

Sociology Graduate Admissions FAQs

Thank you for your interest in the Sociology Ph.D. program at UCSC.

This fact sheet should provide answers to questions commonly asked by Sociology PhD applicants. For the answers to questions that apply to all graduate admissions, and not specific to Sociology admissions, please see the alternate link for Graduate Admissions FAQs.

If you have additional questions, you may contact the department easily by sending an email to 'socyga@ucsc.edu'.

If you leave a voicemail message on the department phone 831-459-4306, please clearly state your name and leave an email address - not a phone number - as your primary contact. It is helpful if you briefly state your question(s) in the voicemail message.

Q. What courses are required for the Sociology Ph.D.?

Students are required to take twelve courses as follows:

- . A three-course core group:
 - 201 The Making of Classical Theory
 - 202 Contemporary Sociological Theory
 - 203 Sociological Methods
- . Two methods courses:
 - 204 Methods of Quantitative Analysisand one of the following seven courses:
 - 205 Field Research Methods
 - 206 Comparative Historical Methods
 - 209 Analysis of Cultural Form
 - 241 Cross-National and Cross-Cultural Research
 - 242 Feminist Research Seminar
 - Psychology 248 Survey Methods, or
 - 282 Social Policy Research
- . Three area foundation courses:
 - 220 Global Transformation: Macrosociological Perspective
 - 240 Inequality and Identity
 - 260 Culture, Knowledge, Power
- . At least one writing course (208 or 250)
- . A minimum of three (3) elective courses approved by the graduate director (excluding Sociology 250 and Sociology 293).

Students with no background in statistics are required to take the undergraduate course, **Socy 103A - Statistical Methods**, before enrolling in Socy 204 - Methods of Quantitative Analysis.

For more information, see the online catalog on the Registrar's web site. There is much useful information about the Sociology undergraduate and graduate programs:
http://reg.ucsc.edu/catalog/html/programs_courses/socyPS.html.

Q. How long does it take to complete the Ph.D.?

The 'normative time' to complete the PhD is seven years. Although a few students finish earlier, most finish in seven years, or just slightly longer.

Years 1-2: coursework and masters paper

Years 3-4: write field statements and take oral qualifying exam. The result is that you advance to candidacy. A few students advance by end of the third year, but students must advance no later than the end of the fourth year. Many students continue to take courses even after completing the coursework required during the first two years.

Years 5-7: dissertation research and writing, PhD completion

For students entering with previous graduate coursework or a master's paper, a slightly shorter time might be possible if any of the coursework or paper is considered essentially 'equivalent' to a specific program requirement, and therefore, eligible for a waiver. This might allow the student to complete the master's requirements more quickly, and to move on to preparation for the Qualifying Exam.

[Q. Is there a M.A. degree program?](#)

No. Students are admitted into the program to pursue a PhD. Many students do file for the MA after completing the required coursework and paper, but this is a non-terminal master's degree.

[Q. Will previous graduate coursework or Master's Degree transfer?](#)

Some students do enter the program with a Master's degree or previous graduate coursework. Some coursework might be transferable. After an applicant is accepted, courses can be evaluated to determine whether they satisfy any of the Sociology PhD coursework requirements. A previous master's paper/thesis might also be considered to meet the master's paper requirement.

There are no automatic waivers/substitutions. These are decided by the Graduate Director on a course-by-course basis. Waiver determinations are made only for after an applicant has accepted and is preparing to enroll.

For a course to be waived, it is necessary to submit a course syllabus to the Graduate Director. A decision is made by the Graduate Director and/or another faculty member as to whether the course taken matches any of the courses that are required for this program. Typically electives are not waived. Typically no more than three courses can be waived. A waiver reduces the total number of required courses (i.e. if one course is waived, eleven are required rather than twelve).

A previous paper must follow the normal review process, namely, that it is reviewed by two readers who decide if it meets the department's requirements/standards for a master's paper.

A previously completed MA does not count in and of itself as a step towards the PhD.

A student must complete Sociology's required courses and a master's paper, except those that have been specifically waived by the Graduate Director.

There are no direct transfers from another MA or PhD program. Everyone must apply and be admitted through the regular applications process.

[Q. I work full time and would like to keep my current position while I get my Ph.D. Is it possible to attend part-time?](#)

This program assumes students are pursuing the PhD full-time. During the first two years, there is substantial required coursework and a master's paper to be completed. Graduate seminars are three hours and the majority are scheduled during the day.

Additionally, sociology graduate students are expected to serve as teaching assistants for the department's classes. A teaching assistant works up to 20 hours per week (maximum of 220 hours per quarter), on duties that include attending 2-3 lectures and leading two discussion sections per week, holding office hours, meeting with the instructor as needed, providing input for grades, and course preparation.

Part-time enrollment is more commonly an option for students after they have completed the master's requirements and the Qualifying Exam and have advanced to candidacy. Some students do manage to work at other jobs at this point, however, many are no longer taking courses nor TAing.

[Q. Do I need a Sociology degree to apply?](#)

No. Most students have a background in social sciences, or a related field, and they have a fairly well-defined research focus. For applicants with other backgrounds, it is important that they understand how their interests overlap the field of sociology.

[Q. Do I need an M.A. to apply to the Ph.D. program?](#)

No. While a number of students with master's degrees or some previous graduate coursework do apply, the basic requirement is completion of a Bachelor's degree. No preference is automatically given to those with a Master's degree.

[Q. Are there opportunities to work with faculty in other departments?](#)

The program does offer interdisciplinary opportunities. Some students choose to take one or two seminars in other departments and, with approval of the Graduate Director, to have these count towards meeting the department's three-elective requirement. Additionally, there are formal parenthetical agreements with some departments – Feminist Studies, Environmental Studies, and Latino and Latin American Studies (LALS). Specific parenthetical requirements vary but typically include: taking a certain number of courses in the other department (in addition to Sociology's coursework requirements), TAing one quarter for the other department, writing a paper, and having a faculty member from the other department agree to serve as the outside member of the student's QE committee. Parentheticals are an option for current PhD students only; applicants do not apply for parentheticals at the time of admission.

[Q. What are the minimum/average GPA and GRE scores?](#)

The department does not track these averages, nor has it established a minimum acceptable GPAs or GRE scores. Admission is competitive, however, and each year many highly qualified applicants must be denied admission. Each application is carefully considered and reviewed as a whole, and applicants with lower scores might be considered favorably when there is other evidence in the file of academic promise. The complete application file consists of: online application, personal history statement, statement of purpose, writing sample, three letters of recommendation, GRE scores, TOEFL score (if applicable), and GPA. While a resume is not required, nor even requested by the department, there is space to attach a resume or CV.

[Q. How many applications does the department receive?](#)

The department receives 90-100 applications each year. Cohorts usually range from six to nine students, but the number can vary widely between years depending upon a number of factors. Due to the limited number of openings, the department can only offer admission to those applicants who are determined to be the most highly qualified and who have the best 'fit' with the department.

Q. Does the selection committee have a waitlist of applicants in case someone turns down an offer.

No. The department realizes that some applicants will turn down the offer of admission. This does not open additional spaces.

Q. Can my recommender send a hardcopy letter rather than submit the letter online?

No. The normal process is to have letters of recommendation submitted online. There is a very real chance that a hardcopy letter will not be merged with the applicant's file, and that it may be discarded. If a recommender insists on sending an original letter, an applicant should definitely let Graduate Admissions know such a letter is being submitted. Graduate Admissions will likely discourage the applicant from doing this. Or the applicant might simply consider using another recommender.

There is no advantage to a hardcopy letter. The likelihood of an incomplete application should outweigh sending a hardcopy.

When recommenders are registered and submit their letters online, an applicant can easily see in the portal which letters has been received and merged with the file.

Q. Can I submit a co-authored paper as for the required writing sample?

A co-authored paper would not be the preferred choice. If you do submit a co-authored paper, it should be accompanied by a statement from the other author as to each author's level of contribution. The department will not review writing samples in advance of the application, so it is up to the applicant to decide whether to submit the co-authored paper or a different writing sample.

Q. Can materials be submitted after the December 15 deadline?

The application itself must be submitted by the December 15 deadline (midnight PST). No late applications will be considered. Additionally, all letters, official test scores, and transcripts should be received by the deadline to guarantee full consideration of your file. There is no guarantee that materials received after the deadline will be reviewed since files are usually distributed for review within a few days of the deadline.

Hints:

- Application materials sent directly to Graduate Admissions cannot be merged until you actually submit your online application. While some applicants do wait until the last minute to submit their online application, they should be aware that the merge of these other documents is not immediate and may not occur for a number of days. This is an extremely busy time since many hundreds of applications are being processed, the fall quarter has just come to a close, and the campus is preparing for the holiday closure (December 19 - January 3).

It is a good idea to submit the online application in advance of the deadline so that the supplemental documents are merged by the time your application is forwarded for review. Applications are typically forwarded for review within a few days following the deadline. Reviewers can see updates as additional documents are merged. However, they will be reviewing numerous files and may not necessarily return immediately, nor often, to individual files to check for updates.

- Consider the normal time for test scores to be sent from the testing centers (see GRE and TOEFL sites for this information) and schedule your exams early enough so that the scores arrive by the deadline.

There is space on the application to self-report your scores if you know them. These can serve until the official scores arrive. Without official scores, however, your application is incomplete.

- Let Graduate Admissions know if your name on any supplemental documents might be different than on the application. Not doing so significantly increases the chance that these documents will not be merged with your application.

Q. How do I know if my file is complete?

Shortly after you submit your online application, Grad Admissions will assign you a student ID and send instructions to access the student portal. You can monitor that your online application was received and you can see which supplemental materials have been merged (letters, scores, transcripts). Merges are done in batches so you should expect reasonable delays before you see the additional documents in your file. It is up to you to track the status of your file and to insure that all supplemental documents have been sent to Graduate Admissions.

If you are certain that materials have been sent, and you do not see these in the portal within a reasonable time (i.e. within a couple weeks of submitting the online application), you should take steps to verify the materials have been sent. You should *first* verify with the sender that your materials have been sent to UCSC Graduate Admissions and when the materials were sent. Only after doing this, should you contact Graduate Admissions.

If you notice that documents for any other applicant were merged incorrectly to your file, contact Graduate Admissions about the error.

Do not wait until the deadline to take care of problems. You should not expect to reach anyone for assistance during the campus closure (from December 19 through January 3). The campus will close at 5pm on Friday December 18 and will reopen on Monday January 4. Still, it may be helpful to look in the portal during the break. It is likely that periodic merges may be done during the break, but you will not be able to reach a person.

Q. When can I expect to hear about the admission decision?

Typically the department makes admission decisions by mid-February and relays its decisions to Graduate Admissions. The official offer of admission and funding is sent via email from Graduate Admissions. Admitted students have until April 15 to accept or decline the offer.

Graduate Admissions also sends notification to students denied admission.

It is the department's policy not to provide status about decisions prior to the formal notifications sent from Graduate Admissions. Nor will Graduate Admissions give any status prior to the email notification. Graduate Admissions will not provide this information by phone.

Shortly after an admission offer is sent from Graduate Admissions, a Sociology faculty member will also phone you to discuss any questions you may have about the program or offer.

Q. Are students admitted in spring?

No. Applications are accepted from October 1 up until midnight December 15 (PST), and students are admitted for the following fall quarter. UCSC is on the quarter system and there is no spring admission.

Q. Does Sociology guarantee funding for its Ph.D. students?

The initial offer letter is for first year funding. However, the department tries to fund full-time graduate students for the first five years through a combination of fellowships, TAships, or GSRships (Graduate Student Researcher). Funding is for the academic year only (fall, winter, and spring quarters).

In recent years the department has been able to meet its goal of five-year funding. The department hopes to continue to meet this goal despite the current California budget situation.

There is no guaranteed funding during summer. Some students receive one of a limited number of summer session TA positions, primarily for the sociology course offerings. Courses run 5 weeks so such positions pay less than during a regular quarter. Others work as GSRs. But many students do not receive funding during the summer.

Q. What are my chances to get a TAship?

Most sociology graduate students depend to a large extent upon Teaching Assistantships for funding, and preference for the department TAships is given to available Sociology graduate students, at least into their fifth year. Continuing students apply in spring for the following year's TAships and the first set of TA offers are usually made in early summer.

During the TA application process, students also have some opportunities to apply for available TAships in other departments.

The current TA salary is \$5546 per quarter. Additionally, in any quarter that a student TA's, the majority of fees is paid directly on the student's behalf. Fees for 09-10 are about \$4194 for residents per quarter (about \$4308 per quarter for non-residents) and the TA fee offset leaves a balance of approximately \$324 that the student must pay. Note: The TA fee offset does not reduce tuition, so non-resident students must still pay tuition for the quarter unless they have a tuition fellowship.)

Q. Is there TA Training?

Yes. A two-day training is mandatory for all new Sociology graduate students, and is typically offered a few days before fall quarter begins. The TA Trainer is a Sociology graduate student who has advanced to candidacy and who has excellent teaching evaluations. The trainer continues to be available for help or advice during the remainder of the year.

Q. How does residency affect my status?

It is very important to fully answer the questions on the application about residency. California residents pay in-state fees. U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are not California residents owe out-of-state fees AND tuition. They may be reclassified as residents by the second year at which point they will have the lower resident fees and no tuition.

Some applicants are not residents, but may be exempt from tuition for other reasons. For more information about residency, see the Registrar's web site: <http://reg.ucsc.edu/students/residency.htm>. Full answers will help the selection committee make an educated guess about whether a non-resident might be eligible for an exemption from tuition (useful in terms of formulating the offer). However, an official determination of residency status is not processed unless an applicant is actually admitted.

Tuition fellowships may be part of the offer made to non-residents, but these are not guaranteed.

Foreign students have both non-resident fees AND tuition until they advance to candidacy. Tuition does not reduce to zero in the second year as it does for U.S. citizens or permanent residents who file for reclassification. After advancement, foreign students must still pay non-resident fees, but they are exempt from tuition for three years.

Q. Do I have to apply separately for funding?

No. First year funding is decided by the department selection committee and is shown in the offer sent from Graduate Admissions. Your answers to Questions 1 and 2 of the application's Preliminary Questions will populate the application with the pages that have funding questions. All applicants will be considered for department funding and campus fellowships for which they may be eligible if they answer these questions. Decisions are made by the selection committee and are based on merit.

Q. Can the application fee be waived?

A few applicants are eligible for a waiver of the application fee based upon either financial hardship or participation in a qualifying program. Pay careful attention to Question 5 of the application's Preliminary Questions for details and further instructions. International students are not eligible for fee waivers. The department does not authorize waivers; these are handled by Admissions.

Q. May I visit the department before applying?

It is possible to visit the campus and department before applying. However, a visit does not increase an applicant's chance of admission. The department does plan a group visit each year for all New Admits. Activities during this group visit usually provide enough information to allow potential students to make an informed decision about accepting their offer.

You may visit the Graduate Program Coordinator (Ann McCurdy) without an appointment during regular office hours, Monday to Friday, 8am-noon and 1-5pm. Or email her at 'amccurdy@ucsc.edu'. The majority of questions can usually be handled via email.

If you wish to meet with particular faculty, it is best to correspond first by email. You may be able to discuss their research interests and yours via email. Not all faculty respond to these queries, but many do. A few faculty prefer to meet applicants only after they are admitted. If the faculty member agrees to a meeting after email correspondence, it is a good idea to confirm the appointment a few days prior to your visit. Faculty contact information can be found at: <http://sociology.ucsc.edu/faculty/>. Office hours for fall quarter are posted during the first few weeks of the quarter.

Many graduate students will respond to inquiries from potential applicants. You may find their contact information on the graduate student web page: http://sociology.ucsc.edu/graduate_students/.

Q. Is there a Visit Day scheduled for newly admitted students?

All applicants chosen for admission are invited to attend a New Admit Visit before the April 15 deadline for acceptance. Typically this has been organized as a one- or two-day event during which new admits have the opportunity to meet others who may be in their cohort and to socialize with faculty and current graduate students. Visitors will meet with the Graduate Director and with potential faculty advisors. Visits routinely include a tour of the campus and other activities applicants might find useful when finalizing their decision, such as informal tours of the Santa Cruz area or of graduate student housing.

This visit is held on regular weekdays (often the first week of spring quarter). While we encourage attendance from as many new admits as possible, we realize that some people will have work, school, or

family conflicts. The best time for admitted students to visit is on Visit Day, but if you are unable to do so, the department may be able to accommodate your visit at a separate time, if you give advance notice.

Some travel reimbursement is allowed and details are discussed prior to the visit.

Q. I am an international student who would like to pursue graduate studies in the Sociology Department on a short-term basis. What are my options?

Under the EAP Reciprocity program, the option occasionally exists for an international post-baccalaureate student to pursue graduate studies as a 'non-degree' student for a period up to, but not exceeding, one academic year. Applicants must complete the same online application and provide the same materials required of PhD applicants, including recent GRE and TOEFL (if applicable) scores. Incomplete applications are not considered. The admissions period (including deadline) is the same as for regular applicants.

Admittance as a reciprocity student is not guaranteed, nor are students accepted every year for non-degree studies. Departments reserve the right to select students for their programs, and cannot always accommodate the EAP non-degree applicants who apply. Before applying, you should contact faculty in the department with whom you may want to work. This contact will not guarantee acceptance but can give an indication of:

- the match of your study objectives to the academic focus of the department
- the department's ability to host a non-degree student (space may be an issue) and
- the availability of faculty in your area of study during the time you plan to study at UC.

EAP reciprocity students are not eligible for financial aid or fellowships.

Q. I was not accepted last year, but would like to re-apply for the coming year. Can you tell me how I can make my application stronger.

The department does not provide this type of information. The selection committee carefully reviews all applicant files and there are always more qualified applicants that the department can admit. Only the most highly qualified applicants with the best 'fit' to the department are admitted each year. The best advice is probably that you review your statement of purpose and personal history statement and make a compelling case about why you're applying to this PhD program. Because applicants are reviewed relative to rest of applicants in the pool, it is possible that even a slightly different pool in a subsequent year can make a difference in your chances.

Q. I have further questions about the program. Who should I contact?

For routine questions about the admissions process, deadlines, funding, TAing, program requirements, the campus, etc., please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator Ann McCarty (amccardy@ucsc.edu). She is also the primary contact for the Visit Day and will handle most of the coordination, including reimbursements. Ann can also answer general questions about which faculty to contact about your research interests.

For a more thorough discussion about how your research interests overlap the expertise of the faculty, you may want to email the Graduate Director or individual faculty. However, even in these instances, it can be a good idea to send these queries through the Graduate Program Coordinator for referral, or copy the coordinator on some of this correspondence.