

PhD Student Handbook
Johns Hopkins University
Krieger School of Arts & Sciences
Department of Sociology
(Revised March 2026)

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Introduction

This Handbook is a resource for the Department's Ph.D. students. It includes an overview of requirements and suggested time frame for the Ph.D. program, the Department's financial aid policy, and the Department's organizational structure, among other topics. We strive to keep the Handbook current, but policy changes made in current times may not be reflected. Accordingly, on matters of consequence, please check with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), your faculty advisor, one of the department staff or the Department Chair.

I. Description of the Ph.D. Program

A. Overview: This overview shows the Ph.D. program requirements and a suggested timeframe

	Year 1: Fall	Year 1: Spring	Year 2: Fall	Year 2: Spring	Year 3: Fall	Year 3: Spring	Year 4: Fall	Year 4: Spring	Year 5: Fall	Year 5: Spring
Coursework	5 Elective Courses									
Coursework	7 Core Courses									
Attendance	Sociology Department Colloquium									
Milestone				TRP Seminar	TRP Deadline			Dissertation Proposal Defense Deadline	Dissertation Defense (if ready)	
Funding	Research Apprenticeship		Teaching Assistantship (and/or RAship)					Dissertation Fellowship		

Notes:

- Summers are required terms for all KSAS graduate students and should be used to further student research and training.
- This is only a suggested timeframe. Students are welcome to complete requirements earlier than indicated here.

B. Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

The requirements for the Ph.D. program include:

- (1) A core curriculum totaling seven courses and (starting with the 2025-26 incoming cohort) attendance in the Department Colloquium in years 1 and 2
- (2) Five elective courses, where (starting with the 2026-27 cohort) two must be taken from the Core-Elective Course options.
- (3) One Research Apprenticeship (RA) in Year 1
- (4) A Trial Research Paper (TRP) and (starting with the 2026-27 incoming cohort) a TRP oral defense, to be completed by January 31 of Year 3
- (5) Teaching Assistantships (TA)
- (6) The University residence requirement
- (7) A dissertation proposal and oral defense at the department level, to be completed by January 31 of Year 4
- (8) A dissertation and oral defense at the University level

Meeting the deadline for the dissertation proposal and defense is a requirement for fifth-year funding eligibility (see Section V on Funding). It is one of the indicators that the faculty use to evaluate the progress of students in the Ph.D. program.

In collaboration with the JHU Department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics, the Department also offers students the possibility of acquiring a joint Doctorate in Sociology and Master's in Applied Mathematics and Statistics. For details, see <http://soc.jhu.edu/graduate/jointprogram/>.

The following sections provide additional details on the Ph.D. program requirements.

1. Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum consists of seven core courses and (beginning with the 2025-26 incoming cohort) attendance in the Sociology Department Colloquium in years 1 and 2.

Core Courses:

1. Proseminar in Sociology (230.608) – Fall of Year 1

Theory:

2. Classical Social Theory (230.602) – Fall of Year 1
3. Contemporary Social Theory (230.603) – Spring of Year 1

Introductory Statistics:

4. Introduction to Social Statistics (230.600) – Fall of Year 1
5. Linear Models for the Social Sciences (230.604) – Spring of Year 1

Logic of Inquiry:

6. Sociological Analysis (230.643) – Fall of Year 2

A third methodology course, such as:

7. Categorical Data Analysis (230.605)
7. Panel Data Analysis (230.615)

- 7. An Introduction to Causal Inference (230.636)
- 7. Qualitative Research Methods in the Social Sciences (230.649)
- 7. Macro-Comparative Research Methods (230.650)
- 7. In-depth Interviewing (230.661)

8. Sociology Department Colloquium (230.420) – Every semester of Years 1 and 2 (beginning with the 2025-26 incoming cohort)

Proseminar: This course is designed to help first-year graduate students get to know the faculty members of the department. In their first semester in the program, students will meet with a different faculty member each week and discuss faculty members' research projects, methodologies, biographies, and tips in academia. Students will be graded Pass/Fail based on their in-person attendance.

Colloquium: Each academic year, a planning committee organizes a Departmental Colloquium that typically occurs once per month. The Colloquium includes speakers from outside the Department who are invited to present research talks, as well as faculty members and advanced graduate students within the Department who are invited to present their own research and works in progress. Graduate students engaged in writing their dissertations are encouraged to present their research as part of this series. Participation in the Departmental Colloquium is regarded as an integral part of departmental life and graduate training. All faculty and resident students are expected to attend. After each Colloquium, the Department hosts a lunch for the graduate students and the speaker. Beginning with the 2025-26 incoming cohort, students in their first and second years are required to register for the Sociology Department Colloquium (230.420) and will be graded Pass/Fail based on their in-person attendance.

Substitutions for Core Courses (from outside or within JHU) are not accepted with the exception of Introduction to Social Statistics (see below for more detail).

To count toward degree requirements, Core Curriculum courses other than the Proseminar and Colloquium (which are graded Pass/Fail only) must be passed with a grade of B- or higher.

2. Electives

Five elective graduate courses are required. Graduate courses have a 600-level designation (230.6xx). However, 400-level (e.g., 230.4xx) courses are also eligible for fulfillment of the five elective courses. In exceptional cases, students may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to count a 300-level (230.3xx) course as an elective. This requires permission from the course instructor and student advisor, as well as an explanation for why they should take a 300-level course and what extra work they will conduct to make it equivalent to a doctoral-level course.

At least four of the five electives must be a JHU Sociology Department course (i.e. with a 230 designation) or taught by a faculty member of the JHU Sociology Department. In exceptional cases, one of the five electives may be fulfilled with an independent study course within the Department. Independent studies must be taught by a faculty member of the Sociology Department and approved by the DGS, as stipulated elsewhere in this Handbook.

Beginning with the 2026-27 incoming cohort, two of the five electives must be fulfilled by the following Core-Elective Course options:

- Economic Sociology (230.682)
- Political Sociology (230.651)
- Global/Transnational Sociology (230.625)

- Social Inequality (230.612)

The Core Courses are taught on a regular rotation and are designed to offer students a broad overview in subsections of sociology in which the department has particular strengths.

Substitutions for Elective Courses from outside JHU are not accepted.

To count toward degree requirements, electives must be passed with a grade of B- or higher except in cases where the course is offered only on a Pass/Fail basis (e.g., as is the case with some courses offered in other departments).

3. Commitment to Full-Time Study

Students pursuing their Ph.D. in the Department are required to carry a full-time equivalent academic workload throughout the Ph.D. program. In general, full-time study refers to a minimum of nine credits (the equivalent of three courses) in a semester and 6 credits in the summer terms. Acceptable activities include regular courses, the TRP seminar, TRP Research Paper, dissertation research, and the dissertation fellowship semester.

4. First-Year Research Apprenticeship (230.804)

During their first year in the program, students are required to develop practical research expertise through professional-level participation in a research project under supervision of a faculty member of the Sociology Department. The first-year Research Apprenticeship is designed to help first-year students develop a direct relationship with a department faculty member. While students are not required to keep their first-year faculty supervisor as their dissertation mentor, many do. "Professional-level" work excludes purely clerical tasks and includes activities such as data analysis, literature reviews, and non-routine data processing or coding. The standard for certification is "substantial research accomplishment" as evaluated by the full-time faculty supervisor. All first-year students must register for the Research Apprenticeship (230.804) under the section for their faculty mentor. The first-year Research Apprenticeship is part of students' academic requirement. At the end of every Research Apprenticeship, the faculty supervisor for a first-year RAship will place a letter in the student's file that describes the Research Apprenticeship's duties and evaluates their performance.

5. Teaching Assistantships (230.811) and Departmental Research Assistantships (230.801)

As part of their preparation for future academic work, graduate students are required to serve as teaching assistants (TAs) for at least six semesters. TAs include a variety of options such as: large introductory courses where students lead their own sections, small seminar-style advanced classes, and an Office Assistantship designed to help students build departmental community and learn how academic departments work. For all students, at least one TAs in Introductory Sociology is strongly recommended.

If a student is able to secure alternative funding as a Research Assistant (RA) on a department faculty member's grant or through an external grant, students may apply to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to except out of a maximum of 4 semesters of TAs.

TAs are required to register for 230.811 and RAs are required to register for 230.801. Since TAs and RAs count toward students' employment contract, they do not count toward the required full-time study credit hours. However, satisfactory performance as a TA or RA is an important academic requirement of the program. At the

end of every TAship or RAship, the faculty member who was assisted will place a letter in the student's file that describes the TA's duties and evaluates their performance and give a grade of pass/fail.

To assist students in their TAships, the JHU Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (CTEI) offers training workshops, which we encourage all current and prospective TAs to attend. All first-time TAs are required to take the online CTEI Teaching Assistant Orientation course. In addition, the JHU Center for Language Education offers courses designed specifically to help prepare international students for their classroom duties. All students whose native language is other than English are required, during their first year of graduate study, to take the screening assessment offered by the Center for Language Education. The result of this assessment will determine whether enrollment in the English Language Program for International TA's is required.

6. Residence Requirement and Eligibility for Non-Resident Status

The Johns Hopkins University requires a minimum of two consecutive semesters of registration as a full-time, resident graduate student for all doctoral degrees. The Department of Sociology requires full-time residency while students are taking classes. After coursework is completed, students must maintain one of three residency statuses until all remaining requirements for the degree have been completed and the University Graduate Board has been so notified by the Department Chair. The three residency statuses are: 1) Full-time; 2) Non-Resident (usually requested when students are away from Baltimore for fieldwork or family reasons; students in Baltimore may also request non-resident status if they are not taking courses for official credit and/or are not being employed as a TA or as a course instructor by JHU); and 3) Term Leave of Absence or LOA (usually requested when medical conditions, compulsory military service, or personal or family hardship prevent students from continuing their graduate studies). Students on Non-Resident status are charged a reduced tuition, which will be covered by the University during years 1-5. Students on Term Leave of Absence are not charged tuition.

Further information on University Residence Requirements can be found at:

<http://www.graduateboard.jhu.edu/residence.htm>

Applications for non-resident status and LOAs can be found at:

<http://www.graduateboard.jhu.edu/images/AppLOA.pdf>

7. Foreign Language

The Sociology Department no longer requires certification of fluency in a foreign language as part of the Ph.D. requirements. Students should be proactive in gaining the language skills necessary to conduct their TRP and dissertation research, and they should work closely with their advisor to determine whether additional language education is needed.

8. Trial Research Paper (TRP)

The Trial Research Paper (TRP) serves several important purposes. First, it gives students hands on experience with the academic research and writing process—i.e. analyzing the existing literature, formulating a research question, creating a research design, finding necessary data, conducting data analysis, and writing up the project in a coherent and succinct form. Second, it gives students the opportunity to write an academic paper that they can present at a conference and/or publish in an academic journal, an important qualification for competitive positions on the academic job market. Third, for many students, it allows them to “test the waters” in a methodology, a geographic area, or a topic that they might pursue for their dissertation research. The research

for a TRP project should be more extensive than that required for a course paper, but less than that required for a dissertation.

The TRP requirement consists of three parts: completion of the TRP course, a written research paper, and (beginning with the 2026-27 incoming cohort) an oral examination of the paper. The goal for students is to write a draft of the paper in the TRP course in the spring of their second year, edit the paper in the summer after the course, and complete and defend the paper by the end of the fall of their third year in the program. Failure to complete these requirements by the spring of their third year in the program could result in a student being placed on academic probation. To be removed from probation, a student must successfully complete the TRP research paper and (beginning with the 2026-27 incoming cohort) an oral examination. In some instances, the "pass" for the paper and/or the oral examination may be conditional on satisfactory completion of specific additional work required by the examining committee.

TRP Advisor and Second Reader. By the beginning of the spring semester of their first year, students should invite a faculty member of the Sociology department to supervise the design and execution of the TRP project as their TRP Advisor. Faculty members whose positions entitle them to serve as dissertation advisors are eligible to serve as TRP Advisors. To facilitate progress on the TRP in their second and third years in the program, students register for courses that consist of one-on-one meetings with their TRP Advisor: TRP Research Paper I, 230.815 (fall of second year); TRP Research Paper II, 230.816 (spring of second year); and, if needed, TRP Research Paper III, 230.817 (fall of third year). Students should register for the section of these courses taught by their TRP Advisor.

During their second year, the TRP Advisor and student should also identify a Second Reader to be involved in the development and completion of the TRP. The TRP Advisor, Second Reader, and student should jointly develop a schedule and agree on responsibilities. With the advice and mentorship of their TRP Advisor and Second Reader, the student is responsible for gathering sufficient literature, data, and preliminary analyses to successfully complete the TRP course in the spring of their second year. The TRP Advisor and Second Reader then help the student revise and complete their TRP paper and (beginning with the 2026-27 incoming cohort) prepare for and conduct the TRP oral examination by the fall of their third year. At the completion of the TRP, the TRP Advisor and Second Reader must submit a copy of the TRP Completion Certification Report and the TRP itself to the Department Office Manager.

TRP Precis. By the end of the spring semester of their first year, students should submit to the Department Office Manager a one-page precis, stating their research question, how it fits into existing scholarly literature, and the data they intend to use to answer their question. The precis should be signed by both the student and the TRP Advisor.

TRP Research. The project does not require collecting original data and can, therefore, rely on existing data. The department expects that by the end of the summer between their first and second years, students have identified an existing dataset or gathered all original data necessary to write a complete TRP paper. Most students therefore devote the summer between their first and second years to data-gathering or working with their data source.

TRP Seminar Course. In the spring of their second year, students take the TRP seminar class (230.685). The course offers students a community of fellow TRP-writers and helps students through the process of drafting a research article. With the mentorship of their TRP Advisor and Second Reader, students work on their TRP over the course of the semester. Therefore, students should have sufficient data and preliminary analyses before the course begins to enable them to draft a paper during the semester. Each student is expected to submit a draft TRP by the end of the course to be graded by the course instructor. This course is graded pass/fail and does not count toward the fulfillment of the elective courses required for the Ph.D., but does count towards the nine credits for full-time enrollment.

TRP Research Paper. All TRPs must include a written research paper that is completed by the end of the Fall semester of the student's third year. Examples of TRP approaches include (but are not limited to): a theoretical/meta-analysis of existing scholarship, a quantitative analysis of an existing dataset, a qualitative

document analysis of documents such as newspaper articles, a historical trend analysis of existing historical data (for example, in government reports or online archives), or a qualitative analysis of interviews and/or short ethnographic fieldwork. In rare cases, it may be necessary to collect additional data between the second and third years; but students should plan to have all data that they need before the TRP seminar and not depend on collecting more data.

TRP Oral Examination. Beginning with the incoming 2026-27 cohort, all students must pass an oral examination of their TRP by the end of the Fall semester of their third year. The purpose of the examination is to measure the student's understanding of the literature, their methods, and the implications of their research. The exam also offers an opportunity for the student and committee to jointly discuss ideas for the student's future research and consider whether to pursue a publishable article out of the project or whether it would be better to move on. The TRP oral exam is intended to replace multiple rounds of revision requests from individual advisors with a 2-hour in-person discussion that can co-produce advice. The oral exam will be conducted by the student's TRP Advisor, Second Reader, and a Department Reader, a faculty member chosen by the DGS from faculty who are not on leave. The Department Reader would be assigned after the end of the spring semester of the student's second year and would not have provided feedback on the paper during drafting. The Department Reader allows the student to get practice defending their research to someone in a different area with little to no prior knowledge of the project and will help students engage with sociological work regardless of method or subfield, an extremely important skill for the job market).

9. Dissertation

The dissertation requirement is met by producing a substantial original contribution to the scientific literature in sociology and by passing a university-level examination, described below. The dissertation requirement is met when the student's two dissertation advisors certify in a written advisors' report to the University's Graduate Board that an acceptable dissertation, publishable in whole or in part, has been produced.

a. Dissertation Advisors. By January of their third year, students should have consulted with department faculty about research topics and invited two regular Department faculty members to serve as Chair (or first advisor) and Reader (or second advisor) of their dissertation committee. By September of the fourth year, students should secure their third reader from the Department faculty. In the event of a change of topic or other justifiable cause, a student may change their advisors with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair. Work on the dissertation should be carried out in close consultation with the Department advisors.

b. Dissertation Literature Review and Proposal. The student's dissertation proposal, written in consultation with at least two dissertation advisors, should include a clear description of the intellectual problem to be addressed and its significance, a review of the relevant literature, a description of data to be used, and analytical procedures to be employed. Students should submit a literature review to their dissertation advisors by May of their third year. They should complete their proposal by January 31st of their fourth year. Dissertation proposals normally should not exceed 40 double-spaced pages.

c. Department Defense of Dissertation Proposal. A two-hour oral dissertation proposal defense is scheduled by the student's dissertation advisors after the advisors have indicated that a written version of the proposal is ready for an oral defense. The purpose of the oral defense is to establish the student's readiness to proceed with the dissertation research. In some instances, the "pass" may be conditional on satisfactory completion of specific additional work required by the examining committee. Ordinarily, the examining committee consists of the three departmental dissertation advisors (first and second advisors plus the department reader). The defense begins with an oral presentation by the student of no longer than 10 minutes that reviews the major points of the proposal. A copy of the approved dissertation proposal must be submitted to the Department.

Students are expected to have defended their dissertation proposal in the Department by January 31 of the fourth year of graduate study. This deadline must be met to maintain eligibility for fifth year funding; see Section V on funding, below. In exceptional circumstances, students may request, from the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), an extension of the deadline for the defense of the dissertation proposal to June 1st of their 4th year. This request must be justified in writing and endorsed by the student's dissertation advisors.

d. Graduate Board Oral (GBO) Examination (Dissertation Defense): To receive a Ph.D., students are required to pass a university-level Final GBO Examination of a completed dissertation. The GBO examination committee consists of a total of five examiners: the three Department advisors and two faculty members from outside the department. Generally, the University requires that at least one of the outside department members be either an Associate or Full professor. Two alternates also are required, one from the Department and one from outside the Department. The first dissertation advisor chooses the outside examiners, in consultation with the second advisor and the student. (For eligibility criteria for GBO committee members, see <http://www.graduateboard.jhu.edu/examProcedures.htm>).

GBO Examinations are held throughout the academic year but must be scheduled with the Graduate Board a minimum of three weeks in advance of the exam. The principal dissertation advisor or department staff is responsible for contacting prospective outside examiners to request their participation on the Graduate Board Oral examining committee; students are not permitted to do so. When these arrangements have been completed, the Department transmits the necessary documentation to the Graduate Board. A tight schedule of deadlines governs the Final GBO Examination: In order to be eligible for the January or May graduation dates, the exam and the advisors' letter must be completed and submitted by the posted Graduate Board Office deadlines for that particular semester, both of which are strictly enforced. A copy of the student's dissertation proposal, in the case of Preliminary GBO Examinations, and of the completed dissertation, in the case of Final GBO Examinations, must be made available to each member of the Examining Committee, including the alternates, at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination.

University guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation can be found at:

<http://library.jhu.edu/services/cbo/guidelines.html>. Students should consult Department staff for information concerning dissertation delivery deadlines for the library. The Department will procure one permanently bound copy of the dissertation for the Department archives.

C. Master's Degree Requirements

Upon satisfactory completion of the seven Core Curriculum courses, the Master's Degree may be awarded to: a) doctoral students in good standing who request it; and b) students who are leaving the doctoral program for personal reasons or by decision of the faculty.

D. Exemptions

Exemption from Introduction to Social Statistics Requirement

Students who have already completed introductory statistics at another institution may request to substitute Introduction to Social Statistics (230.600) with a higher-level statistics course. Substitutions must be taken during the fall semester of the first year.

Requests for substitutions must include information on their previous coursework (e.g., syllabi, transcript, and textbook titles) and be made in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) prior to their first semester of

matriculation. Substitution is approved in writing only where the DGS and faculty instructor teaching the Introduction to Social Statistics course find that the previous coursework involved statistical training at a comparable level of sophistication using sociological concepts and indices.

No other core curriculum or elective course exemptions or substitutions are permitted.

E. Graduate Credit Hours System

Overview

In line with the KSAS Graduate Credit Hours System, a student must take 9-20 credit hours during a semester to be considered a full-time student. All academic activities must be assigned appropriate credit hours. A rule-of-thumb formula for calculating credit hours is: (1 hour of instruction) + (2 hours of independent student effort) = 1 credit hour.

In addition, summer is a required term of enrollment for all KSAS PhD students. To meet the full-time enrollment requirement, students should register for 6 credits during summer terms. No additional tuition is assessed for departmental course registration (dissertation research, etc.) in the summer term.

Student-advisor pre-registration meetings

Before each semester's registration period, all students should meet with their academic advisor to allocate upcoming credit hours for the next four semesters, or for program completion.

Fixed Credit Hours

All core and elective courses in the Sociology Graduate Curriculum are designated with a fixed number of credit hours.

- A 150-minute course, e.g., "Sociological Analysis" (230.643): 3 credit hours
- A 180-minute course plus 30-minute intensive learning, e.g., "Panel Data Analysis" (230.615): 4 credit hours
- Independent Study (230.800): 3 credit hours
- TRP Research: TRP Research Paper I (230.815), TRP Research Paper II (230.816), and TRP Research Paper III (230.817): 3 credit hours
- Research Apprenticeship, Research Assistantships, and Teaching Assistantships: 3 credit hours. Research Apprenticeship, Research Assistantship and Teaching Assistantship credits do not count towards the 9-credits required for full-time enrollment.
- Proseminar: 1 credit hour
- Colloquium: 0.5 credit hour

Variable Credit Hours

- Dissertation Research (230.802) and Dissertation Fellowship (230.810): 3- 20 credit hours. These credits can be used to ensure full-time enrollment once all other program requirements have been completed.

Semiannual Credit Hours Plan

- Year-1 FA: 2-3 regular courses, proseminar, colloquium, Research Apprenticeship, totaling 10.5-13.5 credit hours
- Year-1 SP: 2-3 regular courses, colloquium, Research Apprenticeship, totaling 9.5-12.5 credit hours
- Year-2 FA: 2-3 regular course, colloquium, TRP Research Paper I, TA or RA, totaling 12.5-15.5 credit hours
- Year-2 SP: 1-2 regular courses, colloquium, TRP Seminar, TRP Research Paper II, TA or RA, totaling 12.5-15.5 credit hours

- Year-3 FA: 1-3 regular courses, TRP Research Paper III if needed, Dissertation research, TA or RA, totaling 12-20 credit hours
- Year-3 SP: 0-2 regular courses, Dissertation research, TA or RA, totaling 12-20 credit hours
- FA/SP in Year 4: Dissertation research, TA or RA, 12-20 credit hours
- FA/SP in Year 5: Dissertation Writing Fellowship, 9-20 credit hours

Faculty Advising and Mentoring Commitment

Students are responsible for working with their advisors to chart out a study program during their years at JHU. Advisors only release their students' registration holds on the Student Information System (SIS) once they approve of their semesterly plan. To avoid late registration charges, it is imperative that these advisement meetings be held well before the registration deadline.

During their first semester in the program, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) serves as the initial faculty advisor for the entire first year cohort. Responsibilities include overseeing the student's program of study, monitoring that requirements are being completed in a timely fashion, and assisting them with placement for their first-year Research Apprenticeships. Supervisors for first-year Research Apprenticeships will be held with faculty directly connected with students' areas of research.

Between the fall and spring semesters of their first year of study, students choose, with the assistance of the DGS, an individual faculty advisor from among the full-time faculty of the Department, who then assumes responsibility for their advising. The student and their advisor work together to clarify the student's goals for the next few years in the program and chart a course of action. The faculty advisor's scope of responsibility includes serving as a resource for matters pertaining to the student's intellectual development and helping students plan their courses, complete their TRP, and plan for their summer research.

By their third year, students should select their first and second advisors for their dissertation committee. It is mandatory for the student and their faculty advisor to discuss the student's progress and plans prior to each semester.

In addition to receiving feedback from their individual advisors, all students receive feedback from the department faculty as a whole. Each academic year, students are invited to submit a self-evaluation for all faculty to read. As well, the faculty meet to evaluate each student's progress in the program including their course work, TRP, Dissertation Proposal, and dissertation completion. Faculty also review students' performance in their work roles as RAs and TAs, and their participation in department life. The results of this evaluation are communicated to each student by letter from the Chair at the end of each academic year.

Policy on Mentoring Commitments for PhD Students and Faculty Advisors

<https://provost.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Policy-on-Mentoring-Commitments-for-PhD-students-and-Faculty-Advisors.pdf>

Policy on Annual Academic & Professional Development Discussions for PhD Students & Advisor

<https://provost.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Policy-on-Annual-Academic-and-Professional-Development-Discussions-for-PhD-Students-and-Their-Faculty-Advisors.pdf>

III. ACADEMIC STANDING

A. Academic Probation

A student whose academic performance is deemed unsatisfactory is subject to academic probation by the Department. This includes probation that is prompted by the student's failure to meet degree requirements and deadlines. Satisfactory grades are important to remain in good academic standing, however, passing grades alone may not always signify satisfactory professional development, nor be sufficient to warrant a favorable judgment from the faculty regarding a student's prospects for successfully completing the Ph.D. program.

If a student is placed on probation, it may be coupled with the student no longer being eligible to receive Departmental funding (see "Length of Eligibility," p. 13). If the student successfully defends their dissertation proposal in the fifth year, then as of the date of the successful passing of that exam, the student is eligible for reinstatement as a candidate for Departmental funding. Such students are placed in the Departmental funding queue as having a status equivalent to a 6th and higher year student.

Except in extreme cases, students may not be placed on probation before the end of their second semester in the Department or dismissed before the end of their third semester. A student may be placed on probation at any time of the year, but it would normally occur following either the fall or spring semester. Ordinarily, dismissal is considered only after a probationary period. Exceptions in which dismissal without prior probation is an option include cases of Academic and Graduate Student Misconduct (see Section C below).

Decisions regarding probation and dismissal are made at faculty meetings held as close as possible to the end of the semester, so that course work from that semester may be used in the evaluation. However, if circumstances require, a special faculty meeting may be held to consider problem situations. When the faculty deem a student's performance so wanting as to warrant probation or dismissal, the Chair will notify the student, in writing, of the faculty's action, explain the basis of that action, and, in the case of probation, outline the conditions for returning to good academic standing. This will also require a meeting between the student and their faculty advisor. A copy of the letter will be forwarded to the Dean for Research and Graduate Education in the School of Arts and as well as the Office of Student Financial Services. The probationary period (i.e., the time given to meet the conditions set out for returning to good academic standing) must span at least four months and would typically end at the completion of an academic semester. The department reserves the right to withhold financial aid from students on probation (financial aid is addressed in Section V, below).

The faculty reviews the status of students on probation at the end of each semester. Within one month following the conclusion of the probationary period, the Department will inform the student of their status based upon whether the student has met the requirements as stated in the probation letter. When the faculty meet to deliberate the case, a member of the faculty will serve as the student's advocate and a decision is made to continue probation, withdraw probation, or dismiss the student.

At the time a student is placed on probation, the Chair, in consultation with the student, will select a faculty member to serve as the student's advisor throughout the period of probation. This advisor will normally serve as the student's advocate at the faculty meeting when that student's case is discussed.

Academic probation is regarded as a warning rather than an academic censure. Students on probation are eligible to participate in all aspects of student life. However, the Department reserves the right to limit certain program-related activities (e.g., service on a committee).

Students who have been removed from probation may not be placed on probation again unless there is new evidence of poor work. Students who have completed all department and University requirements, other than the dissertation, may not be placed on probation or dismissed except by invoking the standard elapsed-time provision (12 years from the time of matriculation, excluding any approved leaves of absence – see the section below on Residence Requirements) or other University-wide regulations governing doctoral candidates.

B. Graduate Student Misconduct

Academic Misconduct is grounds for probation or dismissal, including dismissal without a prior probationary period. Graduate student misconduct includes academic misconduct, including but not limited to, the following: cheating or facilitating cheating; plagiarism; reuse of assignments; unauthorized collaboration; alteration of graded assignments; knowingly furnishing false information to any agent of the University for inclusion in academic records; unfair competition; lying; and falsification, forgery, alteration, destruction or misuse of official University documents or seal. Graduate student misconduct also includes the failure to comply with University or governmental rules, regulations, and laws, and the disregard of the norms of expected conduct, including nonacademic conduct that would adversely affect the integrity and reputation of the University as a whole or the Krieger and Whiting Schools. For the University policies concerning misconduct and procedures for handling misconduct, see: <http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/graduate-specific-policies/>

C. Academic Dismissal

If the Department faculty decides to dismiss a student following academic probation or for misconduct, this will be done with a formal letter citing the reason for dismissal and requires a meeting between the student and their faculty advisor. This letter will contain information regarding the readmission process, if deemed appropriate. A copy of the letter will be forwarded to the Dean for Research and Graduate Education, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Financial Services, and the Office of International Students and Scholars Services (if appropriate). Academic dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript at the request of the program and with the approval of the Dean. A student may appeal this decision, first to the Department Chair and then to the Dean.

For the University policies concerning dismissal, see: <http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/grad-students/graduate-specific-policies/#misconduct>

IV. FINANCIAL AID

A. Statement of Intent

The Department strives to provide five years (ten semesters) of financial support for all full-time Ph.D. students, including tuition, mandatory fees, health insurance and a twelve-month stipend, so long as students remain in good academic standing and are making acceptable progress toward completing degree requirements. The Department feels very strongly that all students in the program are equally deserving and should receive the same standard financial aid package. Exceptions are uncommon, but can include salary supplements provided by the Dean's office, research assistantships funded by faculty grants, unusually onerous duties associated with departmentally funded Teaching Assistantships (TAs) or Research Assistantships/Apprenticeships, external fellowships and externally funded Traineeships.

Two of the five years of financial aid (four of the ten semesters) are in the form of fellowships. Likewise, funding in the summer months is in the form of fellowships. All first-year students receive their first two semesters of funding as fellowships (where they must work 20hrs/week as a Research Apprentice with a faculty member of the Department of Sociology). Students normally receive the third and fourth semesters of fellowship funding (where they have 0 hours of work obligations outside their own dissertation research) at a time that is optimal to facilitate their dissertation (and occasionally TRP) research and writing. Most students take their third and fourth semesters of fellowship funding in their 5th year. Requests for the third and fourth semesters of funding with 0 hours of work obligation should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) by the end of the spring semester of the preceding year, after consultation with the student's faculty advisor. The Department tries to

accommodate requests, but flexibility is needed when the volume of requests for a given semester creates unworkable problems in some other area, for example, by leaving the Department short of TAs. Under such circumstances, priority will be accorded to advanced students and those whose dissertation research entails timing constraints.

Financial aid is intended to support full-time graduate study for the academic year. University guidelines stipulate that full-time students may not work more than 20 hours per week during the academic year. Therefore, TAs, Research Apprenticeships, and RAships stipulated in their employment contracts will be for a maximum of 20 hours per week. Students are funded on a year-round basis, and therefore the same 20 hours per week paid work limit applies in the summer, winter vacation, and intersession. Students should be especially wary of outside work commitments that do not align with the purposes of graduate study. The student's faculty advisor, as part of planning for the upcoming year, must approve outside work commitments. The hours a student works at multiple (concurrent) jobs within the Hopkins community (including departmental teaching assistant and research assistantship positions) all count toward the weekly limit and are tracked. Therefore, when a student's work commitments are considered excessive, outside activities will have to be curtailed.

The Department's overriding concern is that students move through the graduate program in a timely fashion. This requires full-time commitment. The Department does not provide financial support for part-time study and will reduce or eliminate its financial commitments to students whose total work commitment during the academic year, inside and outside the University, exceeds 20 hours per week during the academic year.

B. Eligibility

To be eligible for full financial aid, students must be full-time doctoral students, in residence and in good academic standing. Students on Term Leave of Absence are not eligible for assistance. Students on non-Resident status are eligible for tuition support and fellowship stipends, but the University does not allow non-resident students to work on campus as teaching assistants or lecturers.

C. Length of Eligibility

Financial aid ordinarily is for five years, with eligibility for fifth year funding contingent on passing the oral examination of the dissertation proposal at the departmental level by January 31st of their 4th year of graduate study.

If Departmental support is declined in one or more semesters because the student has secured funding for graduate study from outside the university (e.g., a non-university funded fellowship), the department will strive to extend eligibility for departmental funding for a period equivalent to the semester(s) the student is off funding, but not to exceed one year. For example, a student fully supported for a year by an outside dissertation fellowship in his or her fifth year may receive departmental funding in the sixth year, but a student funded in their fourth and fifth years by an outside dissertation fellowship would be eligible for one additional year (not two additional years) of departmental support.

Funding extensions beyond the fifth year are not guaranteed: they depend on student progress (as determined by the Department Chair, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor) and the financial situation of the Department (as determined by the Department Chair).

The Department Chair, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor, makes final decisions about eligibility and the granting of financial aid.

D. Types of Support

1. Tuition Fellowships

Tuition fellowships cover university tuition. Students who receive fellowship stipends, departmental teaching assistantships (TAs) and research assistantships (RAs) are generally also awarded tuition fellowships.

2. University Teaching Assistantships/Instructorships

The faculty member having primary responsibility for each course specifies duties for the TA. Average time spent in class attendance, discussion sections, grading and counseling is 20 hours per week on a semester basis. TA responsibilities are not finished until final grades have been submitted, and so may extend into the exam period. TAs pay is subject to federal and state taxes. For TAs in other departments, the duties, conditions of employment, etc. are governed by the policies of that department.

All TAs and Instructorships that are funded through the University are counted as financial aid when determining whether a student has exhausted their five-year eligibility for financial aid.

The STAR Teacher Awards Fellowship are competitive fellowships that provide the opportunity for advanced graduate students to design and teach undergraduate courses. Fellows teach a one-semester course. Salary is set by the Dean's office. One of the primary purposes of the STAR Fellowships is to prepare graduate students for their future teaching responsibilities. Applicants must be nominated and supervised by a faculty mentor. The letter of nomination from the faculty mentor should explain the relevance of the proposed course to the student's area of specialization and its importance for the department's undergraduate teaching program. Applicants must have completed the dissertation proposal and passed the dissertation proposal oral defense prior to teaching in this program.

The Department also occasionally hosts an internal teaching competition for advanced graduate students. For example, the Doris Roberts Entwisle Graduate Teaching Fellowship, in honor of Doris Entwisle, provides a one semester financial aid package and the opportunity to teach a course of the student's own design in the area of their dissertation research. All proposals for independent teaching under the Department's auspices require faculty sponsorship and oversight.

3. Research Assistantships

Research assistantships (RAs) are considered financial aid, whether funded through grants, contracts or General Funds administered by the Department or the University. This includes projects directed by the Department's faculty, including faculty holding part-time and joint appointments, as well as projects located at University research centers on the Homewood Campus, the Bloomberg School of Public Health and the School of Medicine. Research assistants are chosen by the project director. Number of hours worked and wage or salary level is a decision based partly on the amount of funding available and partly on a mutual agreement between the project director and the graduate student, but RAs covering student stipends entail a work commitment averaging 20 hours weekly on a semester basis, the same as TAs. Pay is subject to federal and state taxes. Additionally, RAs are not obligated to work on University holidays, Fall break day and during Spring break, and should be accorded two weeks of vacation during the academic year (September 1 – May 31) (a list of University holidays is posted). The RA and project director should work out details of the vacation schedule and other conditions of the RA (e.g., the weekly work schedule) before the work commences. The scope of work and the time commitment should be determined by the supervising investigator and agreed to by the student before work commences.

E. Assignment of Financial Aid

TA and RA assignments usually are announced during the semester preceding the semester to which they apply. The work assignment will vary as a function of departmental need for student services, the faculty's needs, and a student's needs, interests, and level of preparation to perform various duties. In making assignments, the Department strives to match student preferences and faculty needs, but the two may not always align, and even when they do align, the department may not always be able to accommodate them.

For first-year Research Apprenticeship assignments, the Department will solicit information about apprenticeship opportunities available for students from faculty, including adjunct faculty. Students will receive this information and indicate their preferences for sponsors/projects. Faculty likewise will indicate their preferences for particular students. With that information, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair will strive to best match student and faculty interests and the opportunities available.

After the first year, students are encouraged to seek Research Assistantships with faculty who have grant monies or other funds to pay for their work. Though the Department will not ordinarily fund Research Assistantships beyond the first year, it will seek to provide students with information about potential research positions.

V. PhD Student Employee Union and Collective Bargaining Agreement

Information about the TRU-JHU PhD Student Union and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) can be found on this website: <https://provost.jhu.edu/education/graduate-and-professional-education/phd-union/>.

- PhD students in the Sociology PhD program who receive work appointments and/or health insurance premium subsidy through Johns Hopkins University are under the Collective Bargaining Agreement dated March 29, 2024-June 30, 2027.
- This agreement has established wages, work hours, benefits, and conditions of appointment, many of these are described below.
- Eligible PhD students will be contacted by the Union and may elect to join the union and pay dues or pay agency fees. All eligible PhD students are under the CBA, regardless of Union membership.
- This agreement only covers work, which is limited to 20 hours per week on average for base funding. A PhD Student Employee may voluntarily elect to participate in supplemental-funded activities beyond the 20 hours per week on average.
- Academic policies are defined elsewhere in the handbook/catalogue/program materials.

This is just a summary, not the actual terms of the CBA. To review the actual terms of the CBA please click on this [link](#)). Not all elements of the agreement are summarized below; please reach out to the department DGS with questions.

CBA Summary

- Compensation
 - Academic year (AY) 25-26: \$50,000 effective July 1, 2025
 - The hourly appointment rate will be \$27.03/hour, at minimum for teaching/research supplemental appointments.
 - Minimum 5 years of guaranteed funding for all PhD student employees in the Whiting School of Engineering, the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Medicine.

- PhD student employees with external awards paid through the University will have their compensation increased to the minimum rate during a period of guaranteed funding.
- Benefits
 - Enrollment information will be available through [HR Benefits for Students and Learners](#) and communications will be sent in advance of benefits election periods.
 - Paid by the University
 - The University will pay the premiums for University Student Health Benefits Plan (SHBP), including dental and vision coverage, employee coverage for employees in full-time resident status during the terms of full appointments.
 - PhD student employees will receive subsidies of \$4,500 per child per year for eligible children under 6 years and \$3,000 per child aged 6-18 years or adult dependent, with a maximum of \$12,000 per family per year, in installments throughout the year.
 - Reimbursed by University/Departments
 - The University will pay the cost of the health insurance premiums for eligible dependent children and spouses unable to work in the US, including dental and vision. Reimbursement procedures will be available on the [HR Benefits website](#).
 - International students will be eligible to apply to a yearly fund to cover required visa fees.
 - Students will be eligible for reimbursement for MTA All Access College Transit Passes or DC U-Passes. Registration and enrollment information will be available on the [HR Benefits website](#).
- Time Off/Vacation/Leaves
 - All University holidays are recognized.
 - PhD student employees have at least 15 vacation days per year. Additional time can be given by a supervisor.
 - PhD student employees receive 15 sick days per year with an additional 5 days per dependent. Student employees should report their absence as soon as possible to their work supervisor.
 - PhD student employees receive 5 days of bereavement leave for the passing of immediate and extended family members and close friends, with 1 additional day for those needing international travel.
 - International PhD student employees who are required to travel out of the country in order to maintain their immigration status necessary to be able to continue their program at the University are eligible for up to fourteen (14) days off with pay during the period of such travel.
 - Parents are eligible for 8 weeks of paid leave following birth or adoption, with an additional 4 weeks for parents who have just given birth. New Child Accommodation applies to the academic, not work, PhD student experience.
 - Employees will make a written request for vacation days in advance to the designated supervisor and receive written approval, which will not be unreasonably withheld.
 - Employees with instructional responsibilities should not use vacation days in a way that would result in the diminution of those duties.
 - Leaves of absence, including family leave, medical leave, and personal leave, are governed by the applicable academic [divisional leave policies](#).
- Work Hours
 - No PhD student employee shall be required to perform work for more than 20 hours/week on average.

- Teaching appointments are included in the 20 hours of work that may be assigned. Academic coursework, exams, and academic research are in addition to this assigned 20 hours of work.
- There are no restrictions on work external to Hopkins except when decreed by funding source or visa status.
- All work appointments (baseline funding or supplemental funding) require an appointment letter. Appointment letters will define the expectations and requirements of the teaching, research, or other University activity appointment. Students should contact their department DGS with any questions.
- Union Representation
 - All directory information will be sent to the Union unless restricted. Supplemental information will require a FERPA consent form available on SIS self-service.
 - Union Representatives are current PhD Student Employees who are elected/selected to help their fellow PhD Student Employees navigate work-related disciplines, grievances, and other procedural/policy issues. Contact TRU-JHU with questions about specific Union Representatives.
 - TRU-JHU Contact Information
 - Website: <https://trujhu.org/>
 - Phone: (443) 281-9462
 - Address: TRU-UE Local 197, PO Box 41149, Baltimore, MD 21203
 - Email: trujhu@gmail.com

APPENDIX A: Additional Department Facilities and Resources

A. Department Reference Materials

The Department archives a bound copy of each completed dissertation. These copies are filed in the Department office and can be examined there by students and faculty. Archives are also maintained of dissertation proposals and trial research papers (TRPs).

B. Milton S. Eisenhower Library

Each year the Chair selects a member of the faculty as liaison with the MSE Library to aid in the Library's selection of new books and journals of relevance to the discipline. Students may request library acquisitions through the Department's faculty representative. Special requests for new materials can be directed to the MSEL Resource Librarian for the Social Sciences (410-516-4156).

C. Seminars

In addition to the Department Colloquium, seminars and meetings may be scheduled throughout the year by Department faculty. In addition, the department's Professional Development Committee organizes professional development seminars each academic year. These seminars address topics including publishing in academic journals, participating in professional conferences, research funding opportunities, and the job market. All resident graduate students are expected to attend these seminars.

D. Computer Facilities

All JHU IT Resources can be found at my.jh.edu – Technology.