Disclaimer
From time-to-time Graduate Studies and/or Brigham Young University will change policies during an academic year. All policies included in this handbook are superseded by the policies maintained by Graduate Studies and the university. Any changes by Graduate Studies or the university may void policies outlined in this handbook. Graduate students will be notified by email of any Graduate Studies or university policies that alter this handbook.
## Table of Contents

I. Introduction 4  
   A. About BYU 4  
   B. Professional Activities 4  

II. Academic Progress 5  
   A. Monitoring Progress 5  

III. Financial Aid 6  
   A. Department-Level Graduate Awards 6  
   B. Requirements and Selection for Assistantships 7  
   C. Garner Family Summer Fellowship 8  
   D. Graduate Financial Support External to the Department 8  
   E. Travel Funding 9  

IV. The Master's Degree Program 10  
   A. New Student Orientation 10  
   B. Faculty Advisor and Graduate Thesis Committee 10  
   C. Program of Study 11  
   D. Credit Issues 11  
   E. Course Work 12  
   F. Thesis 13  
   G. Recommended Timeline 14  
   H. Graduation 14  

V. Summary of Requirements for an MS in Sociology 15  

VI. Advising Checklist for the MS in Sociology 16
I. INTRODUCTION
Welcome to the Graduate Program in the Department of Sociology at Brigham Young University. We hope that your pursuit of a graduate degree is a rewarding experience that benefits you, the department, and the discipline. We look forward to developing a good working relationship. This handbook contains a set of instructions for successfully completing a Master's degree in Sociology at Brigham Young University. It is also available in electronic format on the department’s website (sociology.byu.edu). It is a supplement to the policies and procedures found in the BYU Graduate Catalog and Policy Manual (gradstudies.byu.edu).

This handbook includes specific departmental requirements for the Master’s degree in Sociology and links to all forms and documents you will need throughout your graduate career. Please consult both the Graduate Catalog and this handbook frequently as they will familiarize you with the rules and regulations of the University and Department of Sociology. It is your responsibility to be aware of and meet all applicable requirements for your graduate degree.

A. About BYU
Brigham Young University is the third largest private university in the United States. It currently enrolls approximately 33,000 students, 10 percent of whom are graduate students. The mission of the institution is emphasized in the graduate education experience. Brigham Young University offers a unique education for graduate students. The university is supported and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It attempts to provide a period of intensive learning in a stimulating setting where a commitment to excellence is expected and the full realization of human potential is pursued. BYU is a unique educational institution that pursues education “by study and also by faith.” Within this larger context, the Department of Sociology houses an impressive faculty with a strong commitment to the mission of the institution. At the same time, the department’s faculty maintain an international reputation in their various areas of expertise through strong research and dedicated teaching.

About the Graduate Program in Sociology at BYU
Approximately eight students are enrolled in the sociology graduate program at BYU each academic year. Students come into our program from all over the world and from a variety of cultural and intellectual backgrounds. Close professional interaction with faculty is an integral part of our program and is a critical aspect of a graduate education.

Our faculty are active in research, teaching, and service, providing numerous opportunities for students to play a major role in various research and professional projects. Faculty have a diverse array of research interests, including international development, urban and rural studies, family, criminology, and the life course, to name a few. Graduate classes are typically small enough to be conducted within a seminar setting. This enhances your opportunity to interact at a more personal level with your mentors and peers.

B. Professional Activities
A graduate degree is a professional degree; therefore, professional socialization is a critical aspect of the program. You are encouraged to prepare research papers for presentation at professional meetings and for publication. Faculty members and graduate peers should assist you in these endeavors. We strongly encourage students to work in consultation with faculty and student peers to prepare manuscripts for inclusion in a professional conference during your first or second year in the program. The table below provides conferences that are frequently attended by members of the department, organizational websites, and typical due dates for conference proposals—however this
list is not exhaustive. Please speak with faculty mentors about other conference opportunities. Attendance and active participation in professional meetings are a critical aspect of your graduate training. Students accepted to present at professional conferences will receive funding priority for conference attendance. We encourage you to plan for these opportunities accordingly (see Section III.E.). You should take an active professional interest in your graduate education and your future career as a sociologist regardless of the setting in which that may occur, be it academia, government, private enterprise, or another setting. Plan to make the most of your time and experiences here.

### Organization | Website | Typical Conference Proposal Deadline
--- | --- | ---
American Sociological Association (ASA) | asanet.org | January
American Society of Criminology (ASC) | asc41.com | March-April
National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) | ncfr.org | March
Population Association of America (PAA) | populationassociation.org | September
Rural Sociological Society (RSS) | ruralsociology.org | February

### II. ACADEMIC PROGRESS
There are three phases to graduate coursework in Sociology. In the first phase, you are expected to complete the 14-hour sequence of required course work. The specific courses are identified in the section on degree programs (see Section IV.E., Section V, and Section VI). In the second phase, you will include specialty area courses and electives particular to your substantive area of interest. For the Master’s degree, 15-hours of electives are necessary. In the third phase, you will work on and complete your thesis. Master’s students complete six hours of thesis credits and are expected to finish their degree program within two years. See Section V for information on time limits.

#### A. Monitoring Progress
The department formally evaluates your performance twice a year: (1) at the completion of the Fall semester and (2) at the end of the Summer term. You are evaluated by the faculty members you have worked with as a teaching assistant/research assistant, advisee, and as a student in their class(es). The department’s Graduate Committee (a committee that oversees graduate affairs in the department) then considers these evaluations when developing a holistic evaluation for each student. Your holistic evaluation will include an assessment of program requirements (program of study submitted, graduate thesis committee in place, courses completed on schedule, thesis prospectus approved by the department, progress on thesis requirement, etc.) and professional performance (including quality of assistantship assignments and other professional activities). Students must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or greater and earn grades of B– or better in their individual courses to make satisfactory progress toward their degrees. Consistent with Graduate School policies, students who do not maintain GPAs of 3.0 or greater may be dismissed from the graduate program. Students cannot graduate from the program without a GPA of 3.0 or greater at the time of graduation. Students must also have completed all work responsibilities at a high level of competence and are expected to be making progress on professional activities. To make an informed review, we ask that you keep your progress report updated monthly. You may find the relevant reports at my.byu.edu or by visiting: gradprogress.sim.byu.edu.
Based on the Graduate Committee’s holistic review, you will receive a performance rating of “Satisfactory,” “Marginal,” or “Unsatisfactory.” Examples of marginal or unsatisfactory progress may include but are not limited to: receiving an incomplete or lower than a B-grade in any course, failure to fulfill TA/RA responsibilities, lack of progress in the program, and missing key thesis benchmarks or deadlines (see Sec. IV-G for details). Students who receive a marginal or unsatisfactory rating will be provided with the committee’s reasoning for the rating and a set of stated conditions for remaining in the program. Students will be invited to respond to the committee’s evaluation in such cases.

Two consecutive unsatisfactory or marginal evaluations will result in termination from the program. If you receive a marginal or unsatisfactory evaluation, it is incumbent on you to resolve any issues raised by the committee and to avoid additional problems which may result in a marginal or unsatisfactory rating. You are responsible for working with your advisor to develop an action plan that ensures satisfactory standing at the next evaluation. The action plan, once developed and approved by your advisor, must be submitted to the department’s Graduate Committee for approval. If the non-satisfactory performance rating is caused by an incomplete or insufficient grade in a course, an approval from the instructor of record must be included with the action plan. The instructor approval should include specific steps you will take to correct unsatisfactory course performance. Action plans, along with instructor approvals (when applicable), must be submitted to the Graduate Committee no more than 30 days from the date of the evaluation. Failure to fulfill the approved action plan within the approved time frame can result in an “Unsatisfactory” at the next evaluation, with no opportunity for redress.

III. FINANCIAL AID
A. Department-Level Graduate Awards
Assistantships and tuition awards are the two forms of financial aid provided by the Department of Sociology. Twenty hour per week assistantships are awarded in Fall and Winter semesters. In Spring-Summer, students may either work 10 hours per week in both Spring and Summer term or work 20 hours per week in either Spring or Summer term. Work assignment in the Spring and Summer months are considered "internships." Most students pursue an "academic internship" where they work with a sociology professor on research. Alternatively, some students may pursue an "industry internship." The Graduate Committee supports students who are interested in paid industry internships. Spring/Summer assistantship may be applied to industry internships when approved by the Graduate Coordinator.

Tuition awards from the department vary according to cohort size and other budgetary factors. In most years, students get at least half of their tuition costs covered by the department. However, there is no guarantee on the amount of tuition support students will receive in a given academic year. Tuition awards are provided after the add/drop deadline in Fall and Winter semester in the first and second year of the program.

We discourage students from seeking employment outside of the program, particularly during the Fall and Winter semesters. The program is designed with an expectation that students commit to the program full-time. Generally, graduate students cannot work for another BYU unit while employed within the Department of Sociology. This practice serves to protect the students’ time—which is intended to facilitate a timely thesis defense and graduation—as well as the department’s investment in students. Rare exceptions may be granted via petition to the graduate coordinator and committee.
The Graduate Studies Program Manager will initiate new contracts for each eligible student at the end of each semester. It is the student’s responsibility to respond to requests for information, etc., from the Program Manager in a timely fashion. Failure to provide such information could result in an incomplete contract, meaning the student would not receive an assistantship for that semester. This means that the student’s employment would be terminated for that semester, and the student would be sanctioned for marginal or unsatisfactory progress in the program. Students are also responsible to know the university’s paycheck schedules (see hrs.byu.edu/employees/employee-benefits/pay-period-schedule for more information) and should plan for any breaks in the university's payment schedule.

B. Requirements and Selection for Assistantships

Eligibility for assistantships, internships, and supplementary awards is dependent on student enrollment as a graduate degree-seeking student in good standing. Master’s students may receive assistantship funding from the department for up to two years if they demonstrate satisfactory performance and progress toward completing degree requirements. One "marginal" rating typically does not impact employment. You must also be registered for at least 8.5 credit hours (full-time) during Fall and Winter semesters unless you are in the thesis stage of your graduate career. During the thesis stage, you must be registered for 2 credit hours in the semester (or 1 credit hour in the term) for which the award is granted.

Students should also be aware of university requirements around employment. According to BYU policy, student employees must be residents of Utah to receive an assistantship. Students who do not reside in Utah may not be eligible for employment through the department and university (please see BYU's out-of-state work policy for potential exceptions to this rule). The university also follows specific tax rules regarding student employment and credit hour registration. AFICA rules stipulate that students must be enrolled in classes to be employed within the department. If students do not register for credit hours during the Spring and Summer terms but seek an assistantship, they must first consult with the Graduate Studies Program Manager to ensure compliance with federal law.

Federal immigration regulations require that all individuals hired to work in the United States prove that they are legally eligible to work. U.S. citizens do so by presenting a Social Security card, state-certified birth certificate, or U.S. passport with a current BYU identification card. Non-U.S. citizens need to present a current passport with attached I-94 or I-20 ID visa.

Graduate Assistantships are assignments. When students enter the program, they are assigned to a temporary advisor who, generally, also acts as their work supervisor. Students are matched to their temporary advisors/work supervisors based on the research interests stated in their application to the program, the needs of the department, and several other factors that facilitate the management of the graduate program. These assignments are not solely dependent on students’ interests and therefore do not automatically change as students’ interests shift. Any change in students’ assistantships should be carefully considered and discussed with the graduate coordinator, work supervisors, temporary advisors, and/or permanent advisors.

Graduate Assistantships are professional internships with explicit obligations. As a result, they are considered jobs (20 hours a week unless otherwise specified). They are not fellowships. We expect you to work the full number of contracted hours each week. Students who do not fulfill their work duties may be sanctioned for making marginal or unsatisfactory progress in the program and may have the remainder of that semester’s/term’s contract canceled. Further, they may not receive funding from the department in future semesters or terms.
Specific job duties will be provided by faculty supervisors. Should you have questions or concerns about your duties, please discuss them with the faculty member, your advisor, or the Graduate Coordinator to get them resolved as soon as possible. This will help to ensure that your assignment will be a productive experience for you, the faculty, and the department. Reports of job-related activities are due on Monday mornings and must be submitted to the department each week of the semester or term the student is employed.

A Master’s degree in sociology is a research degree. As a result, the department provides as many opportunities to receive research training as possible. Consistent with this policy, we actively discourage students from teaching their own class. Teaching demands often make it difficult for students to maintain a trajectory toward timely graduation. Save exceptional circumstances, students with a strong interest in teaching that want to teach their own class before leaving our program should have successfully defended their thesis prior to the term in which they’ve been given a teaching assignment. For example, a student could defend their thesis in Spring term but not submit her or his thesis and apply for graduation in Summer term. Such a student could then teach a class independently after the bulk of thesis requirements were completed. Students interested in such a model must be very aware of university deadlines for thesis completion and graduation. Additionally, the department plans courses well in advance; students who are interested in teaching a course should discuss their plans with their advisor and the Graduate Coordinator as soon as possible.

**Duration of Departmental Assistantships**
Continued departmental funding is conditional on satisfactory performance evaluations each semester. Poor evaluations (Marginal and/or Unsatisfactory ratings) as a Research Assistant or failure to make satisfactory progress on program requirements may result in suspension of an assistantship. Students who receive such an evaluation will be informed by the Graduate Coordinator. Master’s students may receive assistantship funding from the department for two years if they meet the above criteria. Typically, the department does not provide funding for any student beyond the two-year mark.

**C. Garner Family Summer Fellowship**
The Department of Sociology provides a competitive award to students. Subject to funding, the Garner Family Summer Fellowship Program will award up to two $3,000 Fellowships for Summer term research support. Fellowships are for first year Master’s students in Sociology who are transitioning into their second year. Students are expected to work on faculty-sponsored research projects during the period of financial support. Faculty may only sponsor one student’s application for the fellowship. Final due dates for Garner Family Summer Fellowship applications will be set by the Graduate Committee. However, these applications will typically be due the week of March 15th.

Students awarded the fellowship will receive the funds based on their enrollment status during Spring and Summer terms. Students should work with Graduate Studies Program Manager to determine when funds will be dispersed. Fellowship recipients are expected to produce a joint-authored paper, with their faculty sponsor, that is targeted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Students will also present their research at a departmental colloquium in the Winter semester following the fellowship.

**D. Graduate Financial Support External to the Department**
Two types of student loans are available to qualifying graduate students—short-term loans and Federal Stafford Loans. Only degree-seeking students who are making satisfactory academic progress will be considered for loan approval.
For information on awards external to department, contact:
Student Loans
Financial Aid Counselor
Appointments: D-155 ASB
Provo, UT 84602-1009 (801)
422-4104

Application
Application materials and information about eligibility and repayment requirements are available in the Financial Aid Office (see gradstudies.byu.edu/page/costs-financial-aid). Students applying for loans must first complete a FAFSA application.

Deadlines
Students must submit all application materials for any BYU need-based loans and federal loans by the last day of enrollment, or by June 30 (whichever comes first). Certain governmental restrictions apply to students without US citizenship. Some students are not eligible to obtain work permits until they have been in school for one semester. The International Services Office can determine international student status regarding employment.

Additional Financial Aid Resources/Sources
Students may want to seek out university-related work opportunities outside the department (e.g., Women’s Studies, the Kennedy Center, etc.). While we encourage students to seek out these opportunities, we recommend that such employment fit the mission of a graduate education in the Department of Sociology. Students should consult their advisor and/or the Graduate Coordinator about these additional funding opportunities. Several campus entities also provide a myriad of financial assistance opportunities, like fellowships and scholarships. Please note the deadlines for each award/fellowship. In some instances, deadlines for some awards/fellowships may disqualify students attempting to finish the program quickly (within a year).

E. Travel Funding
Funding for Travel to Conferences
Typically, students can obtain departmental funding for one conference while a student in the graduate program. Preference for travel funding will be given to students presenting research at professional conferences. Students are strongly encouraged to work with faculty members on projects that can be submitted to a conference while in the graduate program. Advisors and work supervisors will often be the best sources of information on which conferences student may want to attend. Supported travel to conferences must take place within three months of graduation. If you present at more than one conference, the department may be able to provide partial support if funds are available. Consult with the Graduate Coordinator about funding in such circumstances. Please keep the Graduate Coordinator appraised of your plans to attend conferences, even if you do not yet know if you are accepted, so that travel funds can be budgeted appropriately.

Travel funds may also be available from non-departmental sources. Graduate Studies offers professional presentation awards of $500 that are available to BYU graduate students. For more information on these awards, please visit: gradstudies.byu.edu/gss/professional-presentation-award. Likewise, the Kennedy Center offers some opportunities for travel assistance.

Conference presentations may be in any form (including posters). Work closely with the Graduate Studies Program Manager to arrange travel. All other travel expenses must be handled through reimbursement (and must first be preapproved). The student must pay for the item and be
reimbursed by the University. This includes lodging, meals, and transportation to and from airports and in the host city. While reimbursement is generally smooth, please plan to accommodate these expenses until you receive your reimbursement. **KEEP ALL RECEIPTS**, regardless of cost. The University may refuse to reimburse expenses for which no receipts are available. When you return from the conference, bring your receipts to the Graduate Studies Program Manager for help in completing the reimbursement paperwork. Note that the sooner you complete your paperwork, the sooner you will receive your reimbursement.

Finally, Graduate Studies rules make reimbursement for conference registration complicated. While these expenses are handled via reimbursement, such reimbursement is often delayed, sometimes for as much as several months. It may be necessary to bear these costs until you receive reimbursement from the university. When you register for a conference, provide a receipt to the Graduate Studies Program Manager and keep a copy for your own records.

**Funding for Research Travel**
From time-to-time, students may need to travel for a research purpose, such as gathering data. The department may be able to provide some travel support in these cases. Please consult with the Graduate Coordinator to inquire as to the availability of such funds.

**IV. THE MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM**

**A. New Student Orientation**
Graduate students are only admitted in Fall semester. Graduate students will begin their program with a new student orientation, which is typically held a few days before the beginning of Fall semester. This orientation provides an opportunity to meet department faculty, staff, and fellow graduate students. Continuing graduate students are also expected to attend the orientation, since pertinent information about the second year of the program will be shared at that time.

**B. Faculty Advisor and Graduate Thesis Committee**
First-year graduate students will be assigned a **temporary** faculty advisor at the beginning of the program. Your advisor will help you to develop your Program of Study and thesis committee. You should secure a **permanent** advisor during Winter semester of your first year. This advisor may be your temporary advisor or another faculty member. However, your permanent advisor must be a faculty member in the Department of Sociology and have graduate faculty status. Please consider topical match and fit when approaching faculty to act as a permanent advisor.

Your thesis committee includes a faculty member who serves as chair of your graduate thesis committee and at least two other committee members. Your permanent advisor acts as the chair of your thesis committee. As you approach faculty to join your committee, please be aware that the department has set standards about the number of committees faculty may serve on. These policies encourage faculty to closely mentor students and protect junior faculty research time. Faculty members may be unable to accommodate late requests if they already serve on the designated number of committees, or they may have to serve only on the committees that most closely match their own research. Consult with the Graduate Coordinator and your temporary advisor if you have questions about selecting your advisor.

Thesis committees are composed of at least three faculty members. You may have more members on your committee if you wish. Thesis committees may also include faculty from outside the department. However, the chair and at least one other committee member must be from the Sociology Department. All members of your thesis committee must be designated as graduate faculty by the university; listings of graduate faculty can be found under each department’s listing.
in the University Catalog. The purpose of your graduate committee is to advise you throughout your graduate program, especially in terms of professional development. Your committee chair/advisor will be especially important in this capacity. Your advisor will be instrumental in helping you achieve your professional goals.

Your graduate committee is established through the Graduate Committee Members form. If you wish to make changes in the composition of your committee, you will need to do so through the myBYU portal. All changes must be approved by your existing committee.

C. Program of Study
One of the primary responsibilities of your preliminary advisor/committee chair and your graduate committee is to assist you to develop your Program of Study (see Sections V and VI). The Program of Study is not only a road map of the courses you will take to complete coursework for your degree, but it is also a contract between you, the department, and the university that you will take and complete the agreed upon courses as a condition of graduation. Changes can be made through the myBYU portal.

Please note that students who do not complete a program of study will not receive assistantship funding until the Program of Study is submitted to the myBYU portal. Failure to submit a Program of Study by the end of the first semester in the program will result in an unsatisfactory rating for that semester.

To be considered a full-time student, you must be registered for 8.5 credits per semester. To remain enrolled at the university as a graduate student, you must be registered for 6 credits per academic year. Failure to do this will result in your termination from the program. Specific accommodations may be made by petition for students in the final stages of their theses; see the Graduate Coordinator to discuss such petitions.

D. Credit Issues
Transfer Credit
The department will, in exceptional circumstances, consider transfer credits from another institution. Credit taken at other accredited universities in the United States or in Canada may count toward a graduate degree at BYU if the following conditions are met:

- Any course to be transferred must be clearly at the graduate level.
- The grade for any such course must be B or better (pass/fail courses are not transferable).
- Home study, correspondence, and extension courses are not transferable.
- Transfer credit in combination with non-degree and senior credit cannot total more than 10 hours.
- Credit cannot have applied to another degree.

Credit from universities outside the United States and Canada may be considered for transfer only if certified by special examination (see the Credits Certified by Special Examination section in the Graduate Studies Handbook for details).

Time Limit
Only credit taken within the five-year time limit for Master’s degrees may count toward the coursework requirements for an MS in Sociology. The Department will, under very rare circumstances, entertain a petition to extend beyond the allotted time to finish the respective degrees. Requests for extensions should be based on emergencies, are rarely granted, and are
strongly discouraged. By university policy, petitions to extend time limits and include credits outside the five-year time limit are governed by the following:

- The Department and College may petition for up to a one-year extension by providing reasonable evidence that extenuating circumstances caused an unavoidable delay in the student's progress toward a degree.
- The Department and College may petition to allow credit outdated by more than one year but no more than five years to apply toward a degree, but the petition must be accompanied by impressive documentation that the credit in question has been updated by courses retaken, by special readings courses in the outdated subjects, or by examinations in each of the courses.
- No credit outdated by more than five years may apply to a current degree, regardless of circumstances.

E. Course Work

Students must complete 35 credit hours to earn an MS in Sociology. Twenty-nine of these hours must be from coursework. Typically, students take six credit hours of thesis hours (Sociology 699R) to complete the 35-hour requirement. 14 of these hours are in required courses:

- Sociology 598R: Professionalization Seminar (2 semesters)
- Sociology 600: Advanced Research Methods (Prerequisite to Soc 604)
- Sociology 604: Ethnographic Techniques
- Sociology 605: Multiple Regression
- Sociology 610: Seminar in Classical Social Theory

15 credit hours are elective hours and should be determined in conjunction with your graduate committee on your Program of Study. Of these elective hours, a minimum of nine credit hours must be Sociology courses and a maximum of six credits may be taken outside the department with approval of your graduate committee.

Substitutions

Graduate students will only be able to substitute core courses under extreme and unusual circumstances. Students requesting a core course substitution must: (a) request the substitution in writing; (b) give a compelling reason for this substitution; and (c) submit the request, along with an endorsement from your advisor to the Graduate Coordinator for review by the Graduate Committee. Final determination on such requests will be made by the Graduate Committee.

Directed Research/Readings

Up to six hours of elective credit can be used on directed research and/or reading courses. Anything beyond six hours of directed research/reading coursework must be approved by the Graduate Committee. Directed research/reading credits are especially useful for learning from a professor whose expertise is in an area where the department currently does not offer a course, for preparing for thesis research and writing, and for earning credits during summer months. Directed research/readsings credits will not be awarded for carrying out the normal activities associated with your research assistantship, nor will they not be awarded for doing routine thesis research. Rather, they should be seen as supplementary to assistantship work or thesis research (e.g., learning a new method, becoming familiar with a new area of scholarship, etc.).

Students who want to take a directed research/readings course are welcome to approach a faculty member to discuss the possibility of creating one. Faculty members are not obligated to oversee directed research/readings courses, since these courses do not count toward the faculty member's regular teaching load. If the faculty member agrees to oversee the course, then the student and the
faculty member will fill out the Directed Readings/Research Form (sociology.byu.edu/important-documents) that establishes the parameters and expectations for the course in a manner commensurate with the expectations of graduate education in the department. The student will give this form to the graduate coordinator, who will provide an add code to enroll in the class.

Undergraduate Courses
Graduate students cannot receive credit towards the MS degree by completing undergraduate courses.

F. Thesis
Thesis Prospectus
Developing a Thesis Prospectus is the initial step in writing your thesis. Consult your advisor for examples and expectations. You should present your Thesis Prospectus to your graduate committee no later than Fall semester of your second year. Your committee will determine if it is ready to be defended orally. When it is ready for an oral defense, you, in conjunction with your committee, will schedule the oral defense of the prospectus via the "grad prog" portal in myBYU. Candidates must provide their Prospectus at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. This allows your committee sufficient time to read and provide feedback on the Prospectus before the oral defense. Failure to successfully defend your prospectus by the end of the Fall Semester of your second year may result in a “Marginal” rating in your next evaluation by the Department Graduate Committee.

There are two possible outcomes of the oral defense of the prospectus: (1) Prospectus Approved—proceed with your thesis; (2) Prospectus Not Approved—consult with your advisor/thesis chair about next steps. After your Thesis Prospectus has been unanimously approved by your committee, you may proceed to work on your thesis.

Thesis Defense
Your thesis chair and other members of your committee will decide if a written thesis is ready for an oral defense. Because the thesis defense is marked by approval of both the written product and the oral defense, it constitutes the final comprehensive examination within the program. The final oral defense must be scheduled with the Office of Graduate Studies through the Graduate Studies Program Manager at least 48 hours prior to the defense. The process should be initiated using “gradprog” in myBYU.

A thesis defense cannot be held during the interim periods between semesters. All members of the BYU academic community are invited to attend the final oral examination, but only members of your graduate committee may question you and vote on your performance. Only committee members and the student may comment during the oral exam. University rules require that the Master’s candidate be physically present on campus for the final oral examination. You must be registered for at least 2 credits the semester you defend.

There are four possible outcomes to the Oral Defense: (1) Pass; (2) Pass with Qualifications—the committee may require revisions of the thesis before final approval; (3) Recess—if two or more committee members vote to recess, the examination is adjourned. This permits you to reschedule, with the department and Graduate Studies, a second and final examination. The new examination cannot be held sooner than a month after the recessed examination. The new defense must be convened with the original committee; (4) Fail—if two or more examiners vote to fail, your graduate degree program in Sociology is terminated.
**G. Recommended Timeline**

Students are expected to complete their degrees in two years. Students who, in rare circumstances, may need extensions beyond two years should be in early and constant contact with the graduate coordinator. Master’s students should use the following recommended outline in developing a program of study and timeline with their advisor/committee chair.

| First-year Fall Semester | • Complete 10 hours of required course work (Soc 600, 605, 610, 590R)  
|                         | • Complete a program of study through myBYU  
|                         | • Complete a graduate committee form through myBYU  
| First-year Winter Semester | • Complete 4 hours of required course work (Soc 604, 598R)  
|                            | • Begin working with your thesis committee to develop a topic, prospectus  
|                            | • By the end of the semester, develop a timeline for completion of a thesis project, including plans for securing appropriate data  
|                            | • Submit prospectus drafts to thesis chair  
| First-year Spring and Summer | • Complete 3 hours of elective course work (directed readings)  
|                                | • Continue to work with thesis chair and committee to prepare for a prospectus defense by Fall Semester  
| Second-year Fall Semester | • Complete thesis prospectus defense (aim for early Fall Semester)  
|                                | • Complete remaining 3-6 hours of elective credits  
|                                | • Continue thesis research, finalize data and analysis plans, begin analysis  
| Second-year Winter Semester | • Submit drafts of thesis to chair for review and feedback  
|                                | • Make revisions until chair and committee agree thesis meets standards and requirements  
|                                | • Make graduation plan with committee chair. For an April graduation, a defense must be held by mid-March. For an August graduation, a defense must be held by mid-June.  
|                                | • Complete remaining thesis credits according to graduate plans. You must enroll in 2 credits the semester of these thesis defense.  

**H. Graduation**

*Application for Graduation*

The university requires students to apply online for graduation. This allows Graduate Studies to review your Program of Study and other materials to determine your eligibility for graduation in a given semester. Any deficiencies in your paperwork or coursework will result in rejection of the application. Application for graduation is free and may be repeated if a student decides to delay graduation (for example, from Spring to Summer term). Application for graduation is tied to strict university deadlines; students should pay close attention to communications from Graduate Studies, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Graduate Studies Program Manager concerning these deadlines. Deadlines are also listed on the Graduate Studies website ([gradstudies.byu.edu](http://gradstudies.byu.edu)).
V. Summary of Requirements for an MS in Sociology

Program Purpose
The purpose of the Master’s degree in Sociology is to develop skills to teach and research through a sociological lens.

Prerequisites
• Bachelor’s degree in Sociology or a related field  
• Soc 111 (Introduction to Sociology) or equivalent*  
• Soc 300 (Methods of Research in Sociology) or equivalent*  
• Stat 121 (Principles of Statistics) or equivalent*  
• Soc 310 (Classical Social Theory) or equivalent*  
*Equivalent courses must be evaluated and approved by the Graduate Committee

Graduate Coursework
• 35 required hours  
  o 14 hours of required course work (Soc 598R, Soc 600, Soc 605, Soc 604, Soc 610)  
  o 15 hours of elective course work (9 hours must be completed in Sociology)  
  o Six hours of thesis credit  
• Students must register for six credit hours per academic year and two thesis hours during the semester they defend their thesis

Time Limits
You should finish the MS program in two years or less. The maximum time allowed is three years under extenuating circumstances, following a petition to the department Graduate Committee. Note that assistantships and tuition awards are limited to the first two years of the program. To petition for a third year you, not your advisor, must submit a written statement to the Graduate Committee detailing why you were unable to complete your thesis in the standard two years. As part of this petition, you must submit a new timetable for completing your thesis and graduate program. Also, students must indicate how they will pay for additional semesters or terms. The department Graduate Committee will evaluate the petition, overall performance, and ability to meet other deadlines when making a final decision on allowing a third year in the program. Petitions must be approved by the department Graduate Committee before a third year can begin.
### VI. Advising Checklist for the MS in Sociology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Courses</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Waived</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalization</td>
<td>Soc 598R: Pro-Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Soc 600: Graduate Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Soc 604: Ethnographic Techniques</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Soc 605: Multiple Regression Analysis</td>
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<td>Theory</td>
<td>Soc 610: Classical Sociological Theory</td>
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<th>Elective Courses</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Waived</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Thesis Credits</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Waived</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soc 699R: Master's Thesis</td>
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<td>Soc 699R: Master's Thesis</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Required Credits Earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Elective Credits Earned</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Thesis Credits Earned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Credits Earned (35 required for graduation)</td>
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</tbody>
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