



# **GRADUATE STUDIES MANUAL**

**Department of Sociology**

**Michigan State University**

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## **THE UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY**

Michigan State University, as a pioneer land grant university, believes that teaching and research should serve the needs of society. The university has over 40,000 students from all over the world.

The university is located in East Lansing, a community of about 50,000 residents, which is adjacent to Lansing, the state capital. The MSU campus is very spacious, with wide lawns, many trees, a winding river, flowering gardens, natural woodlots, and recreational areas. Many plays, lectures, concerts, and other cultural events are presented. MSU is an hour and a half drive from Detroit, and less than half a day's drive from such metropolitan centers as Chicago, Toronto, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Cincinnati. MSU has easy access to vacation opportunities along the Great Lakes and in scenic northern Michigan. Housing is available on campus and in the community.

## **THE DEPARTMENT: AN OVERVIEW**

The Department of Sociology is part of the College of Social Science, and also has formal ties with the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Education, and Lyman Briggs College.

In addition, many faculty have informal ties with various other departments and programs in the College of Social Science, and with the College of Human Medicine. Department members are involved in area studies and development studies through their involvement with such units as the African Studies Center, the Asian Studies Center, the Center for European and Russian Studies, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, the Center for Advanced Studies in International Development, Global Urban Studies Program, ESPP, and the Center for Women in International Development. Department members are involved in ethnic and regional studies through their connections with the Julian Samora Institute, and the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. Department members are engaged in particular topical areas of sociology through their involvement in the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center, the Center for Integrated Plant Systems, and the Center for Environmental Toxicology.

Graduate education in the Department of Sociology is intended to develop professional sociologists who will be creative research scholars, teachers, and practitioners.

The Department of Sociology at MSU has as its departmental theme, Global Transformations. Global Transformations is rapidly changing the world and our society. People, culture, goods, markets, ideas, and capital are moving globally across national boundaries at ever increasing rates. Global processes are transforming individuals and societies, changing our cities, the ways we communicate, our health and longevity, environmental risks; and leading to new risks and opportunities such as new forms of work, patterns of family living, health care delivery, and ways to distribute food. Given these extensive global changes, sociology itself is changing and no longer can we easily distinguish domestic from international issues. The theme of Global Transformation is found throughout our department's diverse activities, unifying research and scholarship among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates.

Global Transformations as a department theme celebrates our historical commitment to global

comparative and international studies of social change and inequality and African and Asian diasporas. Sociology has research, teaching and service that focus on the challenges of global understanding of social, political and cultural differences and how a global context accounts for social processes, change, and inequality both locally and abroad. This commitment to diversity is reflected in our diverse faculty and student body. The sociology department has faculty who specialize in North America, Africa, Eastern and Western Europe, Russia, Cuba, China, Japan and other areas of the World.

Please see the Sociology Department web-site for a fuller discussion of our departmental areas of emphasis [www.Sociology.msu.edu](http://www.Sociology.msu.edu).

## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### Doctor of Philosophy

The doctoral degree program in sociology is designed to give the candidate a strong background in sociological theory and methodology as well as training in a major substantive area of the discipline.

The graduate program is a doctoral program and the formal awarding of a master's degree is not required for the Ph.D. Students seeking only an M.A. degree are not ordinarily admitted to the program.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the university and of the College of Social Science, students must meet departmental requirements specified below:

- 1) Attendance at the teaching assistant workshop offered the first two to three days prior to the beginning of fall semester.
- 2) Attendance at the sociology graduate pro-seminar through the first year of study (SOC 801 Global Transformation).
- 3) By the end of 5 semesters in the program, students will prepare a professional research paper suitable for presentation at a professional meeting or publication in a professional journal. Students must give a presentation of their Qualifying Paper at a department colloquium by the end of the sixth semester of enrollment.
- 4) Satisfactory completion of required courses in theory, methods, statistics, Professional Training Seminar, and the Globalization Proseminar (total of eight courses).
- 5) Satisfactory completion of a program of study in one or more of the areas of specialization designated by the Department. Each student must complete a program of 4 substantive courses (i.e., courses in addition to those meeting the theory, statistics and methods requirements) approved by her/his guidance committee.
- 6) Enrollment in (24) SOC 999 Dissertation credits; this is a University requirement. Students are limited to a maximum enrollment of a total of 36 credits in SOC 999.
- 7) Successful completion of comprehensive examinations.
- 8) Successful defense of the dissertation.

There is no language requirement. Where acquaintance with a foreign language is necessary for advancing the special interest of the student, the student, in collaboration with the guidance committee, may decide upon the study of a foreign language appropriate to his/her research and career development.

## Doctor of Philosophy

Take all of the following MA requirements:

SOC 801 Global Transformations  
SOC 815 Classical Sociological Theory  
SOC 881 Analysis of Social Data I  
SOC 885 Overview of Research Methods

Attendance at TA Workshop

Qualifying research paper presentation

Three courses in major specialization

Completion of a total of 30 credits **including 4-8 credits of SOC 899**

IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE MA requirements, the following courses are required for the PhD:

SOC 816 Contemporary Social Theory  
SOC 882 Analysis of Social Data II  
SOC 995 Professional Training Seminar

Take at least one of the following courses (choose one which has not been taken previously):

SOC 985, SOC 986 SOC 989  
Or another Methods course that has been approved by student's guidance committee

At least one additional course in major specialization for a total of at least four (individual committees may require more)

Minimum of (24) SOC 999 dissertation credits and maximum of (36) SOC 999 credits

Comprehensive Examination

Dissertation Proposal

Dissertation

## Dual Major PhD

"All dual major doctoral degrees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. A request for the dual major degree must be submitted within one semester following its development and



within the first two years of the student's enrollment at Michigan State University. A copy of the guidance committee report must be attached. The following conditions must prevail:

1. The intent to receive the degree in two areas must be outlined in the guidance committee report.
2. The content of the guidance committee report must reflect the required standards for both departments.
3. The integrated course work must be satisfactory to both departments.
4. The single comprehensive examination must be passed to the satisfaction of both departments.
5. A guidance committee including members from both departments must be satisfied that the dissertation represents a contribution meeting the usual standards in both areas.
6. There must be a single dissertation that represents an integration of the disciplinary areas.
7. RCR requirements as defined and approved by the guidance committee will apply.

### **SPECIFIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Theory**

All graduate students are required to take, or have already taken the equivalent of, SOC 815 Classical Sociological Theory and SOC 816 Contemporary Theory. No student will be granted a Ph.D. degree without having on record:

1. A 3.0 or higher grade for SOC 815 and for SOC 816, or
2. A waiver exempting the student from these courses on the basis of having done equivalent work. (See below for more on such waivers).

#### **Statistics**

All graduate students are required to take, or have taken the equivalent of two semester statistics courses. The coursework must also be approved for graduate credit (400 level or above). The recommended courses are SOC 881 Analysis of Sociological Data I and SOC 882 Analysis of Sociological Data II. Other courses may be substituted.

1. A grade of 3.0 or higher in the approved course, or
2. A waiver form on record waiving this requirement on the basis of having done equivalent work (see below for more on such waivers).

To perform satisfactorily in any of the courses in statistics, a student must be competent in college algebra. Those who are not competent in college algebra must take a course in it (Math 110 or 116 or 120) before taking statistics.

## **Methods**

All graduate students are required to take, or have taken the equivalent of SOC 885 Methods of Sociological Inquiry. The course treats the domain assumptions and limitations of an array of sociological methods.

## **Additional Requirement in Methods**

In addition, all graduate students are required to take, or have taken the equivalent of, one specialized methods course. These courses are: 985 Qualitative Field Research; 986 Survey Research Principles; or some other 800 or 900 level specialized methods course approved by the student's advisor and their Guidance Committee.

## **Other Required Courses**

Global Transformation (SOC 801)  
Professional Training Seminar (SOC 995)

## **Waivers and Substitutions**

Waivers are granted for all areas, including Methods, Theory and Statistics. If you are using other training to substitute for departmentally required courses, you need to submit a waiver form [found at the back of graduate handbook]. This waiver form must indicate the departmental course that you have had the equivalent of and also indicate the training that has provided you with the equivalent of our course (attaching the syllabus from the College or University you took the course is suggested). Such a waiver form must be issued and signed by a faculty member who regularly teaches the course you wish to waive. In addition, your guidance committee report in GradPlan must list the Sociology course being waived and to indicate that it has been waived.

Moreover, if you are proposing to satisfy part or all of the methods requirement with a method that is different from the departmentally required courses, your guidance committee must agree that your training in this method is a reasonable alternative to one of the required Departmental methods courses.

## **TA Workshop**

All first year students are required to attend all days of the Teaching Assistant Workshop held just prior to the start of fall semester. International TAs must attend the International TA Program usually in early-mid August.

## **Qualifying Research Paper**

By the end of 5 semesters of study, students will prepare a professional research paper suitable for presentation at a professional meeting or publication in a professional journal. The maximum length of the paper should not exceed thirty pages double-spaced. Students must give a presentation of the paper at a department colloquium. Students will be expected to provide two copies of their paper to the department, one of which will be placed in the student's file and another placed in the departmental library. The paper must be presented at a department colloquium by the end of 6 semesters of study.

The purpose of this requirement is to strengthen the department's emphasis on research by ensuring that students are capable of preparing a professional research paper. It also provides a scholarly writing experience in a genre scholars actually use and engages the talents and skills of students in organizing and analyzing data beyond the typical term paper.

It is not a requirement of the Ph.D. program that a student obtain a Masters' Degree. Obtaining a Master's degree is not necessary but some students wish to get it for teaching purposes. Students are eligible to teach courses independently if they have a M.A. degree.

For those students who do not intend to obtain an M.A. degree, doing the qualifying paper is still one of the requirements of the Ph.D. program. You do not have to enroll in SOC 899 at all and it is best if you do not do so. You do not have to have the qualifying paper bound or typed according to the special university format. You do have to submit a clean, typed, final copy to the department in some standard format.

For those students who do intend to obtain an M.A. degree, the qualifying paper serves for what the university calls a masters' thesis. You must enroll in at least (4) credits of SOC 899 (maximum of 8 credits). You must submit a copy of the paper to the graduate school in the format they prescribe and pay all of the fees for binding, etc., that are required. This process done online through ProQuest. The [graduate school](#) provides information on their website .

For all students the completion of the qualifying paper is a time of evaluation. Each student's committee must recommend to the department whether or not the student should be allowed to continue in the program. This is true whether or not the student intends to continue.

The qualifying paper itself is essentially a report of research findings such as would be submitted for publication in a journal. It is to be article length (30 typed pages maximum), article style (e.g., no long literature reviews) and data based. Of course, all kinds of data are included. If new data is collected, the approval of the human subjects committee (Human Research Protection Program <http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/> ) must have been obtained in advance no matter what kind of data it is. Even if secondary analysis of an existing data file is performed, approval of Human Research Protection Program may be necessary. Check out their web site for current instructions. ([http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu](http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/) )

The presentation is not a simple reading of the paper. Instead it is a verbal presentation of the material in the paper but in the form of a talk or lecture such as would be given at a professional meeting. Use of overheads, charts, handouts, visual aids and the like is encouraged. It is hoped that every student will try

to do the same presentation at an appropriate professional meeting at some time in the future. Each person will have roughly 15 minutes to do the presentation. The audience will be all faculty and graduate students in the department. There will be only two times each year when presentations may be given. These will be announced at the beginning of each year, but are usually in November and April.

Prior to the presentation, the student's draft must have been approved by a committee of the advisor and of the three remaining faculty members from the student's guidance committee. This approval shall mean that the paper is acceptable for final approval with only minor revisions. The student will only be permitted to give the oral presentation when the student has turned in to the graduate secretary the signed "Graduate Student Qualifying Paper Approval Form", indicating the committee's approval.

When the final version of the paper is complete, a form or letter with a final grade for the paper must be submitted and signed by the chair and two other members of the guidance committee.

### **Qualifying Papers Written Elsewhere**

Students entering the graduate program in sociology at Michigan State University can request to have the qualifying paper requirement waived if they have written a Master's Thesis in Sociology or in a related field. The thesis will be evaluated by two faculty members, who will read the thesis and provide letters to the Graduate Coordinator asserting that the thesis meets the expectations of the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University.

Students who have written their thesis in a language other than English must also provide an English translation of their work to the Department of Sociology. This translation will be evaluated according to the criteria and procedures described above.

### **CRITERIA FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN PROGRAM (also found on pp. 31)**

- Students should have filed an approved guidance committee report by the beginning of the second year in the graduate program.
- Graduate students are ordinarily expected to complete at least six credits of coursework each semester in which they are enrolled until all required coursework is completed;
- Students should have no more than seven deferred or incomplete credits in courses other than thesis or dissertation credit;
- Students should have had their qualifying research year paper approved by the end of five semesters in the program and must have made an oral presentation no later than the sixth semester;
- Students should complete comprehensive exams within 5 years of entering the graduate program;
- Students should have filed an approved dissertation proposal within one year of passing their comprehensive exams;
- The Ph.D. degree should be completed within eight years of initial enrollment in the graduate program;
- The Ph.D. degree should be completed within three years of passing comprehensive

examinations;

- Ph.D. candidates must have at least a 3.00 grade-point average in the degree program;
- Ph.D. candidates cannot have grades below 3.00 (including N grades in the P-N grading system) in not more than two semester courses required by the guidance committee.

Most of the above are University requirements for receiving the Ph.D. degree.

### STANDARD OF WORK

In order to receive a Ph.D. degree, a student's course grades must meet the following minimum standards.

- A. An overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 (University Rule).
- B. A GPA of at least 3.0 in courses given by the Sociology Department (Department Rule).
- C. Grades less than 3.0 in no more than three of the courses required for the degree (College of Social Science Rule). This rule means the following:
  1. To receive an M.A. degree, a student may receive no more than three grades below 3.0;
  2. To receive a Ph.D. degree, a student may receive no more than three such grades in courses listed on his/her Guidance Committee Report.

Deferred grades may be given if work has been satisfactory, but has not been completed because of extenuating circumstances. When giving a DF-Deferred grade, the required work **MUST** be completed and a grade reported within **6 months** with the option of a single six-month extension. If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U under the numerical and Pass-No Credit (P-N) grading systems, and to DF/NC under the Credit-No-Credit (CR-NC) system. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work credits.

Now that the University requires DF grades to be completed within 6 months, we urge students to complete any deferred grades over the break immediately following the semester in which the deferred was acquired. Experience shows that once a new semester has begun, it is very hard to complete a deferred grade and the longer one retains it the more difficult it becomes to remove it. In addition, unfulfilled deferred grades delay one's rate of progress in the graduate program and reduce one's chances of obtaining financial aid.

Satisfactory grades in coursework are not, by themselves, sufficient demonstration of an ability to pursue scholarly work with the degree of competence and independence that will be required in one's future teaching and research. Furthermore, obtaining the M.A. degree does not imply automatic continuance in the Ph.D. program. The Master's project committee has the responsibility of recommending termination or admission to the Ph.D. program upon completion of the Master's degree requirements. **Further discussion of the criteria and procedures involving termination from the program are given in Appendix C.**

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

## **Language Requirements**

There is no departmental language requirement for the M.A. or the Ph.D. degree. Inclusion of a language requirement in a student's doctoral program is a decision which rests with each Guidance Committee and is based on its relevance to a candidate's specific program.

## **English Requirements For Foreign Students**

All foreign students are required to demonstrate competence in English sufficient for graduate study. Sufficient competence is determined either by scores in examinations at the English Language Center or TOEFL scores. Admission to the program is automatically provisional until this requirement is satisfied. Delay in satisfying this requirement and failure to enroll in recommended English language courses are grounds for dismissal from the program.

Foreign students who wish to hold a teaching assistantship are required to meet higher English language standards than those required of other graduate students. English Language Center or TOEFL scores of sufficient magnitude must be submitted prior to any appointment as a teaching assistant.

Please note that ETS has been rapidly phasing out the Test of Spoken English (TSE). Although MSU still accepts TSE scores as an alternative to the SPEAK test, the score report cannot have been issued more than two years prior to the student's appointment as a TA. Also note that the spoken section of the TOEFL does not substitute for the SPEAK test.

## **Full Time Status**

Full time status for doctoral students is defined as a minimum of (1) credit for those students who:

- a. Have successfully completed all comprehensive examinations and are actively engaged in dissertation research; or
- b. Are doing department-approved-off-campus fieldwork related to preparation of their dissertation.

## **DF-Deferred Grades Time Line**

**The required work MUST be completed and a grade reported within 6 months with the option of a single six-month extension.** If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U under the numerical and Pass-No Grade (P-N) grading systems, and to DF/NC under the Credit-No Credit (CR-NC) system. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

## **Dual Enrollment by Undergraduates**

Within the first semester of dual enrollment, the student's graduate degree program adviser must be identified and the appropriate graduate degree guidance committee established. The adviser and

committee assist the student in developing a program of study for the graduate degree. Admission to graduate study must be approved before work to apply toward a graduate degree program is undertaken. Credits completed prior to admission to graduate study *cannot* be applied toward a graduate degree program.

### **THE MAJOR PROFESSOR AND GUIDANCE COMMITTEE**

Upon entering the graduate program, each student is assigned a temporary advisor. By the end of two semesters in residence, all students must select a major professor. This may, but need not, be the temporary advisor.

All students in the Ph.D. program are encouraged to consult regularly with their advisors and form a Guidance Committee **no later than the third semesters of doctoral study**. At least one member of the guidance committee must be from outside of the Sociology Department. Faculty who hold joint appointments in another department are considered to be outside of the department for this purpose. All students in the Ph.D. program are required to submit in GradPlan their Guidance Committee report by the beginning of the third semester of their regular enrollment (not counting summer terms) in the Ph.D. program. (For those who were initially taking English language training, this would mean within three semesters of completing their English language requirement.) Any student who had not met this requirement shall not be permitted to enroll until he/she has formed a guidance committee. If the student's performance is otherwise satisfactory, the student may re-enroll once he/she has formed a committee and has a course of study approved.

It is the responsibility of the Guidance Committee to approve all courses which the student intends to take. Prior to completing the formation of the Guidance Committee, the student shall work out a list of all courses to be taken each semester throughout her/his graduate program, in consultation with the major professor or temporary advisor.

When the Guidance Committee meets, it should not only approve a course of study, but comment on the student's progress and prospects, strengths and weaknesses. If the committee has any concerns about the student's ability to complete a Ph.D., it should communicate those directly to the student and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

The Ph.D. Guidance Committee also composes and evaluates the students' comprehensive examinations, meets with the student to consider the proposed dissertation, reviews the dissertation, and conducts the final oral examination.

At any time, a student may change committee members, including the major professor. In particular, one's Dissertation Committee need not be the same as the Guidance Committee for the pre-dissertation part of the Ph.D. program. To change committee members, a student should (1) secure the consent of the individuals to be added, and submit this change through GradPlan. ALL old and new committee members that are being changed will need to approve of this change in GradPlan.

The qualifying research paper must be approved by a committee consisting of the major advisor and at least two additional non-retired tenure line faculty. The Ph.D. guidance committee and dissertation committee must contain at least four non-retired tenure line faculty members, at least three of whom must be from the Department of Sociology.

Retired and emeriti faculty are considered with this group of "non-retired" faculty for the first two terms of their retirement only. Temporary faculty or faculty who have been retired for more than two semesters may only serve on committees in addition to the three or four regular faculty members required. Each year, each graduate student is evaluated by his/her major professor and the department. These evaluations from the major professor should be discussed with the student and any concerns about the student's ability to complete the degree should be addressed at this time. Students should expect to receive, and have a right to see, the evaluations from their committee and major professor. Students also have a right to communicate, orally or in writing, their own comments regarding their performance. For more information on advising and mentoring, please see the following:

[Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook of the Graduate School](#)

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT COMMITTEES**

**(Ph.D. Committees: Guidance Committee, Comprehensive Examination Committees, Dissertation Committees).**

1. What is the minimum composition of a Ph.D. committee?

The committee must contain at least four members. At least three must be regular faculty in the Sociology Department. The fourth must be out of the Department, but must be regular faculty at MSU. Note further that while some faculty have joint appointments, as long as they are appointed in the department under the rules of tenure and hold the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, they may serve.

("Regular faculty" hold the rank of professor, associate professor, or assistant professor, and are appointed under the rules of tenure. Sometimes they are referred to as tenure stream faculty.)

Instructors may serve on a committee with written permission from the chairperson of the department and the Dean of the Graduate School.

2. Can the committee be larger than 4 members?

Yes.

3. Can a regular faculty member appointed in another department, but with an adjunct appointment in sociology, serve as a member from the department of sociology?



No.

4. What about emeritus (retired) professors?

They can serve both as committee members and committee chairs if they have been retired for 2 semesters or less, and if the department chair approves. It is not recommended to begin a new committee with an emeritus professor as chair or to change one's committee chair to an emeritus member.

5. Can non-tenure stream faculty or instructors serve on committees as one of the required members?

Yes, but they must go through an approval process. The department chair must approve and request approval from the Dean of the Graduate School, who must also approve.

6. What about serving as additional members?

Persons who are not MSU regular faculty can serve on committees but the total number of such persons cannot exceed the number of regular faculty.

7. How does a student form a committee?

Start with a meeting with your advisor. Discuss with him/her your interests and career objectives and agree on a list of potential members. Contact potential members and ask them to serve. Be prepared in each case to provide information about your interests and objectives and the potential contribution of the faculty member to the committee. When the committee is complete, submit this information through GradPlan. Forming a committee is the joint responsibility of student and advisor.

8. Can a student change their advisor or committee members?

Yes. This change is made through GradPlan. GradPlan must be approved by the advisor (or new advisor) and the graduate program coordinator. It is recommended but not required that the student or advisor personally inform committee members who are being removed from a committee.

### **Qualifying Paper Committees**

1. What is the standard minimum composition of a qualifying paper committee?

Three. All must be regular faculty members at MSU. The student's advisor must be from the department of sociology and ordinarily at least one of the other two members must be from the department.

2. What about emeritus professors, non-tenure stream faculty, and the like?

The same rules apply as for Ph.D. committees.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to give doctoral students the opportunity to demonstrate:

- a. knowledge of broad and specialized areas of sociology;
- b. ability for independent scholarship; and
- c. sociological writing skills, including the ability to organize, synthesize, and critique sociological material.

### **Preparing for the Examination**

Students should convene a meeting of their Guidance Committee to discuss, define, and decide on the three (3) areas in which they will be tested. In making decisions, keep in mind that the comprehensive examination should be the nexus for (a) master works situated in areas accepted as legitimate sociological enterprises; and (b) frontier works that redirect thinking. The accomplishment of this goal is the responsibility of individual students and committee members, acknowledging that the areas designated should be neither too broad (e.g., structural inequality or conflict) nor too narrow (e.g., sociology of German-Catholic farm families). We suggest that students look at the sections that are included in the American Sociological Association to best acquire a sense of what constitutes an area.

There are, in the main, two ways a comprehensive examination can be intellectually designed: the “Pyramid” model, and the “Venn” model. Because preferences for one or the other model varies across faculty and committees, students should discuss with and agree on the model (or variation of a model) committee members want her/him to use.

Once the areas and model are agreed upon, a student should prepare statements that delineate the essential nature of each and meet with her/his chair to discuss them. (A chair may suggest that a student work with another committee member who has special expertise in one or another of a student’s areas.) Statements should run one to three (1-3) pages each and should not be reviews of the literature. Rather, they should provide a relatively broad narrative that outlines:

- a. central issues/debates in the area;
- b. student’s focus within the area;
- c. rationale for the types of literature included on the reading list; and
- d. questions/issues to be addressed in preparing for the examination.

We strongly encourage students to prepare an introduction to the statements in which she/he describes her/his fields and sub-fields and shows the relationships among the three areas chosen.

In addition to these statements, a student should prepare reading lists for each area, ensuring that key synthetic texts are incorporated. A useful guideline for each is that it include about 50 pieces of literature, recognizing that some areas may require a greater or lesser number of works than others. The literature included can be either books or articles, but the lists should include a mix of both.

After the statements and reading lists have been approved by the chair, they should be distributed to all members of the Guidance Committee, who may amend statements and/or add literature to the reading lists. Once tentative agreement has been reached on these, a student should convene a meeting of all members of her/his Guidance Committee. The purpose of this meeting is to approve the statements and reading lists; after approval students begin preparing for their examination. A date for the examination also will be agreed upon at this meeting, and the members of the Guidance Committee will agree on a division of labor and a timetable for finalizing the examination. Special concerns, if any, of a student regarding the examination may also be discussed. The Chair of the Guidance Committee will complete the Permission to Take Comprehensive Exam form, which indicates that the meeting has taken place, and stipulates the dates the comprehensive examination will be taken. This form will be given to the Graduate Program Director or graduate secretary and retained in the student's file.

The reading lists will be considered final after this meeting. If, however, the examination is not taken within six (6) months of the meeting, the members of the Guidance Committee will review the reading lists and, if they believe it appropriate, add works to them. Students should maintain steady progress in their preparation for their examinations, ensuring that they keep on schedule. If, under exceptional circumstances, a student feels she/he is not prepared to take the comprehensive examination on the designated date, she/he must apply in writing to the Chair of the Guidance Committee to postpone the examination. It is the Chair's prerogative to accept or to deny the request. If the Chair agrees to a postponement, she/he must notify the Graduate Education Coordinator of the decision and the new date that has been agreed upon for the examination.

Students may participate in writing their own examination questions. We suggest that a student prepare one to two questions for each of the areas in which she/he will be examined a month or two prior to taking the examination. (Answers to successfully passed comprehensive examinations are on file in Room 316 BH, and students may look at these for help in constructing questions.) The drafted questions should be submitted to the Chair of the Guidance Committee (or the faculty member with whom she/he worked most intensively on an area), who will review them and provide input and direction for revisions. After the Chair (or the appropriate faculty) approves the restructured questions, a student should submit them to the members of the Guidance Committee for additional critique and input. A student should also continue to refine these questions as part of the process of preparing for the examination. Members of the Guidance Committee have the prerogative to use these questions as written, modify them, or reject them in their entirety as they finalize the examination.

In preparing for the comprehensive exam, the student may receive feedback from committee members, on practice essays that he or she writes. However, there is one important exception to this. A student may *not* submit for feedback, the answer to any question that bears a strong resemblance to a question on which the student will be subsequently examined.

A student's approved statements and reading lists (and draft questions) serve as guidelines for the members of the Guidance Committee to use in finalizing the examination. The examination will not require knowledge of any literature that is not on the reading lists. The only exception is that each question may ask a student to analyze one (1) new article. Whenever this is done, however, a copy of the article will be appended to the examination question.

Guidance Committee members will submit questions to the chair of the committee at least two weeks before the scheduled beginning of the examination. The Chair of the Guidance Committee will circulate the complete exam to all members of the committee for review before giving it to a student. After consensus, the chair will submit the final examination (or part of it) to the Graduate Secretary; deposit of the examination with her/him constitutes notification of the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) that an examination is to be given. Students should contact the Graduate Secretary the morning of their examination to pick it up and must return the completed examination to her/him at the designated time of completion. The Graduate Secretary is responsible for distributing students' answers to the members of a students' Graduate Guidance Committee.

## **Examination Procedures**

Students will have a total of 15 consecutive days to spend writing answers to the exam. Under exceptional circumstances, however, these need not be 15 consecutive days. Rather, after completing one part of the exam, a student may take a break of up to two weeks before receiving the questions for other parts of the exam. Hence, while a student may work on the exam for only 15 days, the time that can elapse from the beginning to the end may be four to eight weeks (the latter being an exception made for students with special scheduling problems).

Students who retake part of an exam (see rules on retakes below) will have an amount of time proportional to that fraction of the exam that is being retaken. More specifically, a student will have five days to answer one question, ten days to answer two questions, and fifteen days to answer three questions.

The comprehensive examination will require a student to answer a total of three (3) questions, and she/he will have some choice among questions. In answering questions, students should keep in mind that each **should be no more than 25 double-spaced pages in length, not including the references**, and that each answer will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

a. Content

--Is the area discussed from an informed standpoint, i.e., does it show an understanding of the area at large?

--Does it compare works in a logical way, drawing out relationships between and

among them?

--Is the answer synthetic, i.e., integrative?

--Does the answer demonstrate the capacity to conduct independent scholarship, i.e., ability to function alone?

b. Style

--Is the answer well organized, with a distinguishable introduction, discussion, and conclusion?

--Is it written in a clear, simple, and direct manner?

c. Originality (criteria for award of “pass with distinction”)

--Does the answer suggest new directions for thinking about an issue?

--Is it interesting and engaging?

Under exceptional circumstances (i.e., English is not a student’s first language) students may use the services of a stylistic editor, but they must obtain prior approval from the members of the Guidance Committee to choose this option. Students may not consult with other individuals in writing their answers, although they may ask the chair of the committee to clarify the meaning of a question. If a student uses a stylistic editor, she/he must turn in the answer given to this person when the edited answer is turned in.

YOU MUST BE ENROLLED THE SEMESTER YOU ***BEGIN*** YOUR COMPREHENSIVE EXAM. For students who were enrolled in the spring and are taking **their comprehensive exams** during the immediate summer semester, the department can request a waiver of the requirement that the student be enrolled for at least one credit the semester of **the comprehensive exam**. These requests are to be directed to the Graduate School and must be endorsed by the student’s department and college. **All students defending their thesis or dissertation in the summer need to be registered for at least one credit during that summer, regardless of their being enrolled in the preceding spring semester.**

## Grading

The chair of a student’s Guidance Committee is responsible for notifying the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) and the student of the results of the examination simultaneously. Unless a chair has previously informed a student otherwise, the results must be communicated within 15 working days of when she/he turned in the exam. (Between term breaks and summers do not count as working days.)

There are (3) possible results the first time a student takes the comprehensive exam.

- a. Pass: answers to all three questions are satisfactory and no additional writing is required.
- b. Pass with Distinction: answers to all three questions are original, interesting, and engaging.

- c. Fail: one or more of the three answers contains major deficiencies and is not considered a passing answer. The report of the results of such answers will include:
- the area(s) and question(s) in which a deficiency was shown;
  - detailed feedback indicating why the answer(s) was/were deficient;
  - the conditions attached to taking either part or the entire exam a second time.

While all of these results must be reported to the GPC, a Fail in which only one or two of the three answers were deficient will not be reported to the University. All other results (i.e., all three questions were passed or all three questions were failed) will be reported to the University.

Students may retake the complete comprehensive exam or the parts they failed one (1) time. The question(s) given for a retake exam will be new questions. Put another way, a retake exam does not constitute a revision of an answer that was considered inadequate. A retake is a fresh exam and will include question(s) different from those on the original exam. When a student retakes all or part of an exam, the only possible outcomes are Pass and Fail. Either outcome will be reported to the University. A student who fails all or part of the comprehensive examination two (2) times will be removed from the graduate program, i.e., she/he will no longer a candidate for the Ph.D. degree.

When a student must retake part or all of an exam, but does not retake it within six (6) months of when the reading list was approved, the members of the Guidance Committee may make changes on the reading list. Students should also bear in mind College and University deadlines for completion of the comprehensive exam.

The only legitimate grounds for failure to turn in an exam within the allotted time are unforeseeable circumstances, clearly beyond a student's control, that does not give her/him time to work on the exam. If an exam is turned in late without such legitimate grounds, it will not be accepted and will count as a Fail. Whenever a student is allowed to have additional time, the Chair of the Guidance Committee must report to the GPD, explaining the circumstances, stating whether she/he has decided to accept the exam, and the reasons for this decision. This information should be included on the Comprehensive Exam Report.

The decision-making process on the results of an exam is as follows:

1. Grading an exam is the responsibility of the entire Guidance Committee. Each member of the committee reads the entire exam and prepares a written evaluation of it; specialists in one or more areas are expected to prepare substantive evaluations for the questions they wrote.
2. Questions will be read by each member of the Guidance Committee and the results reported reflect their joint decision. If a majority of the members (i.e., three people) vote to pass an answer, it is automatically considered a pass. If two of the four members consider an answer a fail, it is automatically considered a fail. The members of a committee, however, may, in such an instance, meet to attempt to reconcile their different opinions.

## MODELS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

### Designation of Areas

There are, in general, two models currently being used in the department to design comprehensive examinations. Both are viable and neither is preferred, although they are quite different.

#### 1. Triangle Model: Field, Area, Locus

This model begins with an exploration of master works in a student's **field** of specialization (e.g., medical sociology or state theory). This exploration is followed by specification and exploration of an **area** within the field, one that has a discrete topical or empirical orientation (e.g., women's health or natural resource management struggles). Finally, a particular well-developed **locus** of concern (e.g., gender, technology, and health or labor versus environmental movements) is laid out and interrogated.

Approximately fifty works from the field, fifty from the area, and fifty from the locus are listed and the rationale for their inclusion discussed. In the process of intensifying the scholarship within one field, the expression of similar areas or loci in other sociological fields is consciously set aside. It is anticipated that the dissertation will focus on the locus of concern.

#### 2. Venn Model: Fields, Areas, Loci

This model begins with three analytically discrete areas which are seen to intersect and overlap. Within each **field**, a student must define and show an understanding of key texts, explain how and why certain **areas** of concern in these texts are of personal concern, and **locate** these moments in particular exchanges or empirical issues. Often, although not always, the central areas within field will reflect overlap between fields, and the particular locus of concern will be the place where all three fields overlap. It is anticipated that the dissertation will be oriented around multiple perspectives on, or synthetic views of, sociological phenomena within the three fields.

In this model, the three fields might be the sociology of agriculture, environmental sociology, and science and technology studies. After exploring key historical texts, the sociology of agriculture field might be pared down to focus on the areas of agricultural environment and agricultural tech, finishing by examining a locus centered on agricultural-tech-environment relations. The same process would be followed in the remaining two fields. The environmental sociology statement would end with an exploration of how an orientation to environment or agriculture of technology generates different concerns. The science and technology statement would indicate the alternative loci which come from that perspective. Another example might be the fields of the sociology of development, migration studies, and community studies.

In the Venn model, the number of texts across the three fields would number approximately fifty, just as might the number of texts at the intersecting areas. Rather than including 50

texts in the field, 50 in the area, and 50 in the locus, each field would, for example, include 17 key texts within the field, 17 texts about the intersection of the field with each of the others, and 17 that look at the locus of intersection between all three fields. One strategy here (and this will depend on the fields and on negotiations within the committee) might be to reduce the number of key historical texts and emphasize works on the areas of overlap and multi-faceted loci.

Graduate students completing their dissertation using the Venn model might be seen as defining their locus from the inside (where the fields overlap) out (to where the fields are discrete. In contrast, those using the Triangle model might be seen as working from the outside in.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS**

### **A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE**

1. Student convenes meeting of Guidance Committee to discuss, define, and decide on the three (3) areas in which she/he is to be tested.
2. Student prepares statements delineating nature of each area and three corresponding reading lists and meets with major professor (or designated surrogate) to discuss them.
3. Upon approval of major professor, student distributes statements and reading lists to all members of the Guidance Committee.
4. Student meets with committee members individually to discuss statements and reading lists. When tentative agreement is reached on these, student convenes a meeting of the Guidance Committee.
5. After formal approval of the statements and reading lists by the Guidance Committee (at this meeting or, if necessary, a subsequent one), student and Guidance Committee agree upon a date for the exam. (This date can be changed only under exceptional circumstances and after a formal request.) [The "Permission to Take the Comprehensive Exam" form can be found at the back of the handbook. The student needs to have all his/her committee members sign and then give this form to the Graduate Secretary for the student's file.]
6. Student prepares for the exam. During this period, she/he may write examination questions, which she/he discusses with Chair or designated surrogate.
7. Approximately two weeks prior to the scheduled exam, Chair requests committee members to provide questions for student's exam. Chair constructs exam and distributes to members of committee for approval. After exam is finalized, chair gives copy to the Graduate Secretary.



8. The Graduate Secretary will email the comprehensive examination to the student. The student then returns the completed exam after 15 consecutive days spent answering them. The exam will require a student to answer a total of three (3) questions, and a student will have some choice among questions.
9. Fifteen (15) working days after student turns in examination, the Chair of the Guidance Committee notifies her/him of the Committee's decision about the exam. [Semester breaks and Holidays do not count in these 15 days.]
10. A student may retake the complete comprehensive exam or parts that were failed one (1) time. The questions given for a retake exam will be new questions.
11. A student who fails all or part of the comprehensive examination two (2) times will be removed from the graduate program.

### **SUGGESTED DISSERTATION PROPOSAL OUTLINE**

1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem

2. Theory and Literature

This section of the proposal should review only the literature which is directly relevant and pertinent to the topic of the dissertation. Lengthy and wide ranging reviews are not appropriate.

3. Specific Hypotheses to be Tested

A concise statement of the hypotheses and variables which will be investigated. Specific attention is given to how the concepts and variables will be operationalized.

4. Data

A discussion of how the data will be gathered, their adequacy and limitations, and why the methods of data collection are superior to others for testing the hypotheses.

5. Analysis of the Data

A description of how the hypotheses will be tested, the kinds of analysis to be used, the kinds of statistics to be used, and the formats for presenting the findings.

6. Contribution of the Dissertation to the Discipline

A discussion of the importance of the dissertation, including its theoretical, methodological, and substantive contributions.

### **MULTI-ARTICLE DISSERTATION**

As an alternative to writing a dissertation that addresses a single topic, with committee approval, students have the option of writing 3 or more separate papers or articles. By integrating these papers with an introduction and conclusion section, they can fulfill their dissertation requirement.

As long as the document meets the Graduate School's formatting requirements and the student maintains consistency from article to article in the dissertation, this format is okay. Please be aware that they must follow the formatting guidelines available at:

<http://grad.msu.edu/etd/docs/Formatting%20Guide%20September%202014.pdf>

## **HELPFUL INFORMATION CONCERNING THE DISSERTATION**

1. PREP program for graduate students' professional development

Link to the PREP program for graduate students' professional development

<http://grad.msu.edu/prep/>

2. Publishing agreement for thesis/dissertations with ProQuest

ProQuest provides an "Open Access Publishing Option" as an alternative to the traditional publishing option available to our students. The Open Access option gives ProQuest the authorization to make the electronic version of the document accessible to all via the internet, including the selling of the document by commercial retailers and the accessibility to the work via search engines. A student selecting the Open Access option will not be eligible to receive royalties. This option makes your dissertation more visible, but may violate the expectations of other publication venues.

## **DOCTORAL STUDENT PROGRAM PLANNING AND FINAL DEGREE CERTIFICATION**

[GradPlan](#) is the official website for all doctoral student program planning, guidance committee reports and changes, comprehensive and final defense reports, submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School, and the final University degree certification. It provides electronic circulation for checking/approvals and generates automatic emails when needed. [GradPlan](#) is now open for use:

<https://login.msu.edu/?App=J3205>

## **COMPUTERS**

The Department provides some computer resources in the Useem Library and in the Graduate Assistant offices. There is also a public computer lab on the second floor of Berkey Hall. The department has a computer consultant available for questions and problems.

## **RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

Throughout the graduate program, students are encouraged to participate in research projects as assistants, apprentices, or through directed research credit. Students are also encouraged to present their research at professional meetings and to submit it to professional journals. Joint publication with faculty is especially encouraged and often occurs.

### **TEACHER TRAINING**

The department is well known for its commitment to, and success in, teacher training. A very large number of the winners of the university's "Excellence in Teaching" Award, which recognizes outstanding graduate student teaching, have been from the Department of Sociology.

Every year, the department conducts a teaching workshop for graduate students. Part of each year's workshop is held with the fall orientation during registration. All new graduate students are required to attend. Also, International TA's must attend the International TA Workshop.

A three credit professional training course that includes college-level teacher training, taught during the spring semester **SOC 995 Professional Training Seminar** is required for graduate students.

All Ph.D. candidates are strongly encouraged to obtain teaching experience as part of their graduate training. Considerable experience can be gained as a teaching assistant (TA). TA's begin by assisting a faculty member in teaching an undergraduate course, but with experience, may eventually be given their own course to teach.

## APPENDICES

### A. GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCIAL AID POLICY

#### 1. General

- a. The Department shall allocate financial aid to achieve the following goals:
  - 1) Recruitment of new students.
  - 2) Assisting continuing students to complete their degrees.
  - 3) Supporting Departmental teaching and research.
  - 4) Providing training in teaching and research.
- b. Teaching assistantships are divided into two categories: those used to recruit new students, and those to support continuing students.
- c. Research assistantships are often provided through the department on extramural grants obtained by faculty. Thus, the faculty member who has obtained the grant will play a major role in identifying a student for an appointment as a research assistant.
- d. The new tuition waiver is in the amount of nine credits for Fall and Spring semesters, and five for Summer semester.

#### 2. Allocation of Recruiting Graduate Assistantships

- a. The Sociology Department shall have a number of assistantships (either teaching or research) available for recruitment each year.
- b. A student's record prior to entering this department shall be used in the allocation of recruitment assistantship.
- c. Students recruited on assistantships will have five-year appointments, with reappointment to second, third, fourth and fifth year contingent on: performance as an assistant; satisfactory rate of completing coursework (making normal progress, as defined elsewhere in this document); and a GPA of at least 3.6 in the first year. After the fifth year, students will be able to compete for department assistantships.

#### 3. Allocation of Assistantships

- a. There are five relative criteria for continuation as a teaching or research assistant:

- 1) Satisfactory progress in the graduate program (see Appendix B)
- 2) Academic performance
  - i. GPA
  - ii. advisor and other faculty evaluations and letters
  - iii. non-department fellowships and scholarships
- 3) Teaching performance
  - i. substantive content of teaching activities
  - ii. presentation of materials
  - iii. administration of course materials
- 4) Research activity
  - i. research assistantships (both departmental and non-departmental)
  - ii. publications
  - iii. presentations
- 5) Outreach Service activity
  - i. membership on department, college, etc. committees
  - ii. community involvement

Note: Satisfactory progress, academic performance, teaching performance and research activity should be considered equally; outreach and service activity may be considered in addition.

- b. An outline suggesting the kinds of information that may appropriately be supplied to the Teaching Assistant Selection Committee as part of an application to be considered for a teaching assistantship will be distributed to graduate students along with the call for applications for teaching assistantships. Students are encouraged to follow that outline in preparing their files.

#### 4. Limits on Number of Terms of Financial Support

The maximum number of semesters of half-time financial support that will be provided to graduate students by the Sociology Department is 12 semesters, not counting summers. For those who enter with an M.A. degree the limit is 10 semesters, not counting summers.

- a. All forms of financial support will count toward that limit. All semesters during the academic year (Fall and Spring) will count toward the limit, but not Summer semesters. Two semesters of quarter-time appointment will count as one semester of half-time appointment.
- b. Financial support from fellowships, research grants, or other sources will not be counted if the student obtains the support entirely on her/his own, and the Sociology Department does not participate in determining that support.

c. Work by students on an hourly basis does not count toward the support limits.

5. English Language Proficiency

Foreign students who wish to hold teaching assistantships are required to meet higher English language standards than the minimum required for graduate study. Any appointment of a person who is not a native speaker of English shall be provisional upon the applicant providing scores on the SPEAK test of at least 50.

6. Files of Graduate Student Financial Aid Applicants

- a. For each student, the department office will provide the number of credits completed, number of deferred grades outstanding, number of semesters enrolled, and all other information which is identified in this document as relevant to judging whether a student is making satisfactory progress (see Section B). The office will enter that information on a form, a copy of which will be given to each student and his/her advisor. It is the responsibility of the student to correct any errors in that information.
- b. The Graduate Program Director, in consultation with the Allocation Committee, will arrange for the distribution to the Allocation Committee of all information about each applicant which is required by the criteria set forth in this document.
- c. Any applicant may add anything he/she wishes to his/her file. In particular, the department encourages each applicant to submit:
  - 1) Student evaluations of his/her teaching, together with a statistical summary of the responses to closed-ended questions and a list of the most frequent comments made.
  - 2) A vita, listing such professional accomplishments as authorship of published articles, working papers, and conference presentations (see the Graduate Manual for an example of such a vita.)
  - 3) Letters of recommendation from teaching and research experiences outside the Department.

7. Timing

- a. All advisor evaluations and all information from the applicant should be in the applicant's file by the end of January-early February.
- b. Financial Aid decisions for the following year shall be made by April 15.

8. MSU GEU Collective Bargaining Unit

All Teaching Assistantship matters are now being covered by the MSU-GEU collective bargaining agreement with the newest contract from May 16, 2015- May 15, 2019.

<http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/contracts/GEU2015-2019.pdf> This contains the full contract and TA employing units.

9. CRITERIA FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANT LEVELS I and II and III

Graduate Assistant Level I

Graduate students with a B.A. degree and less than one year of experience as a Graduate Assistant.

Graduate Assistant Level II

Graduate students in good standing who have completed an M.A. degree (30 credits or its equivalent) and/or one year of experience as a Graduate Assistant.

Graduate Assistant Level III

The arbitration decision **required that appointments at level 3 must be made for TAs after 6 semesters of experience (including summer) and with a Master's degree or equivalent (30 or more grad semester credits). If units previously appointed to level 3 after fewer semesters, they are required to continue with that practice.** Level 3 is required for Research (R) or Teaching (TE) assistants when each of the following 2 criteria are met: (1) Successful completion of doctoral comprehensive exams, as defined by the department in which the student is enrolled; (2) 6 semesters as a graduate Research/Teaching (R/TE) assistant at MSU, or equivalent.

10. Qualification for Teaching Assistants

In order to insure their competence, teaching assistants in sociology are required to have taken or to be currently enrolled in graduate level courses in sociology, or to have taken other coursework in relevant social science fields.

11. Eligibility for In-State Tuition for Recipients of Externally Funded Fellowships

Receipt of externally funded fellowships by students who have written their own grant applications and are worth at least \$20,000 (direct costs) now makes the students eligible for in-state tuition rate. The in-state tuition rate applies only to the semesters during which the student is supported by the fellowship. This policy applies only to grants funded through a competitive process by a US institution/agency/foundation. Funds obtained through non-competitive processes (e.g., need-based fellowships) or from international sources do not

qualify the students for in-state tuition rates. For more information contact Melissa Del Rio ([mdelrio@msu.edu](mailto:mdelrio@msu.edu)) at the Graduate School.

## **B. CRITERIA FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM** (also found on p. 13)

- Students should have filed an approved guidance committee report by the beginning of the second year in the graduate program.
- Graduate students are ordinarily expected to complete at least six credits of coursework each semester in which they are enrolled until all required coursework is completed;
- Students should have no more than seven deferred or incomplete credits in courses other than thesis or dissertation credit;
- Students should have had their qualifying paper approved by the end of five semesters in the program and must have made an oral presentation no later than the sixth semester;
- Students should complete comprehensive exams within 5 years of entering the graduate program;
- Students should have filed an approved dissertation proposal within one year of passing their comprehensive exams;
- The Ph.D. degree should be completed within eight years of initial enrollment in the graduate program;
- The Ph.D. degree should be completed within three years of passing comprehensive examinations;
- *Ph.D. candidates must have at least a 3.00 grade-point average in the degree program;*
- *Ph.D. candidates cannot have grades below 3.00 (including N grades in the P-N grading system) in not more than two semester courses required by the guidance committee.*

Most of the above are University requirements for receiving the Ph.D. degree.

## **C. GRADUATE STUDENT TERMINATION**

### **1. Who May Recommend Termination**

The ultimate responsibility for a Departmental recommendation to terminate a graduate student lies with the Chair of the Department. The Chair, in turn, may delegate this authority to the Associate Chair and/or Graduate Program Coordinator.

A student's advisor, or guidance committee, may ask the Department Chair to make such a recommendation.

The final authority regarding decisions to terminate is the Associate Dean for Student Affairs of the College of Social Science.

### **2. When Termination May Be Recommended**

Although recommendation for termination may come at any point in a student's career, formal evaluation with a possibility of termination will always occur at both of the two points below.



- a. Upon completion of the qualifying research paper and public presentation of the paper.
- b. Upon completion of the comprehensive examinations.

### 3. Criteria For Termination

- a. Course grades clearly below those required for a degree (see the section "Standard of Work" in this graduate manual). Also see:  
[\*Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities\*](#)  
[\*Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities \(GSRR\)\*](#).
- b. Failing comprehensive exams a second time, or failing to retake them within a year of a first failure, or twice failing the qualifying research paper presentation.
- c. Failure to make satisfactory progress towards completing a degree.
- d. Failure to show, in one's qualifying research paper, a level of performance which leads the MA Guidance Committee to expect success in the Ph.D. program.

### 4. Appeals

A student who feels he/she is being terminated unjustly may file a grievance. The rules governing such grievances are described in the document "[Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)" (GSRR).

**D. CHECKLISTS FOR ADVISORS AND FOR STUDENTS (Students should remind their advisors of these things as necessary and should see the SEQUENTIAL CHECKLIST OF PROCEDURES FOR PH.D. CANDIDATES)**

**FOR NEW STUDENTS (entering program with NO M.A.)**

1. Temporary Advisor

Enroll the student in the mathematics-statistics sequence and encourage the student during the initial two semesters in residence to consider the various specialized fields of sociological work. This should be designed to aid the new student to determine the field in which he/she will do the qualifying research paper and to identify the faculty member who may become the student's permanent major professor.

2. Major Professor

- a. Consult with and direct the student in developing and carrying out of the qualifying research project.
- b. Confer with the student in selecting of doctoral Guidance Committee.
- c. Write a letter to Department Chair giving the results of the evaluations of the qualifying research paper, and present the recommendation of the committee on whether the candidate should pursue doctoral studies.
- d. Complete the annual review of the student's academic progress.

**E. CHECKLISTS FOR ADVISORS AND FOR STUDENTS (Students should remind their advisors of these things as necessary and should see the SEQUENTIAL CHECKLIST OF PROCEDURES FOR PH.D. CANDIDATES)**

**FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS**

1. Review advisees' progress at least once a year and authorize advisee's program for subsequent terms. Provide feedback to student as to his/her strengths, weaknesses, and prospects.
2. Consult with advisee in selecting the Guidance Committee.
3. Refer advisee to Chair of Department for formal designation of guidance committee.
3. Preside over Guidance Committee meetings in selecting courses to take in theory, methods, foreign languages (if applicable), and the theme area.
4. Sign Report of the Guidance Committee - Doctoral Program.

6. Preside over Guidance Committee meetings in conducting the annual review of student's progress during the spring term.
7. Arrange for examinations in the theme area of concentration by the Guidance Committee.
8. Advise on and approve the dissertation proposal prior to its distribution to all department faculty members.
9. Convene and preside over the meeting of Guidance Committee and other interested faculty members in discussing the dissertation proposal.
10. Supervise work on the doctoral thesis.
11. Convene and preside over the Ph.D. final oral examination. Contact the Dean's office for a Dean's representative to this exam.
12. Ascertain that the advisee has edited and revised the thesis in conformity with the recommendations of the final oral examination committee.

In addition to the foregoing, the major professor has the responsibility of exploring with the student his/her long-range career plans and assisting her/him in finding a first job.

#### **SEQUENTIAL CHECKLIST OF PROCEDURES FOR PH.D. CANDIDATES**

1. Select the major professor for Ph.D. program and notify the Department office.
2. Consult with the major professor regarding membership of the Guidance Committee. Then jointly select a Guidance Committee, which must consist of at least four members, at least three of whom must be members of the Sociology Department.
3. Confer with the Graduate Coordinator of the Department to formally designate the Guidance Committee.
4. Work out, in consultation with the Guidance Committee, courses of study in the area of specialization. Check with the Graduate Coordinator to be sure that the proposed program fits Departmental rules.
5. Deposit in the Department office the "Report of the Guidance Committee – Doctoral Program." Any deviation from this formal report requires the approval of the Guidance Committee, and these changes must be conveyed to the Department office for incorporation into the records.
6. Complete all required coursework.
7. After completing at least 80% of the required coursework, take comprehensive examinations.

8. Prepare a dissertation proposal and, with approval of the major professor, the graduate secretary will distribute it to all faculty members. You are required to give a full copy of the proposal to the graduate secretary after any revisions are made.
9. Meet with the Guidance Committee and interested faculty members to discuss and defend the dissertation proposal. Notice of this meeting must be given one week in advance. When the proposal has been approved, the appropriate form must be submitted to the Department office.
10. Complete the dissertation.
11. Prepare a vita and make plans for job placement. Plans for occupational placement should be made a year in advance of the anticipated date of completing the degree. The student should (a) meet with the chair of the Dissertation Committee to formulate job plans; (b) deposit 10 copies of her/his vita in the Department office and (c) plan to attend the meetings of the American Sociological Association and other professional associations to explore job opportunities. An illustrative format for a vita is provided elsewhere in this Manual on the Department Web site.

## F. SETTING UP THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

### WHICH COURSES TO LIST:

List all courses which you have taken or will take as part of your Ph.D. program. Do not list courses you are not required to take by your committee or the department.

It is helpful to the graduate coordinator and your committee members if you fill out a checklist for requirements and include a copy when you submit the draft of your program (see below).

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You must be registered during the semester you take your comprehensive exam, present your dissertation proposal and do your oral exam defense. This is a requirement of the University.

At the beginning of the semester you plan to apply for graduation, have a meeting with your major advisor to be sure all the requirements have been met and all DF's for required courses have been removed. Make sure at that time you have followed your program. **If there are any changes** in credits, committee members, courses, etc., make sure it is formally changed on your program. Notification from the student and your major advisor to the Graduate Secretary is needed before the change form can be processed. Following these necessary procedures will make your progress toward graduation go smoothly for everyone.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask.

### TYPING THE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Graduate Secretary will type your Ph.D. program form from a draft. When preparing your draft, make sure you list course number, course name, credits, and the semester you took or will take the course. If possible, submit a complete copy of the checklist of requirements.

List your courses by category: theory, methods, statistics, substantive.

## G. CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM

If you have taken or will take a required course, place a check or X in the space on the right. Do the same for non-course requirements. If you have satisfied the requirement with some other way (waiver, work at another school or the like) indicate how in a brief comment.

1. SOC 881 Analysis of Social Data I \_\_\_\_\_
2. SOC 882 Analysis of Social Data II \_\_\_\_\_
3. SOC 815 Classical Sociological Theory \_\_\_\_\_
4. SOC 816 Contemporary Sociological Theory \_\_\_\_\_
5. SOC 885 Methods of Sociological Inquiry \_\_\_\_\_
6. SOC 801 Global Transformations \_\_\_\_\_
7. SOC 995 Professional Training Seminar \_\_\_\_\_
8. One of:  
    985 Qualitative Field Research \_\_\_\_\_  
    986 Survey Research Principles \_\_\_\_\_  
    OR another Methods course approved \_\_\_\_\_  
    By student's guidance committee \_\_\_\_\_
9. Attendance at TA Workshop \_\_\_\_\_
10. Qualifying research paper and presentation \_\_\_\_\_
11. **Minimum** of 4 courses in substantive area  
    (please list): \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_\_
12. Must enroll in a minimum of 24 SOC 999  
    Dissertation credits (a University requirement) \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** You may not list the same courses as meeting more than one requirement.

REVISED: 8/3/13

## **H. NEW EXIT SURVEYS**

A new short online exit survey for all students graduating with a Plan A or Plan B masters or with a Doctoral degree was introduced May 9<sup>th</sup> of 2011. Only students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey. The survey asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate professional plans. The Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students.

The identity of all respondents will be kept confidential and only aggregate (group) information will be made available to faculty and administrators. The students will receive an e-mail message from the dean of the graduate school with a link to the survey. However, students do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. It takes about 5-10 minutes to complete the online survey. Below are the instructions for completing the survey and they are also available from <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>

### **Instructions for students:**

- Access the following website:
  - o Doctoral Students: <https://www.egr.msu.edu/doctoral/survey/>
  - o Master's Students: <https://www.egr.msu.edu/masters/survey/>
- Enter your MSU NetID (Login Name) and Password
- Complete all the items on the survey. When finished, click **Submit**.

If you cannot open this survey, please contact Katey Smagur by email at [smagurka@msu.edu](mailto:smagurka@msu.edu), and include your name, student ID #, degree level (PhD, MA/MS) and semester of graduation. You will then be notified when you are able to complete the survey.

## **I. FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS TRAVELING ABROAD**

--check with the MSU Travel Clinic. They will let you know of any health risks or immunizations. <http://www.travelclinic.msu.edu/>

--check the International Studies and Programs website for issues related to safety around the world. <http://www.isp.msu.edu/>

--apply for assistance with travel funding via the Graduate School. If the Graduate School provides funding, they will also provide a MEDEX emergency card.

Students traveling abroad should visit the "Travel Smart" website (<http://grad.msu.edu/travel>) before their trip. When students appointed as TAs or RAs travel outside the U.S. to conduct required thesis or dissertation research or to collaborate with investigators conducting research abroad, the department or research grant supporting the work will be required to pay for all needed vaccinations and or medications (e.g., anti-malarials) as determined by the MSU Travel Clinic. Students may include those costs in applications for funds from the Research Enhancement or Travel Grant programs administered by the Graduate School.

## **J. DEPARTMENTAL AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES: INTEGRITY AND SAFETY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

1. MSU Standards for integrity and safety in research and creative activities are described in Research and Scholarly Integrity (<http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/> found on the Graduate School homepage.

All research activities involving human subjects are governed by the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (Human Research Protection Program).  
<http://hrpp.msu.edu/>This committee provides training sessions, consultation and evaluates research.

### **2. RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH**

Department of Sociology, College of Social Science, Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training

#### **Background**

In order to satisfy federal regulations, MSU requires that all graduate students and postdocs complete training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR). This training is individualized to each graduate program and needs to be documented. This document covers the RCR requirements for all graduate student and postdocs in the College of Social Science. Please note that in addition to these requirements, certain funding agencies may require researchers to obtain additional training related to the responsible conduct of research. Additionally, anyone who conducts a study that requires Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must meet the training requirements for human subjects' research protection offered by MSU's Human Research Protection Program (HRPP). (As of the writing of this document, HRPP includes an "initial educational requirement" which involves a 2-3 hours online tutorial. This training is valid for two years, after which the training must be renewed by completing online refresher modules. )

#### **RCR Requirements for ALL CSS Graduate Students**

In order to comply with MSU's requirements for training in the responsible conduct of research, all graduate students in departments in the MSU College of Social Science (CSS) who are engaged in research must complete five hours of Initial RCR education in their first year. Additionally, after the initial RCR education, all graduate students must complete three hours of refresher training annually. (This is consistent with the recommendations of the Association of American Universities (AAU), which have been endorsed by MSU). Each department must devise a method of assessing and demonstrating compliance with these requirements. Regardless of how these requirements are documented, graduate student advisors will be responsible for completing a CSS RCR Training Requirement Form and submitting them as part of each student's Annual Progress Report paperwork.

The CSS RCR policy will pertain to all graduate students and post-docs engaged in research in departments within the college. Each department in CSS will be responsible for



developing an RCR plan. RCR Plans generally will include approximately five (5) hours of training for graduate students and post-docs, with three (3) hours of refresher training annually. While specific content will be determined by each department, it is recommended that the topics covered include:

- Responsible Data Acquisition, Management, and Sharing
- Conflict of Interest
- Protection of Human Subjects
- Research Misconduct
- Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities
- Publication Practices, Responsible Authorship, and Peer Review

Department of Sociology Plan

### **Initial RCR Education (5 hours)**

All Sociology graduate students must complete five hours of initial RCR training by the end of their first year. There are two options for satisfying the requirements for initial RCR education. Students must only complete one of these options.

#### **Option 1:**

- HRPP Initial Training (2-3 hour tutorial) *Note: completion of this tutorial will also satisfy the initial education requirement for requesting IRB approval.*
- A total of two hours of CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) Modules approved by Advisor or PI. *Note: MSU has licensed access to CITI modules. A link can be found on the HRPP website (<http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/onlinetraining.html>)*
- 1 hour of discussion with Advisor or PI (use readings from RCR website: <http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/resources/>)

#### **Option 2:**

- MSU Graduate Schools' RCR Workshop Certificate: Certificates are awarded to students who complete the requirements of the workshop series (<http://grad.msu.edu/rcr/>).

### **Refresher Training (3 hours annually)**

All Sociology graduate students must complete three hours of RCR refresher training annually. Student may choose any combination of the following training resources totaling a minimum of 3 hours.

- CITI Modules approved by advisor or PI (<http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/onlinetraining.html>)
- MSU Graduate Schools' RCR Workshops
- Non-CITI Tutorials (<http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/resources/>)
- Discussion/Training with advisor or PI (*RCR Readings*) (<http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/resources/>)

Please note that the above requirements are only *minimum* requirements for RCR training. Students interested in learning more about the Responsible Conduct of Research are encouraged to take advantage of the many resources available from the Graduate School, the Human Research Protection Program and Office of Research Integrity. These include workshops, online tutorials and readings.

3. **IRB Approval (Human Subjects) is required for all research that is being used to fulfill University requirements, i.e., MA or PhD. It is also required for all research that will be presented at a conference or published.**
4. **We also encourage students to consult the American Sociological Association Code of ethics.** Its introduction is below.

### **ASA Code of Ethics: Introduction**

American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics <http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm>

The American Sociological Association's (ASA's) Code of Ethics sets forth the principles and ethical standards that underlie sociologists' professional responsibilities and conduct. These principles and standards should be used as guidelines when examining everyday professional activities. They constitute normative statements for sociologists and provide guidance on issues that sociologists may encounter in their professional work.

ASA's Code of Ethics consists of an Introduction, a Preamble, five General Principles, and specific Ethical Standards. This Code is also accompanied by the Rules and Procedures of the ASA Committee on Professional Ethics which describe the procedures for filing, investigating, and resolving complaints of unethical conduct.

The Preamble and General Principles of the Code are aspirational goals to guide sociologists toward the highest ideals of sociology. Although the Preamble and General Principles are not enforceable rules, they should be considered by sociologists in arriving at an ethical course of action and may be considered by ethics bodies in interpreting the Ethical Standards.

The Ethical Standards set forth enforceable rules for conduct by sociologists. Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly in order to apply to sociologists in varied roles, and the application of an Ethical Standard may vary depending on the context. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive. Any conduct that is not specifically addressed by this Code of Ethics is not necessarily ethical or unethical.

Membership in the ASA commits members to adhere to the ASA Code of Ethics and to the Policies and Procedures of the ASA Committee on Professional Ethics. Members are advised of this obligation upon joining the Association and that violations of the Code may lead to the imposition of sanctions, including termination of membership. ASA members subject to the Code of Ethics may be reviewed under these Ethical Standards only if the activity is part of or affects their work-related functions, or if the activity is sociological in nature. Personal activities

having no connection to or effect on sociologists' performance of their professional roles are not subject to the Code of Ethics.

## **PREAMBLE**

This Code of Ethics articulates a common set of values upon which sociologists build their professional and scientific work. The Code is intended to provide both the general principles and the rules to cover professional situations encountered by sociologists. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom sociologists work. It is the individual responsibility of each sociologist to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct in research, teaching, practice, and service.

The development of a dynamic set of ethical standards for a sociologist's work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisors, supervisees, employers, employees, and colleagues; and to consult with others as needed concerning ethical problems. Each sociologist supplements, but does not violate, the values and rules specified in the Code of Ethics based on guidance drawn from personal values, culture, and experience.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

The following General Principles are aspirational and serve as a guide for sociologists in determining ethical courses of action in various contexts. They exemplify the highest ideals of professional conduct.

### **Principle A: Professional Competence**

Sociologists strive to maintain the highest levels of competence in their work; they recognize the limitations of their expertise; and they undertake only those tasks for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience. They recognize the need for ongoing education in order to remain professionally competent; and they utilize the appropriate scientific, professional, technical, and administrative resources needed to ensure competence in their professional activities. They consult with other professionals when necessary for the benefit of their students, research participants, and clients.

### **Principle B: Integrity**

Sociologists are honest, fair, and respectful of others in their professional activities—in research, teaching, practice, and service. Sociologists do not knowingly act in ways that jeopardize either their own or others' professional welfare. Sociologists conduct their affairs in ways that inspire trust and confidence; they do not knowingly make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive.

### **Principle C: Professional and Scientific Responsibility**

Sociologists adhere to the highest scientific and professional standards and accept responsibility for their work. Sociologists understand that they form a community and show respect for other sociologists even when they disagree on theoretical, methodological, or personal approaches to professional activities. Sociologists value the public trust in sociology and are concerned about their ethical behavior and that of other sociologists that might compromise that trust. While endeavoring always to be collegial, sociologists must never let the desire to be collegial outweigh their shared responsibility for ethical behavior. When appropriate, they consult with colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.

#### Principle D: Respect for People's Rights, Dignity, and Diversity

Sociologists respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all people. They strive to eliminate bias in their professional activities, and they do not tolerate any forms of discrimination based on age; gender; race; ethnicity; national origin; religion; sexual orientation; disability; health conditions; or marital, domestic, or parental status. They are sensitive to cultural, individual, and role differences in serving, teaching, and studying groups of people with distinctive characteristics. In all of their work-related activities, sociologists acknowledge the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from their own.

#### Principle E: Social Responsibility

Sociologists are aware of their professional and scientific responsibility to the communities and societies in which they live and work. They apply and make public their knowledge in order to contribute to the public good. When undertaking research, they strive to advance the science of sociology and to serve the public good.

For full documentation of the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics, see:  
<http://www.asanet.org/members/ecoderev.html>

### **K. ACADEMIC COUNCIL AND ACADEMIC SENATE**

The Academic Council and Academic Senate approved a revision of the Integrity of Scholarship and Grades Policy. This document should be consulted when revising the department/unit policy on penalty grades and other issues related to academic dishonesty.

[http://www.msu.edu/~acadgov/documents/ISGACapproved2\\_24\\_09final\\_polished\\_editedversion3\\_3\\_09.pdf](http://www.msu.edu/~acadgov/documents/ISGACapproved2_24_09final_polished_editedversion3_3_09.pdf)

### **L. ACADEMIC FREEDOM REPORT (AFR)**

Revisions to the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) were approved by the Board of Trustees and that action required subsequent revisions of the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) document. Most of the changes to the GSRR relate to Article 5. The revised AFR and GSRR will be published as part of the 2010 Spartan Life. The updated GSRR document will be on the Graduate School website. The Office of the Ombudsman is developing detailed

descriptions of the new judiciary procedures related to these revisions; those details will be available from the Office of the Ombudsman [www.msu.edu/unit/ombud](http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud) .

## M. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

MSU **only accepts** electronic theses and dissertations submitted via ProQuest. The instructions for electronic submissions are available from <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>.

The target date for the **FINAL APPROVAL** of an electronic Thesis or Dissertation to the Graduate School for graduating the semester of that submission is FIVE working days prior to the first day of classes for the next semester (see future target dates below). **Be aware that a submission via ProQuest does not mean that the document has been ACCEPTED.** The review process is interactive and final approval can take anywhere from a few hours to weeks, depending upon the extent of the necessary revisions and how diligent the author is when making the necessary revisions.

### **Electronic Submission for Thesis & Dissertation Important Dates:**

Summer 2014 – August 19, 2014

Fall 2014 – December 19, 2014

Spring 2015 – May 8, 2015

Summer 2015 – August 25, 2015

Fall 2015 – December 18, 2015

**Graduating in the semester of the electronic submission is only guaranteed if the document is APPROVED on or before the target date for that semester.**

## N. PLAGIARISM, ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND GRADES

Plagiarism (from the Latin plagiarus, an abductor, and plagiare, to steal) is defined by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy on Misconduct in Research as “. . . the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit.”

At MSU, [General Student Regulation 1.00](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/) <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/> states in part that “no student shall claim or submit the academic work of another as one’s own.” (For the complete regulation, see [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/) <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/>.)

In outlining what he called the “the perils of plagiarism” to his students, the late W. Cameron Meyers, a revered journalism professor at MSU, wrote:

Plagiarism not only is legally wrong but also morally corrosive. . . . Any paper based upon the writing of others should acknowledge every source used. In a reference paper, the acknowledgements are made in footnotes--numbered notes at the bottom of the page

(corresponding to the numbers in text) that show exactly where the information was obtained. There are times, however, when such acknowledgements can be incorporated smoothly in the text without their becoming distracting or obtrusive.

Unless authorized by their instructors, students are expected to do their own, original work on each assignment in each class. A student who recycles his or her course work from one class to another may face an allegation of academic dishonesty. An instructor who believes a student has committed an act of plagiarism should take appropriate action, which includes the issuing of a “penalty grade” for academic dishonesty. [Article 8.1.15](#) of the *Academic Freedom Report for Students at Michigan State University*, or the “AFR,” defines a penalty grade as “a grade assigned by an instructor who believes a student to have committed academic dishonesty. . . .” A penalty grade can include, but is not limited to, a failing grade on the assignment or in the course.

MSU instructors cite easy access to the Internet as a primary reason for a perceived increase in plagiarism by their students. So-called term paper mills, available online, are plentiful. To counter, instructors have turned to various plagiarism detection sites to seek out and identify the original sources of their students’ work.

See the MSU TA Handbook, 2008-2009; then go to Chapter 4, page 13 for 20 WEB sources on plagiarism.

For a scholarly discussion of plagiarism at U.S. colleges and universities, see Patrick M. Scanlon and David R. Neuman’s article “Internet Plagiarism Among College Students,” published in the May/June 2002 *Journal of Student Development* (Vol. 43., No. 3).

See also:

- [www.AntiPlagiarism.com](http://www.AntiPlagiarism.com) for information about *The Plagiarism Handbook: Strategies for Preventing, Detecting, and Dealing with Plagiarism*, by Robert A. Harris. This book is especially good in coaching instructors on how to confront students they suspect have plagiarized.
- Northwest Missouri State University *Guide to Diagnosing Plagiarism*, at this Web site: [www.nwmissouri.edu/library/services/plagiarism.htm#article](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/library/services/plagiarism.htm#article)

### **Plagiarism Links:**

For examples of what constitutes plagiarism, see:

[http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/docs/Plagiarism\\_Avoiding\\_Unintentional\\_Plagiarism.pdf](http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/docs/Plagiarism_Avoiding_Unintentional_Plagiarism.pdf)

<https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/>

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/academic-integrity-2011b.pdf>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is central to the educational process and acts of academic dishonesty are serious offenses within the University community. Suspension from the University could be the consequence for acts of academic dishonesty.

Students should be familiar with General Student Regulation 1.00 on Scholarship and Grades, and with the all-University policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades. In addition, it is important that students clearly understand the specific expectations of their individual instructors with regard to this important matter. The process for adjudicating cases of academic dishonesty is outlined in Section 2.4 of *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*.

### INTEGRITY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND GRADES (All-University Policy)

The following statement of University policy was approved by the Academic Council and the Academic Senate, and serves as the definitive statement of principle and procedure to be used in instances of academic dishonesty.

1. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles and in so doing protect the validity of University grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. (See *General Student Regulation 1.00, Scholarship and Grades*, for specific regulations.) Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged.
2. If any instance of academic dishonesty is discovered by an instructor, it is his or her responsibility to take appropriate action. Depending on his or her judgments of the particular case, he or she may give a failing grade to the student on the assignment or for the course.
3. In instances where a failing grade in a course is given only for academic dishonesty, the instructor will notify the student's academic dean in writing of the circumstances.
4. The student who receives a failing grade based on a charge of academic dishonesty may appeal a judgment made by a department, school, or a college. Refer to *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*.
5. When in the judgment of the academic dean, action other than, or in addition to, a failing grade is warranted, the dean will refer the case to the college-level hearing board which shall have original jurisdiction. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the appropriate judiciary will be randomly selected by the assistant provost from one of the three care colleges. Appeals from the judgment may be made to the All-University Academic Integrity Review Board. Refer to *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*.

6. In instances of academic dishonesty where the instructor feels that action other than, or in addition to, a failing grade in the course is warranted, the instructor will report the case to his or her departmental or school chairperson and to the student's academic dean. The dean will then refer the case to the college-level hearing board, which shall have original jurisdiction. Refer to *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*.

(See also: *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities*, Article 5; or *Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities*, Article 5.)

---Academic Council

---Academic Senate

---November 18, 1969, Revised July, 1990

---Editorial revisions as printed in *Academic Programs 2000*



## O. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN SOCIOLOGY

The following material was taken from the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities found on the MSU website <https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/grievance-procedures/index.html>

### ARTICLE 5

#### ADJUDICATION OF CASES INVOLVING GRADUATE STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

##### 5.1 Judicial Structure

**5.1.1** To promote effective functioning of the system of graduate student rights and responsibilities, an appropriate judicial structure and process shall be established for hearing and adjudicating all cases brought by and against graduate students in the following areas:

- (a) Academic Rights and Responsibilities
- (b) Professional Rights and Duties of Graduate Assistants not covered by the Graduate Employees Union collective bargaining contract
- (c) Professional Rights and Duties of other Graduate Students

**5.1.2 Department/School Level.** Adjudication necessitated on the department/school level may be handled informally or, at the request of a party or parties, formally through a department/school hearing board. The hearing board shall be composed of the unit administrator or designee and equal numbers of faculty and graduate students selected by their respective groups in accordance with the department/school bylaws. If the unit administrator is involved in the case, neither the unit administrator nor the designee may serve on the hearing board.

**5.1.3 College Graduate Hearing Board.** Each college shall establish a judiciary composed of the chair of the college graduate committee or designee and equal numbers of faculty and graduate students selected by their respective groups in accordance with college bylaws.

**5.1.4 University Graduate Judiciary.** A judiciary shall be established at the University level composed of the Dean of The Graduate School or designee, who shall serve as chairperson, three elected faculty members of the University Graduate Council, and three graduate students chosen by the all-university graduate student governing body.

**5.1.5** Each hearing board or judiciary shall be chaired by a member who has faculty rank and shall provide a suitable number of alternate members chosen in accordance with the procedures established above.

**5.1.6 Term of Office.** Hearing board or judiciary members at all levels shall be selected in the fall of the year and shall serve one year. The one-year term shall not preclude reappointment of any member the following year.

**5.1.7** Members of a judiciary involved or possessing other conflicts of interest in a case at issue shall be disqualified from sitting on the judiciary for that specific case.

- (a) An approved alternate member from the appropriate faculty or student group will replace such person(s) in accordance with established guidelines.

- (b) Either party [complainant or respondent] may submit to the chair of the hearing board a challenge of judiciary members in instances of alleged conflicts of interest. Such challenges will be arbitrated by the chair in a timely manner and reported to both parties in writing three (3) class days after rendering a decision.
- (c) Either party may remove a total of two board members, barring the chair, without stated cause. The name(s) of the individual(s) must be transmitted to the chair no later than three (3) days after receiving notification of the board's membership.

## **5.2 Jurisdiction of Alleged Violations (other than grievances).**

**5.2.1** Except as specified in this document (particularly in Section 5.1), alleged violations of student group regulations, general student regulations, or all- University policies as they apply to all students (undergraduate, graduate, graduate-professional) will be referred to the appropriate judiciary as outlined in the *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*.

## **5.3 Redress of Grievances**

**5.3.1** With respect to allegations of violation(s) by or against a graduate student in the areas cited in Section 5.1, where possible, a grievant is encouraged to seek resolution and redress informally with the appropriate individual(s).

**5.3.2** If problems arise in the relationship between instructor and student, both should attempt to resolve them in informal, direct discussions. If the problem remains unresolved, then the unit administrator and/or the Ombudsman should be consulted. If still aggrieved, a student may then submit a formal, written grievance for consideration by an appropriate hearing board. The formal grievance alleging violations of academic rights must include a proposed remedy, which could be implemented by a responsible administrator.

**5.3.3** The University undertakes, within the limits of its resources and the limits imposed by due respect for the professional rights of the faculty, to supply an appropriate remedy for legitimate student grievances that have judicial merit. (See Article 5.4.6). The limits of the University's resources proceed from factors that, while subject to its influence, are not always subject to its control.

**5.3.4** To overcome the presumption of good faith in course instructors' and graduate committees' judgments of performance, grievances concerning academic evaluations must demonstrate that an evaluation was based entirely or in part upon factors that are inappropriate or irrelevant to academic performance and applicable professional standards. (See Sections 2.2 as well as 2.3.11 and 2.4.8.)

**5.3.5** Any member of the academic community of Michigan State University may initiate a grievance involving the rights and responsibilities of graduate students. Grievances alleging violation of the academic rights of an undergraduate student by a graduate student shall be heard by the unit level judiciaries outlined in the *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*.

**5.3.6** In submitting a formal grievance to an appropriate hearing board (see Section 5.3.6.2) alleging violation(s) by or against a graduate student in the areas cited in Section 5.1, a grievant must submit a written, signed statement

**5.3.6.1** Grievances must normally be initiated no later than mid-term of the semester following the one wherein the alleged violation occurred (exclusive of summer semester). If the involved instructor or student is absent from the University during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons exist, an exception to this provision may be granted by the appropriate Hearing Board. If, before the formal grievance procedures are completed, the involved instructor is no longer employed by the University, the grievance process may nevertheless proceed.

**5.3.6.2** Student grievances alleging violation of academic and professional rights must be initiated at the lowest administrative level feasible; normally, the department/school. With the approval of the college dean, departments/schools may waive jurisdiction and refer grievances to the college hearing board.

## **5.4 Judicial Procedures**

**5.4.1** Hearing boards shall establish their own procedures in a manner consistent with this document. A copy of procedures adopted by each unit shall be filed with the Office of the Ombudsman and with the Office of the Dean of The Graduate School. Departments/schools and Colleges shall establish hearing board procedures in a manner consistent with this document. A copy of these procedures shall be filed with the Ombudsman and with the Dean of the Graduate School. Departments/schools and colleges shall review their hearing board procedures every five (5) years.

**5.4.2** Procedures for the adjudication of grievances must proceed in a timely manner as defined below.

**5.4.3** Upon receipt of a request for a formal grievance, the unit chair/director shall forward a copy of the grievance request to the chair of the hearing board who in turn shall transmit a copy of the grievance request within five (5) class days to the hearing board members and to the person or persons party to the matter.

**5.4.4** In urgent cases in which it is alleged that a regulation, administrative decision or action threatens immediate and irreparable damage to any of the parties involved, the hearing board or judiciary shall expedite the hearing and final disposition of the case.

**5.4.5** A hearing board or judiciary is empowered to act on a request to direct an individual or unit to discontinue or postpone an administrative decision or action that threatens immediate and irreparable damage to any of the parties involved pending final disposition of the case. The hearing board or judiciary shall expedite the hearing and final disposition of this urgent case.

**5.4.6** A department/school or college hearing board shall review each hearing request for jurisdiction and judicial merit and may then forward a copy of the request to the appropriate individual(s) and invite a written response. After considering all submitted information, the board may:

- a. Accept the request, in full or in part, and proceed to schedule a hearing.
- b. Reject the request and provide an appropriate explanation.
- c. Invite all parties to meet with the board for an informal discussion of the issues. Such a discussion shall not preclude a later hearing.

**5.4.7 Notice of Hearing.** At least six (6) class days prior to a formal hearing, both the respondent and the complainant shall be sent a written notification of hearing from the appropriate hearing body. This notice of hearing shall state:

- a. The nature of the issues, charges and/or conflicts to be heard with sufficient particularity to enable both the respondent and the complainant to prepare their respective cases.
- b. The time and place of the hearing.
- c. The body adjudicating the case and the names of the members that make up the body, including the names of all alternate members.
- d. The names of the respondent and complainant.
- e. The name(s) of any potential witnesses.
- f. The name of an advisor (if any) selected by the complainant or respondent.

**5.4.8** Either the complainant or the respondent may request, with cause, a postponement prior to the scheduled time of a hearing. The hearing board may grant or deny such a request.

**5.4.9** Both the respondent and the complainant shall be expected to appear at the hearing and present their cases to the judiciary.

- a. Should the complainant fail to appear, the judiciary may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case.
- b. Should the respondent fail to appear, the judiciary may either postpone the hearing or, only in unusual circumstances, hear the case in his or her absence.
- c. The judiciary may accept written statements from a party to the hearing in lieu of a personal appearance, but only in unusual circumstances. Such written statements must be submitted to the judiciary at least one (1) day prior to the scheduled hearing.

**5.4.10** Hearing boards shall ensure that a collegial atmosphere prevails in grievance hearings. Either party shall have the right to be accompanied by an advisor (see definition in Article 8). Permission will be granted to the respondent to be accompanied by an attorney if there are criminal charges pending. If the respondent is charged with a sex offense, the complainant may also have an attorney present.

**5.4.10.1** During the hearing, parties to a grievance shall have an opportunity to state their cases, present evidence, designate witnesses, ask questions, and present a rebuttal.

**5.4.11** The hearing board shall prepare a written report of findings and rationale for the decision and shall forward copies to the parties involved, to the responsible administrator(s), to the Ombudsman, and to the Dean of The Graduate School. The report shall indicate the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof that support the hearing board's decision. All recipients are expected to respect the confidentiality of this report. When a hearing board finds that a violation of academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall direct the responsible administrator to provide redress. The administrator, in consultation with the hearing board, shall implement an appropriate remedy.

**5.4.12 Appeals.** The decision of the original hearing board may be appealed by either party to a grievance only to the next level hearing board. If the original hearing was by a department/school hearing board, the appeal shall be made to the college hearing board. If the original hearing was by a college hearing board, the appeal should be made to the University Graduate Judiciary.

**5.4.12.1** Appeals must allege either that applicable procedures for adjudicating the case were not followed in the previous hearing or that the findings of the hearing board were not supported by the preponderance of the evidence. (Presentation of new evidence will normally be inappropriate at an appeal hearing.)

**5.4.12.2** All appeals must be written and signed and must specify the alleged defects in the previous adjudication(s) in sufficient particularity to justify further proceedings. The appeal must also specify the redress that is sought.

**5.4.12.3** Appeals must be filed with the chair of the appropriate appellate board within ten (10) class days following a notice of a decision. The original decision shall be held in abeyance while under appeal.

**5.4.12.4** An appellate board (i.e., a college hearing board or the University Graduate Judiciary) shall review each appeal request and may then forward a copy of the request to the appropriate individual(s) and invite a written response. After considering all submitted information, the appellate board may:

- a. decide that sufficient reasons for an appeal do not exist and that the decision of the lower hearing body shall stand;
- b. direct the lower hearing body to rehear the case or to reconsider or clarify its decision; or
- c. decide that sufficient reasons exist for an appeal and accept the request, in full or in part, and proceed to schedule an appeal hearing.

**5.4.12.4.1** Following an appeal hearing, an appellate board may affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the lower hearing body.

**5.4.13 Reconsideration.** Each judiciary or hearing board shall make provision to allow the parties to a grievance to request reconsideration of a case within sixty (60) days if it is determined that new evidence has arisen. An exception to the time provision may be granted by the appropriate judiciary or hearing board.

## **5.5 Academic Dismissal and Academic Disciplinary Cases**

**5.5.1** A student who receives a penalty grade based upon a charge of academic dishonesty and who is not referred for judicial action may seek a hearing from a department/school hearing board to contest the allegation. In such a hearing, the burden of proof shall rest upon the instructor whose prior assignment of the penalty grade will constitute a charge of academic dishonesty. The hearing board shall proceed in compliance with applicable University and/or unit academic legislation on the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards, and the procedural and appeal provisions of this document shall apply.

**5.5.2** When sanctions other than or in addition to a penalty grade are involved, the college hearing board has original jurisdiction, and the University Graduate Judiciary has appellate jurisdiction over academic dismissals and disciplinary cases against graduate students relating to academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, or falsification of admission or academic records.

**5.5.2.1** After hearing a case involving academic dismissal, dishonesty, professional standards, or falsification of admission or academic records, the college hearing board shall decide whether action is supported by the preponderance of evidence. If the finding is that disciplinary action is not warranted, the graduate student may challenge a penalty grade received in the case through the department/school and college hearing boards. If disciplinary action in addition to any penalty grade that has been assessed is supported by the preponderance of evidence, the hearing board may select from the following sanctions:

### **a. Sanctions in academic disciplinary cases:**

- (1) **Warning.** An official written statement expressing disapproval of acts committed.
- (2) **Warning Probation.** A probation indicating that further violations of regulations will result in more severe disciplinary action. This probation will be imposed for a specific period of time; and provided no further violations have occurred, the graduate student shall be automatically removed from probation when the imposed period expires. This probation may be accompanied by a requirement that restitution be made for University property damages or losses resulting from acts committed, or other requirements or special conditions as deemed appropriate.
- (3) **Disciplinary Probation.** A period of time specified for observing and evaluating a graduate student's conduct, with or without special conditions, including a written reprimand, and indicating that (a) further violations while on probation may result in more severe disciplinary action including suspension, or (b) further violation while on probation of regulations of similar or greater severity will result in suspension. This probation will be imposed for a specific period of time; and, provided no further violations have occurred, the graduate student shall automatically be removed from probation when the imposed period expires.

- (4) **Suspension.** A suspension from the University may be for a specified period of time, in which case the graduate student is eligible to apply for readmission at the end of the stated period of time; or it may be a conditional suspension, in which case the graduate student must demonstrate that he/she has fulfilled stated conditions prior to applying for readmission. A recommendation of suspension must be reviewed by the Dean of The Graduate School and the Provost who may affirm the decision or direct other appropriate redress in consultation with the hearing body.
- (5) **Other:** Other action deemed appropriate to a specific case.

**b. Sanctions in academic dismissal cases:**

- (1) Academic dismissal does not imply future readmission, nor does it mean that the person is forever barred from enrollment at Michigan State University. After a period of at least a year, and usually a minimum of two years, a student dismissed for academic reasons may apply for readmission. The applicant must be prepared to submit evidence indicative of capacity to perform graduate level work. Declarations of good intentions are not sufficient. Each application will be considered on its merits. If the student has attended another institution while on dismissal, an official transcript must be submitted.

**5.6** The University Graduate Judiciary is the final hearing body within the judicial structure related to graduate academic rights and responsibilities, in cases that were initiated at the college level.

**5.6.1** The University Graduate Judiciary shall have available to it the full range of decisions provided to hearing boards through this document. In addition, the University Graduate Judiciary may make whatever recommendations it may consider appropriate to specific cases. When the Judiciary finds that a violation of academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, the Judiciary shall direct the responsible administrator to provide redress. The administrator, in consultation with the University Graduate Judiciary, shall implement an appropriate remedy.

*The following was taken from the Michigan State University Sociology Department Bylaws –*

## **9.0 GRADUATE STUDENT GRIEVANCES**

- 9.1 Graduate student grievances in the department shall be conducted in accordance with procedures set forth in Appendix C: Graduate Student Academic Grievance Hearing Procedures for the Department of Sociology.

## **P. SEXUAL HARASSMENT, GRIEVANCES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The Department of Sociology follows the MSU policies on Sexual Harassment Appeals, Grievances and Conflicts. If students have concerns in any of these areas, they are encouraged to contact the department chair and associate chair. Alternatively, they are encouraged to contact the MSU authorities with regard to these issues.

Those who want copies of these policies may request them in the Department office or find them on the web at the following addresses:

<http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/gradrights.htm>

<http://www.msu.edu/unit/facrecds/FacHand/sexharass.html>

Those who are concerned that Sexual Harassment may have been committed or who feel that they may have another grievance should contact the Chairperson or Associate to discuss their concerns.

The MSU Ombudsman is also available to address these and other issues.

## CONFLICT

The University has established a judicial structure and process for hearing and adjudicating alleged violations of recognized graduate student rights and responsibilities (see Article 5 of the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities handbook of the Graduate School).  
<http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/default.pdf>

However, the first venue to resolve such conflicts informally or formally rests with the department.

Students that find themselves in conflict with other students, course instructors, or committee members are advised to seek guidance and support from their committee chair or from the director of graduate programs. For disputes or grievances involving committee chairs or the director of graduate programs, students are advised to seek council through the department chair or the graduate instruction committee.

## Q. FACULTY

Please see department website for information about our faculty.

## R. GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY (as approved by University Council)

For master's (Plan A), master's (Plan B) with research responsibilities, and doctoral students, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student's initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty. It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence –it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student's return, and c) make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence. If employed as a RA or TE, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student's responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in the MSU GEU CBU Article 18.

## **S. MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL**

Student will need to notify the GPD and graduate secretary of their medical withdrawal and meet with Mr. Connelly, Director the Student Affairs in 201 Berkey.

## **T. SUMMER TEACHING**

Students interested in teaching Summer semester must have a masters degree or have passed the department's qualifying paper. In the latter case, student must go through the graduate school's steps to have a masters degree listed on their transcript.



**Department of Sociology  
Michigan State University  
Permission to Take Comprehensive Exam**

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

The Guidance Committee of the student named above has met and has approved the statement and reading list for the Comprehensive Exam. The student plans to take the exam starting

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date)

The student understands that

- 1) if he/she does not take the exam on the designated date s/he must apply for an extension from the Chair of the Guidance Committee and that such an extension is given at the discretion of the Chair of the Guidance Committee.
- 2) if he/she does not take the exam within six months, the members of the Guidance Committee will review the reading lists and if they believe it is appropriate, add works to them.

Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_

(student)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Chair of Guidance Committee)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

Other Guidance Committee members:

\_\_\_\_\_

Type name and sign

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

\_\_\_\_\_

Type name and sign

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

\_\_\_\_\_

Type name and sign

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

\_\_\_\_\_

Type name and sign

\_\_\_\_\_

(date)

Please return this form to the Graduate Program Coordinator or Roseann Bills.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE STUDENT QUALIFYING PAPER  
APPROVAL FORM**

This form must be signed and turned in before the student will be allowed to make an oral presentation.

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(Name of Student)

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(Title of Paper)

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Written paper approved by (3) Committee Member (sign below).

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(Major Advisor's signature)

(write name)

(date)

---

(Signature)

(write name)

(date)

---

(Signature)

(write name)

(date)

**QUALITATIVE METHODS WAIVER**  
**Non-MSU Coursework**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

Course for which waiver is requested \_\_\_\_\_

University Attended for Course(s) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Summary of student's training in Qualitative Methods:

2. Amplifying remarks:

Guidance Committee Approvals (signatures):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation of instructor who teaches the course for which waiver is requested  
Requirement:     Waive             Not waived

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Instructor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Instructor of Qualitative Methods  
course to be waived

WAIVER FORM

SOC 995 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Teaching

Have you taught at least one class as a teaching assistant? If so, please list the class(es) and when taught below.

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Have you taught a class as an independent instructor? This includes leading your own recitation section. If so, please list the class(es) and when taught below.

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Any other teaching experience? If so, please list and give dates below.

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B. Research experience

Have you ever been a research assistant? If so, please list when and give a description of your duties below.

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Any other research experience? If so, please list and give dates below.

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C. Conference participation

Please list all conferences attended, where you **did not** present a research paper.

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Please list all conferences attended, where you **did** present a research paper.

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D. Publications

Please list any publications

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E. Attendance at any Graduate School workshops. Please list all.

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F. Any other relevant information to be considered for granting the waiver?

Waiver granted? YES NO Signature

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