GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

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GRADUATION
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Congratulations and welcome to the sociology department at the University of North Texas. We are pleased you decided to join our department! Here at the University of North Texas, we strive to provide our graduate students with a challenging, yet stimulating curriculum, ample opportunity to participate in nascent research and engage with undergraduates in the classroom. It is our goal to provide you with the tools necessary for success in your future.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This handbook has been designed to assist students in understanding the graduate programs within sociology. This handbook does not serve as a replacement for the Toulouse Graduate School Student Success Manual or the University Catalog. In addition to providing information about academic policies and degree programs, this handbook will also provide information for graduate student employees. Although this handbook attempts to explain the curriculum and academic policies with as much detail as possible, it is in your best interest to also review the manuals listed above and develop a relationship with the graduate director.

MISSION

The sociology graduate program at UNT is designed to prepare students for professional careers as sociologists in academic and non-academic settings. Our department offers three programs: Masters, Masters Pass-Through, and a PhD. The objective of these programs is to produce intellectually well-rounded graduates capable of (1) functioning effectively in either an academic milieu or a sociological practice setting, (2) analyzing human social groups and relationships between groups and (3) evaluating the influence of social factors on social situations. All doctoral students are required to study core social theory, social statistics and social research and may concentrate in a variety of substantive areas including (but not limited to social stratification, health and aging, and globalization. The sociology PhD program participates in a consortium with Texas Woman’s University and Texas A&M University–Commerce called the Federation of North Texas Area Universities. Through the federation, doctoral students are able to take sociology courses at these institutions and apply them to their PhD degree, include faculty from the other universities on their doctoral advisory committee and participate in federation professional development programs and events.

DEPARTMENT ADDRESS

Department of Sociology
University of North Texas
1155 Union Circle #311157
Denton, TX 76203-5017
(940) 565-2296
The department is located in Sycamore Hall in Suite 288. A campus map can be found at: https://northtexan.unt.edu/content/interactive-campus-map.

**DEPARTMENT WEBSITE AND EMAIL**
https://sociology.unt.edu/
Sociology@unt.edu

**DEPARTMENT CHAIR**
Dr. Donna Barnes
(940) 565-2936
Donna.Barnes@unt.edu

**GRADUATE DIRECTOR**
Dr. Gabe Ignatow
(940) 565-3616
Gabe.Ignatow@unt.edu

**ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR**
Anna Nguyen
(940) 565-2936
Anna.Nguyen@unt.edu

**FACULTY INFORMATION**
A list of faculty can be found on the sociology website at:
https://sociology.unt.edu/people/faculty
GRADUATE STUDENT CULTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

Graduate school is a completely different academic experience from undergraduate education. In this section, we will discuss some of the changes you can anticipate.

Coursework

Graduate classes require significantly more coursework than undergraduate courses. At the graduate level, a full time course load is typically 9 hours (or 3 courses) per semester. You should expect to spend approximately 2 hours study time for every credit hour. While each professor has a different style, you can anticipate reading approximately 100 pages per week in each course. Generally, you can expect to write a 20-25 page final paper. Some courses will require weekly papers over the readings. The department offers primarily face to face seminars, but may occasionally offer online or hybrid courses. Online courses will typically have a discussion board that requires weekly participation. Face to face courses are typically discussion based, with little lecture. Graduate classes tend to be much smaller than undergraduate classes.

Curriculum Vitae

If you have not started yet, you should develop a curriculum vitae, or CV. Over the course of your graduate career, you will want to regularly update your CV by adding items such as conference presentations, published articles, manuscripts in progress, teaching experience, awards, and service.

Helpful Hint: Ask some of your professors and peers to see examples of CVs. This can help you format yours.

Faculty/Student Interaction

As a graduate student, you should expect to become better acquainted with your professors. The graduate faculty enjoys mentoring students and is very supportive of graduate student development. However, it is important to remember that faculty members also have a number of demands on their time, including administrative duties, research obligations, and publishing pressure. You should respect their time by making appointments ahead of time and preparing for the meeting.

Independent Study, Special Problems Coursework

As a graduate student, you are able to enroll in independent study courses (SOCI 5900 and SOCI 6900) in which you work one-on-one with a faculty member. These courses are useful for developing seminar papers, thesis work, or early work on your dissertation into publishable articles. These courses are 3-credit, and prior to registration you must designate a faculty member who has agreed to supervise your work in the course.
**Graduate Student Involvement**

As a graduate student, your peers will be one of your greatest resources. The department and university offer numerous ways to connect with peers within and outside sociology. While there is not a distinct peer mentoring program, incoming graduate students are encouraged to reach out to current graduate students for advice and mentoring.

*Graduate Student Council*

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) is the graduate student government on campus. It hosts a number of free events on campus for graduate students. These events are an excellent way to meet other graduate students and expand your peer network. You can also participate in GSC in a more official capacity by running for executive and legislative positions. For more information visit [http://tgs.unt.edu/gsc](http://tgs.unt.edu/gsc).

*Alpha Kappa Delta*

UNT has a chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD). If you were a member as an undergraduate, your membership can be ‘transferred’ to the UNT chapter. If you were not a member, you can notify the department Academic Coordinator if you are interested in joining. Check out the Facebook group for more information: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/UNTAKD/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UNTAKD/)

*Social Media*

UNT Sociology has an active Facebook page. This is a good place to learn about upcoming events and department news. [https://www.facebook.com/UNTSOCIOLOGY/](https://www.facebook.com/UNTSOCIOLOGY/)

*Federation Workshops*

Each year, the UNT/TWU Federation usually hosts a workshop or panel for graduate students. These are a great way to network with sociology grad students and faculty at TWU.

*Toulouse Graduate School Workshops*

The graduate school also hosts numerous workshops and events throughout the academic year. These are excellent ways to get involved and meet students in other programs.

*Graduate Student Listserv*

You can contact sociology graduate students by emailing the graduate student listserve: [Sociology-Grad-All@unt.edu](mailto:Sociology-Grad-All@unt.edu)
Program INFORMATION

The Federation

The sociology PhD program participates in a consortium with Texas Woman’s University and Texas A&M University–Commerce called the Federation of North Texas Area Universities. Through the federation, doctoral students are able to take sociology courses at these institutions and apply them to their PhD degree, include faculty from the other universities on their doctoral advisory committee, and participate in federation professional development events.

To register for federation courses, you need approval from the graduate director. If approved, you must complete the following form: http://sociology.unt.edu/graduate/graduate-program-forms. You must also complete the enrollment form located at http://tsgs.unt.edu/federation and send a signed copy of the latter form to Natalie.Garcia-McIntire@unt.edu.

Course Scheduling and Course Rotation

Each semester there will generally be 6 graduate courses offered—a mix of core and other courses. Most courses run on a 2-year rotation. Course rotations are tentative and may have to change to accommodate faculty leaves and course demand.

PhD Concentrations

Global & Comparative Sociology - The global and comparative doctoral concentration comprises a range of classes that focus on social phenomena that are global or transnational in scope.

Social Stratification - The Social Stratification doctoral concentration focuses on socially structured inequality in terms of societal resources such as wealth, power, and status. It focuses primarily on modern stratification systems and on social strata such as race, class, and gender.

Health & Aging – This doctoral concentration focuses on the social factors related to health, as well as aging. It focuses on topics such as the cultural meanings of illness, the social organization of the medical care system, and social factors as they relate to health disparities.

For more about the concentrations, see: https://sociology.unt.edu/graduate/phd-concentrations.
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND DEGREE PLAN**

*Faculty Mentor*

Upon entering the graduate program, you will be advised by the Graduate Director until you have chosen a faculty member to serve as your mentor and likely also as your Advisory Committee Chair. The Mentor will assist you with planning of coursework, as well as navigating departmental processes.

*Advisory Committee Chair and Advisory Committee*

It is recommended that you choose an Advisory Committee Chair during your first year in the program. The Chair (sometimes referred to as your major professor) must be a full-time faculty member of the UNT Sociology Department. To begin the selection process, set up a meeting with a faculty member who has similar substantive interests. You can learn about faculty research interests from the faculty links on the department website. At the meeting, you should share common research interests, and then ask the faculty member if s/he would be willing to serve as your Advisory Committee Chair. If the faculty member declines, you can seek advice on other possible chairs. If the faculty member agrees, ask for recommendations about other possible committee members.

The duties of the Advisory Committee include:

- Provide advice and assistance related to the student’s degree plan
- Conduct the student’s oral thesis/dissertation proposal defense
- Supervise the student’s thesis/dissertation project
- Conduct the student’s oral thesis/dissertation defense

Since Advisory Committee members must approve of your degree plan, the committee must be assembled before you submit your degree plan to the graduate school. As you progress in the program, you may add or remove members from your committee as necessary.

Advisory Committees must include at least 3 members, 2 of whom must be full-time faculty members from the UNT sociology. The third member can be from UNT sociology, another UNT department outside of sociology, or from the federated TWU sociology department. If you wish to add an additional outside person, you will need also to add another full-time UNT sociology faculty member since more than half of your committee must be from UNT sociology.

*Helpful Hint:* Always check with your committee chair before adding a new member.
Degree Plan

Once you have established an Advisory Committee, you need to file a degree plan with the graduate school. Degree plans can be found at: https://sociology.unt.edu/graduate/graduate-program-forms. You should complete your degree plan under advisement from the graduate director and your Advisory Committee chair. The degree plan must be filed before completion of 18 semester hours in the program and for doctoral students, no later than the second year of graduate work and prior to taking the concentration exam.

GRADUATE STUDENT FUNDING

There are many opportunities for graduate student funding within and outside the department. Graduate students are encouraged to seek external funding as well.

Graduate Student Scholarships

There are a number of university-wide scholarships available. The deadline for the general scholarship application is March 1. More information can be found at: https://financialaid.unt.edu/how-apply-scholarships

For incoming doctoral students, the graduate school offers a $1,000 Academic Achievement Scholarship that includes a waiver for out-of-state tuition costs. However, the scholarship and waiver are not granted automatically. Admitted students must apply for the scholarship at tsgs.unt.edu/graduatelife/AAS.

The department also offers graduate student scholarships. The deadline for the scholarship application is in mid-to-late February. A minimum 3.5 G.P.A. is required by all of the scholarships. More information about the various scholarships and how to apply can be found on the sociology website: https://sociology.unt.edu/graduate/financial-aid.

Departmental Funding

Generally, funding priority is given to pass-through and doctoral students. Pass-through students can be funded up to 5 years and doctoral students who are admitted with a Master’s degree can be funded up to 3 years. Students can receive funding by working for the department in a variety of ways:

Teaching Assistantships (TAs) require up to 20 hours per week of assisting sociology professors and instructors. TA positions come with up to 6 hours of paid tuition in both the fall and spring semesters. In order to qualify for this tuition benefit, a student must be in good academic standing and be a full-time graduate student. Students are considered for a renewal of this position based on funding availability, past TA performance, and satisfactory progress in the program.
Teaching Fellowships (TFs) require that graduate students either teach two courses independently each semester or teach one course as an instructor and serve as a teaching assistant in another course. The Graduate Director and/or Department Chair makes specific work assignments based on the department's teaching needs and student research/teaching interests when possible. TF positions come with up to 6 hours paid tuition in both the fall and spring semesters. In order to qualify for this tuition benefit a student must be in good academic standing and be a full-time graduate student. Students are considered for a renewal of this position if they are enrolled in the MA-PhD pass-through or doctoral programs based on funding availability, past TF performance, and satisfactory progress in the program.

Tutor-Graders (TGs) require up to 20 hours per week of assisting sociology department professors and instructors. These students assist faculty members, but they do not teach classes. This position pays a flat stipend for the academic year, and the stipend is stipulated in the official funding-offer letter. Tutor-grader positions do not provide health care benefits, but students who have performed well as tutor-graders are often given priority consideration when graduate assistantship (TA and TF) positions become available.

Helpful Hint: TAs and TGs generally have similar job duties and thus build similar occupational skills that prepare them to teach later.

Research Assistant (RA): An individual faculty member may hire a RA to assist with preparing, conducting and/or writing research. These positions are often funded through external grants.

Summer funding is limited. There are some Teaching Fellow and Teaching Assistant positions available, but it is rare to be able to fund all interested graduate students. International students should take particular note of the limited summer funding because students with F-1 student visas are generally not permitted to work off campus in the summer. International applicants with questions about work and funding should visit international.unt.edu.

Other UNT Graduate Funding Opportunities

UNT also offers graduate positions in a variety of administrative offices. Typically, these positions will be akin to a Teaching Assistant position (offering monthly stipend and tuition benefits). In the past, sociology graduate students have held positions in the graduate school, the office of student orientations, GSTEP, and the Mayborn School of Journalism. Information about on-campus employment can be found at: http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center/students-and-alumni/find-a-job-or-internship/on-campus-student-employment.

Travel/Research Funding

The sociology department offers funding for travel to conferences. The form to request these funds can be found at: https://sociology.unt.edu/graduate/financial-aid.

The graduate school (TGS) also offers funding opportunities for travel and research, as does the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS). Whenever possible, students should apply for matching funds from these sources. Here are the relevant links: https://tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/travel-grants.
Alpha Kappa Delta also offers travel funds for regional conferences for its members. You may visit the AKD website to find out more information.

**ACADEMIC POLICIES**

*Registering for Classes*

1) Log into My UNT. https://my.unt.edu/
2) From the student tab you can see the registration calendar, view your semester schedule, make a payment, register for classes, etc.
3) Click *Enrollment* to register. Then, click *Enroll/Add/Drop* to search for and enroll in courses.
4) Select the correct term for enrollment, and then continue.
5) Click on *Search* and in the dropdown box choose *Graduate* as Career.
6) Click *Select Subject*, and choose the appropriate subject.
7) Select *Graduate* as Course Career, and then begin your search. For example, to register for SOCI 6500, click *Select* to choose this course.
8) Click *Next* to add the course to your cart.
9) Click *Proceed to Step 2 of 3* to confirm enrollment.
10) Click *Finish Enrolling*.
11) If a red ‘X’ shows in the *Status* field of the confirmation box, contact the Instructor of Record or the Administrative Coordinator to request permission to enroll in the course.
12) If a Green check mark shows in the *Status* field of the confirmation box, you have successfully enrolled in the course.

*Helpful Hint:* Register for classes early so that they do not get dropped from the schedule. Classes need specific enrollment numbers to be offered; if a class doesn’t meet those goals, it could be cancelled.

*Residency*

To fulfill UNT’s residency requirement, a student must carry a full load of 9 hours each semester for two consecutive long semesters at UNT or 6 hours for three consecutive semesters.

*Time to Completion*

All coursework and other requirements towards the master’s degree must be completed within five years. Credits more than six years old at the time of first registration for graduate work are not transferable from other institutions. Individual courses which are over 10 calendar years old lose all value for degree purposes. There is no opportunity to appeal for extending the 10 years that a course is valid.

All work to be credited toward the doctoral degree beyond the master’s degree must be completed within a period of 8 years from the date doctoral credit is first earned. No course credit beyond the master’s degree that is more than 10 years old at the time the doctoral
program is completed will be counted toward the doctorate.

Time limits are strictly enforced. Students exceeding the time limit may be required to repeat the comprehensive exam, replace out-of-date credits with up-to-date work, and/or show other evidence of being up-to-date in their major and minor fields. Students anticipating they will exceed the time limit should apply for an extension of time before their seventh year of study. For time extension procedure and forms, visit gradschool.unt.edu/extension.htm.

Time spent in active military service of the United States will not be considered in computing these time limits. However, career members of the armed forces should consult the graduate school concerning credit given to work completed before or during active military service.

**Satisfactory Progress**

A student who fails to make any progress toward the degree for at least one full calendar year (e.g., does not enroll, does not sit for the concentration exam, does not make progress on thesis or dissertation) may be dismissed from the program.

Failure to progress along the suggested timeline listed on the department webpage (http://sociology.unt.edu/graduate/faqs) may influence graduate student funding decisions.

**Academic Probation and Dismissal from Program**

Upon receipt of a grade of “C” or below or two “W” grades, a student will be placed on academic probation. The graduate director will notify the student of his/her probationary status, and a written notice will be placed in the student’s file.

Receipt of a second grade of “C” or below or a third grade of “W” will result in the student’s dismissal from the graduate program. Also, if the student’s overall GPA falls below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters, the department has the right to dismiss the student. The graduate director will inform the student of his/her dismissal from the program, and a written notice will be sent to Toulouse Graduate School.

**Dismissal Appeals**

A student wishing to appeal his/her dismissal from the doctoral program may petition the Graduate Committee, through the graduate director. This written appeal must be received within 30 days of the notification or attempted notification of dismissal.

**Incompletes**

Incompletes are non-punitive grades given in the last fourth of the semester only if the student is (1) passing the course; and (2) has a justifiable and documented reason (such as serious illness) for not completing the work on schedule. The student must file a Request-for- Incomplete form signed by both the Instructor and Department Chair. This form must clearly indicate what work needs to be completed and must set a maximum time (1 year or less) for completing the work. A student who does not complete the work within the designated time receives an F. Excessive Incompletes on your student record can jeopardize your graduate funding. Incompletes should
be an exception, never a routine practice.

Withdrawal

A student may withdraw from UNT at any time prior to two weeks before the first day of final examinations for fall or spring semesters or the equivalent dates for summer sessions by making a request in the Dean of Students Office. For withdrawals processed prior to the end of the sixth week of classes for fall or spring semesters or the equivalent dates for summer sessions, the grade of W is recorded for each course in which a withdrawn student was enrolled. After the sixth week of classes for fall or spring semesters or the equivalent dates for summer sessions, a withdrawn student receives grades of W only for those courses in which there were passing grades at the time of withdrawal; otherwise, the grade WF is recorded.

Leave of absence

Leave of absence applies to graduate students who wish to discontinue work toward the degree for a specified period of time due to exigent circumstances. If approved, the leave of absence may “stop the clock” for a maximum of one year on the time limit for the degree. In the case of extenuating circumstances, a leave of absence may be extended for a second year by the Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School on the recommendation from the student’s committee, graduate coordinator, department chair, or academic associate dean. A leave of absence form must be submitted to the Toulouse Graduate School and must have approval of the student’s department chair or academic associate dean prior to submission to the Toulouse Graduate School. Once a student returns from an approved leave of absence of one year or longer, the student must submit an application through www.applytexas.org to reactivate the student record.

Leaves will only be granted under conditions that require suspension of all activities associated with pursuing the degree. Scenarios such as military deployment and medical leave (including childbirth, adoption of a child, or to care for a sick parent) are examples of a leave of absence that may be approved to “stop the clock” on degree time limits.

More information on these and other academic policies can be found in the graduate catalog, http://catalog.unt.edu/index.php.

MASTER’S DEGREE

The Department of Sociology offers a Master of Science (M.S.) and Master of Arts (M.A.) in Sociology. Candidates for the Master of Arts degree must present evidence of a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language. This is not a requirement for candidates for the Master of Science degree.

All master’s students must complete the following required courses:
  - SOCI 5050 - Sociological Theory
  - SOCI 5200 - Seminar on Research Methods and Design
  - SOCI 5210 - Introduction to Social Statistics
Students seeking a master’s degree can choose a thesis or non-thesis option. A master’s degree in sociology requires 30 graduate hours, in which 6 hours can be thesis hours (for the thesis option). Also, up to 6 hours can be outside sociology.

Master’s Degree Plan

All students seeking a master’s degree must file a Master’s Degree Plan, which can be found at: http://sociology.unt.edu/graduate/graduate-program-forms.

Non-thesis Option and Comprehensive Exams

Satisfactory performance on the comprehensive examination completes the requirements for the non-thesis master’s degree. Comprehensive exams are generally written take-home exams. The student is usually allowed two weeks to complete the exam. Principally, the exams cover, but are not limited to, content from completed course work with an emphasis upon theories, research methods and social statistics used in the discipline. Candidates are eligible to complete the exam after they have established an Advisory Committee, have an approved degree plan, and have completed at least 21 semester hours of graduate credit toward the degree.

Thesis Option

The thesis is a scholarly, original study that contributes to the knowledge of the discipline. Students interested in earning a doctorate are strongly encouraged to do a thesis project, and choosing not to do one may place a student at a disadvantage when competing for funding as a doctoral student.

Thesis projects are usually designed in close consultation with the Chair of your Advisory Committee. You may use an existing data set or collect your own data. Whatever you choose to do, make sure your thesis project is one that can be accomplished in a reasonable amount of time. The Toulouse Graduate School has a thesis manual to assist you in completing this process: https://tgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual

During your thesis research, it is important to maintain regular communication with your committee chair and offer regular progress reports to your committee members. Speak with your advisory committee to determine the preferred procedure for feedback on drafts.

Thesis Hours

You can take up to 6 thesis credit hours. Enrollment in thesis hours is permitted only after you have completed your master’s coursework. Also, a student completing a thesis must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of 3 credit hours of thesis during each fall and spring semester, including the semester the thesis is accepted by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School. Registration in 3 semester hours of thesis in at least one summer session/term is required to graduate in August.
IRB

If your research involves human subject, you will need to complete CITI training prior to submitting an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). No research should be done prior to getting IRB approval. Information about the IRB process can be found at: https://research.unt.edu/faculty-resources/integrity-compliance/irb.

Oral Defense

Each member of your Thesis Committee must attend. Other faculty and students may attend as well. A thesis defense lasts at least one hour. Talk with your chair about how the defense will be conducted. Generally, members of your committee ask questions about how you conducted the research and analyzed your data. Other faculty and peers may ask questions as well.

A majority of committee members must vote that you have “passed” the thesis project. The vote is conducted in closed session where students are not present. Often a committee will recommend a pass with revisions. All revisions or edits must be completed before the thesis can be submitted to the graduate school.

Submitting Your Thesis to Toulouse Graduate School

UNT uses an online application, Vireo, for thesis submissions. The Vireo Submission Guide can found on the TGS website at: https://tgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual. Your submission will be reviewed, and any required formatting changes must be submitted prior to graduation.

MASTER’S PASS-THROUGH PROGRAM

Students in the Master’s Pass-Through program complete the master’s degree on the way to completing the doctorate. Pass-through students do not need to reapply after completing the master’s degree. Pass-through students are strongly urged to complete a thesis, and choosing not to do a thesis may disadvantage them in competing for graduate funding. Also, the preferred approach is for Pass-through students to complete the master’s degree requirements, including thesis, before beginning the doctoral coursework.

DOCTORAL DEGREE [Please note that the department is seeking approval for major revisions in its doctoral requirements; if granted, the information in this section will no longer be accurate for students who opt into the new program]

The minimum program for the PhD in sociology consists of 72 hours beyond the bachelor’s degree or 42 hours beyond the master’s degree. All students are required to complete the following:

- A minimum of 9 semester hours in research methods and statistics.
- A minimum of 6 semester hours in sociological theory at the 6000 level,
including one 3-hour course in classical theory and one 3-hour course in contemporary theory. A grade of B or better must be achieved for each.

- A minimum of 9 semester hours in one of the department’s substantive concentrations (i.e., social stratification, health and aging, or comparative and global sociology), including at least 6 hours at the 6000 level. The core course for the concentration must be taken, with the remaining three courses selected from a list of available concentration courses. The core course is not a prerequisite to taking one of the other concentration courses. Readings courses cannot be used to satisfy these requirements.
- A minimum of 9 semester hours of electives.
- A minimum of 9 semester hours of dissertation.

QUALIFYING EXAMS

After you have completed coursework, the qualifying exam can be taken.

*Helpful Hint:* If you are a TG, TA, or TF, you can apply for a course load exception, which allows you a semester long course load exception while preparing for qualifying exams. As a department employee, you are required to maintain full time enrollment (9 hours) until ABD status, unless you submit this form. More information can be found, [https://tgs.unt.edu/course-load-exception-request](https://tgs.unt.edu/course-load-exception-request).

The purpose of the qualifying exam paper is to determine the student's grasp of foundational works, the current state of the literature, and how the student’s proposal expands on the latter. The committee should have some indication if the proposed study is 1) feasible in the general time frame provided and 2) advances the literature, either theoretically or methodologically, in notable new ways that are not addressed by current studies.

All qualifying papers must include all of the following:

- Clear statement of concentration
- Structured literature review
  - Review of foundational research
  - Review of contemporary research
  - Identification of gaps in theory and methods
  - Development of preliminary research questions
- Written timeline for degree completion

Minimum 15-20 pages excluding notes and references (1” margins, single spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, with references in ASA format). Qualifying papers below this department minimum will not be accepted or approved by committee members.

The qualifying paper committee is the student’s advisory committee as indicated on their approved degree plan.
A successful defense is a necessary benchmark to move to the prospectus stage and graduate in a timely manner. To receive a ‘pass’ on the qualifying paper, it must be approved by all members of the advisory committee following a shared rubric. The advisory committee consists of a minimum of three members, two of whom must be members of the UNT Department of Sociology. For this reason, it is important for students to communicate regularly with members as they write and revise their defense.

The committee can require students to revise their submission and resubmit it. Resubmissions have a time frame of one month to address the comments of committee members.

**The Dissertation**

Under the direction of their committee, each doctoral candidate must write a dissertation representing original research. It must make a significant contribution to the discipline of sociology in the student's area of concentration. Students are advised to consider possible dissertation subject areas as they work their way through their coursework. It is recommended that students structure required papers for their classes so that these papers may provide pieces or background for a dissertation project.


**Research Track Option**

A traditional dissertation is a monograph. However, there is also a ‘research track’ option. This track prepares students for an academic position at a research university. Requirements include preparing three research papers in which the student is the sole or primary author (if co-authored, the contributions of each author must be detailed in the introduction). The papers need to have a central theme or topic. One of the papers must be solely authored by the student and accepted for publication, a second paper must be submitted for publication, and the third must be approved as near-ready for submission for publication. The three papers are organized within the dissertation format for submission to the graduate school. The article-style dissertation must include an introduction, discussion, and conclusion that integrates the presentation of the manuscripts and must be formatted according to standard TGS guidelines.

**Dissertation Hours**

Doctoral students are required to complete 9 semester hours of dissertation. Enrollment in dissertation hours is permitted only after you have passed your comprehensive exams, but not necessarily before defending the dissertation proposal.

A student completing a dissertation must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of 3 semester hours of dissertation during each fall and spring semester, including the semester the dissertation is accepted by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School. Registration in 3 credit hours of dissertation in at least one summer session/term is required to graduate in August.
The Dissertation Committee

Once coursework is completed and comprehensive exams are passed, it is time to begin the dissertation proposal. One of the first steps in this process is to determine whether one or more advisory committee members, including the committee chair, should be replaced with one or more faculty members who have more expertise in the dissertation topic area. The advisory committee now changes its emphasis to being a dissertation committee.

You are advised to meet regularly with your dissertation committee chair to discuss potential dissertation topics and methodologies. These ideas should then be discussed with all committee members. You are encouraged to develop a 2-3 page paper (or outline) of ideas that your committee can read. Once all committee members are in agreement, you can work on a more developed proposal.

Dissertation Proposal

Students will complete a dissertation proposal in consultation with the dissertation committee. The purpose of the proposal is to set out a plan for the dissertation project. It is best to see the proposal as an agreement between the student and the committee. You must orally defend a proposal that meets with the approval of your dissertation committee before you begin the process of writing your dissertation.

A well-formulated proposal should be about 15-30 double-spaced pages. Proposal formats can vary, so consult with your committee for more precise information. Typically, however, a proposal should include:

1) An introductory statement of the problem and research question(s). This should show how the research will make an original contribution to sociology.
2) A review of the literature on the topic that you have chosen. This should include theoretical and empirical literature.
3) A detailed statement of the problem, including research questions or hypotheses.
4) A description of the research methods to be employed.
5) Research instruments (such as surveys, questionnaires interview schedules, etc.) should be appended to the proposal.
6) A tentative chapter outline
7) A tentative timeline for completion

IRB Process

If your research involves human subjects, you need to complete CITI training prior to submitting an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Information about training and the IRB process can be found at: https://research.unt.edu/faculty-resources/integrity-compliance/irb.

Conducting Research and Writing the Dissertation
It is important to maintain regular communication with your committee chair and offer semester progress reports to your committee members. Once your research is complete, and your dissertation is written, provide each member of your committee with a copy. Be sure to pay close attention to their feedback when revising your draft. Once each committee member approves a draft of the dissertation, you can schedule an oral defense.

*Helpful hint:* Some committee members will request a draft of each chapter or sets of chapters, while others will prefer to see a complete dissertation draft. Make sure you know what your committee prefers.

**Oral Defense**

Each member of your Committee must attend. Other faculty and students may attend as well. A dissertation defense lasts at least one hour. Talk with your chair about how the defense will be conducted. Generally, committee members ask questions about how you conducted the research and analyzed your data. Then other faculty and peers may ask questions as well.

If a majority of committee members vote that you successfully defended your dissertation, you pass. The vote is conducted in “closed session” where students are not present. Often a committee will recommend a pass with revisions. All edits/revisions must be completed before the dissertation can be submitted to the graduate school.

**Submitting Your Dissertation to Toulouse Graduate School**

UNT uses an online application, Vireo, for dissertation submissions. More information about uploading to Vireo can be found in the Vireo Submission Guide found on the TGS website at [https://tgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual](https://tgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual). The submission will be reviewed, and any recommended edits or format revisions must be completed and submitted prior to graduation.

**GRADUATION**

UNT has three graduation dates (Spring-May, Fall-December and Summer-August). However, the university hosts only two commencements, in May and December. August graduates are invited to attend the December Commencement Ceremony. More information about the graduation process and deadlines can be found at: [https://tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/graduation-information](https://tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/graduation-information).

Commencement information, including regalia information, can be found on the commencement webpage: [https://commencement.unt.edu/celebrating-accomplishments-unt-graduates](https://commencement.unt.edu/celebrating-accomplishments-unt-graduates).