

# Graduate Student Handbook

## 2025-2026 Edition

*This Handbook can be changed at any time at the discretion of the Department Chair, Graduate Program Director, and / or the Graduate Committee*

### Table of Contents

#### Welcome

#### Academic Expectations

Requirements for Each Year

- First Year
- Second Year
- Third Year
- Fourth Year
- Fifth Year

Other Requirements and Notes

Activity Report Example

Preliminary Exam Scoring Rubric

Sociology Dissertation Guidelines

#### Student Policies & Procedures

Links to Student Policies

Policy on Professional Conduct

Academic Integrity & Generative AI Policy

#### Benefits and Financial Support

Tuition Remission & Stipends

Financial Aid & Determining Cost

Health and Wellness

Free Access to Basic Health Care

Childbirth/Adoption Accommodations

Short-Term Leave Accommodation

Baylor Funding Opportunities

Travel Awards & External Funding

Professional Development

Campus Life

Faith & Scholarship

Living in Waco

TWO Newsletter

#### Parking & Shuttles

Parking Permits

Baylor University Shuttle Service

Baylor Garage Counter Map

Shuttle Routes

Green, Gold, Blue, & Red Routes & Map

#### Stipend and Tuition

Stipend

Tuition

#### Thesis & Dissertation Process

Completing Your Degree

Dissertation & Thesis Overview

Additional Department Requirements

#### Teacher of Record

Requirements & Trainings

Student Dress & Appearance

#### Mail & Addresses

Mailing and Address Information

**Baylor University**  
**Sociology Graduate Handbook**  
**2025-2026**

Welcome to the Ph.D. Program in the Department of Sociology at Baylor University! Whether it is your first year or you are returning for another academic year, we are glad you are here!

This book has been compiled with you in mind. In it, you should find the answer to most of your questions about the graduate program in the Sociology Department at Baylor University.

Thanks again for joining us,  
The Department of Sociology

# BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

### REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

This document presents program requirements and procedures for the MA and PhD degrees in sociology at Baylor University. The Department of Sociology is required to conform to the general guidelines of the Graduate School, which are presented in the Baylor University Graduate Catalog. Students are required to follow the requirements of the Catalog under which they entered. The most up-to-date catalog is available on the [Graduate School's website](#).

Baylor University offers a Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, with three areas of specialization: Sociology of Health, Sociology of Religion, and Social Inequality and Stratification.

- **Sociology of Health** focuses on understanding of how social forces and structures are linked to human well-being. This specialization integrates sociological theories with disciplines like public health, epidemiology, and gerontology, focusing on social mechanisms that explain the roles of biology, genetics, and stress in shaping mental and physical well-being over the life course.
- **Sociology of Religion** examines the role of religion in shaping social life, identities, and social institutions. It investigates how religious beliefs, practices, and communities influence societal norms, values, and behavior, with particular attention to the ways religion intersects with power, inequality, and social change.
- **Social Inequality and Stratification** considers how diverse forms of inequality—including socioeconomic, racial, gender—are maintained and reproduced, as well as their implications for individuals, groups, and societies. Students and faculty in this area pursue multiple levels of analysis, using approaches ranging from social psychology to demography. Their work addresses a variety of institutions, including the family, education, the criminal justice system, and the welfare state.

The information that follows provides a year-by-year program of study, including important milestones in the process. These guidelines are meant as a general framework, assuming a five-year program of study. Students may continue in the program beyond year five, though funding cannot be guaranteed. All students, however, must complete all degree requirements for the PhD by the end of eight years.

# **FIRST YEAR**

## **A. Course Work**

### **Required for All Students – First Semester (Fall)**

- SOC 5312 Social Science Data Analysis
- SOC 5391 Advanced Sociological Theory
- SOC 5379 Graduate Research Methods
- Be available for meetings on Fridays from 12:20 – 1:10 pm year-round and earn credit for in the Spring semester

### **Required for All Students – Second Semester (Spring)**

- SOC 5314 Regression Analysis for the Social Sciences
- SOC 5398 Advanced Sociological Theory II
- 3 hours of an approved graduate course – a course in other departments may be taken with the approval of the Graduate Program Director.
- SOC 6385 Proseminar in Sociology

## **B. M.A. Thesis chairperson**

Students need to be proactive in seeking a faculty member to chair their thesis. A chair must be chosen before the end of their first year.

## **C. Annual Evaluation**

Each spring, every graduate student will complete an “Annual Activities Report” (see pages 13 and 14). The graduate faculty will meet to evaluate the progress of all graduate students. A “Graduate Student Performance Report” will be sent to each student. They must sign and return this report for their department files. Students who are not progressing adequately will be notified and provided an improvement plan. A notice of inadequate progress will indicate the amount of time the student has to improve his or her performance. A student’s failure to show improvement within a specified amount of time constitutes grounds for removal from the sociology Ph.D. program.

## **SECOND YEAR**

### **A. Course Work (Summer, Fall and Spring)**

#### **Required for All First- and Second-year Students (Summer)**

- SOC 5390 Summer Writing Practicum.

#### **Required for All Students – Third Semester (Fall)**

- SOC 5342 Data Sources and Publishing in Sociology
- SOC 5V99 Thesis Research (3 hours) (also see Thesis/Dissertation Section)
  - Students must also select two additional committee members: 1 departmental member and 1 outside the department member. All members must hold “Graduate Faculty Status” including your thesis chair.
  - Also refer to sections B and C below.
- 3 hours of an approved graduate course – a course in other departments may be taken with the approval of the Graduate Program Director.

#### **Required for All Students – Fourth Semester (Spring)**

- 3 hours of SOC 5V97 Seminar in Teaching Course  
Graduate students are also required to attend “Teachers of Record” training given by the Graduate School by the end of this semester (see Teacher of Record Section).
- 3 hours of approved graduate level courses.
- SOC 5V99 Thesis Research (3 hours)

### **B. Thesis Prospectus**

By November of the third semester, students must have defended a thesis prospectus to their MA Thesis Committee. This prospectus must contain:

- statement of the research problem
- literature review
- elaboration of how the candidate will go about solving the problem, i.e., research design or equivalent
- discussion of sources or data to be used and, if appropriate, the methodology
- bibliography.

The thesis is normally the length of a standard journal article. A successful MA thesis will have strong potential to make a contribution to sociological literature. The final product must conform to the *Guidelines for Preparing the Dissertation and Thesis* (on webpage).

### **C. Defense of Thesis**

Students are required to make an oral defense of their thesis to the MA Thesis Committee by the Graduate School deadline. This date varies each semester, so it is important to check the Graduate School

Deadlines webpage. Students must submit the final version to their MA Thesis Committee at least two to three weeks prior to the defense and make their appointment for a preliminary technical review with the graduate school. At the same time **students must notify the sociology office staff of the scheduled defense at least 10 working days prior to the defense.**

The office staff will submit the “Announcement of Master’s Oral.” Once the oral defense is completed, the office staff will submit the results to the Graduate School.

After all the corrections have been made and the thesis chair has approved the revisions and signed the “Approval of the Final Dissertation/Thesis Copy” form, the student will then upload the following to the Graduate School portal.

- Final thesis document
- Signature pages
- Copyright document
- Approval of your Final Dissertation/Thesis form

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Theses should be defended in Spring. Students who have not defended the MA thesis by the end of the summer semester of their second year will not be eligible for continued funding.*

#### **D. Annual Evaluation**

Each spring, every graduate student will complete an “Annual Activities Report”. The graduate faculty will meet to evaluate the progress of all graduate students. A “Graduate Student Performance Report” will be sent to each student. They must sign and return this report for their department files. Students who are not progressing adequately will be notified and provided an improvement plan. A notice of inadequate progress will indicate the amount of time the student has to improve his or her performance. A student’s failure to show improvement within a specified amount of time constitutes grounds for removal from the sociology Ph.D. program.

## **THIRD YEAR**

In this year, students move into the Ph.D. phase of the program of study. The Ph.D. requires an additional 54 hours beyond the MA degree. Twelve (12) of these 54 hours are dissertation research hours; 3 hours are SOC 5V97 Seminar in Teaching (actual teaching) and the remaining are regular classroom instruction and Special Topic/Independent Instruction.

**Note:** Although the department admits students directly into the Ph.D. program, at this transition stage, the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Sociology may recommend that a student not move forward, or that his/her funding is not extended. Such a recommendation is based on their assessment of the student's ability to perform Ph.D. level work, and on the student's annual evaluations.

### **A. Course Work (Summer, Fall and Spring)**

#### **Required for All Students (Summer)**

- SOC 5390 Summer Writing Practicum

#### **Required for All Students (Fall)**

- 3 hours of SOC 5V97 Seminar in Teaching (teacher of record teaching). See information in Section I – Teacher of Record.
- 6 hours of approved graduate level courses. **[Note:** Courses may be taken in other departments with approval of the Graduate Program Director. During Years 3 and 4, student coursework may include independent study and reading courses toward development of a dissertation research agenda with the approval of the Graduate Program Director].
- Students must attend the formatting class offered by the graduate school at the beginning of this semester. You should have gotten an email from the Grad School adding you to the Canvas class.

#### **Required for all Students (Spring)**

- 9 hours of approved graduate level courses. **[Note:** Courses may be taken in other departments with approval of the Graduate Program Director. During Years 3 and 4, student coursework may include independent study and reading courses toward development of a dissertation research agenda with the approval of the Graduate Program Director].

### **B. Annual Evaluation**

Each spring, every graduate student will complete an "Annual Activities Report". The graduate faculty will meet to evaluate the progress of all graduate students. A "Graduate Student Performance Report" will be sent to each student. They must sign and return this report for their department files. Students who are not progressing adequately will be notified and provided an improvement plan. A notice of inadequate progress will indicate the amount of time the student has to improve his or her performance. A student's failure to show improvement within a specified amount of time constitutes grounds for removal from the sociology Ph.D. program.

## **FOURTH YEAR**

### **A. Course Work (Summer, Fall and Spring)**

#### **Required for All Students (Summer)**

- SOC 6363 Directed Readings in Sociology
- Take Written Preliminary Exam – See Section B below.

#### **Required for All Students (Fall)**

- SOC 6V99 Dissertation (3 hours)
- [Note: Additional courses could possibly be required for the spring if so warranted.]

#### **Required for All Students (Spring)**

- SOC 6V99 Dissertation (3 hours)

### **B. Preliminary Exam**

In the month before fall classes begin, all fourth-year students must take the written portion of the preliminary exam. All grades of 'Incomplete' must be removed before the exam. Failure to do so may subject the student to dismissal from the program. The Preliminary Exam determines entrance into doctoral studies. The examination committee will consist of three graduate faculty members in the area of the student's declared specialization. The Graduate Program Director will administer the written exam and arrange the oral exam. The written exam will span two days. The Graduate Program Director will email questions to the students at 8:00 am each day, and they will have until 5:00 pm the same day to submit their responses. Oral exams will follow written exams in approximately one week. The oral exam will be, in part, a defense of the written exam questions, in addition to general questions about the student's field of expertise. More details about the exam can be found below (see "Overview of Preliminary Exam and Scoring Rubric").

**Grading:** Students will receive one of three grades from the examination committee:

#### **Pass with Distinction**

- Expresses ideas in innovative ways.
- Synthesizes prior research to form a logical, compelling argument.
- Explains, with excellence, major sociological theories and methods.
- Evaluates, with excellence, merits and shortcomings of different research methodologies.
- Demonstrates excellent familiarity with dominant research in a substantive area of their choosing.

#### **Pass**

- Explains, at an adequate level, major theories and methods in sociology.
- Evaluates, at an adequate level, merits and shortcomings of different research methodologies.
- Demonstrates adequate familiarity with dominant research in a substantive area of their choosing.

#### **Fail**

- Displays insufficient or incorrect knowledge of major sociological theories and methods.
- Lacks familiarity with dominant research in a substantive area of their choosing.

- Students who receive a grade of “Fail” will have one (1) opportunity to retake the written exam before the spring semester. Students will be removed from the program if a grade of “Pass” is not achieved in all three areas.
- Students who receive a “Conditional Pass” will have to rewrite that section of the exam deemed inadequate.
- Students will be removed from the program if the second exam score is not “Pass.”

### **C. Admission to Candidacy**

Students are recognized as candidates for the doctoral degree only after they have passed the preliminary examination, completed all departmental requirements (all course work) except the dissertation, and received approval from the Graduate School of their formal application for candidacy. An on-line application for candidacy is filed by the office staff with the Graduate School upon successful completion of all these requirements. All of these requirements must be met before the students can enroll in dissertation hours.

### **D. Dissertation Committee**

In the fourth year, students will establish a dissertation committee. The committee must include the departmental dissertation chair, two additional departmental members, and one external member from another academic department at Baylor. All four members must hold Graduate Faculty Status with the Graduate School.

If a student wishes to change advisors during the dissertation process, the following steps must be completed:

- The student must notify their current advisor by email, copying the Graduate Program Director (GPD) and office staff.
- The student must forward the email confirming the new advisor’s agreement to the GPD, copying the office staff and the new advisor. In this email, the student should clearly state their intent to change advisors and identify the new advisor.

### **E. Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation committee supervises the development of the dissertation proposal. The format of the proposal and the timeline for defending it are described below, under “Baylor Sociology Dissertation Guidelines.”

Generally, dissertation proposals include the following elements:

- Approval sheet and title page
- Subject of the dissertation
- Significance
- Preliminary review of the literature
- Conceptual statement of the problem--the hypotheses to be tested or empirical relationships to be examined with conceptual model (if appropriate).

- Research procedure: a) Operationalization of concepts, b) Sampling design/description of data, c) Analytical techniques, d) Sample tables
- Timetable, including when data are to be collected, when analysis and writing will be done, and target date for completion.
- General bibliography (ASR Style)
- It is expected that a student will orally defend a dissertation prospectus before the start of the fifth year in the PhD program.

## **F. Annual Evaluation**

Each spring, every graduate student will complete an “Annual Activities Report”. The graduate faculty will meet to evaluate the progress of all graduate students. A “Graduate Student Performance Report” will be sent to each student. They must sign and return this report for their department files. Students who are not progressing adequately will be notified and provided an improvement plan. A notice of inadequate progress will indicate the amount of time the student has to improve his or her performance. A student’s failure to show improvement within a specified amount of time constitutes grounds for removal from the sociology Ph.D. program.

## **FIFTH YEAR**

### **A. Course Work** (Summer marks the beginning of your fifth year.)

**Summer – SOC 6V99 (2 hours of dissertation)**

**Fall – SOC 6V99 (2 hours of dissertation)**

**Spring – SOC 6V99 (2 hours of dissertation)**

### **B. Filing for Graduation**

You must file for graduation before the last semester in which you expect to graduate. This link can be found on the [Requirements for Graduation](#) webpage.

### **C. Dissertation**

The fifth year is the dissertation year. Students are expected to complete and defend their dissertation in the spring of their fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) year (mid-March). According to the Baylor University Graduate Catalog, “The dissertation must give evidence that the candidate has pursued a program of research, the results of which reveal scholarly competence and a significant contribution to knowledge.” Candidates should acquire the *Guidelines for Preparing the Dissertation and Thesis* at the beginning of the fall semester in which graduation is expected. The *Guidelines* contain the directions for the procedure to complete the dissertation, an explanation of forms necessary, the semester calendar, and an explanation of fees associated with the process. Refer to the [Graduate School Student Completing Your Degree](#) webpage.

If a student desires to change mentors during the process of the dissertation, as student must complete the following process:

- Student must notify the existing mentor by email and copy the GPD and the office staff.
- The student must forward the email where the new mentor agrees to become his or her mentor to the GPD, copying the office staff and the new mentor. The student must state that he or she wants to change mentors and name the new mentor of this change.

### **D. Dissertation Defense/Final Examination**

The final exam is an oral defense of the dissertation. The candidate is examined by the Dissertation Committee. The defense is open to all graduate faculty. Students must defend their dissertation by the “last day” published on the Graduate Academic Calendar (usually mid-March). The office staff will submit the student’s Announcement of Dissertation Oral after the student has emailed them with their defense information. After the student has made all the corrections and the dissertation chair has approved the revisions and signed the Approval of the Final Dissertation/Thesis Copy, students will then upload the following to the portal that the student is supplied by the graduate school.

- Final dissertation document
- Signature pages
- Copywrite and availability document
- Doctoral Investment form
- Approval of the Final Dissertation/Thesis form

# Other Program Requirements and Information

## Time Limit

The maximum time limit for the doctoral degree is eight years from the time the student first matriculates into the Sociology Program (first attends class). This means students must have the doctorate degree conferred before the eighth-year time period expires.

## Enrollment

Should a student leave the program after achieving candidacy, but before the degree is conferred, the student must enroll for at least one semester hour in the semester that the degree will be conferred.

## Tuition Waivers

Fully funded students are eligible for 5 years of tuition waivers. After 5 years, students will be eligible for tuition waivers on a case-by-case basis.

## Significant Progress

Students are required to maintain significant progress toward graduation. This includes maintaining a GPA above 3.0, satisfactory performance in course work, minimal incompletes, incompletes rectified in a timely fashion, and acceptable ratings on annual evaluations.

## Publications

With R-1 Status, the department needs to publish all aspects of student publications. Every student needs to notify the office staff when:

1. They submit a paper for publication
2. They have a paper is accepted for publication
3. The paper is published online
4. The publication comes out in print.

**Note: Because the fifth year is mainly focused on the dissertation, students will rarely get to teach during this fifth and final year.**

## **Annual Activities of Graduate Students**

**2025-2026**

The purpose of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information on your academic activities during the past academic year, spanning June 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026. Please complete and upload to Graduate Evaluations 2026 on Box.com by May 1.

**Name:**

**Year in graduate program:**     1       2       3       4       5+

**Thesis/Dissertation Advisor:**

**TA/RA Assignment (faculty member's name):**

**List responsibilities and duties:**

**List any leadership responsibilities at the Center for Community Research and Development, if applicable:**

**For Thesis, Preliminary Exam, or Dissertation (whichever comes next for you):**

**Progress to date:**

**Expected date of completion:**

**Research activities for the academic year (include topics and supervisor/collaborators):**

**Papers presented at academic conferences in the academic year (authors [in order], title, conference, location, and date):**

**Papers submitted for publication in the academic year (authors [in order], title, journal or other outlet, and date of submission):**

**Papers invited to revise and resubmit for publication in the academic year (authors [in order], title, journal or another outlet):**

**Papers accepted for publication in the academic year (authors [in order], title, journal or other outlet, and DOI number if available):**

**Papers published in the academic year (authors [in order], year, title, journal or other outlet, volume, and pages):**

*Papers that have a DOI number but no volume or page numbers should be listed as accepted, not published.*

**Book reviews published in the academic year (title, journal, and year of publication):**

**Other papers or reports/projects completed in the in the academic year academic year:**

**Teaching assignments as Official Teacher of Record (course and semester):**

**Other professional activities:**

**Other accomplishments:**

**Use a separate sheet to provide any additional information that might be helpful concerning your progress in addressing any potential concerns, such as incompletes, slow progress on major requirements, or courses not taken on schedule.**

### **Graduate Student Evaluation Rating Scale**

**Excellent:** This rating is reserved for truly outstanding achievements. This ranking is typically for students who have refereed publications in print that academic year or have received a research grant from an external source (such as an NSF dissertation grant).

**Good:** This is a high rating. Students have papers under review at journals, forthcoming publications, professional presentations, are meeting departmental targets for thesis/dissertations/exams, and are in good standing with their courses (i.e., no incompletes) and graduate assistant assignments. Recognition for outstanding teaching or exemplary service will also earn a rating of Good, provided all other requirements for Meets Expectations are met.

**Meets Expectations:** Students are successfully completing courses (i.e., no incompletes), presenting papers at conferences, meeting departmental targets for finishing thesis/exams, and performing well in graduate assistantship and teaching assignments. Lack of noticeable on-going research activity (papers under review, papers accepted for publication, etc.) will prevent students from receiving a ranking higher than Meets Expectations. A ranking of Meets Expectations, or higher, is necessary to receive continued funding.

**Does Not Meet Expectations:** Students are not meeting the expected standards of the program (failure to successfully complete coursework, inadequate performance in graduate assistant and teaching duties, failure to meet departmental targets for thesis/exams/dissertation). Receiving this ranking is grounds for losing funding or possible dismissal from the program.

Note: First year students will typically receive a Meets Expectations or Does Not Meet Expectations rating.

# Baylor University Department of Sociology

## Overview of Preliminary Exam and Scoring Rubric

Approved December 3, 2015 (modified March 2025 – and again February 2026)

The preliminary exam is taken at the beginning of the fourth year. Preliminary exams assess students' grasp of key methodological and theoretical perspectives in sociology, as well as their mastery of one defined subfield. While dissertation research will deepen expertise in a specific topic, preparing for and completing the exam helps students develop a broad foundation for their research and situate their contributions within the discipline. The exams also serve as a checkpoint to ensure readiness for the advanced stages of the program, as well as aid in preparation for future teaching.

The exam has two parts: written and oral. An examination committee composed of three departmental members will conduct the exam. Prior to the exam, a student must identify the area of specialization they wish to cover in their exam. Options include sociology of religion, sociology of health, or social inequality and stratification. Each exam includes four questions: two on the student's chosen area of specialization and two covering broader methodological and theoretical issues in sociology.

To be eligible for continued study in the PhD program, a student must pass the preliminary exam. To achieve an overall exam pass, students must pass at least three of the four exam questions, as assessed through both the written and oral components.

If, after completion of the written and oral components, a student has passed only one or two questions, they will be given an opportunity to follow up in writing on areas of deficiency (the re-writing phase). Students passing none of the questions in the written and oral setting will fail the exam. The format of the re-writing phase may vary from year to year at the discretion of the Graduate Committee. The examination committee will evaluate all rewritten material before making a final determination of Pass or Fail for each question. Students who do not ultimately achieve passing scores on at least three of the four questions will fail the preliminary exam.

Evaluation criteria for the three possible outcomes are listed below. *Pass with Distinction* is reserved for students whose written and oral responses exhibit exemplary merit and who pass all four questions without the need for follow-up rewriting. Students who fail the preliminary exam will have one opportunity to retake the exam before the start of spring semester. Failure of the exam a second time will result in dismissal from the program.

### Pass with Distinction

- Expresses ideas in innovative ways.
- Synthesizes prior research to form a logical, compelling argument.
- Explains, with excellence, major sociological theories and methods.
- Evaluates, with excellence, merits and shortcomings of different research methodologies.
- Demonstrates excellent familiarity with dominant research in a substantive area of their choosing.

### Pass

- Explains, at an adequate level, major theories and methods in sociology.
- Evaluates, at an adequate level, merits and shortcomings of different research methodologies.

- Demonstrates adequate familiarity with dominant research in a substantive area of their choosing.

Fail

- Displays insufficient or incorrect knowledge of major sociological theories and methods.
- Lacks familiarity with dominant research in a substantive area of their choosing.

## **Baylor Sociology Dissertation Guidelines**

Approved December 11, 2023

### **Dissertation Proposal and Committee Formation**

A student should defend a dissertation proposal within four months after completing the PhD Preliminary Exam. The dissertation proposal is typically a 20 to 30-page document that introduces the topic of the dissertation, reviews relevant literature, and outlines the empirical chapters including research questions, tentative hypotheses, data and methods. The proposal, or a variation of the proposal, often becomes chapter 1 of the dissertation.

The dissertation committee will have four members: dissertation advisor, two other sociology faculty, and one graduate faculty member outside of sociology. A student will defend her or his dissertation proposal in an oral exam conducted by the dissertation committee. Members of the dissertation committee may not be changed after the proposal defense unless approved by the Graduate Program Director.

### **Dissertation Format**

The Department of Sociology allows article-based or book-oriented dissertations. Article-based dissertations typically consist of five chapters. Under this format, Chapter 1 is an introduction to the overall project with relevant literature review and an outline of following chapters. Chapters 2-4 are empirical chapters written as stand-alone journal articles. The final chapter is a conclusion of the overall project.

Alternative formats for a dissertation are possible for a student if approved by their advisor and dissertation committee. Whether article-based or book-oriented, a dissertation should include at least five chapters that make a substantive contribution to existing research in a student's specialty area.

### **Expected Dissertation Timeline**

- Fall, Year 4: Select dissertation committee and defend proposal
- Spring, Year 4: Chapters 1-2
- Summer, Year 4: Chapter 3
- Fall, Year 5: Chapters 4-5
- January, Year 5: Full draft of dissertation to advisor
- February, Year 5: Revised draft of dissertation to committee
- Late February: Complete preliminary technical review (at least two weeks before oral defense)
- March: Defend dissertation before Graduate School deadline, make requested changes, submit final dissertation and other required documents to the Graduate School

# Student Policies & Procedures

This section of the Sociology Handbook contains links to the various Student Policies and Procedures. This is for general information only, and it is not intended to, nor does it contain all regulations that relate to students. Baylor University reserves the right to change the policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and information at any time. Changes will become effective at the time the proper authorities so determine, and the changes will apply to both prospective students and those already enrolled.”

“Baylor University rules, regulations, and policies applicable to students are listed in the Student Policies and Procedures and other student-related publications as published exclusively by the University and available both online through the Baylor website and in print at designated campus locations. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize him or herself with these rules, regulations, procedures, and policies. Since the Student Policies and Procedures and other student-related publications may be revised semester to semester, it is also the responsibility of the student to view revisions online or to obtain official revisions from the Judicial Affairs office.”

For current Student Policies and Procedures, follow this link:

[https://www.baylor.edu/student\\_policies/index.php?id=953888](https://www.baylor.edu/student_policies/index.php?id=953888)

Below are the listed sections and links associated with Student Policies and Procedures.

[Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#)

[Alcohol and Other Drugs, Policy Statement](#)

[Animals on Campus](#)

[Baylor ID Cards](#)

[Campus Facilities Use and Campus Solicitation Policy](#)

[Campus Speakers](#)

[Civil Rights Policy and Procedures](#)

[Class Attendance](#)

[Classroom Conduct](#)

[Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[Dress and Appearance](#)

[Fire Prevention Policy](#)

[Hazing](#)

[Honor Code](#)

[Statement on Human Sexuality](#)

[Information Technology Services](#)

[Intellectual Property Policy](#)

[Missing Persons Reporting Requirements](#)

[Parking Regulations](#)

[Public Demonstration Policy](#)

[Publications](#)

[Statement on Public Health](#)

[Records - FERPA](#)

[Right to Withhold Transcripts and/or Block Registration](#)

[Sexual Conduct](#)

[Sexual and Interpersonal Misconduct Policy](#)

[Smoking](#)

[Student Conduct Code](#)

[Student Organization Policies & Procedures](#)

[Student Organization Conduct Expectations and Procedures](#)

[Student Services](#)

[Threats or Harm to Self or Others](#)

[Weapon Regulations Policy](#)

# The Graduate School Policy on Professional Conduct:

“In keeping with Baylor University’s commitment to mutual respect and personal integrity, the Graduate School expects that all students will conduct themselves in a manner befitting their professional identity. This includes personal conduct towards faculty, staff, peers, and colleagues both on and off campus. Failure to display professional conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the graduate program.”

*Students accused of violating this policy have a right to a fair hearing. In recognition that some acts of professional misconduct may also involve violations of Baylor’s Student Conduct Code, Department faculty or the Graduate School may also and simultaneously report concerns or allegations of a student’s behavior to Baylor’s Judicial Affairs office.*

## 1. Reporting Unprofessional Conduct

If a faculty member believes that a student may have violated the Statement on Professional Conduct, the faculty member should consult with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) and Department Chair. If the GPD and Chair agree that the situation warrants investigation, the following steps should be taken.

- a. The Chair and GPD (or designees) shall meet with the student to discuss the situation. If the student acknowledges the problem and a resolution can be found, the GPD should describe the situation and resolution in writing, provide a copy of the document to the student and faculty member, and keep a copy in the student’s file.
- b. If the situation warrants more immediate action or a resolution cannot be found, the GPD should notify the appropriate dean within the Academic Unit in writing\* (see appended list for the appropriate dean in each Academic Unit). The notification should
  - I. Describe in detail the behavior in question, including any relevant written documentation or communications,
  - II. Explain why the behavior is unprofessional in the context of the particular discipline or program,
  - III. Describe in detail the steps taken thus far to resolve the issue,
  - IV. If necessary, explain why any resolution proposed by the student is inappropriate, and
  - V. State the Department’s recommendation for discipline or resolution.
- c. The Graduate School should be notified of the process by the GPD and/or notified dean.

## 2. Responding to Allegations of Unprofessional Conduct

When the Academic Unit receives notice from a Department that a student may have violated the Statement on Professional Conduct and the situation was not resolved in step 1.a, the following steps will be taken.

- a. The Academic Unit will notify the student of the allegations and will provide the student with a copy of the notification to the Academic Unit submitted by the GPD. The Academic Unit will also provide the student with a copy of this Procedure.
- b. The student will have an opportunity to respond to the Academic Unit in writing within three business days.
- c. Both the Academic Unit and/or the student may request a meeting at this point. However, if the student requests a meeting with the Academic Unit, it will not take place until after a written response from the student has been received by the Academic Unit.
- d. The Academic Unit will supply any written response submitted by the student to the Department, which may then respond in writing to that response within three business days.
- e. If the student chooses not to submit a written response to the Department allegations and/or if three business days following the notification of the student of the allegations have lapsed without the student submitting a written response to the Academic Unit, the Academic Unit may proceed with providing a written response to the Department based on the initial notification provided by the Department (as described in 1b).
- f. If, after receiving the student's reply and/or meeting with the student, and in consultation with the Graduate Program Director, all parties can agree on a resolution that allows the student to remain in the graduate program, the student and the Department will be notified of any terms and conditions imposed. Digital copies of all correspondence and documentation shall be kept in the student's file.
- g. If no such resolution can be found, or in the absence of a written response from the student, or if warranted by the circumstances, the Academic Unit may determine any disciplinary action, including the loss of financial support or dismissal from the program. The student shall be notified of the Academic Unit's decision in writing.
- h. The Graduate School should be notified of the resolution and/or disciplinary action instituted.

### **3. Appeal**

The student may appeal a decision by the Academic Unit to the Provost's office. The student must make the appeal in writing within three business days of notification of the decision. The Provost (or designee) will review the documentation and either uphold the Academic Unit's decision or determine some alternate outcome. The decision of the Provost's office is final.

# Sociology Graduate Program, Baylor University: Academic Integrity and Generative AI Policy

(January 2025)

## 1. Authorship and Originality

Using text generated by AI tools (such as ChatGPT) and presenting it as your original work breaches our academic integrity standards. This is similar to asking someone else to complete an assignment for you or using external sources without proper citation. While AI-generated material cannot be submitted as your own, utilizing AI in appropriate ways—such as brainstorming, creating outlines, or evaluating the flow of your writing—is allowed when fully disclosed.

## 2. Permissible AI Applications

Students may employ AI to generate ideas, organize thoughts, or assess the clarity of their writing. Any use of AI must be openly documented, including a clear description of the AI tools and prompts used and an explanation of how the AI outputs were incorporated. Faculty members or advisors may ask for this documentation when evaluating assignments, thesis proposals, or other significant academic work.

## 3. Instructor-Specific Guidelines

Each instructor will outline how AI may or may not be used in their courses. They may request that students provide evidence of their AI use, such as prompts and summaries, as part of their assignments. Transparency in how AI tools contribute to academic work is required.

## 4. Privacy and Data Protection

Students should exercise caution when using AI platforms, recognizing that any information shared may become part of a larger training database. It is essential to avoid uploading any confidential or sensitive information, particularly data governed by human subjects' protections or other ethical guidelines.

## 5. Intellectual Property Considerations

AI usage can have implications for intellectual property. Students should be aware that AI-generated content may include material under copyright, and any original content they input into these tools may be absorbed into the broader training models of the AI system, potentially diminishing their ownership rights.

## 6. Accountability for Accuracy

AI tools can produce inaccurate or misleading information and may reflect biases present in their training data. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the factual correctness and scholarly reliability of all material they submit, regardless of any AI assistance used.

## Adherence and Compliance

Familiarity with this policy is expected, and students should follow the outlined guidelines. Violations will be considered infractions of the Baylor Honor Code and will be addressed through the procedures outlined by the Office of Academic Integrity. Faculty members are available to assist with questions regarding appropriate AI use in academic contexts.

# Benefits & Financial Support for Graduate Students

[The Graduate School offers a variety of benefits to support students during their time at Baylor, including:](#)

Tuition Remission & Stipends

Financial Aid & Determining Cost

Health & Wellness

Free Access to Basic Health Care

Childbirth/Adoption Accommodations

Short-Term Leave Accommodation

Baylor Funding Opportunities

[Travel Awards & External Funding](#)

[Student Resources:](#)

Professional Development

Campus Life

Faith & Scholarship

Living in Waco

TWO Newsletter

## Parking & Shuttles

[Parking Permits](#)

[Baylor University Shuttle Service](#)

[Baylor Garage Counter Map](#)

GREEN ROUTE   10-minute service						
B9	Ferrell Center	:24	:34	:44	:54	:04 :14
E12	Simpson Center	:27	:37	:47	:57	:07 :17
D5	Jones Library	:30	:40	:50	:00	:10 :20
GOLD ROUTE   10-minute service						
B9	Ferrell Center	:24	:34	:44	:54	:04 :14
D7	McLane Student Life Center	:27	:37	:47	:57	:07 :17
E6	Foster Campus for Business and Innovation	:29	:39	:49	:59	:09 :19
E5	Speight Ave. Stop	:31	:41	:51	:01	:11 :21
BLUE ROUTE   15-minute service						
E5	Speight Ave. Stop	:20	:35	:50		:05
I6	Daughtrey Ave.	:23	:38	:53		:08
I4	Speight Ave. and 11th St.	:26	:41	:56		:11
I3	Baylor Ave. and 10th St.	:27	:42	:57		:12
I5	Bagby Ave. and 10th St.	:29	:44	:59		:14
E6	3rd St. and Bagby Ave.	:32	:47	:02		:17
RED ROUTE   12-minute service						
D10	University Parks Apts.	:00	:12	:24	:36	:48
E7	East Village	:05	:17	:29	:41	:53
E5	Speight Ave. Stop	:07	:19	:31	:43	:55



# Stipend & Tuition

## Stipend

A student stipend is awarded when students are admitted into the program. The office staff reviews it each semester for any additions or changes. If students have any questions regarding the stipend and tuition, please see the office manager. If students have a problem or feel the payments are not correct, please talk to the office manager immediately.

Some quick facts regarding stipend.

- Graduate students are paid on the last working day of the month. Graduate assistants do not submit timecards.
- Students receive a stipend in exchange for a twenty (20) hour work week that the student accepted when signing the acceptance into the program. Students are expected to work 20 hours per week no matter how busy their schedule. The professor they are assigned to is their immediate supervisor. Not following the faculty member's directions is grounds for disciplinary action (see the Student Code of Conduct). Students will be evaluated on their performance.
  - Students are off on official university holidays.
    - Labor Day
    - Thanksgiving Holiday (Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday after Thanksgiving)
    - Christmas Break through New Year's (exact dates depend on calendar year)
    - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
    - Easter Holidays (Good Friday through the Monday after Easter)
    - Memorial Day
    - Juneteenth
    - Independence Day
  - Your stipend is based on your 12-month academic year, beginning in August and ending in July.
  - **Because you are on a 12-month contract, you are expected to be in Waco for the summer. If you are not in Waco, you will not get paid, which may affect your insurance eligibility.**
  - There are specific times that you are not expected to be here.
    - Two weeks between spring graduation and the first day of summer classes.
    - One week between summer graduation and the first day of fall classes.
    - Two to three weeks between fall graduation and first day of spring classes.
  - Students are not to depart before your supervisor's undergraduate finals without getting permission from the supervisor AND the Graduate Program Director.

## Tuition

Fully funded students will have 100% of tuition paid for up to five (5) years. If a student does not graduate within the 5-year contracted time, tuition will be awarded on a case-by-case basis.

# Thesis & Dissertation Process

The Graduate School has many resources to help students complete their degree. It is the student's responsibility, not the thesis/dissertation chair, nor the office staff, to know the Graduate School's requirements.

Resources for [Completing Your Degree](#) include Graduate School Deadlines, Forms for Degree Completion and Graduate Petition, Dissertation and Thesis Resources, Graduation Requirements, and FAQs.

Another great resource is the [Dissertation and Thesis Overview](#) that shows the process step-by-step.

## Additional Departmental Requirements and Notes

While the resources above are helpful, there are additional **departmental requirements**. At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester (2<sup>nd</sup> fall semester), students need to attend the Graduate School's [Formatting Workshop](#). It is much easier to format the thesis or dissertation correctly at the beginning than to get to the technical review and have to reformat at the end.

Please note: Students will need to defend their thesis/dissertation mid to late March, depending on the graduate calendar. Students do NOT have until May to complete it. Please check for the spring semester deadlines to get to know the schedule.

Here is an [example](#) of a thesis timeline. Be sure to keep track of your deadlines. This will help you figure out your personal timeline to help you plan your writing. Make sure you work with your chair to set up a schedule to successfully defend your thesis in March. Not completing your thesis while registered in your 5V99 is NOT making academic progress. **Not making academic progress puts your stipend, tuition, and other benefits at risk.**

### Timeline for Thesis/Dissertation

August: Attend the Graduate School formatting class

October: Thesis/dissertation proposal defense

November: Chapter 1 to your chair

Early December: Chapter 2 and revisions to chapter 1 to your chair

Mid December: Chapter 3 and revisions to chapter 2 to your chair, before Christmas break

Early January: Chapter 4 and revisions to chapter 3 to your chair

Mid-January: Chapter 5 and revisions to chapter 4 to your chair

Early February: Full draft of thesis/dissertation to your chair

Mid-February: Revised draft of thesis/dissertation to your committee

Late February: Complete preliminary technical review (at least two weeks before oral defense)

March: Defend thesis/dissertation before Graduate School deadline, make requested changes, submit final thesis/dissertation and other required documents to the Graduate School

# Teachers of Record

## Requirements & Trainings

Students will likely serve as a Teacher of Record (TOR) during their academic training in sociology. New TOR resources can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Students will take SOC 5V97 Seminar in Teaching for three semester hours during the spring of their second year. The seminar will prepare students to serve as a Teacher of Record. During the fall or spring of the third year, students will enroll in SOC 5V97 for three hours of supervised teaching. Most often, students serve as a Teacher of Record for Introduction to Sociology in their semester of supervised teaching.

In addition to taking SOC 5V97, students will be required to attend a TOR Training hosted by the Graduate School that primarily focuses on the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Canvas TOR training, complete a background check conducted by Human Resources, and complete online training on Civil Rights and Title IX. Every faculty, staff, and student at Baylor University is required to take online trainings yearly.

At all times, the student must comply with the Policies and Procedures of Baylor University. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize him or herself with these rules, regulations, procedures, and policies

There may be other opportunities to serve as a Teacher of Record after you complete the Seminar in Teaching. These opportunities are contingent on department needs. Any additional teaching will be considered part of the student's graduate assistantship, equivalent to 10 hours per week.

The Graduate School offers a variety of other learning opportunities related to teaching. Visit the [Professional Development](#) page for more information on research and scholarship, teaching and pedagogy, and career exploration.

## Student Dress & Appearance

The purpose of the University is to conduct an education program, and the University considers this program an activity second to none in its importance and believes it should be so regarded by the students. Thus, a mature attitude should be demonstrated by the dress and appearance of students while attending classes or engaging in the other academic pursuits about the campus. Students are expected to maintain the same standards of dress and personal grooming about the campus which would ordinarily be maintained by those engaged in other serious pursuits. It is recognized that specific policies or rules of dress and grooming to maintain such standards are difficult to draft and to enforce. For this reason, considerable discretion must be vested in the vice president of student life and his or her associates to maintain these standards. Obvious violation of these standards, such as failure to cover the torso adequately or to wear shoes to class, in cafeterias, in university offices, and at other appropriate places and times, may subject a student to disciplinary action. It is hoped that the reasonable suggestions of the vice president of student life and his or her associates as to dress and other aspects of personal appearance and grooming will be accepted by students, but refusal to comply with such specific reasonable requests will be grounds for University disciplinary action under the Student Conduct Code. Students are expected to wear proper dress, both on and off campus.

No student may modify his or her manner of behavior or appearance in order to prevent recognition unless the student has received the express permission of the University to do so. Any student found guilty of violating this policy may be subject to University disciplinary action.

NOTE: For students who serve as teaching assistants or Teacher of Record, business casual dress is encouraged.

## Mail & Addresses

Main Office Phone No. 254-710-1165

### All Incoming Mail

U.S. Postal Service, UPS, FedEx, and all overnight services are delivered to the Baylor Post Office in the Bill Daniel Student Union Building (SUB) and are picked up by the staff or student workers. If you get an email stating that you have a package, you may forward the email to the staff and let the staff pick it up. It will then be delivered to your mail slot in the main office. If the package is too large for your slot, you will find a “you have a package” card and the box will be on the bottom center package slot. If you do choose to pick it up yourself, please immediately let the office staff know so that we do not spend a lot of time looking for it.

### Regular Mail, Packages, FedEx and UPS to SUB

Your Name  
Baylor University - Sociology  
One Bear Place, # 97326  
Waco, Texas 76798-7326

### Flower & Food Delivery Address- Room/Office

#### **Draper**

Draper Academic Building,  
Room No.  
1420 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Waco, Texas 76706

#### **Tidwell**

Tidwell Bible Building  
600 Speight Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Suite 204  
Waco, Texas 76706

#### **Leuschner**

Leuschner Building  
602 James Street Suite 203  
Waco, Texas 76706