



Brandeis
UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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1. Introduction

This handbook is a guide for students pursuing graduate degrees in Sociology at Brandeis University. It contains essential information on the PhD (including the joint doctorate with the Heller School) and MA programs (in Sociology and in Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies).

Please note that the [University Bulletin](#) is a legal document governing all academic regulations. If anything in the Sociology Department Handbook contradicts what is in the Bulletin, the Bulletin takes precedence. In addition, please note that in the event of a public health emergency or other major event, the procedures listed in this handbook may change.

The handbook first describes graduate student advising and the Sociology Graduate Committee where graduate policies are made, monitored, and implemented. The handbook next presents rules and courses of study for completing degree work in Sociology. It then reviews Departmental and Graduate School policies on evaluating students, transferring credit, incomplete courses, and leaves of absence. Finally, it presents resources and facilities available to graduate students, University policies regarding financial aid and funding opportunities, and Brandeis policies and resources pertaining to students with disabilities. For additional resources and information you can go to the graduate sections of the [Brandeis Department of Sociology](#) web page and the shared Sociology Graduate Student Latte site to which all graduate students and faculty in the Department are subscribed.

Links to forms and web pages are in the PDF version of this handbook, available at <https://www.brandeis.edu/sociology/graduate/handbook/index.html>.

We hope that you will use the handbook well. The Chair and Members of the Graduate Committee and the Departmental staff are available to answer questions.

2. People and Committees

Advising

At the beginning of an MA or PhD student's first semester in residence, the student will be assigned a faculty advisor, who will be responsible for guiding the student. At the end of a PhD student's first year, the student must formally select an advisor. Students should notify the Director of Graduate Studies of their choice. At the time when the student chooses a chair for the Qualifying Portfolio and Defense, that faculty member becomes the student's advisor. The same applies at the point of choosing a Dissertation Committee chair.

Director of Graduate Studies

For the 2025-26 academic year, the Sociology Department's Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is Michael Strand. The DGS is the faculty member responsible for chairing the Graduate Committee and supervising the implementation of graduate policies.

Graduate Administrator

The Senior Graduate Affairs and Guidance Administrator for the Sociology graduate program is Lauren Jordahl.

The Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee is comprised of appointed members of the Sociology Department faculty, plus the Graduate Affairs Representative (GAR), one of the two [Graduate Department Representatives \(GDRs\)](#). The Graduate Committee deals with policy issues affecting graduate students, and reviews the programs of individual students. The GAR is not involved in any decisions relating to individual graduate students.

All matters of departmental graduate student policy come before the Graduate Committee prior to any final decision by the Department faculty as a whole. Any faculty member or graduate student may bring a problem or suggestion concerning policy to the Graduate Committee. When a proposal or recommendation is submitted to the faculty by the Graduate Committee, it will be discussed by the faculty as soon as possible. Student members of the committee may request to attend, or may be invited to attend, discussion by the faculty at large of issues or proposals brought to the faculty by the Graduate Committee.

The Department itself or its subcommittees retain the following powers:

- Admission to the department
- Approval of transfer credit
- Approval of the faculty composition of QPD committees
- Approval of dissertation prospectuses
- Approval of dissertation review committees
- Conduct of oral examinations on dissertations
- Approval of MA paper committees
- Individual student programs

The Graduate Committee also rules on petitions from individual students. Students should submit a “Petition to the Graduate Committee” with all petition requests. The petition is an [online form](#) (to access this form, one must be signed in to one’s Brandeis account), which can be found on the Brandeis Department of Sociology Graduate Programs web page. The Graduate Committee’s approval is necessary in the following matters:

- Student petition to change advisors
- Student petition to transfer academic credit from another university
- Student petition to establish or change the QPD Committee
- Student petition to establish or change the Dissertation Prospectus Committee and Dissertation Review Committee (including adding the outside reader)
- Student petition to receive graduate credit for an undergraduate course

Petitions must be submitted at least 48 hours before a scheduled Graduate Committee meeting. All additional supporting materials should be submitted electronically to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Administrator with a paper copy made available to the Director of Graduate Studies upon request.

Other Departmental Bodies

In addition to the Graduate Committee, the following standing Sociology Department bodies each have a graduate student representative:

- The Department faculty meetings
- The Colloquium Committee

Other temporary committees may also be established with graduate student representation, such as search committees. Please see [here](#) for more information about graduate student representation.

3. The PhD in Sociology

The PhD in Sociology is a program designed to last six years. Funding is guaranteed for five years. The program consists of three years of course work and another semester for accreditation (Qualifying Portfolio and Defense) prior to the dissertation. The minimum in-person residence for the PhD is three years. Apprenticeship in teaching is an integral part of the program and funded doctoral students normally serve as Teaching Assistants (TAs). There is no foreign language requirement for the PhD.

A student's initial program of study is arranged in consultation with the graduate student's advisor. Consideration will be given to graduate work done elsewhere, but formal transfer credit is assigned only after the successful completion of the first two semesters of study. More information about requesting transfer credit is available [here](#).

Courses

Students entering the PhD program in sociology are expected to complete the following course requirements, totaling 48 credits. We expect the majority of the following to be completed in the first two years, with students taking 2-3 courses per semester in addition to the pro-seminar.

- Four semesters of the program's half-credit Thinking Like a Sociologist pro-seminar (SOC 300a) (formerly called Approaches to Sociological Research)
- Ten additional full-credit courses
 - Five formal graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) taken in the Brandeis Sociology Department:
 - One course in social theory (SOC 200a or SOC 204a)
 - One course in research methods (SOC 203b or another graduate seminar in research methods)
 - Three additional graduate seminars
 - Two additional courses offered by the Brandeis Sociology Department, either as graduate seminars or directed readings (SOC 230a/b).
 - The three remaining courses can be taken as the student chooses, including graduate courses in other departments or at other Boston-area universities or undergraduate courses for graduate credit, in consultation with the student's advisor.

Directed Readings

When formal graduate seminars on a topic are not offered, students may choose to pursue a directed reading course (Soc 230a/b) with a faculty member. The faculty member and the student agree on a reading list, a schedule of meetings, and a set of assignments (for example, a series of memos or a final paper.) Faculty members may or may not be available to supervise directed readings, and students are encouraged to approach faculty members early in the previous semester to explore the possibility. Students may opt to pursue a directed reading as part of their [preparation for the QPD](#) in the third year.

Undergraduate Courses for Graduate Credit

Occasionally, if there is a strong fit with the student's research interests, a PhD student may choose to take an undergraduate course (numbered 100-199). For an undergraduate course to count for graduate credit, the student must meet with the course instructor early on in order to formulate a course enhancement plan. This plan will include additional readings and assignments, and/or written work of at least 20 pages. Once the student has met with the course instructor, the student must submit a petition requesting that the course count as a graduate level

course. The Graduate Committee will review the petition and make a determination. This will all take place either prior to the first class, or by the end of the first week of class. If at all possible, students should work with their advisors to determine graduate-level alternatives before pursuing this option.

Course Substitutions

Of the five required formal graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) that must be taken in the Brandeis Sociology Department, a minimum of four must be graduate seminars offered as formal seminars by the Sociology Department at Brandeis. One of the five may be transferred in, based on Master's level coursework completed before matriculating at Brandeis, or substituted with courses offered outside the Sociology department, with the approval of the Graduate Committee. In considering substitutions, the Graduate Committee will discuss whether or not it is possible for the student to meet their pedagogical needs within the Sociology Department's current graduate offerings. In no case may a student complete fewer than four graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) offered by the Sociology Department at Brandeis and receive a Brandeis PhD. More information about transfer credit is available [here](#).

Pro-Seminar

The Thinking Like a Sociologist pro-seminar (SOC 300a, formerly called Approaches to Sociological Research) is a two-credit course designed to help students transition from being consumers to producers of sociological knowledge and be exposed to the professional aspects of being a sociologist with the support of peers and faculty. It includes some joint sessions across the social sciences.

Publishable Paper

As they near the end of coursework, students will write a single-authored publishable research paper, and submit it to a peer-reviewed academic journal. The paper should be based on original empirical research and/or theoretical development, and be of professional quality and length. Students will choose two faculty members of the Sociology Department, one of whom is designated as chair, to guide and review the project. Both faculty readers must approve the completed paper. This requirement can be completed any time before the end of the student's eighth semester in the program. The paper need not be accepted for publication in order for the requirement to be met. Third-year students will have the option of presenting works in progress once each semester to the Thinking Like a Sociologist pro-seminar (SOC 300a, formerly called Approaches to Sociological Research) to discuss and gather feedback on their publishable papers.

Qualifying Portfolio and Defense (QPD)

The Qualifying Portfolio and Defense (QPD) is the Brandeis Sociology Department's equivalent of qualifying/comprehensive examinations. The system encourages doctoral students to design their own programs of study, supervised by two different Brandeis Sociology Department faculty members. The purposes of the QPD system are:

- To guide students toward demonstrated competence in two different areas in sociology, as defined by the American Sociological Association (ASA) (see Appendix 4). These areas should not have substantial overlap with one another.
- To certify (accredit) student competence, as determined during a defense meeting of the student and both committee members.

- To encourage students to develop ideas for the dissertation. Successful completion of the QPD process precedes the drafting and defense of a dissertation proposal.

Step 1: Preparing for the QPD

QPD work often builds upon courses that students have taken in the department, so students might consider potential QPD areas as they make decisions about courses in their first years of the program. Once students have identified a potential qualifying area, they are encouraged to take related courses (if they have not done so already). If related courses are not available, students may take one or more independent reading courses to gain an introduction to or conduct more focused study in the area of interest. Readings done for a regular or directed reading course frequently become part of the QPD reading list. When putting together a reading list, students are encouraged to consult subject area lists available on the [Sociology Graduate Student Resources](#) in Moodle Communities, syllabi from Brandeis or other universities, and other sources.

Step 2: Formation of the QPD Committee

Forming a QPD Committee is the student's responsibility. The student identifies two areas of study, and for each one, asks a Sociology Department faculty member to supervise it. Students should approach those faculty members whom students believe can best advance their work in a given area. The possibility of serving on a student's QPD Committee can be broached by visiting a faculty member during office hours and having a conversation about the student's academic interests and prior work in the area. Once a faculty member agrees to be on the Committee, the student and Committee member should negotiate a timeline for completion of the QPD portfolio. The standard components of the QPD portfolio are listed below.

A student may form a QPD Committee at any time before April 1 of the second year of residency. By then, two areas must be defined, and two corresponding faculty members must have agreed to serve. The student must designate one as chair, who then becomes the student's principal advisor. In order to define these areas and designate the chair, the student submits a petition to the Graduate Committee, which lists the names of designated faculty members and areas of study for approval. With this petition, the chair of the QPD Committee becomes the student's formal advisor. Thereafter, both students and faculty members may request justifiable changes in the composition of the QPD Committee by written petition to the Graduate Committee. That petition must be approved by the Graduate Committee before a Qualifying Defense meeting can be scheduled.

Step 3: QPD Completion and Defense

In each of two QPD areas, students choose among the following QPD completion options: portfolio, an oral exam, or a take-home written exam. Regardless of their choice, there will be 90 minute QPD Defense with both supervising faculty members present.

For students in the Sociology PhD program and the Joint Heller/Sociology PhD program,, the deadline for QPD completion will now be by May 15 of their third year.

Students from either program should pick which completion option (oral exam, take-home written exam, portfolio) will apply to each of their QPD areas by December 1 of their third year. They can pick the same

option for both QPD areas (e.g. two oral exams) or they can have different completion options for each QPD area (e.g. one portfolio and one take-home written exam).

Supervising faculty can decide whether the student will do either an oral exam or a take-home written exam by December 1 if portfolio completion appears, in their estimation, to be unlikely by the May 15 deadline. This is for the purpose of expediting completion of the QPD.

QPD completion options

a – Portfolio

Will include reading list (developed with the supervising faculty member), syllabus, and a literature review.

The student will confer with the supervising faculty about the scope, topic and form of their literature review.

Will include a 45 minute portfolio discussion at the QPD Defense in the candidate's field with questions about their portfolio materials from supervising faculty, after which time the supervising faculty will determine if the student's portfolio passes.

b - Oral exam

Will include reading list (developed with the supervising faculty member)

Will include a syllabus

Will include a 45 minute oral exam with the supervising faculty member at the QPD Defense.

Students will submit 5 questions to supervising faculty, of which the faculty member will pick 2. The faculty member will also add one question of their own. Students will have a maximum of 15 minutes to answer each question during the QPD Defense, after which time the supervising faculty will determine if the student's oral exam passes.

c - Take-home written exam

Will include reading list (developed with the supervising faculty member)

Will include a syllabus

Will include a three-day (72-hour) work period to answer questions at home from supervising faculty in a written document. The student should email their written answers to the supervising faculty at the end of the 72-hour period. Barring an emergency during the 72-hour period, if students are late submitting their answers to the supervising faculty member, they will fail the take-home written exam.

Students will submit five questions to the supervising faculty, of which the faculty member will pick two. The faculty member will also add one question of their own for a total of three questions.

Students should complete their answers to these questions in no more than 20 total double-spaced pages (inclusive of answers to all three questions), using no smaller than 11-point font & 1-inch margins. Works cited/references list do not count toward the total number of pages.

At the QPD Defense, the supervising faculty will have 45 minutes to discuss written answers with the student, asking questions and for further elaborations, after which time the supervising faculty will determine whether the student's take-home written exam passes.

The QPD Defense

The QPD Defense will no longer include an introduction by the student to their two QPD areas. The 90 minutes will be allotted in the above ways depending on the student's two QPD completion options.

At the QPD Defense, both supervising faculty members will, after the 90 minute period, confer in private about whether the student passes depending on the supervising faculty's assessment of the quality of their QPD completion option in each of the student's two areas.

Each area in the student's QPD will have three possible grades: Pass, No Pass, or Conditional Pass. For a Conditional Pass, the following will apply for each QPD completion option. Oral exam: an additional question will be asked of the student after the exam period has elapsed. Take-home exam: the student will be granted a 48-hour period to correct written answers that in the supervising faculty's judgment are not sufficient to pass. Portfolio: the student will be granted a one-week period to make revisions to the portions of their portfolio materials that the supervising faculty finds insufficient to pass.

Should a student receive a No Pass for a given completion option, they cannot change that option for a new one (e.g. failing an oral exam and shifting to a take-home written exam). They must retake the exam in the original completion option. Students must complete the retake exam within six months of the original exam date. If students fail the exam for one field, but pass their second field, they should only retake the exam in the field they did not pass.

Please note: Students in the joint PhD in Social Policy and Sociology program are subject to slightly different rules, as reviewed [here](#).

Dissertation and Defense

After accreditation by a student's Qualifying Portfolio and Defense Committee, three formal steps remain: (1) approval of the dissertation prospectus, (2) approval of the dissertation, and (3) successful defense of the dissertation.

Step 1: Approval of the Dissertation Prospectus and Advancement to Candidacy

Following the Qualifying Portfolio Defense meeting and by October 1 in the student's fourth year, a Dissertation Prospectus Committee must be approved by the Graduate Committee and the dissertation prospectus must be completed and approved. The Dissertation Prospectus Committee guides the student in preparing the prospectus. The committee should include two members of the Sociology Department faculty, one designated by the student as chair, who becomes the student's official advisor. Each student is responsible for forming a Dissertation Prospectus Committee--that is, securing agreement from each member and then

petitioning the Graduate Committee for approval. The Dissertation Prospectus Committee then determines when the prospectus is ready to be defended.

The dissertation prospectus elaborates a student's dissertation topic and explains the research the student plans to undertake. It should clearly state the research question, situate this question in a review of relevant literature, and describe the methods that will be used to answer the question. The prospectus should also provide a tentative timeline for completing the project. It should be approximately 20 pages, including references. If the proposed research involves data collection with human subjects, the student must also seek approval from the Brandeis Human Research Protection Program by the date of the scheduled defense. Examples of dissertation proposals are available on the shared Graduate Student Latte site.

When the Committee determines that the proposal is ready, a dissertation prospectus defense is scheduled. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the Sociology Department. The proposal defense meeting typically begins with the student giving a short (10 minute) presentation on the student's work before answering questions from the faculty. After the defense, the Dissertation Prospectus Committee meets in private to decide on one of three grades - No Pass, Conditional Pass (meaning that specified further work is needed), or Pass. This grade will be noted on the Dissertation Prospectus Defense Report (available on the shared Latte site), which must be signed by all Committee members and deposited with the department Graduate Administrator. At this point, the student has advanced to candidacy.

Step 2: Approval of the Dissertation

After approval of the prospectus, the Dissertation Prospectus Committee automatically becomes the student's Dissertation Committee with the chair as the student's official advisor. Thereafter, the student may petition the Graduate Committee to change the membership of the Dissertation Committee, although approval is not usually granted when the dissertation is close to completion. Between approval of the prospectus and submission of a completed dissertation, the official link between the Department and student will be the chair of the Dissertation Committee, who serves as the student's dissertation advisor and provides periodic reports of progress to the Graduate Committee in addition to the student's annual end of year evaluation.

Final composition of the Dissertation Committee must include at least three faculty members: two members of the Sociology Department faculty and an outside reader, chosen with the advice of the Dissertation Committee members, from another department or from outside the university. Graduate Committee approval must be secured before a defense can be scheduled, at least one month before the dissertation defense. The outside reader should hold a PhD, though exceptions may be possible according to the Graduate School requirements outlined [here](#). At least two weeks before the dissertation defense, the student must submit to the Graduate School the [Dissertation Defense Calendar Submission form](#).

The Dissertation Committee, including the outside reader, has sole responsibility for approving the dissertation. Committee members will have one month to read a complete draft, comment on it, and require revisions. Once all Committee members agree that the dissertation is ready to defend, the candidate should schedule the dissertation defense. The defense must be scheduled with at least two weeks' notice at a time all committee members can attend.

Step 3: Defense of the Dissertation

At least two weeks before the defense, a copy of the dissertation must be made available for review by members of the faculty. This can be done either by placing a print copy in the Sociology Department office, or by placing an electronic copy on the shared Latte site. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the Sociology Department. The student should issue a request to the Sociology Department Administrator to make this announcement at least one week prior to when the announcement is to be distributed, and at this time should also inform the Department Administrator whether the dissertation will be made available in print or electronic form.

The dissertation defense must include all members of the Dissertation Committee, including the outside reader. Until further notice, the Dissertation Committee, in consultation with the student, can determine if the mode of the defense will be in-person, remote, or hybrid. If the outside reader is not able to be physically present for in-person defenses, university rules allow the outside reader to be included by videoconference (note that conference calls by telephone are not acceptable). The chair of the Committee chairs the defense, which normally involves a presentation by the candidate outlining the research process and summarizing findings followed by questions posed first by Committee members and then by others present. After the defense, the Committee meets in private to decide whether the dissertation is or is not acceptable and what revisions, if any, will be required for final acceptance.

Before the defense, the student must prepare forms for submission to the Graduate School, in its prescribed format. The student then has the forms signed by members of the Committee and submits them to the Registrar's Office and the Graduate School. All of these forms are available on the shared Latte page and/or at the web addresses listed below. When the dissertation is complete, with all revisions approved, the candidate must submit the final copy to the Graduate School, in accordance with deadlines posted in the academic calendar. Students in the final stages of preparation should also obtain an application for the PhD degree from the Graduate School and inform themselves of the final dates by which all requirements must be completed. Students should also obtain [detailed instructions](#) for the final format of the dissertation from the Graduate School.

Information on Filing the Dissertation (see also Appendix 3: PhD Degree Checklist)

[Completing Your Program](#) - Wrapping Up at Brandeis and Officially Graduating
[Key Degree Dates for Graduate Students](#)
[Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#)

1. Apply to graduate with the online [Graduate Degree Application Form](#)

Applications will NOT be accepted after the deadlines listed here. Once a deadline has passed the student will need to make an application for the next application period. A new application form is necessary if the student does not complete all requirements for the degree by the dates listed.

2. Complete [Dissertation Defense Calendar Submission Form](#) Two Weeks before your Defense

Dissertation Defense Deadlines:

3. Forms for your Dissertation Defense

Bring your [Dissertation Defense Form](#) to your defense.

Student Instructions:

- The Dissertation Defense form should be signed by your Committee at the defense and returned to the Registrar's Office and GSAS.
- The student makes one copy for personal records and deposits one copy with the Sociology Department Administrator for department records.
- An Approval Page should be included in the prefatory pages of the final, ready-for-publication dissertation. The sample template of the Approval Page is [here](#).

If revisions are requested, complete the [Report on PhD Revisions](#) form.

Please note: minor revisions require only the signature of the Committee chair; substantive revisions require the signature of each Committee member.

Submit the Revisions form after your Committee has accepted the revised dissertation.

- Email the Revisions form to: Lauren Jordahl (ljordahl@brandeis.edu), Taylor Seidel in the Registrar's Office (tseidel@brandeis.edu), Abigail Arnold in GSAS (aarnold26@brandeis.edu)
- Keep a copy for your records.

4. Submit your dissertation

For complete guidelines on formatting and submission, see the GSAS [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#). Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with this information at an early stage. Dissertations must conform to formatting requirements in order to be accepted by the university.

Students must electronically deposit their dissertation to ProQuest ETD. For instructions on how to do this, visit the [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#).

Students have the option to register copyright of the dissertation, either through ProQuest or by filing directly with the U.S. Copyright Office. There are also two publishing options: (a) traditional publishing, with restrictions and/or an embargo on dissertation access; (b) open access publishing, with no restrictions to researchers (the author must pay an additional fee for Open Access). For additional information on copyright and publishing options, visit the [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#) as well as the following information about graduation and program completion:

[Completing Your Program](#) - Wrapping Up at Brandeis and Officially Graduating
[Key Degree Dates for Graduate Students](#)
[Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#)

5. Final Paperwork. Please complete the GSAS Exit Survey and Survey of Earned Doctorates by your Dissertation Submission Deadline

Once you have defended your dissertation, the Office of Institutional Research will contact you with more information about completing these surveys.

Required Teaching

Doctoral students in Sociology receiving stipends from the Department are required to serve regularly as Teaching Assistants during their first four years.

For all Sociology PhD students:

- Students will not TA in the first semester in the program.
- Students will TA during their next 6 semesters in the program (up through the 7th semester.)
- Students may do an optional internship during their 8th semester.
- No teaching is required in the 8th, 9th, or 10th semesters.

Note also that, in all cases, no more than one semester of UWS instruction can count toward the required 6 semesters of departmental TA work. Any student who intends to teach in the UWS program in lieu of a departmental TA assignment should submit a petition prior to the end of classes during the previous semester. The Graduate Committee will attempt to meet these requests but cannot guarantee that they will be met.

Optional Internship Semester

During the semester in which they are not acting as a TA (normally in semester 8, as described above), students may choose to work at an internship with an organization or office outside of the Sociology Department. The 8th, 9th and 10th semesters are intended to be free from teaching to enable students to work on their dissertations and professional development.

The internship can be a good option for students who want to explore work in non-academic settings, gain new skills that complement those acquired through their academic studies, and/or expand networks in areas of interest. The internship can take place either off-campus or with an organization or office at Brandeis. It should involve a commitment of approximately 10 hours a week throughout the semester. During the semester, students will enroll in SOC 392a / Graduate Internship.

In order to secure a meaningful internship, students should begin thinking about the kind of placement they desire in the second semester of their third year. This involves considering the type of organization students would like experience in, the kinds of skills they would like to acquire, and the kinds of skills they can offer to a potential internship. Students are encouraged to discuss their interests in Proseminar and with individual faculty members as well as GSAS staff involved in professional development. Students should also seek guidance on the best ways to approach a potential internship site. By the first Wednesday in November of the fourth year in the PhD program, students should submit a proposal to the Graduate Committee. This proposal should outline the internship placement, the name and contact information of the person who will be supervising the internship, the projects the student will be working on, and the goals of the internship.

Before the internship begins, the student should discuss with the internship supervisor details about the internship. These include the nature of the project the student will be working on, the learning outcomes for the student, the deliverables the student will produce, a timeline and deadlines for the project, and an agreement on how often the student will meet with the supervisor. Following this conversation, the student should write up notes on what was agreed to, and send it to the supervisor for confirmation.

Over the course of the internship semester, the student will attend the PhD Proseminar (SOC 300a) at least four times. This will provide students with an opportunity to reflect on and discuss their internship with other students and Proseminar faculty. At the end of the internship semester, students will submit to the Graduate

Committee a two-page report on what was accomplished during this semester, including successes and challenges encountered.

In addition to consulting faculty, students may also take advantage of the [GSAS Professional Development Opportunities](#).

RAship Opportunities

The sociology department does not require any research assistantships during the course of the PhD. However, many students benefit from research assistantships with faculty members as a way of gaining experience with data collection and analysis, professional writing, collaboration, and publishing. RAships with faculty members are paid hourly, and the faculty member supervising the RAship is responsible for securing funding for RAship pay through internal or external research funds. Students are encouraged to talk to faculty members with whom they share interests about potential research collaborations, and faculty will, whenever possible, share available research assistantship opportunities with all PhD students.

4. The Joint PhD in Sociology and Social Policy

The PhD in Social Policy and Sociology is a joint degree of the Department of Sociology and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. It is available to students only after completion of at least one year of graduate study in either the Heller School or the Department of Sociology's PhD program. To apply, students should submit their application by April 1. Applications require a letter of support from the Director of the home department. If the student is accepted by the complementary department (admission is not guaranteed), their home school remains the school in which they began their graduate study, and financial and fellowship packages are determined accordingly. There is a three-year in-person residency for the joint degree. The following procedures apply to all students in the joint program.

Courses

Students pursuing this joint degree are required to take a total of 17 courses, 8 in Sociology and 9 in Heller, plus Thinking Like a Sociologist in Sociology and the Doctoral Seminar in Heller, totaling 76 credits, with requirements as follows:

Heller Courses

1. HS 508a Theory of Social Policy and Change
2. HS 401b Research Methods
3. HS 510a Applied Design and Analysis
4. HS 404b Stats/Regression Analysis (including applications lab)
5. HS 403b Qualitative Research
6. Other Heller concentration or methods courses
7. Other Heller concentration or methods courses
8. Other Heller concentration or methods courses
9. Other Heller concentration or methods courses
10. Doctoral Seminar (non-credit) (4 semesters from entry into the Joint PhD program)

Sociology Courses

- Students must participate in SOC 300a, Thinking Like a Sociologist (formerly called Approaches to Sociological Research), during each semester they are completing coursework—at least two years—following matriculation into the Joint Degree program.
- Eight additional full-credit courses
 - One course in social theory (SOC 200a or SOC 204a)
 - At least three other formal graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) taken in the Brandeis Sociology Department.
 - Four additional courses offered by the Brandeis Sociology Department, either graduate seminars, directed readings (SOC 230a/b), or upper-division (numbered 100-199) courses.

The Thinking Like a Sociologist pro-seminar (SOC 300a, formerly called Approaches to Sociological Research) is a two-credit course designed to help students transition from being consumers to producers of sociological knowledge with the support of peers and faculty. It includes guidance on researching and writing papers for publication. Note that the publishable paper required of Sociology PhD students is not required of students in the joint PhD in Sociology and Social Policy.

Qualifying Portfolio and Defense (QPD)

Each student must complete a “comprehensive paper” as required in the Heller School PhD curriculum.

In Sociology, students must show competence in two substantive areas following the Sociology Qualifying Portfolio and Defense (QPD) requirements described [here](#), compiling a dossier in each area of specialization, the contents of which will be determined in consultation with the supervising faculty member. Typically, in one of the areas, the student will complete all three of the below components. In the other area, they will complete the first two of the three (a comprehensive reading list and a literature review):

- A **comprehensive reading list** of both foundational work in the area and theoretical and empirical debates in the area of relevance to the student’s interest. The student will consult with the supervising faculty member in each area to finalize this list.
- A **literature review**. The student will consult with the supervising faculty member in each area to determine the scope and topic of the literature review.
- A **course syllabus**. The student will consult with the supervising faculty member in each area about the topic and level of the course syllabus.

QPD Committee membership and chair must be approved by the Sociology Graduate Committee (by petition) by December 1 of the student’s third year in the joint degree program. The QPD Committee meeting must be completed by December 1 of the student’s fourth year in the joint degree program.

Dissertation and Defense

Step 1: Approval of the Dissertation Prospectus and Advancement to Candidacy

A dissertation prospectus should be submitted to a Dissertation Committee soon after the Comprehensive examination and QPD processes are completed, typically by May 1 of the fourth year. The Dissertation Committee should consist of five members—two Brandeis faculty members each from the Sociology Department and the Heller School (one designated as chair) and one outside reader. Students must submit paperwork for committee, proposal hearing, and defense approvals to both programs following each program’s respective procedures. The following procedures outline Sociology rules only; the student should also consult [Heller School guidelines](#) to be sure that both programs’ expectations are being met.

Each student is responsible for forming a Dissertation Committee--that is, securing agreement from each member and then petitioning the Graduate Committee for approval. If a student selects a Heller School faculty member as Dissertation Committee chair, the student’s QPD chair will continue as the student’s official Sociology Department advisor, and official link between the Department and student, unless the student petitions for a change.

The dissertation prospectus elaborates a student’s dissertation topic and explains the research the student plans to undertake. It should clearly state the research question, situate this question in a review of relevant literature, and describe the methods that will be used to answer the question. The prospectus should also provide a tentative timeline for completing the project. If the proposed research involves data collection with human

subjects, the student must also seek approval from the Brandeis Human Research Protection Program by the date of the scheduled defense. Examples of dissertation proposals are available on the shared Graduate Student Latte site.

When the Dissertation Committee determines that the proposal is ready, a dissertation prospectus defense is scheduled. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the Sociology Department; the student should issue a request to the Sociology Department Administrator to make this announcement at least one week prior to when the announcement is to be distributed. At least two weeks in advance of the defense, the student must post a copy of the prospectus on the section of the shared Latte site titled, Dissertation Prospectus for Defense. The proposal defense meeting typically begins with the student giving a short (10 minute) presentation on the student's work before answering questions from the faculty. After the defense, the Dissertation Committee meets in private to decide on one of three grades - No Pass, Conditional Pass (meaning that specified further work is needed), or Pass. This grade will be noted on the Dissertation Prospectus Defense Report (available on the shared Latte site), which must be signed by all Committee members and deposited with the Sociology Department Administrator. After a student's prospectus has been passed, a completed PhD Degree Audit Checklist Update Form must be submitted to the Registrar. At this point, the student has advanced to candidacy.

Step 2: Approval and Defense of the Dissertation

The joint PhD dissertation may be accepted by the Sociology Department and the Heller School upon the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee. Committee members will have one month to read a complete draft, comment on it, and require revisions. Once all Committee members agree that the dissertation is ready to defend, the candidate should schedule the dissertation defense, which is a public final oral examination. The defense must be scheduled at a time all Committee members can attend. At least two weeks before the defense, a copy of the dissertation must be made available for review by members of the faculty. This can be done either by placing a print copy in the Sociology Department office, or by placing an electronic copy on the shared Latte site. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the Sociology Department. The student should issue a request to the Sociology Department Administrator to make this announcement at least one week prior to when the announcement is to be distributed, and at this time should also inform the Department Administrator whether the dissertation will be made available in print or electronic form.

After the dissertation and defense are approved, a report signed by the Dissertation Examining Committee (available on the Shared Latte Site) certifying the candidate's successful performance on the oral exam is submitted to the University Registrar, the Sociology Department, and the Heller School Office of Student Records. Please see the instructions under PhD in Sociology on p. 8 above regarding the Sociology process for filing forms and the dissertation. The forms required from Heller can be obtained from Cheryl Sweeney, Program Administrator of the Heller PhD program.

Required Teaching

All students in the joint PhD program must participate in undergraduate teaching. This typically means working as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for at least one semester in the Brandeis Sociology Department. See [here](#) for general information on teaching.

5. MA Programs

Master of Arts in Sociology (en route, or in passing)

A Master's degree in Sociology can be earned *en route* as part of on-going work for the sociology PhD. Students who have completed MA requirements can apply for the MA degree at any point beyond the first year of residency.

To fulfill program requirements for the MA, students must complete eight courses. At least five of these courses must be taken in the Sociology Department at Brandeis. One course must be a full year of SOC 300a. At least two other courses must be Sociology graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher). One of the eight required courses must be in research methods and one must be in social theory. If a student wishes to take a course numbered 100-199 for graduate credit, the student must meet with the course instructor in order to formulate a course enhancement plan. This plan will include additional readings and assignments, and/or written work of at least 20 pages. Once the student has met with the course instructor, the student must submit a petition requesting that the course count as a graduate level course. The Graduate Committee will review the petition and make a determination. This will all take place either **prior to the first class, or by the end of the first week of class.**

In addition to the above coursework, students must have fully completed and submitted the publishable paper required of all PhD students in order to be eligible for the MA degree.

Once the paper has been completed and approved, students must submit the signed Sociology Master's Degree Completion Form to the Sociology Graduate Administrator before the University deadline for certifying degree requirements.

Information on Applying to Graduate

Complete the [Graduate Degree Application Form](#) available online from the Registrar's Office.

[Completing Your Program](#) - Wrapping Up at Brandeis and Officially Graduating
[Key Degree Dates for Graduate Students](#)
[Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#)

Master of Arts in Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

The Department of Sociology cooperates with Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies in a joint MA. The program is designed for completion in one-year (12 months), with the degree awarded at the next official University degree conferral after completion of residence and requirements. The joint SOC-WGS MA can be earned either as a stand-alone degree or en route as part of on-going work for the sociology PhD (at any point beyond the first year). Each MA degree candidate will devise a specialized program with a faculty adviser. At the start of the first semester, stand-alone MA students should submit a proposed course schedule for approval to their adviser no later than the end of the first full week of classes. That proposal should also be submitted to the Graduate Committee to be considered at their first meeting of the semester. For each following semester,

students are required to submit their plan of study (agreed on with their adviser) to the Graduate Committee for approval. That plan, including details on the subject of and readers for the MA paper, should be submitted to the Graduate Committee within a week of the first day of classes.

Requirements

Completion of eight courses to be distributed as follows:

- The foundational course in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS 205a);
- One course in feminist research methodologies (WGS 208b, the Feminist Inquiry course offered through the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies);
- One graduate course outside Sociology listed as an elective in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies;
- One graduate Sociology course listed as an elective in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies;
- Three other regular graduate Sociology courses: one in theory, one outside the area of gender, and one elective that could be a directed reading course;
- One other graduate elective of the student's choice.
- For upper-division courses (numbered 100 to 199) to count for graduate credit, the student must meet with the course instructor in order to formulate a course enhancement plan. This plan will include additional readings and assignments, and/or written work of at least 20 pages. Once the student has met with the course instructor, the student must submit a petition requesting that the course count as a graduate level course. The Graduate Committee will review the petition and make a determination. This will all take place either **prior to the first class, or by the end of the first week of class.**

MA students will also have the option of taking Sociology 300a, Thinking Like a Sociologist, a two-credit course that introduces students to professional aspects of being a sociologist.

Also required is submission of a research paper of professional quality and length (normally 25-40 pages) on a topic related to the joint degree. The paper will be read by two faculty members, at least one of whom is a member of the Department of Sociology and at least one of whom is a member of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies core or affiliate faculty. Once the paper has been completed, students must submit the signed Sociology Master's Degree Completion Form to the Sociology Graduate Administrator, and the signed WGS Master's Paper Approval Form to the WGS Program Administrator.

Information on Applying to Registrar for Graduate Degree

Complete the [Graduate Degree Application Form](#) available online from the Registrar's Office.

[Completing Your Program](#) - Wrapping Up at Brandeis and Officially Graduating

[Key Degree Dates for Graduate Students](#)

[Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#)

6. General Sociology Department and Graduate School Policies

Student Evaluation and Progress to the Degree

Every student pursuing work for a degree, whether or not currently in residence, must register at the beginning of each term. All Sociology graduate students will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee, with input from the Sociology faculty at large, each spring. Before this evaluation, each student must complete a self-assessment, which will be included as part of the evaluation discussion. At this evaluation the records of all graduate students will be carefully reviewed with reference to timely completion of course work and requirements, quality of work, and teaching. Continued enrollment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of academic standards and milestones.

For students whose records are deemed insufficient, the Department can act up to and including requiring withdrawal from the program.

Note: Any grade below B-, or a grade of “NC” (no credit), is an unsatisfactory grade in the Graduate School. A course in which the student receives an unsatisfactory grade will not be counted toward graduate credit.

Grading Policy for Graduate Courses

PhD students in Sociology courses are typically graded on a credit/no credit basis. At the beginning of the term, instructors should have a conversation with graduate students about grading options. PhD students have the option of asking for a letter grade, but if doing so, must request it by the end of the add-drop period. Instructors have discretion in how credit is apportioned (attendance, meaningful participation, written work, etc.) and should communicate that via their syllabus and directly to students at the beginning of term. Instructors may choose to assign points or letter grades to individual assignments. In lieu of a letter grade, at the end of the term, instructors should provide students with written feedback about their performance in the course, including suggestions on areas of future improvement.

MA students in Sociology courses typically receive letter grades. If an MA student wishes to take a graduate Sociology course for credit/no credit, the student must petition the Graduate Committee before the end of the add-drop period. The petition should include a rationale for taking the course on a credit/no credit basis.

Graduate School Deadlines

Students should be aware of the deadlines for completion of the various degree requirements. These may be found in the [Academic Calendar](#), which is published each year by the University Registrar.

Transfer Credit

After completing at least one year of in-person residence, PhD students may apply for credit for graduate-level courses completed while enrolled in graduate programs elsewhere. Students may petition for up to 5 courses (or 20 transfer credits) from previously completed graduate-level coursework.

Students entering the PhD program with an MA in sociology or a related social science may petition the departmental Graduate Committee for a reduction of the required course load by as many as five courses (or 20 transfer credits). Pending approval from the Committee, one of these courses can be applied to the

graduate-level Sociology department seminar requirements. These petitions should be submitted during the fall of a student's second year in the program. Courses being transferred must carry a grade of B or better, and must have been earned at an appropriately accredited institution.

Transfer credit is not allowed for the MA degree in Sociology or the joint MA in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Sociology.

Incomplete Courses

A course grade of "Excused Incomplete," unless given by reason of a student's failure to attend a final examination, must be made up prior to the end of the term following the term in which it was received. Consult the [academic calendar details](#) from the Registrar's Office on specific date requirements. Failure to complete a course on time can jeopardize a student's academic standing.

Academic Standing

As per the Bulletin, in order to be in good academic standing, students must be making satisfactory academic progress by meeting the following standards:

- All grades in classes that count towards the degree are a B- or above (or the program's threshold for advancing in the curriculum, if higher than a B-). If classes in a program are credit/no credit, the student must have received credit for all classes that count towards the degree.
- The student has no unresolved Excused Incompletes (EIs) past the published deadline from the Registrar's office for the terms in the current or prior academic year. Final incompletes (I) cannot count towards the degree.
- The student is completing non-course milestones (i.e., comprehensive exams, language requirements, prospectus defense, etc.) on the program's typical timeline.

If a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, the program will recommend to the Graduate School that the student be placed on advising alert. Advising alert is still considered good academic standing, but it signals that there are emerging concerns about the student's ability to remain in good academic standing for the next review period. The purpose of advising alert is to facilitate proactive academic supports and strategies for the student and to ensure that the program and the Graduate School are working together to support the student's success.

The Graduate School will automatically place PhD students who are on extension of their time-to-degree into the advising alert category. The Graduate School will also automatically place master's students into advising alert if they are requesting a third Extended Master's semester.

Information on Teaching

The Brandeis Sociology Department supports a culture where teaching is highly valued, and it aims to make the teaching experience of graduate students significant to their overall professional development. At the same time, we depend on graduate student teaching assistants to make it possible to offer high-enrollment courses in which undergraduate students engage in frequent writing and oral participation. As part of their fellowship package, students in the Sociology PhD program are required to act as Teaching Assistants (TAs) for six semesters. Other Sociology graduate students, including Master's students, PhD students in the joint Heller-Sociology program,

and PhD students who have completed their TA responsibilities, may be hired by the university to act as Teaching Assistants or, in the case of Master's students, Course Assistants (CAs). Occasionally, when there is no Sociology student available, graduate students outside the Sociology Department may be hired as Course or Teaching Assistants. The expectations for Teaching Assistants and Course Assistants are the same, as outlined below. Very occasionally, graduate students may be hired, at a lower pay rate, as a Grader. This category is usually reserved for graduate students who do not attend class or carry out any responsibilities other than grading.

The Brandeis Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) assumes that exact TA responsibilities will vary from one course to another, within the general guidelines of the union contract. Information GSAS makes available to first-time graduate student TAs is available [here](#). General resources for graduate student teaching offered through GSAS are available [here](#).

Because teaching is a collaborative activity, instructors and their assigned TAs should meet as soon as assignments are firmly made to agree upon TA responsibilities over the course of the semester. TAs should receive a course syllabus within a reasonable time before the beginning of the semester. TAs are not expected to work before August 16th for fall term or January 1st for spring term.

At Brandeis, TAs are represented by Service Employees International Union, Local 509, which acts as the exclusive bargaining agent. The current contract is available [here](#).

TA responsibilities may include some combination of attending lectures, facilitating discussion sections, leading study sessions, grading papers and exams, holding office hours, mentoring and advising Peer Teaching Assistants (undergraduates), handling audiovisual materials, maintaining the course Latte page, maintaining grade or attendance records, and more generally, meeting with the instructor and other TAs to discuss course content, organization, and pedagogy. Instructors should take into account where a graduate student is in the program before asking her or him to take on unusual responsibilities, such as being in charge of a lecture. More advanced students might be given that option, but should have the ability to opt out if they feel unprepared for it.

All students who serve as Teaching Assistants, Course Assistants, or Teaching Fellows must complete a series of trainings: the Office of Equal Opportunity training, the Supporting Students Outside of Academics training, the Pedagogy training, and (for international students who have not received a previous degree from a US college or university) the International Pedagogy training. Students only need to complete each training once and will receive emails in the semester they are first teaching with information about schedules and signing up. Students also have access to a variety of resources to refine their teaching through the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#).

TAs should spend an average of 10 hours a week on TA duties (including time spent attending class and holding office hours). Obviously, much of the work gets concentrated in those weeks when grading takes place, while TAs will put less time into their work at other points in the semester.

With some exceptions, faculty instructors tend to split grading with TAs. Often this means that each grades a share of every assignment, including finals. Sometimes it means that one person takes all of one assignment, and then another grades all of a different assignment. When there are large courses with multiple TAs who have responsibility for specific students in sections, TAs might do all the grading for their particular students. GSAS has a rule that graduate student TAs cannot grade other graduate students -- the instructor must do that (this differs from Heller rules, which do allow graduate student TAs to grade other graduate students).

Instructors ultimately have responsibility for a student's course grade. Instructors should also handle any major problem that comes up, such as academic integrity issues. However, according to Brandeis policy, all TAs are responsible reporters under Title IX.

TAs should not have to pay for any course materials they are required to use. Instructors should ask the Department Administrator to arrange for publishers to send desk copies of books. They will have access to appropriate space to prepare for class, and can sign up to use the TA office to meet with and advise students.

Our current rule of thumb is that a TA is assigned for every 30 students enrolled in a course. However, we may assign a TA when a course has a lower enrollment based on the course's or instructor's special needs. And during semesters when there is especially high demand for TAs, enrollments may go higher before a TA is assigned. The Sociology Director of Graduate Studies makes TA assignments for all Sociology courses. These decisions, which may be subject to approval by the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences, take into account course enrollments, the number of graduate students available in a given semester, particular needs of a course, graduate student preferences and time conflicts, and prior graduate student experience. While instructors are welcome to communicate their preferences to the DGS, it is not always possible to honor them. Instructors should also not make independent arrangements with a graduate student.

Course review: At least one per term, instructors are encouraged to meet with the TA to discuss their performance.

Written Feedback: Instructors are encouraged to provide written feedback to the TA at the end of the semester.

Our graduate students tend to care a great deal about teaching and frequently go on to become excellent instructors. We appreciate the work that faculty do to nurture their teaching interests and skills.

Leaves of Absence

Information about applying for leaves of absence for health and personal reasons is available [here](#).

Ethical Conduct

The department adheres to the [American Sociological Association Code of Ethics](#).

Dispute Resolution Procedures

Academic life, especially in apprenticeship situations where so much is at stake, is a messy business, open to many kinds of misinterpretations and disappointments, as well as divergent views among faculty themselves, as well as between faculty and students, as to what counts as good work appropriate for a graduate student, or good teaching and advising to enable such work.

Our collective ethic as a faculty is to protect students from any form of intimidation or retaliation. It is also to provide as much opportunity and encouragement as possible for students and faculty to repair relationships that may have been frayed by previous misunderstandings or regrettable behavior on anyone's part. We do this not only because it is the ethically right thing to do, but because it is in everyone's interest for graduate students to leave the program with dense networks of support and trust, not only with the particular committee with which

they may have worked, but with other faculty, who are often asked by faculty at other universities what they may think of particular students. We are proud of this departmental ethic, which we have nurtured for decades and have seen serve scores of PhDs well over the course of their careers.

Thus, when misunderstandings or disputes arise or someone feels treated unfairly, we encourage students and faculty first to talk as constructively as possible with each other. Students and faculty may also seek the counsel of other professors and students. Should the situation remain unresolved, students should consult with the Department Chair and/or the Director of the Graduate Program to seek advice on how to proceed or to lodge a formal complaint. Brandeis also offers an [Ombuds](#) office that provides “a safe space to talk confidentially and off the record about difficult situations and offer conflict resolution support.” GSAS policy is that students first seek resolution and, when possible, rapprochement, within the Department. If a student does not find the proposed resolution acceptable, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School regarding academic grievances. Students with concerns about academic issues may seek resolution to the University’s [Academic Grievance Procedure](#). Non-academic issues, including issues of student conduct, harassment, discrimination, or sexual violence, should be addressed through the [Department of Student Rights and Community Standards](#) or the [Office of Equal Opportunity](#).

Graduate Department Representatives

The purpose of the Graduate Department Representatives (GDR) is to act as a liaison between faculty and students within the Sociology Department and between Sociology graduate students and GSAS administrators and other university committees or task forces. The GDR structure is also meant to facilitate the dissemination of information between students in departments and disciplines across the university. GDR responsibilities should not exceed 4-5 hours of work each month, including meetings.

Each PhD GDR serves for a one-year term. The term runs for the academic year plus one month (from August through August), with the month of August serving as a transition period for incoming GDRs to learn from outgoing GDRs. The Sociology Department has two GDRs: the Department Life Representative and the Graduate Affairs Representative. These positions do not supersede other graduate student roles in Department governance, such as representatives to the colloquium committee or search committee.

Process for Selecting GDRs

PhD students in their second year and beyond, including students in the joint PhD program, are eligible for a GDR position. The process of selecting a GDR begins with self-nominations. If multiple students express interest in a position, the Graduate Committee will organize an election in which all Department graduate students have a vote. All graduate student representatives must be in good academic standing.

Responsibilities of the Department Life Representative (DLR):

- 1) The DLR will attend department meetings in order to discuss issues of interest and concern to graduate students.
- 2) Organize social events such as happy hours and virtual events on Zoom for graduate students.
- 3) Assist the department Admissions Committee in organizing meetings between prospective and current students.
- 4) Attend monthly meetings, including Divisional GDR meetings as organized by the Division Head.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Affairs Representative (GAR):

- 1) The GAR will attend Graduate Committee meetings and participate in committee business, excluding deliberations about individual students.
- 2) Meet with faculty outside of faculty meetings and discuss improvement to graduate student life.
- 3) Act as conduit between graduate students and faculty for individual concerns.
- 4) Consult with the Assistant Dean of Students Affairs on GSAS-wide programming, such as Wellness Day and community building events.
- 5) Attend monthly meetings with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and all other GDRs across divisions.

Shared Responsibilities of the Two GDRs:

- 1) Participate in coordinated communication efforts within the department as needed.
- 2) Hold departmental town halls to discuss student concerns once a semester and work with faculty to propose solutions.
- 3) Fill out the GDR Hand-Off Document (title pending) to transition new GDRs.
- 4) Share information in division meetings and all-GSAS meetings about campus resources and events including upcoming union negotiations, GSA elections, the counseling center, OmBuds, etc.; disseminate this information in the department (via email, Slack, or other means).
- 5) Attend skill building / professional development workshops as time permits.

Other Graduate Student Representatives

In addition to the GDR roles, graduate student representatives also participate in the Colloquium Committee and on temporary committees (such as search committees) for a term of one year. These representatives are selected by self-nomination; if multiple students express interest, the Graduate Committee will organize an election to select the representative. All graduate student representatives must be in good academic standing.

7. Resources and Facilities

Department Resources

Sociology Graduate Program Intranet

Sociology graduate students, faculty, and staff have access, via [Latte](#), to a range of shared resources. Included are administrative material, reading lists, proposals, teaching resources, grant information, and much more. Students are encouraged to post additional resources on this site.

Space in Pearlman

Graduate Students are invited to use the Computer Room and TA office in Pearlman Hall. They are also welcome to use the microwave and refrigerator in Pearlman 201. Students may bring a lock and select a locker to store personal belongings. All students are also assigned a mailbox where mail and internal university correspondence are directed.

Department Funding and Awards

The Berkowitz Award

The Sociology Department annually awards one \$600 prize for assistance in dissertation research in the name of the late Steven Berkowitz, PhD. This prize is usually awarded in March.

The Peter Conrad Award for Graduate Student Research

In honor of emeritus faculty member, Peter Conrad, the Sociology Department annually awards funds, up to \$600, to a PhD student for pre-dissertation research. This prize is usually awarded in March.

The Debra Osnowitz Memorial Graduate Student Paper Prize

In honor of Brandeis Sociology PhD, Debi Osnowitz, the Sociology Department recognizes a paper authored by a graduate student in the Brandeis Sociology PhD program with this cash prize.

University and External Funding and Awards

Research and Travel Funding

Students may consult the [Funding Opportunities](#) page on the Brandeis Sociology website as well as the [GSAS website](#) for information regarding external and internal funding opportunities, including travel and research grants. Additional information may be found in the “Financial Assistance” section of the current [Brandeis University Bulletin](#). Research and travel funding is available for both [MA](#) and [PhD](#) students.

University Prize Instructorship

The purpose of the [University Prize Instructorship](#) award is to allow a GSAS student to teach an advanced undergraduate course that is related to the student’s research interests and dissertation work, so as to enhance the student’s capacity to assume teaching responsibilities following completion of the PhD. Candidates must have completed at least one semester as a teaching assistant and must be ABD (i.e., have completed all degree requirements except the dissertation) by early May of the year the prize is awarded.

Up to five instructorships will be awarded to candidates who propose courses that represent strong contributions to the undergraduate curriculum and who have demonstrated excellence in, and commitment to, teaching.

Selection criteria include quality of the proposed course as demonstrated by the syllabus, its relevance to the curriculum, and its intellectual appeal to undergraduates.

Campus Resources

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Staff at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences can answer questions regarding various aspects of your graduate study, including leaves of absence, registration, professional development, and thesis submission. The [Staff Directory](#) details areas of support within GSAS.

Graduate Student Affairs

The [Office of Graduate Affairs](#) supports and encourages life on campus for graduate students outside of the classroom and serves as a liaison between graduate students and University Administration. The office works to coordinate events and programming among the three graduate schools on campus. Graduate Affairs advises and assists the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and the Graduate Student Senate, offers programming throughout the year, and runs Graduate Student Orientation in the fall.

Libraries

The social science collections of the University are housed in Goldfarb Library and Farber Library. These materials are also accessible through an online catalog system called [One Search](#). The libraries have facilities for computerized searches of [bibliographic databases](#) such as SocINDEX, JSTOR, and other periodical indices. The [Interlibrary Loan Office](#) provides books or articles not owned by the University. Brandeis is a member of the Boston Library Consortium, composed of 17 academic and research institutions in the area. A [consortium card](#), allowing use of these libraries, is available from the Brandeis Library.

Accessibility Resources

At Brandeis University, a diverse body of people come together to form a cohesive community. Brandeis welcomes all qualified individuals into the University community as students, faculty, or staff members. Brandeis is committed to providing “reasonable accommodation(s)” to individuals with appropriately documented physical, learning, or psychological disabilities.

A person is considered to have a disability when fitting within any one of these three categories:

- The person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the individual.
- The person has a record of such an impairment, or the person is regarded as having such an impairment.
- “Major life activities” include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

A “reasonable accommodation” is defined as any change in the work or educational environment or the way things are customarily done that will allow an individual with a known documented disability to perform the essential functions of a position or let otherwise qualified students receive a reasonable modification or adjustment for their known documented disability. All accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis. Students, faculty, and staff must follow well-established procedures to obtain accommodations.

For more information regarding reasonable accommodations, contact [Student Accessibility Support](#).

Professional Development Support

The [GSAS Professional Development](#) webpage allows you to set up appointments with the Professional Development team access resources to help you with many aspects of the professional development and job search process. The website includes profiles of GSAS alumni with insights into their career journeys.

International Student Support

[**The International Students and Scholars Office \(ISSO\)**](#) is your main resource for any questions about your status as an international student. It is particularly important to consult them with any visa questions, as everyone's individual situation is slightly different and other university resources do not have the knowledge on this topic that they do. The [**English Language Programs**](#) are also available to provide support for students who do not speak English as a first language. We may suggest you sign up for a tutorial with them if we feel you are in need of extra support.

Office of Equal Opportunity

[**The Office of Equal Opportunity \(OEO\)**](#) is responsible for assisting students, faculty and staff with all issues of discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, and relationship violence). OEO can receive reports of such conduct and will provide information regarding support resources and interim restrictions, including no contact orders, housing changes and academic support. OEO can also provide information about what options may be available for taking action, including internal resolution processes and criminal action. In most cases, the decision regarding whether to initiate action will remain with the person who experienced the conduct.

Workday

Workday is where you register for courses and also allows you to access information about your own student record. For example, you can [view your academic progress](#) or [check which required teaching training sessions you have completed](#). If you work an hourly job, you will also enter your hours there. There are many [job aids that explain how to complete tasks in Workday](#).

Confidential Resources

[**The Prevention, Advocacy & Resource Center \(PARC\)**](#) is a confidential, student-centered resource serving members of the Brandeis community who have been impacted by violence and those who want to contribute to the anti-violence movement.

[**The Brandeis Counseling Center \(BCC\)**](#) provides counseling for all students. Treatment is available in English, Hebrew, Mandarin and Spanish.

[**The Student Health Center**](#) provides free health services to all students who are enrolled at least three-quarters time. They are open Monday through Friday and also provide vaccine services.

[**The Center for Spiritual Life**](#) offers a safe space for students to explore their spirituality and find their place in the world, on their terms. They have staff chaplains trained in different faith traditions who help students find a supportive community, access a non-judgmental spiritual mentor, and find opportunities to serve others.

[**The University Ombuds**](#) are a confidential, independent, impartial, and informal resource for all members of the Brandeis community. They support the dignity, well-being, and safety of each person who visits us by providing a safe space to talk confidentially and off the record about difficult situations and offering conflict resolution support. They are an outlet to process any type of challenging situation and a bridge to navigate campus resources. They serve as a coach to help, support, and empower you.

Boston-Area Consortia

Boston Area Graduate Consortium

Brandeis participates in a cross-registration program with Boston College, Boston University, and Tufts University. Students are eligible to take graduate-level courses at these institutions (no more than one course per term) with the prior approval of their advisors. Refer to the Brandeis Registrar for [details](#). Information on finding Consortium Sociology courses is available [here](#).

The Consortium for Graduate Studies in Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality

Students interested in gender and women's studies may enroll, with their advisor's approval, in interdisciplinary courses offered through the [Consortium for Graduate Studies in Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality](#) (GCWS) at MIT.

Appendix 1: Timeline for the Sociology PhD Program

The Graduate Committee will consider compliance with the following timeline in its annual student evaluation each spring. Students are encouraged to consult this timeline as they complete their annual self-evaluations. Note that this timeline applies to Sociology PhD students only; please consult with your advisor or with the DGS regarding timelines for the joint PhD program in Sociology and Social Policy.

Year	Task Timeline
First	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester, which will include SOC 300a both Fall and Spring.</p> <p>Teaching: No TA in the Fall. TA in the Spring.</p> <p>End of the year, petition to designate your adviser moving forward.</p>
Second	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester, which will include SOC 300a both Fall and Spring.</p> <p>Teaching: One TAsip per semester.</p> <p>By April 1 initiate QPD process: two QPD Committee members and corresponding areas of study designated and approved.</p> <p>Students requesting transfer credit from courses taken at other universities prior to matriculating at Brandeis should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee during the fall semester.</p>
Third	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester. Students at or near completion of their coursework should enroll in CONT 500a to maintain their 12 credits.</p> <p>Present work in progress to SOC300a optionally, once in Fall and once in Spring.</p> <p>By end of second semester: seminar requirement should be fulfilled, and a publishable research paper should have been submitted to a peer-reviewed academic journal.</p> <p>Teaching: One TAsip per semester.</p> <p>By May 15: Defend Qualifying Portfolio.</p> <p>Upon the completion of eight or more courses and the publishable paper, students are eligible to apply for the MA degree (see description of MA in Sociology).</p>
Fourth	<p>Enroll in CONT 500a.</p> <p>By October 1: Write and defend dissertation prospectus. Petition Graduate Committee with Prospectus Committee before the prospectus defense.</p> <p>Teaching: One TAsip in Fall semester. No service requirements in Spring semester. Students may opt to do an outside internship in Spring.</p>

	<p><i>For the optional internship:</i></p> <p>By the first Wednesday in November students should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee describing the internship project.</p> <p>By the second Monday in March, students should submit a mid-semester progress report to the Graduate Committee.</p> <p>By the end of the semester, submit a 2-page report to the Graduate Committee on the internship.</p>
Fifth	<p>Enroll in CONT 500a.</p> <p>Teaching: No teaching requirement. Students are encouraged to work full time on the research and writing of their dissertations.</p> <p>Students are encouraged to apply for external funding to support dissertation writing in their sixth year. Students are unlikely to receive funding from within Brandeis after the fifth year.</p>
Sixth Year and Beyond	<p>Enroll in CONT 500a.</p> <p>Write and defend dissertation. Students are reminded to petition the Graduate Committee with changes to their Dissertation Committee, including adding an outside reader to the committee.</p>

Appendix 2: Timeline for the Joint Sociology-Social Policy PhD Program

The Graduate Committee will consider compliance with the following timeline in its annual student evaluation each spring. Students are encouraged to consult this timeline as they complete their annual self-evaluations. Note that this timeline includes only Sociology requirements; students are also responsible for completing all requirements at the Heller School. The "year" refers to the year in the Sociology department; for students entering from the Heller School, the first year below may be their second or third year at Brandeis.

Year	Task Timeline	
	<i>Students entering through Sociology</i>	<i>Students entering through Heller</i>
First	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester, which will include SOC 300a both Fall and Spring.</p> <p>No TA in the Fall. TA in the Spring</p> <p>End of the year, petition to designate your Sociology adviser moving forward.</p>	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester, which will include SOC 300a both Fall and Spring.</p> <p>TA one semester anytime during the program.</p> <p>End of the year, petition to designate your Sociology adviser moving forward.</p>
Second	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester, which will include SOC 300a both Fall and Spring.</p> <p>One TA per semester.</p> <p>Students requesting transfer credit from courses taken at other universities prior to matriculating at Brandeis should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee during the fall semester.</p>	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester, which will include SOC 300a both Fall and Spring.</p> <p>By spring: seminar requirement should be complete.</p> <p>By December 1: Designate QPD areas and supervisors, and indicate who is QPD Committee Chair, by petition to the Graduate Committee.</p> <p>TA one semester anytime during the program.</p> <p>Students requesting transfer credit from courses taken at other universities prior to matriculating at Brandeis should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee during the fall semester.</p>
Third	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester. Students at or near completion of their coursework should enroll in CONT 500a to maintain their 12 credits.</p>	<p>Enroll in at least 12 credits each semester. Students at or near completion of their coursework should enroll in CONT 500a to maintain their 12 credits.</p>

	<p>By spring: seminar requirement should be complete.</p> <p>By December 1: Designate QPD areas and supervisors, and indicate who is QPD Committee Chair, by petition to the Graduate Committee.</p> <p>One TA per semester.</p>	<p>By December 1: Defend Qualifying Portfolio.</p> <p>By May 1: Write and defend dissertation prospectus. Petition Graduate Committee with full Prospectus Committee before the prospectus defense.</p> <p>TA one semester anytime during the program.</p>
Fourth	<p>Enroll in CONT 500a.</p> <p>By December 1: Defend Qualifying Portfolio.</p> <p>By May 1: Write and defend dissertation prospectus. Petition Graduate Committee with full Prospectus Committee before the prospectus defense.</p> <p>One TA in Fall semester, no service requirements in Spring semester. Students may opt to do an internship in spring.</p> <p>For the internship: By the first Wednesday in November, students should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee describing the internship project.</p> <p>By the second Monday in March submit a mid-semester progress report to the Graduate Committee.</p> <p>By the end of the semester, submit a 2-page report to the Graduate Committee on the internship.</p>	<p>Enroll in CONT 500a.</p> <p>Students are encouraged to work full time on the research and writing of their dissertations, and are encouraged to apply for external funding to support dissertation writing.</p> <p>TA one semester anytime during the program.</p>
Fifth	<p>Enroll in CONT 500a.</p> <p>No TA or RA. Students are encouraged to work full time on the research and writing of their dissertations.</p>	<p>Enroll in CONT 500a.</p> <p>Write and defend dissertation. Students are reminded to petition the Graduate</p>

	Students are encouraged to apply for external funding to support dissertation writing.	Committee with changes to their Dissertation Committee. TA one semester anytime during the program.
Sixth Year and Beyond	Enroll in CONT 500a. Write and defend dissertation. Students are reminded to petition the Graduate Committee with changes to their Dissertation Committee.	Enroll in CONT 500a. Write and defend dissertation. Students are reminded to petition the Graduate Committee with changes to their Dissertation Committee.

Appendix 3: Calendar of PhD Evaluation Points

Points	Times	Possible Sanctions
Whenever work is submitted	Any time of the year.	Inform student of progress. Warn of problems.
Annual general evaluation meeting	Each spring. Review of progress based on student self-assessment, teaching evaluations, and in some circumstances, examples of written work. Feedback from the advisor and other faculty is also solicited.	Warning, with or without funding contingencies.
MA submission	Voluntary, but for adequate consideration should be submitted in time to read before desired degree deadline.	Submissions are judged solely on whether or not they are worthy of an MA degree.
Final Qualifying Portfolio and Defense Committee Mtg	By May 15 of student's third year	Without accreditation, student cannot go on to qualify for PhD.
PhD prospectus	By October 15 of student's fourth year	It may not be approved or accepted by committee.
PhD dissertation	Student's fifth year and beyond. Any time during the academic year.	It may not be approved or accepted by committee.
PhD defense	Student's fifth year or beyond. Any time during the academic year (official awarding of the degree in February, May, or August).	May not be approved or accepted by committee, or may require revisions.

Appendix 4: PhD Degree Checklist

Important Resources and Deadlines:

[Completing Your Program](#) - Wrapping Up at Brandeis and Officially Graduating

[Key Degree Dates for Graduate Students](#)

[Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#)

_____ Apply to graduate and submit accompanying fee
approximately by Nov. 1 for a Feb degree, March 1 for a May degree, and June 17 for an August degree; see the Registrar's [Graduate Application Information](#) page for exact deadlines

_____ [Petition Graduate Committee](#) for outside Dissertation Committee member
at least one month before dissertation defense

_____ Request Sociology Department Administrator announce defense
at least one week before announcement is to go out

_____ Announce defense
at least two weeks before dissertation defense

_____ Make dissertation available either in electronic form on Latte or in paper form in the Sociology Department office
at least two weeks before dissertation defense

_____ Submit [Dissertation Defense Calendar Submission form](#) to GSAS
at least two weeks before dissertation defense

_____ Defend the dissertation

_____ Have Dissertation Committee sign [Dissertation Defense Form](#)
at the defense

_____ Submit copy of signed Dissertation Defense Form to Sociology Department Administrator
immediately following defense

_____ Submit original Dissertation Defense Form to Registrar
immediately following defense

_____ Submit copy of completed [Report on PhD Revisions form](#) to Sociology Department Administrator (if revisions are required)
when Dissertation Committee has approved revisions

_____ Submit original completed Report on PhD Revisions form to Registrar (if

revisions are required) *when Dissertation Committee has approved revisions*

_____ Submit dissertation to GSAS

_____ Complete GSAS Exit Survey and Survey of Earned Doctorates
by dissertation submission deadline

Appendix 5: QPD Areas

modified from [American Sociological Association Current Sections](#)

Aging and the Life Course	Science, Knowledge, and Technology
Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco	Sexualities
Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity	Social Movements and Collective Action
Animals and Society	Social Psychology
Asia and Asian America	Sociolinguistics
Body and Embodiment	Theory
Children and Youth	Urban Sociology
Communication and Media	Work and Occupations
Community Sociology	
Comparative and Historical Sociology	
Consumers and Consumption	
Criminology	
Culture	
Demography	
Development	
Disability	
Economic Sociology	
Education	
Emotions	
Environmental Sociology	
Ethnomethodology	
Evolution and Biology	
Family	
Gender	
Global and Transnational Sociology	
Human Rights	
Immigration	
Inequality	
Labor	
Latino/a Sociology	
Law	
Marxist Sociology	
Mathematical Sociology	
Medical Sociology	
Mental Health	
Methodology	
Organizations	
Peace, War, and Social Conflict	
Political Economy of the World-System	
Political Sociology	
Race, Gender, and Class	
Race and Ethnicity	
Rationality and Society	
Religion	

Appendix 6: Faculty QPD Areas of Supervision

a/o 2025-2026

Faculty	QPD areas available to supervise
Mike Strand	Theory; Culture; Economic Sociology; Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity; Marxist Sociology; Science, Knowledge and Technology
Sarah Mayorga	Race and Racism (Racial and Ethnic Minorities); Community & Urban Sociology; Latina/o Sociology; International Migration; Race, Gender, Class
Rachel McKane	Environmental Sociology; Community & Urban Sociology; Race and Racism (Racial and Ethnic Minorities); Science, Knowledge, and Technology; Disability in Society
Sara Shostak	Medical Sociology; Science, Knowledge, and Technology; Environmental Sociology
Laura Miller	Culture; Consumers and Consumption; Communication and Media; Social Movements; Urban Sociology
Gowri Vijayakumar	Sex and Gender, Sexualities, Political Sociology, Social Movements, Race/Class/Gender
Siri Suh	Medical Sociology; Race/Gender/Class; Science, Knowledge and Technology; Global and Transnational Sociology; Sociology of Development