the degree is awarded. It is usually possible for a director from the other campus to attend the home university’s graduation ceremonies and to “hood” the student receiving the doctoral degree.
POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious breach of professional ethics. To ensure that students understand plagiarism, in all its forms, every student is required to complete the following in their first semester of the graduate program.

1. Students will complete an online CITI training which includes a section on ethics, and print the completion certificate.
2. Students will complete an online program on plagiarism, and print the documentation provided upon passing the program.

Both documents must be submitted to the graduate director of their home department for inclusion in their file.

A single act of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the graduate program.

Procedures Concerning Plagiarism

If a faculty member suspect a student has plagiarize an assignment, the faculty member will present the students paper and a copy of the original source to the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) by submitting the materials to either the Department Chair or Graduate Program Coordinator.

All cases of suspected plagiarism will be brought to the JEC.

The JEC will assess the evidence and make the final decision as to the presence or absence of plagiarism.

The JEC will recommend appropriate disciplinary action to the Graduate Committee of the student’s campus. The Graduate Committee will then make a final recommendation as to disciplinary action. If the disciplinary action is dismissal from the graduate program, the graduate committee will notify the Graduate School and ask that the student be formally dismissed.

For more on university policy concerning plagiarism, please see: http://libguides.library.kent.edu/c.php?g=278246&p=1854288

Awards & Scholarships

Department Awards

Elaine Mai Schock Award: Awarded to an outstanding Master’s student in Sociology. 
Requisites: GPA, faculty nomination, and GEC vote. 
Amount of Award: $100, non-renewable.

Outstanding Doctoral Student Award: Awarded to an outstanding Doctoral student in Sociology
Requisites: GPA, faculty nomination, and final GEC vote. 
Amount of Award: $100, non-renewable.
James E. Fleming Memorial Award: Awarded to author of the best paper in sociological theory.
Requisites: GPA, faculty nomination, and final faculty vote.
Amount of Award: $100, non-renewable
Available to: undergraduate of any rank, graduate

James T. Laing Scholarship in Sociology: Awarded to a graduate student in good academic standing, who is not graduating, and who has taken an active and engaged role in the department or discipline.
Amount of Award: $1,000 to be awarded the following Fall semester. Number of awards may vary from year to year.

Lewis-Benson Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award: Awarded to a graduate student who has demonstrated teaching excellence in at least one course taught independently. A student may only win this award once.

University Awards & Scholarships

For information on awards and scholarships submitted at the Graduate College level, see the links below or ask the Graduate Coordinator for more information:

- University Fellowship.
  For eligibility criteria and the nomination form, visit http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/university-fellowship.
- Jeanette and Louis Reuter Fellowship in Developmental Science.
  For eligibility criteria and the nomination form, visit http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/reuter-fellowship.
- David B. Smith Award.
  For eligibility criteria and the nomination form, visit http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/smith-award.
- Lillian Friedman Award.
  For eligibility criteria and the nomination form, visit http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/friedman-award.

Emergencies

Each department has an emergency evacuation plan. Please consult with other graduate students and faculty to learn details regarding this plan (e.g., where to evacuate from your office space in the event of an emergency). The most common emergencies are tornados or a gas link. Merrill Hall has two rally points in the event of an emergency. These are the stone library gardens (rally point 1) and Hilltop Drive in front of Cartwright Hall (rally point 2). For additional information on the university’s response plan and dealing with difficult or troubled students, please see the website for further information:

http://www.kent.edu/stepupspeakout
APPENDIX A: M.A. THESIS PROPOSAL – SUGGESTED OUTLINE & GUIDELINES

This suggested outline is intended as an aid for the student and his or her thesis advisor in preparing the thesis proposal. The nature of the problem to be investigated and the procedure to be used in the investigation will result in differential emphases and details on the various outline sections. These should be worked out in consultation with your advisor.

I. **Introduction and Statement of problem**
   A. State the general problem/question to be investigated.
   B. Introduce the reader to the main goals and contributions of your proposed project.

II. **Literature Review**
    Review theoretical and substantive literature related to your topic. This section should be guided by your general research question(s) and cover the literature relevant to answer that/those questions. In this section, most authors introduce a “guiding” theoretical framework, which may also help to better specification of your final research questions, hypotheses, and analytic approach.

II. **Research Questions and hypotheses**
    State your specific research questions/hypotheses that emerge from the preceding literature review.

III. **Methods**
    Identify and explain the data and measures that you will use to investigate your research questions/hypotheses. The particular research methods employed depends on the nature of the problem and/or the state of knowledge in the area. This should be worked out in consultation with your advisor.

IV. **Data Analysis**
    Indicate your analytic strategy – i.e., how you will evaluate your data in relation to your research questions/hypotheses.

V. **Conclusion**
    Restate the importance of your proposed project and the contributions that completing the project will make to the relevant literature(s).

NOTE: If it is determined by the graduate faculty that completing a doctoral degree is no longer possible or desirable, the M.A. degree may be completed through the “non-thesis option.” Please see Appendix A for the non-thesis process.
APPENDIX B: COLLEGIAL REVIEW OF TEACHING

Collegial Review of Teaching: Traditional Delivery (available HERE)

Date _________________________
Instructor __________________________
Faculty Reviewer _________________

Course Name and Number__________________________________

Rating scale (1=very poor, 2= weak, 3=average, 4=good, 5=excellent, N/A=not applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>Higher order thinking was required</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor related ideas to prior knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course content reflects state-of-the-field</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ORGANIZATION | Introduction stated organization of lecture | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|              | Effective transitions (clear w/summaries) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|              | Clear organizational plan | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|              | Concluded by summarizing main ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

| INTERACTION | Effectively held classes attention | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|             | Achieved active student involvement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|             | Student-instructor interaction is respectful and appropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|             | Student-to-student interaction is respectful and appropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

| VERBAL/NON-VERBAL | Spoke clearly and audibly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|                   | Absence of verbalized pauses (er, ah, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|                   | Instructor spoke extemporaneously | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|                   | Rate of delivery was appropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|                   | Confident & enthusiastic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

| COURSE MATERIALS | Powerpoint clear & well-organized | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

Syllabus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course learning objectives clear</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course learning objectives appropriate for level of class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course objectives consistent with established student learning outcomes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies are described comprehensively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies are consistent with department &amp; university policy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular feedback about student performance provided in a timely manner throughout the course</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES:

STRENGTHS: (e.g. use of comparisons & contrasts, positive feedback, opportunity provided for student questions)

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: (e.g. unable to answer student questions, overall topic knowledge, relevance of examples)

In the image, there is a table format document titled "Collegial Review of Teaching: Online Delivery (available HERE)". The table includes columns for Date, Instructor, Faculty Reviewer, Course Name and Number, and a rating scale for various aspects of the course delivery. The rating scale is from 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent), with N/A for not applicable.

### CONTENT
- **Higher order thinking required**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Course content reflects state-of-the-field**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

### ORGANIZATION
- **Course is well-organized and easy to navigate**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Course design presents course material clearly throughout the course**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **All web pages are visually and functionally consistent throughout the course**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Course uses a variety of technology tools to appropriately facilitate communication and learning**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Course optimizes internet access and effectively engages students in the learning process**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **All web pages are visually and functionally consistent throughout the course**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Instructional and Assessment activities are closely aligned**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

### INTERACTION
- **Course provides multiple visual, textual, and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Course provides multiple activities that help students develop critical thinking**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Appropriate level of student-instructor interaction**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Student-instructor interaction is respectful and appropriate**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Student-to-student interaction is respectful and appropriate**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

### COURSE MATERIALS
- **Powerpoint clear & well-organized**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

### Syllabus:
- **Course learning objectives clear**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Course learning objectives appropriate for level of class**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Course objectives consistent with established student learning outcomes**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Policies are described comprehensively**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Policies are consistent with department & university policy**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
- **Regular feedback about student performance provided in a timely manner throughout the course**: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A
NOTES:

STRENGTHS: (e.g. use of comparisons & contrasts, positive feedback, opportunity provided for student questions)

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: (e.g. unable to answer student questions, overall topic knowledge, relevance of examples)

Adapted from: http://www.csuchico.edu/roi/the_rubric.shtml
APPENDIX C: REQUIRED PAPERWORK (ideal timeline)

1st Year
Notice of Matriculation/Change in Prog. of Study Due: Start of semester if you enter without an M.A.
Declaration of Advisor Form Due: End of fall semester
Plan of Study & Vita Due: End of spring semester

2nd Year
Approval of Thesis Topic Due: End of fall semester
Note: must be submitted the semester before graduation.

MA Thesis Forms:
Apply for graduation (online). The very latest to do this is early in the semester you plan to graduate (see http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-deadlines). Ideally it should be done the semester before you plan to graduate.
Thesis Defense Announcement
Report of Thesis Final Examination
Signature Page (two copies on >50% bond paper; see the Style Guide and Instructions for Preparing Dissertations and Theses)

Post-MA Defense:
Updated Plan of Study & Vita Due: End of spring semester

3rd & 4th Year
Coursework Approval Form Due: Final semester of coursework
Candidacy Committee Request Form Due: End of the 3rd week of the fall semester
Report of Comprehensive Examination Filled out throughout the advancement to candidacy process. Due: After the student successfully or unsuccessfully completes the entire process
(filed w/department only)
Report of Candidacy Examination Filled out at the end of the advancement to candidacy process. Due: After the student successfully or unsuccessfully completed the entire process.
Updated Plan of Study & Vita Due end of spring semester

5 Year
Approval of Dissertation Topic Due: End of fall semester
Note: must be submitted the semester before graduation.

PhD Thesis Forms:
Apply for graduation (online). The very latest to do this is early in the semester you plan to graduate (see http://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-deadlines). Ideally it should be done the semester before you plan to graduate.
Dissertation Defense Announcement Due: At least 10 days prior to scheduled defense
Report of Dissertation Final Examination
Signature Page (two copies on >50% bond paper; see the Style Guide and Instructions for Preparing Dissertations and Theses)