

Department of Sociology

**GRADUATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE
MANUAL**

**Department of Sociology
University of Alabama at Birmingham**

Seventh Edition

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UAB

Academic Policy 11: Graduate Programs in Sociology

Medical Sociology Graduate Program Policies, Guidelines, and Procedures

Preamble: The Department of Sociology awards the Masters of Arts in Sociology (Plan I) as **part** of the PhD in Medical Sociology to doctoral students who enter without an M.A. The department does not offer a terminal M.A. separate from the Ph.D. program with the exception of an online M.A. The online M.A. is a terminal degree and offered as a professional Masters of Arts (Plan II) completely online. See the UAB web site, Graduate School Catalog for general degree requirements. Policies specific to the Department of Sociology Ph.D. Graduate Programs follow.

A. The Medical Sociology Graduate Program

1. Leadership and Administration

The Graduate Program Director of the Medical Sociology program and the Chair of the Department of Sociology, maintain primary responsibility for administering the graduate program. In addition, the Sociology graduate faculty, the Graduate Program Committee, and the Graduate Student Association fulfill secondary and supplemental administrative functions within the program. The Graduate Program Committee is composed of the Graduate Program Director and two additional faculty members chosen by the Director. The Chair of the Department serves as an ex-officio member. The graduate student body makes up the Graduate Student Association, which works closely with the graduate faculty and departmental leadership.

2. Admissions

Admission to the Ph.D. program in Medical Sociology requires the approval of the doctoral program committee of the Department of Sociology and the Graduate School. This administrative body is responsible for recruiting the most qualified graduate students in sociology and for balancing the interests of the Medical Sociology program with the available financial resources. The committee reviews and makes recommendations for admission. Students entering the program with a master's degree are granted waivers for a maximum of 16 semester hours of substantive graduate work, upon approval of the Graduate Program Director and the professors in charge of the respective coursework in question. Students transferring from another graduate program without having received a graduate degree may be granted waivers for a maximum of 12 semester hours of substantive graduate work, upon approval of the Graduate Program Director and the professors in charge of the respective coursework in question.

Note that the number of allowed transfer credits is governed by the Graduate School (see current rules regarding Transfer of Graduate Credit).

Minimum admission requirements are as follows:

- A bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited institution in sociology or a related field with a minimum of 18 hours of social science coursework, preferably including social theory, statistics, and research methodology;
- An overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0, based on a 4.0 system, or a 3.2 GPA for the last 60 semester hours in a B.A./B.S. program;
- A 3.0 GPA in all previous graduate coursework;
- A GRE (Graduate Record Examination) score of at least 1150 for the verbal and quantitative parts of the test combined. The GRE test was revised in 2011 and has different scoring. Scores should range from 150-162 Verbal and 140-157 Quantitative;
- For international students, a minimum TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of 550 and an acceptable score on the Test of Written English (TWE). Alternatively, a score of 6.5 is expected for the IELTS.

Exceptional students who fail to meet any of the above requirements will be evaluated on a casebycase basis. Furthermore, the following criteria are also considered in the admissions process.

- Evidence of scholarship;
- Statement of career goals, with emphasis on research and scholarship;
- Letters of Recommendation;
- Professional experience.

3. Financial Aid

Support is available for students through fellowships and teaching and research assistantships. Teaching assistantships (TA) are currently the main form of graduate student support. Research assistantships (RA) may be available if individual faculty have research funding with allocation for RA positions. In addition, RA positions are sometimes available through partnerships with other UAB departments. The department will make every effort to pay for tuition when

possible. Graduate assistants also currently receive health insurance coverage (check with the Department and the Graduate Schools for up-to-date details). Assistantship payment is based on availability of funds and satisfactory progress towards completion of either the M.A. or Ph.D. degree. Satisfactory progress will be determined by: D. Grading Policies and E. Length of Time Permitted for Degree Completion below. GPA should be 3.5 or above by the end of the second year. To have funding, students should maintain a 3.5 average or above (as averaged at yearly evaluations) and each year thereafter to have continued funding.

In addition, students are encouraged to write grant proposals for externally funded predoctoral fellowships and grants to provide themselves with support during their dissertation years. When applying for these funds, stipends, travel, tuition, and health insurance should be included in the application if allowed by the funding agency. If a student receives the award, they are expected to use the grant resources first and in lieu of departmental funds. This policy also applies to students who receive fellowships and scholarships.

4. Assistantship Opportunities

Graduate departmental assistantships represent excellent opportunities for graduate students to gain hands-on experience in the field of medical sociology. Assistantships are awarded based on student merit, departmental need, and available funding and are for 20 hours per week. Students are evaluated by the Graduate Program Committee with recommendations submitted to faculty members for funding on an annual basis. A student may usually receive departmental funding up to and no longer than four years entering with a B.A. degree, or up to three years entering the program with a master's degree. Extensions are sometimes given based upon departmental needs. Financial coverage from a grant is considered as getting departmental funding, thus those covered from a grant do not receive "extra" years. There is a possibility of exceptions if students receive their own fellowships and/or scholarships, however they must still abide by graduate school rules of the timeline to completion. Students who receive funding are required to sign a contract with the Department of Sociology outlining the duties and performance expected on a yearly basis. Students are to negotiate their weekly work schedules with the respective faculty member with whom they are assigned, but are expected to work an average of 20 hours per week. Any expectations of students working over school holidays or semester breaks are to be discussed and negotiated prior to signing the assistantship contract. Students who are unavailable to work for a period of time are required to tell the faculty member they work for, and the graduate director. Students should check their email on a regular basis. In addition, all students

travelling overseas during semesters they are working or in school should let their mentor and/or graduate director know.

5. Graduate Student Association

UAB graduate students are represented by the Graduate Student Association (GSA), which works closely with the Graduate School and other offices of the university administration in formulating policy and meeting graduate student needs. The GSA strives to promote and protect the interest of graduate students, provide a forum for students to express concerns on academic and non-academic issues, and enhance the quality of education and research at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. All graduate students are automatically members of the GSA upon admission to the graduate program. Graduate students who have been nominated by their program director are the voting delegates of the GSA. The GSA provides individual travel grants, funding for student groups and hosts a benevolent fund for graduate student (MediGAP). More information can be found at www.uab.edu/gsa

Written by the GSA secretary August 6, 2014

6. Equal Opportunity and the Prevention of Discriminatory Harassment Policy

Reaffirmation of Equal Opportunity and the Prevention of Discriminatory Harassment Policy by President Ray L. Watts (Issued 11/8/11; Reissued September 2018)

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) remains fully committed to equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, nondiscrimination and the prevention of unlawful harassment in employment, education and the participation in university programs. We have long embraced diversity and equal opportunity as core values that encourage the type of supportive environment and campus community that allows faculty, staff, and students to excel and reach their fullest potential. We maintain and promote these values not only because they are right and equitable, but also because they are integral to achieving our institutional goals, our mission, and our vision to be one of the most dynamic and productive universities—and the preferred academic medical center—of the 21st century.

Therefore, we reaffirm our full support for diversity and equal education and opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender

identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability unrelated to job or program performance, veteran status, or genetic or family medical history.

Discriminatory harassment, whether sexual or non-sexual, is strictly prohibited. The University seeks to ensure that all aspects of employment, education and program participation remain free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. All University employees are expected to comply with this policy and any actions involving faculty, staff and students are initiated and administered in compliance with our commitment to federal/state laws and Executive Orders with respect to nondiscrimination and affirmative action. All UAB employees holding administrative, managerial and supervisory positions are required to ensure that this policy is fully implemented by enforcing only valid, position-related requirement decisions for employment, promotions, and work assignments and to ensure that progress continues with regard to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

Our commitment to fairness, nondiscrimination and the prevention of unlawful harassment is the foundation of UAB's Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment policy and should be the guidepost for other management decisions as well. I urge each member of our University community to join me in supporting these principles and ensuring that our core values of embracing diversity, showing mutual respect, and exhibiting fair and equitable treatment at UAB, remain intact, every day.

The Equal Opportunity and Discriminatory Harassment Policy may be accessed in the Policies and Procedures Library at uab.edu/policies.

In addition, The University of Alabama at Birmingham administers its educational programs and activities, including admission, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or Vietnam era or disabled Veteran status (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex). Further inquiries into university policy may be directed to:

Academic Affirmative Action Officer
University of Alabama at Birmingham
College of Arts and Sciences
560 Heritage Hall
Birmingham, Alabama 352941152

B. Mentor and Academic Advising Systems

The Graduate Director serves as the primary mentor for the student during their first year of studies. At an appropriate time during the first year, the

Director may suggest a faculty mentor who provides a good fit between the student's interests and faculty expertise. It is the student's responsibility to interact with faculty and find a mentor and then find a thesis and dissertation advisor.

After the first year of study (before the fall of the second year), graduate students should select a faculty member to serve as a thesis or dissertation advisor from whom they receive academic and professional guidance while working toward a master's thesis and/or a doctoral dissertation. Note that the student's mentor or professor with whom they work in their first year is not their thesis or dissertation advisor, unless by mutual agreement. The thesis or dissertation chair ensures that significant progress is being made toward completion of the master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. Students should examine graduate faculty members' individual research interests and projects throughout the course of mentor selection. Faculty visit during the proseminar in the first year and discuss research.

Advisor selection is a crucial aspect of graduate study in the Department of Sociology. Failure to select a faculty mentor can hinder progress toward degree completion. Students are strongly encouraged to select an appropriate faculty mentor in a timely manner so as to avoid departmental intervention in the selection process. Students should notify the Graduate Program Director when this decision has been made.

Academic advising is still primarily the responsibility of the Graduate Program Director of the Department of Sociology. The Program Director's advisory capacity includes help with course selection, evaluation of academic progress, and addressing any student/departmental issues that may arise. This arrangement ensures that all students are receiving consistent information with regard to course and degree requirements. As such, the Graduate Program Director maintains and updates student files, which include information on course completion, yearly student evaluations, and any other relevant information. The Program Director represents the final word on issues concerning course and degree requirements.

Student Mentor

The Graduate Program Director assigns entering graduate students a student peer mentor. This person is an experienced graduate student who serves as an informal mentor. This arrangement fosters collaboration among the graduate students as well as a smoother transition into the departmental environment.

Temporary Faculty Advisor

The Graduate Program Director assigns entering graduate students a temporary faculty advisor that is randomly chosen. Faculty and advisee should meet with the student face-to-face when they initially begin the program and be available to answer informal questions/e-mails periodically.

Initiated Fall 2019

Individual Development Plans-IDPs

All Ph.D. students who are funded by NIH or NSF must have an IDP. This is to be managed by the student's mentor.

Writing an Appeal

Students who wish to appeal (for instance, taking a class, a substitution, and/or not taking comprehensive exams (if they took them at a prior institution)), may write an appeal to the Graduate Committee. These should be formally submitted in memo format to the Graduate Committee. The memo should include the date and reason for appeal, what is desired, and why it would still fulfill requirements. The Graduate Committee will review the appeal, and exceptions to rules are made on a case-by-case basis by the Graduate Committee. If the Graduate Committee cannot come to consensus, the appeal will be brought to full graduate faculty in sociology and put to a vote.

C. The Sociology Graduate Curriculum

The Department of Sociology graduate program curriculum is outlined below. Questions regarding fulfillment of current requirements should be addressed to the Graduate Program Director of the department.

1. Required Coursework

Medical Sociology Core (9 hrs)

Required ----->SOC 780 Medical Sociology (must be taken in residence)

2 Required Electives--->

- 2 of the following:
 - SOC 724 (Research Colloquium: Body and Health).
 - SOC 734 (Global Health)
 - SOC 735 (Special Topics in Global Health)
 - SOC 755 (Race/Ethnicity and Health)
 - SOC 756 (Gender and Health)
 - SOC 775 (Place and Health)
 - SOC 781 (Sociology of Health and Illness)
 - SOC 783 (Health Care Delivery Systems)
 - SOC 785 (Family and Health)

- SOC 786 (Health Disparities)
- SOC 787 (Sociology of Mental Health)

Theory Core (6 hrs)

Required-----> SOC 720 Classical Theory (must be taken in residence)
SOC 722 Contemporary Theory (must be taken in residence)

Statistics and Research Core (12 hrs)

SOC 601 Data management and analysis (must be taken in residence)
SOC 703 Regression Analysis (must be taken in residence)
SOC 704 Categorical Data Analysis (must be taken in residence)
SOC 705 Advanced Research Methods (must be taken in residence)
SOC 711 Qualitative Methods (must be taken in residence)

SOC 706 Advanced Longitudinal and Multi-Level Data Analysis (elective) or the Psychology equivalent in place of this course.

University Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) (3 hours)

GRD 717 Principles of Scientific Inquiry

The university requires all Ph.D. students to take GRD 717. Graduate Students who will graduate with a Ph.D. in 2016 and beyond must take this course. Graduate students who began the Ph.D. program before Fall 2014 are exempt from the requirement.

Research Hours

Master's Thesis Research Hours (6 hrs.)
Doctoral Dissertation Research Hours (24 hrs.)
These are graduate school requirements

Sociology/Health Electives/Transfer Credits (30 hrs--up to 6 hours outside the department, subject to approval). The number of allowed transfer credits is governed by the Graduate School. Check with the Graduate School guidelines at the time of application if transfer graduate credit applies to you.

For all students in the sociology program up through end of summer 2015, they may take the 9 credit hours of outside electives, and then take this requirement for an additional 3 hours that we will count as outside elective. Students beginning in Fall 2015 and beyond will only be allowed 6 credit hours of outside electives.

*A maximum of 2 online courses are allowed as electives for the Ph.D. They can be taken any time during coursework, though students are encouraged to consider taking them in the summer. Students may not take required classes from the online MA program.

Proseminars (3 hrs.)

Proseminar, SOC 702 1 hour Fall, Professional Socialization and Faculty Research

Proseminar, SOC 702 1 hour Spring, The Profession

Proseminar, SOC 702 1 hour Summer, Classroom Teaching

Other Requirements

All graduate students must teach a class independently, or TA for research methods or statistics (i.e. teach lab) in order to receive the Ph.D. This is considered a part of their training. Being a TA for online statistics or methods will not satisfy this requirement.

Additionally, all students must submit a manuscript for publication. Verification of submission should be forwarded to the Graduate Director.

2. UAB Graduate School Minimum Course Degree Requirements

Please check the latest UAB Graduate School Web Site for requirements and deadlines before graduation.

Note that program requirements for course work may exceed the Graduate School minimum.

3. Graduate Proseminar Functions

The graduate proseminar series (SOC 702) is required of all entering graduate students in their initial three terms in the graduate program. This series orients students to professional norms, values and practices, to department culture, and faculty's research programs. It also introduces students to best practices in college teaching.

4. The Master's Thesis

Students pursuing the doctoral degree who enter the program without an M.A. must follow Plan I (Thesis Plan) of the existing master's degree program by producing a researchbased thesis, but two types of documents will be acceptable. The first alternative is a traditional thesis organized in the form an extensive monograph. This option is especially appropriate for qualitatively based research.

The second alternative is a manuscript in the standard form of a journal article with appended materials. Specifically, this journal article thesis will consist of: 1) a journal article manuscript with a text no longer than the page limitations of a journal approved by the committee, plus footnotes, references, tables, and figures; 2) an appendix that fully presents the methodological procedures; 3) an appendix of measurement instrumentation (e.g., survey instruments, indepth interview schedules, observational logs, etc.); 4) an appendix of additional tables and/or samples of observational notes, and 5) an appendix of other research documentation such as survey cover letters, human subject review approval forms, and letters of support and approval from facilities where the research was conducted.

The master's thesis process involves; 1) formation of the thesis committee; 2) oral defense of a written thesis research proposal; 3) oral defense of the completed thesis; 4) submission of the completed manuscript to the Graduate School, and 5) submission of the journal article for publication. The thesis committee consists of a minimum of three fulltime faculty members, including one from outside the Department of Sociology. This committee will be responsible for guiding the research process, evaluating the final draft of the thesis, presiding over the oral defenses of the thesis proposal and the completed manuscript. In addition to meeting general M.A. degree requirements, before being admitted to candidacy for the M.A. degree, a student in the Ph.D. program in medical sociology must have completed the master's level course in contemporary sociological theory (SOC 722) and four core methods courses (SOC 601, SOC 703, SOC 704, and SOC 705 OR SOC 711), completed two courses in the medical sociology core, and made a successful oral defense of the thesis proposal. See Policy 10 of this manual regarding public announcements of thesis and dissertation defenses.

For those students entering with a master's degree, the Graduate Program Director will review the student's transcript, evaluate course transfers (can only be used if the class was never used for a degree), and devise a course plan. Students who have an MA, MPH, MPA and so on, but have not written a thesis will be required to write a master's thesis before they proceed to the dissertation. The director will also handle the student's admission to candidacy and the comprehensive examination requirement. Students who enter the program with the master's degree are not required to make oral defense of his/her thesis approved by another accredited institution. Students who enter with a master's degree, and have taken comprehensive exams at their prior institution can petition the graduate committee to possibly waive the exam at UAB. Otherwise, all students entering, whether they have a master's degree or not, must take comprehensive exams at UAB.

Credit Hours for Students Entering Program with an MA or MS.

Students entering the program with a master's degree can have transferred up to 12 hours of credit so long as these credits were not used for any other degree

program (see graduate school guidelines). The department of sociology may also waive up to 16 credits of coursework from electives for those who come in with a master's degree.

Policy accepted by faculty and graduate school July 7, 2007.

5. Comprehensive Examination Policy

Timeline for Comprehensive Exams

All doctoral students are required to take a comprehensive exam no later than the 3rd week of the 4th fall semester after being admitted to the Ph.D. program. The exam will be offered two times a year: the 3rd week of fall and the 3rd week of spring semesters (see timeline below). The student should alert the Graduate Director the semester **before** you plan to take your comprehensive exam (i.e., in the first week of that semester).

	Prepare Reading List	Send List to Committee	Study	Take Exam
FALL	Mid-March	Early April	Summer	3 rd Week of Fall
SPRING	Before September 1	Mid October	Fall	3 rd Week of Spring

Exam Description

The comprehensive exam is a take-home exam that requires you to answer 4 out of 5 questions related to major theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues in medical sociology and a chosen specialty area. Your specialty area must be a combination of health and one substantive area reflecting the specialties of our department (e.g., health disparities, aging and health, health behaviors, health and demography, etc.). There is no oral examination.

Developing a Readings List

The comprehensive exam committee will use your reading list to create exam questions related to your chosen specialty area and medical sociology more broadly. This means that successfully completing your comprehensive exams will require you to work with your faculty advisor and the exam committee to develop a readings list. You should aim to have your list approved by your committee and advisor (if not in the committee) by the 2nd week of the semester preceding the one when you wish to take your exam.

Readings lists range between 100 to 125 published papers, including peer-reviewed articles, literature reviews, and books. Your list must draw from your coursework, major works in medical sociology, the department's required readings list, and key scholarship from your chosen specialty area. Ideally, your readings list should include one or more sections directly related to your dissertation. Reading lists are public and can be shared in the department.

The Comprehensive Exam Committee returns their first set of revisions for the list or their approval within 2 weeks of receiving the list. Faculty and student work together until the list is accepted. However, faculty can **NOT** approve student work during the summer.

Exam Preparation

Preparation is absolutely critical to passing your exams. We expect all students to take initiative and use the resources provided by the department to prepare for the exam. The main office has a file with old lists and test questions. Students are encouraged to use these lists and exam questions/answers to prepare. The best exams are written by students who have spent time writing answers to common exam.

Taking the Exam

The student will answer four of five questions as a take-home exam. The exam is distributed at 4:00 p.m. on Friday and is due the following Monday at 9:00 a.m. While taking your exam, you may not discuss it with anyone other than the comprehensive exam committee. You are encouraged to use any notes or practice answers you have prepared.

Comprehensive Exam Committee

The comprehensive exam committee will consist of three faculty members selected by the Graduate Committee. One faculty will head the committee and make sure the questions are distributed and answers received. They will also notify the Graduate Director of the outcome. The Graduate Director is not a member of the Comprehensive Exam Committee.

Exam Grades

The members of the Comprehensive Exam Committee will assign the exam a grade of

1. Pass with honors

Your exam has received the department's highest distinction. The exam is not just well-written, but it also provides exceptional responses to questions. You will move on to Ph.D. candidacy.

2. Pass

Your exam has received a passing grade. The exam is written clearly and provides adequate responses to the questions. You will move on to Ph.D. candidacy.

3. Pass with revision

Your exam has some limitations in writing and/or response to the questions. If you receive a grade of “pass with revision,” you have 30 days to both meet with your exam committee and address their concerns. If your revisions are approved, you will move on to Ph.D. candidacy. If your revisions are rejected, you must retake your exams.

4. Fail

Your exam is inadequate in terms of writing and/or response to the questions. Students who fail the examination but wish to continue in the program must take a make-up examination in the following semester. Students who fail the make-up examination will not be allowed to continue the Ph.D. program.

Policy approved January 2009

Revised and Approved November 2015

Revised and Approved October 2018

6. The Doctoral Dissertation

The dissertation process is as follows: 1) formation of the dissertation committee; 2) oral defense of a written dissertation research proposal and admission to candidacy; 3) successful oral defense of the completed dissertation, and 4) submission of the completed manuscript to the Graduate school.

In consultation with faculty, and near the completion of all substantive coursework, a student forms a dissertation committee consisting of at least five members, with two from outside the Department of Sociology. This committee will be responsible for guiding the research process, evaluating the final draft of the dissertation, and presiding over the oral defenses of the dissertation proposal and the completed manuscript. Outside committee members will be selected from other departments at UAB. As a rule, experts from outside of UAB are not allowed to sit on the committee, except when a UAB faculty member on a student's committee moves to another university, and the student requests that faculty person to remain on the committee. Former faculty at other institutions may continue to serve for no more than one year after their departure, at which time their eligibility will terminate. Former faculty members may not chair thesis/dissertation committees, unless they were chairs at the time of their departure. In such cases, they may serve as a co-chair with a department faculty

member. The Department Chair decides whether to advance requests to the graduate school to approve graduate faculty status for anyone lacking such status. The Dean of the Graduate School has final approval over the candidates advanced by the Chair. The Sociology department will not initiate graduate faculty status for its previous Ph.D. alumni and alumnae. However, if a Ph.D. alumni or alumnae already have graduate faculty status, they may be on a committee. This is, however, discouraged, so we do not appear to be “stacking” our committees with our own graduates. It is more acceptable to have a Ph.D. alumni/alumnae on a committee if considerable time has passed since they graduated from the Sociology Department.

A student is admitted to candidacy after successful oral defense of the dissertation proposal and no earlier than the term in which the required substantive coursework is completed. The department will not accept a series of published articles or reprints as a substitute for the dissertation. See Policy 12 of this manual regarding public announcements of thesis and dissertation defenses. Graduate students are in charge of keeping up with all graduate school requirements such as submitting forms and submitting final dissertations. See graduate school policies for requirements and forms:

<http://www.uab.edu/graduate/current-students/completing-a-graduate-degree>

D. Grading Policies for Course Work in Sociology Graduate Programs

1. Receipt of Grades of C or F

- Receipt of a grade of C or F in a required course will need to retake the course.
- Receipt of a grade of C or F in two or more required courses will result in termination from the graduate program in Medical Sociology.
- Letter grades may not be assigned in PNP (PassNonpass) courses, but receipt of an NP will place students on academic probation (unless the NP is offset by a P). However, these evaluations are not calculated into the student's grade point average.
- The computer in the Registrar's Office automatically converts an I (Incomplete) to F (Fail) if an Incomplete is not changed before the end of the next term. In order for an Incomplete to be changed to an acceptable grade, the respective course requirements must be met before the end of the following term in which the course was first taken.

2. Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements

In order to consistently remain in good academic standing within the graduate program of the Department of Sociology, students must maintain a 3.3 GPA. Entering students will be allowed two semesters to establish this minimum GPA. If a student's cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.3 in any semester thereafter, a probationary semester will be initiated so that the student will have an opportunity to reestablish the minimum requirements for good academic standing. If minimum requirements remain unsatisfied, departmental funding may be cancelled or restricted for the student at the discretion of the Graduate Program Committee. If a student allows her or his cumulative GPA to drop below 3.00 at any time, departmental funding will be cancelled or restricted immediately by departmental administration with no probationary period. Additionally, a cumulative GPA of 3.3 is required for conferral of graduate degrees. Students who do not meet this requirement for program completion are to be evaluated by the graduate faculty on a casebycase basis.

E. Length of Time Permitted for Degree Completion

The length of time permitted for all students from entry into the graduate program in medical sociology to degree completion before recertification, such as reexamination or required additional coursework, is seven years. Such re-examination or certification may be waived under extraordinary circumstances by permission of the Graduate Program Committee. The most desirable timeframe for completion of the program is four to five years, since funding is typically available through the fourth year. Additional restrictions of time to completion exist within the graduate school, including 5 years matriculation for master's, and 7 years matriculation for doctoral students. See "Time Limitations" in the UAB Graduate Handbook.

F. Yearly Graduate Student Evaluations

Each spring, the Graduate Program Committee conducts yearly evaluations in the spring, typically before spring break. Students submit their updated CV, a course completion form, and goals for the year. The department collects transcripts and evaluations for each student. An evaluation file is assembled for each student.

Each faculty member should submit a confidential evaluation for each student for whom they are chairing a committee, or mentoring as an RA/TA. Only the committee will see the evaluation. Some professors have long histories with certain students, even though they do not have an official "role" with them. Faculty may also evaluate any student they feel comfortable evaluating. The graduate director provides all graduate faculty with the template for evaluation.

The Graduate Program Committee will review each evaluation file and decide whether they consider the student to be making satisfactory progress, not making

satisfactory progress or somewhere in between. A letter will be given to the student indicating the outcome, and will also go in the student's file. The letter may suggest ideas, present a deadline to meet, or suggest a meeting with the graduate advisory committee. Evaluations are meant to be helpful to students and the program.

G. Leave of Absence Policy

Leaves of absence will be considered and evaluated on a casebycase basis. A leave of absence must be for serious reasons. Requests for leave of absence must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director, the Chair of the Department of Sociology, the student's mentor, and the Graduate School. Reentry into the graduate program must be negotiated at the time that leave is requested. Per Graduate School policy, a student absent for more than one year must complete a readmission application. Reentry may be restricted to meet course sequence requirements and the student will be required to reenter the program at the same point in the curriculum at which he/she left.

In cases of absence for more than one year, any curriculum modifications instituted since departure from the program will apply to that student for completion of degree requirements and subsequent conferral of the graduate degree.

H. Academic Conference Policy

Students are encouraged to go to Sociology Conferences. Attending a conference is not required for the Ph.D.

Department of Sociology will provide reimbursement for (1) a specified amount announced each year for conferences. These include ASA, any major sociology regional conference (e.g. SSS, NCSA), or PAA (the Population Association of America). Students should inquire with the graduate committee if they are unclear if the conference they are interested in will be covered.

Students must be on a paper (or be an organizer or discussant), and must provide a copy of the conference program as verification for reimbursement.

Students represent Department of Sociology at UAB. Therefore, sociology has to be at least one of the affiliations for registration.

Students are expected to participate in the pre-ASA/SSS/PAA discussions in our department and let us know the day and time of their presentation if they are reimbursed by UAB Department of Sociology.

Approved October 30, 2018

H. Disciplinary Action and Misconduct Policy

The Department of Sociology asserts herein that it follows its own procedures for establishing academic misconduct and appealing disciplinary actions. The Department of Sociology also asserts herein that it retains the right to expel a student from the graduate program for a first offense of misconduct.

1. Definition of Misconduct

While it is impossible to outline all conceivable instances of misconduct, situations involving plagiarism or unethical practices qualify as academic/professional misconduct. The Graduate School of the University of Alabama at Birmingham maintains a comprehensive list of potential instances of misconduct (including falsification of records, unethical practices in research and other scholarly activities, sexual harassment, comprehensive exam cheating, abuse of controlled substances, and computer software use and copying) that is available through the Graduate School <https://www.uab.edu/education/home/images/pdf/hs/cep-student-handbook.pdf>. In addition, the Department of Sociology expects its graduate students to adhere to professional ethics as outlined by the American Sociological Association on their ethics website and in the ASA Code of Ethics (<http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm>). All graduate students enrolled in the Department of Sociology are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with these policies and statements of professional ethics, as offending parties will be solely responsible (within the department and the Graduate School) for any instances of misconduct. Moreover, any other actions deemed by the faculty of the medical sociology graduate program in the UAB Department of Sociology to be unethical, offensive, or unscrupulous will subject the offending student to disciplinary action within the department and/or the Graduate School.

In addition, graduate students who wish to file a complaint against faculty should follow graduate school guidelines available in the graduate student handbook (<https://www.uab.edu/education/home/images/pdf/hs/cep-student-handbook.pdf>).

2. Disciplinary Procedures, Actions, and Appeals

In all matters related to allegations of misconduct, those persons involved, including faculty, staff, and students are instructed to treat the information put forward to them in the strictest of confidence.

An allegation of student misconduct made by a sociology faculty member will be handled according to procedures described in this policy manual. The

Graduate School is involved only when the disciplinary actions of the department are appealed.

If a faculty member wishes to allege an instance of student misconduct, the following procedures are to be followed:

- (a) A faculty member notifies the Chair of the Department of Sociology, in writing, of the alleged incident and provides information upon which this allegation is made. (In the case of a course-related matter, the student will be assigned an F while the allegation of misconduct is processed.)
- (b) Within 10 days of notification by the faculty member, the Chair notifies the student that an allegation has been made. The student is given 10 days to refute the charges. Within days of this response, the Chair determines if disciplinary action is warranted and, if so, notifies the student and the Graduate Program Director in writing.
- (c) Disciplinary actions are determined by a special review committee of the Department consisting of the Graduate Program Committee and the student's mentor (with exception of a faculty member who made the allegation). If wishing to refute the charge, the offending student will be permitted a hearing before the committee, after which the committee will issue a written statement of findings with recommended disciplinary actions to be implemented by the Chair of the Department.
- (d) The Chair has the option of taking the issue before the full-time, graduate faculty of the Department of Sociology for advice on disciplinary actions. The Department of Sociology, in concurrence with and by a majority vote of the full-time graduate faculty, may determine that a first offense of misconduct warrants expulsion from the graduate program.
- (e) When disciplinary action is taken, the Graduate School is also notified in writing. In accordance with Graduate School policy, if either the student charged with misconduct or the faculty member who brought the misconduct allegation is not satisfied with the decision of the Chair, he or she may appeal to the Graduate School Appeals Board, the decision of which is final. The appeals process is described in the Graduate Student Handbook in the section entitled "Right to Appeal and Formation of an Honor Council" (available at http://www.uab.edu/graduate/UAB_Grad_Handbook.pdf).

Policy 9 approved on October 10, 2003

Revised and approved: January 2009

Academic Policy 12: Announcing Thesis and Dissertation Defenses

Advertising your public defense: It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his or her thesis or dissertation defense's date, time and location is sufficiently advertised to the public. At least two weeks prior to a defense, a student must submit a form requesting approval of the scheduled date and time. When the approval form request is received, the time and location of your defense is added to the Graduate School Calendar of Events. Check this online calendar at <https://www.uab.edu/graduate/graduate-school-quicklinks/calendar-of-events> to ensure your information has been entered. Students are responsible for checking the online calendar at to ensure that information has been entered. The student must also announce the date and time of a thesis or dissertation defense to the department (faculty and graduate students) via E-mail *and* by flyer posted by faculty and graduate student mail boxes one week prior to the time of the defense.

Policy Revised and approved: January 2009

END OF MANUAL