

# Sociology MA

## Sociological Competency

### Goal Description:

Graduate students who complete the MA program in Sociology will be competent in sociological theory, methods, and analysis and demonstrate comprehension in a topical area or sociological pedagogy.

**Providing Department:** Sociology MA

### RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

#### 1. Sociological Competency In Research

##### Learning Objective Description:

On completing their graduate study in Sociology, M.A., students who have conducted a thesis or a systematic review of scholarship must demonstrate their ability to: (i) synthesize and critique empirical, sociological work in at least one substantive area (e.g., class, race/ethnicity, gender, community, social movements, etc.), (ii) develop and articulate appropriate research questions.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

##### 1.1. Thesis

##### Indicator Description:

A successful SOCI MA thesis will be at least 50 and not more than 100 printed pages of referenced, original SOCI research or a meta-analysis of existing research including primary and/or secondary data analysis. The thesis track entails two semesters of work. First, students must take SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum and successfully defend their thesis proposal. Following the successful defense of their thesis proposal, students then enroll in SOCI 6099 Thesis.

##### Criterion Description:

All students enrolled in SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum will successfully defend their thesis proposal.  
All students enrolled in SOCI 6099 will successfully defend their thesis.

The committee members of each student will assess their thesis proposal and thesis using the associated rubrics. See attached.

Attached Files

 [Attachment 1- Thesis Proposal rubric](#)

 [Attachment 2 -Thesis rubric](#)

##### Findings Description:

##### SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum

One student enrolled in SOCI 6098 during the 2022-2023 academic year.

- This student switched to complete the Capstone project.

##### SOCI 6099: Thesis

Term	# of students enrolled	# of successful completions
Fall 2022	3	2
Spring 2023	1	0

Among the four students who worked on their theses between Fall 2022-Spring 2023, two were scored as exemplary and two switched to complete the Capstone projects.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

1.1. Thesis

Action Description:

No action is needed at this time. With the implementation of the capstone option, more students are opting for the non-thesis track. The thesis track is primarily designed for students who intend to continue to a doctoral program.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

1.2. Systematic Review of Scholarship

Indicator Description:

A successful review of scholarship requires students to complete a thematic review of one topical area in sociology. A successful review consists of at least 40 peer-review publications and a paper of 25 double-spaced pages or longer that provides an in-depth review and evaluation of sociological research in the topical area. A successful systemic review of scholarship must include the following components: (1) identification of key findings, (2) summary of recent developments, (3) critical evaluation of the current research, (4) identification of future research areas, and (5) discussion of implications for policy and practice. Each review of scholarship will be evaluated by the student’s project director and two reviewers using the evaluation rubric (see attached).

Attached Files

 [review rubric Scholarship.docx](#)

Criterion Description:

All M.A. candidates completing a successful systemic review of scholarship must meet or exceed expectations on all rubric components.

Findings Description:

Five students completed the systemic review of scholarship during the 2022-2023 academic year.

	Systematic Literature Review	
Term	# of attempts	# of passes
Fall 2022	2	1
Spring 2023	4	4

One student failed her first attempt but passed her second attempt. All students passed or exceeded expectations in each of the areas on the rubric.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

1.2. Systematic Review of Scholarship

Action Description:

The department met or exceeded goals. The department will review the systematic review of scholarship requirements regarding streamlining the time to completion.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

2. Sociological Competency in Teaching

Learning Objective Description:

On completing their graduate study in Sociology, M.A., students who have conducted a teaching capstone must demonstrate understanding of sociological pedagogy and be able to develop sociological courses.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

2.1 Teaching Capstone

Indicator Description:

On completing their graduate study in Sociology, M.A., students who have conducted a teaching capstone must demonstrate understanding of sociological pedagogy and be able to develop two sociological courses. A successful teaching capstone must include the following components: (1) an essay on pedagogy, (2) a teaching philosophy statement, (3) two course syllabi, (4) assignments and lesson plans, (4) an essay justifying the design of the elective course, and (5) teaching demonstration. The student’s project director and two reviewers will evaluate each teaching capstone using the evaluation rubric (see attached).

Attached Files

 [portfolio\\_rubric.docx](#)

Criterion Description:

All M.A. candidates completing a successful teaching capstone must meet or exceed expectations on all rubric components.

Findings Description:

Six students completed the teaching capstone during the 2022-2023 academic year.

	Teaching Capstone	
Term	# of attempts	# of passes
Fall 2022	2	2
Spring 2023	4	4

All students met or exceeded expectations on each of the rubric components.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

2.0 Teaching Capstone

Action Description:

The department met or exceeded goals. The department will review the teaching capstone requirements regarding streamlining the time to completion.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Recruitment and Retention of High Quality Students

Performance Objective Description:

The Sociology Department aims to recruit and retain high-quality students for its Master of Arts Program.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Student Recruitment and Retention

KPI Description:

To assess student recruitment and retention, the following data will be collected and measured:

Recruitment:

1. Number of applications to the program
2. Number of students accepted.
3. Number of students denied
4. Number of students enrolled

Retention:

1. 1-year retention
2. 2-year retention
3. Average semester to graduation

**Target Description:**

Recruitment:

1. Number of applications to the program: 35
2. Number of students accepted: 25
3. Number of students enrolled: 20

Retention:

1. 1-year retention: 70%
2. 2-year retention 70%
3. Average semester to graduation: 9

**Results Description:**

See attached.

Attached Files

 [Copy of 22\\_23. CHSS Graduate Admissions, Retention, and Completion Template-Hsu-061523.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### **Student Recruitment and Retention**

#### **Action Description:**

The department did not meet its goals in terms of admissions or retention. The department will develop and implement a recruiting plan during the 2023-2024 academic year. The retention rate for students who entered the program in fall 2022 was also significantly below the program norm. While many of the students who left the program did so because of personal and extenuating circumstances, the program will work to develop support mechanisms to support student success and retention.

## **Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

#### **Closing Summary**

Facilitate the transition of graduate directors and develop a transition memo to aid in this process in the future. In addition, the new graduate director will identify a vision for the graduate programs in sociology moving forward.

Update website to feature additional student testimonials rather than faculty perspectives in the intent to bolster recruitment.

Develop a recruitment plan the MA and certificate programs.

Update assessment plan for 2022-23 to include the capstone project as a key performance indicator.

### **Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

1. Facilitate the transition of graduate directors and develop a transition memo to aid in this process in the future. In addition, the new graduate director will identify a vision for the graduate programs in sociology moving forward.

The Sociology Department successfully transitioned to a new Graduate Director: Dr. Tze-LI Hsu. As part of the transition process, Dr. Stykes developed a graduate director manual that outlines the responsibilities of the Sociology Graduate Director. In coordination with the Department Chair, the graduate director has submitted curriculum revisions to the MA program to the university. These include reducing the program credit hours to 30 and consolidating the methods class requirements into one course.

2. Update website to feature additional student testimonials rather than faculty perspectives in the intent to bolster recruitment.

The website has been updated. This includes a streamlining of the website and the featuring of students and program alumni. As the university has a new marketing officer and will be overhauling its whole web ecosystem, additional updates are on hold for the transition to the new university website.

3. Develop a recruitment plan for the MA and certificate programs.

A recruitment plan was delayed until the 2023-2024 academic year to allow the curriculum changes to occur. Reducing program credit hours to 30 will make the program more economically competitive. Once this change is approved, a recruitment and marketing plan will be developed for the MA program.

4. Update the assessment plan for 2022-23 to include the capstone project as a key performance indicator.

The assessment plan has been updated accordingly. New learning objectives, indicators, and criteria have been added for the systematic review of scholarship and the teaching capstone.

## **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Closing Summary:**

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Sociology Department will work to further strengthen the MA program and grow enrollment.

As part of the curriculum revisions, the department will eliminate the 1-credit proseminar and replace it with an orientation. The Graduate Director will develop and implement an orientation program for incoming graduate students.

The Graduate Director and Committee will review and modify the systematic review of scholarship and teaching capstone requirements as necessary. The aim will be to streamline the requirements and balance faculty workload.

As the MA program faces increased competition with the proliferation of online programs, we need to be more effective in promoting the MA program. The Graduate Director and Department Chair will work on developing a recruiting plan and marketing materials.

Increase synchronous, virtual interactions (1) among current students, (2) between department-level administrators and graduate students, (3) between faculty and graduate students, and (4) between alumni and current graduate students.

The Graduate Director and Department Chair will explore the possibility of a 4+1 program for the Sociology Department. If a 4+1 program is feasible, the Sociology Department will seek university approval for such a program.