

ANNUAL REVIEW OF MASTER'S DEGREE STUDENTS

The Department of Sociology has a long-standing tradition of conducting an annual review of all graduate students during the spring semester, and the Faculty Senate's Graduate Studies Council has recommended guidelines for the implementation of such an annual review policy. The annual review of graduate students is intended to serve as a simple and effective mechanism for informing students about their progress toward the master's degree on a regular basis. It is helpful for students to know when they are doing well. If they are not doing well, it is crucial that they know clearly what is expected of them in order to improve. This review is a process in which the Central Graduate Committee inspects the student's program checklist and assesses academic performance, research accomplishments, and progress toward the degree. Satisfactory annual progress is a requirement for funding through the department and for maintaining good standing in the master's degree program. Please note, however, that the department cannot extend offers of funding to all graduate students who are making acceptable progress through the master's degree program.

A. Procedure

The Central Graduate Committee is responsible for reviewing the Department of Sociology's master's degree program checklist and student transcripts as well as graduate student records such as an updated vita, summary of accomplishments over the past year, and a plan for the coming academic year submitted on or before February 1 by each graduate student. The checklist is completed by the graduate advisor, using student transcripts along with other documents, and contains information on the major tasks that each student has completed at the time of the review. Timely completion of the tasks on the program checklist is essential for receiving a master's degree in sociology.

B. Progress toward the M.A. Degree

Each student will receive a letter by March 1 that summarizes the Central Graduate Committee's evaluation regarding progress toward the degree. After careful evaluation the committee will render one of the following decisions:

1. Acceptable Progress

The decision of the committee is that the student is making timely progress towards the degree. In other words, the student is maintaining the required minimum grade point average and is steadily completing requirements in the course of study for the master's degree.

2. Acceptable Progress with Concerns

The decision of the committee is that the student is making acceptable progress, but there are some deficiencies that may hinder future progress. For example, a core course may not have been completed in a timely manner or the student may have received an excessive number of incomplete grades. The decision letter will detail the committee's

concerns for the student and indicate what remedial action the student should immediately take in order to address such concerns.

3. Unacceptable Progress

The decision of the committee is that the student has encountered serious problems that may prevent completion of the degree. If the problems are not immediately corrected, the student is in danger of being dismissed from the program. Problems that may cause the committee to reach this decision include a GPA that falls below the minimum requirement, failure to appoint a thesis committee in a timely fashion, failure to complete required courses in a timely manner, an absence of a formal program of study on file, or a lack of continuous enrollment.

4. Dismissal

This is the gravest decision the committee can make with respect to a student's standing in the Department of Sociology's master's degree program. To be dismissed from the master's degree program, the student has received at least one letter from a previous review detailing unacceptable progress that needed to be addressed immediately. Since there was a failure to correct the problems and an effort to address the issues has not been evidenced, the graduate student will be removed from the program. This is not a decision the Department of Sociology takes lightly. All dismissed students will be notified of their loss of standing in the master's degree program. Letters will be sent to the student, department chair, the Graduate College, and the Registrar's Office, and a copy of the letter will also be placed in the student's graduate file. Once removed from the program, the student has the option to apply to the Central Graduate Committee for readmission.