

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

Sociology Graduate Program

Sociology offers a distinct perspective on understanding the social world. Our discipline emphasizes how institutions and structural forces outside the individual—the family, organizations, politics, economics, culture—shape individual and group behavior, opportunities, and histories. As a major teaching and research unit, we seek to ensure that the knowledge imparted to our students is current and that they learn the skills of critical inquiry, analytical evaluation, and historical sensibilities.

Admission to Graduate Studies

Admission Requirements

- All applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the Admission to Graduate Study (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/admission-to-graduate-study/>) policy.
- Bachelor's degree: A copy of official transcripts showing proof of a bachelor's degree (and any post-bachelor's coursework or degrees) from a regionally accredited institution, or a foreign university with equivalent bachelor's degree requirements is required.
- English proficiency: Proof of English proficiency (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/english-requirements/>) for non-native or non-native-like English speakers is required. There are two bands of English proficiency, including Admission and Full proficiency. For applicants to online programs, Full proficiency is required.

Graduate Admission

The Department of Sociology at the University of Kansas offers a Ph.D. program in sociology. Upon admission, all students are enrolled as Ph.D. students, but must complete all requirements for the M.A. degree during their progress toward the Ph.D. degree. A terminal M.A. option is available for students who decide not to complete a Ph.D.

To be considered for admission, applicants must have completed 15 credit hours in sociology, including a course in sociological theory, and a course in statistics.

Applications also must include:

- A statement of academic interests and professional goals
- 3 recommendation rating forms and letters from individuals who can evaluate the applicant's academic performance
- 1 complete set of transcripts from all colleges and universities attended
- A current résumé/curriculum vitae
- A writing sample (senior or master's thesis preferred)
- A nonrefundable application fee
- GRE scores are **optional** for applicants for Fall 2025 admission.

The applicant's record should indicate considerable academic promise and a high level of motivation.

Submit your graduate application online (<https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply/>). Most application materials can be attached to the online application.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

For the Ph.D., students must complete both M.A. and Ph.D. coursework requirements. All courses must be selected in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

Coursework

The following courses are required for all students in the Sociology Ph.D. program. Students who complete the thesis-option M.A. in Sociology along the way can count the methods, theory, and elective courses completed during the M.A. toward these requirements:

Code	Title	Hours
Required Courses		
SOC 810	Sociological Inquiry	3
SOC 995	Professionalization Proseminar	3
Theory		
SOC 802	Classical Social Theory	3
SOC 902	Contemporary Social Theory	3
SOC 900	Seminar on Special Topics in Theory: _____	3
Methods		
SOC 812	Analytic Methods in Sociology	3
An additional 6 course chosen from the following		6
SOC 707	Seminar in Historical Sociology	
SOC 910	Seminar on Special Topics in Methods: _____	
Elective Seminars		24
SOC 722	Sociology of Gender	
SOC 760	Social Inequality	
SOC 767	Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Gerontology and Aging	
SOC 780	Advanced Topics in Sociology: _____	
SOC 820	Political Sociology	
SOC 824	Health and Social Behavior	
SOC 873	International Political Economy	
SOC 920	Seminar on Special Topics in Social Organizations: _____	
Total Hours		48

*Individual Doctoral Readings courses (SOC 991) may not be used to meet these requirements except by approved petition.

Research Skills & Responsible Scholarship

Students must complete the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship (RSRS) requirement. The university requires that every doctoral student have training in responsible scholarship and research skills pertinent to the field of research and appropriate to the doctoral level. These requirements must be completed by the end of the semester the student takes the oral comprehensive exam. Doctoral students in sociology meet this requirement by completion of the following courses: SOC 810, SOC 812, SOC 910. Additional information about this requirement can be found in the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/research-skills-responsible-scholarship/>) policy.

Professional Portfolios & Research Topics of Focus

Students must compile portfolios of their professional work successfully demonstrating command of 2 research topics of focus within sociology and preparation to undertake dissertation research. Each portfolio must contain written materials from at least two courses selected from the theory, methods and electives listed in #1 above; directly relevant to the topic selected. Portfolios are reviewed by a three-member faculty committee, chosen by the student in consultation with their faculty advisor. The committee has discretion in determining if a particular course may count toward the student's chosen topic.

Oral Comprehensive Exam & Dissertation Proposal Defense

Students must pass an oral comprehensive examination and defense of dissertation proposal, within the first 6 semesters post-M.A. degree. The dissertation proposal is an independent piece of research leading to a dissertation that contributes to sociological knowledge. The student's doctoral committee determines the exact format of the dissertation proposal. In the proposal, the student is expected to review the state of the knowledge pertinent to the topic, describe the research problem, and explain the methods to be employed in the investigation. The oral comprehensive examination and dissertation proposal defense occur at the same time and are administered in a closed session. The focus of the oral comprehensive examination will be on the feasibility and quality of the proposed research as well as the student's understanding of the 2 portfolios described in #3 above. The dissertation committee must comply with Graduate Studies' Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-student-oral-exam-committee-composition/>) policy. A maximum of 7 members are allowed. The outcome may be graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Sociology does not utilize the Honors designation for oral comprehensive examinations. The exam may be taken twice; a second failure on the examination requires that the committee chair report this fact to the Graduate Studies Committee to deliberate on the possible dismissal of the student from the program.

Doctoral Candidacy

Upon passing the oral comprehensive examination, the student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D. degree and is approved to proceed with their dissertation research and project. Starting the semester following successful completion of the oral comprehensive exam, students must enroll in accordance with the Office of Graduate Studies' Doctoral Candidacy Policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-candidacy/>). This enrollment includes, but is not limited to, at least 1 dissertation hour every semester until graduation. See the Doctoral Candidacy policy for more information about this University level requirement.

Dissertation

Students must complete a dissertation and pass a final, oral examination on the dissertation. The dissertation must demonstrate the development, execution, and results of original research. The doctoral dissertation is a coherent, logically organized, scholarly document, and must comply with the Office of Graduate Studies' Doctoral Dissertation policy (<https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-dissertation/>). The final exam is open to the public. The outcome may be graded as Honors, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory. If a grade of "Unsatisfactory" is reported, the candidate may be allowed to repeat the examination a second time. Failure on the

second attempt at the final oral examination will result in the termination of the student from the graduate program.

Handbook for Graduate Students

A more detailed account of advising procedures, degree requirements, and program options is set forth in the department's *Manual of Graduate Study in Sociology*, which is available on the department's website (<https://sociology.ku.edu/curriculum/>).

University Policies and Requirements

A list of all policies of the Office of Graduate Studies is available online in the Policy Library (<https://policy.ku.edu/office/Graduate-Studies/>).

At the completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Select significant research questions grounded in current literature/theories.
- Demonstrate advanced-level understanding of relevant sociological literature and theories in the sub-field.
- Apply rigorous research methods of the discipline.
- Produce meaningful empirical contributions to the fields.
- Communicate effectively in academic writing.