

**SOCIOLOGY**  
**RICE UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE**  
**HANDBOOK**

**Fall 2022**

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This handbook will serve to orient new graduate students and provide information to current sociology graduate students (*generally current graduate students are guided by the version of the handbook available the year they enter the PhD program*). In addition to the regulations stated in this departmental handbook, students must also abide by the university's General Announcements and the Code of Conduct. There are many policies and procedures that we do not address here in detail. University policies are subject to frequent changes. For information on current university policies, students should be familiar with the "Information for Graduate Students" section of the university's General Announcements, available at: <http://ga.rice.edu>. *Under most conditions if there is any discrepancy between this guide and university policies, the university policies prevail.*

If in doubt about the interpretation of policies, students should seek help first at the department level (program administrator, director of graduate studies, PhD advisor, department chair) and then at the central administration level (office of graduate and postdoctoral studies). If you have additional questions, please contact us at the following numbers:

## HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Program Administrator  
Department of Sociology  
Cristal Ogletree  
713 348-3286  
Email: [co36@rice.edu](mailto:co36@rice.edu)

Director of Graduate Studies  
Department of Sociology  
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Associate Director of Graduate Studies  
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Department Chair  
Department of Sociology  
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## Orientation

The Sociology Department holds an orientation for new students in August. Visit the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website to find information about the GPS Graduate Student Orientation (<https://graduate.rice.edu/admissions/after-admission/graduate-student-orientation>). Additionally, the new student checklist, information about housing, and your summer to-do list before you arrive at Rice University can be found at <https://graduate.rice.edu/admissions/after-admission>. Matriculating students will need to submit official transcripts and complete several online trainings by October 1 to prevent holds on their accounts.

There are several key people in the department whom graduate students will get to know well during the next year and throughout their career as graduate students at Rice University.

## The Graduate Committee

The Committee, in conjunction with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), is responsible for overseeing the graduate program. Usually, students with academic problems or concerns will discuss them with their advisor or the DGS. The current graduate committee is comprised of Elaine Howard Ecklund (DGS and committee chair), Jeremy Fiel (Associate DGS), Tony Brown, and Elizabeth Roberto.

## The Director of Graduate Studies

The Director of Graduate Studies (currently Elaine Howard Ecklund) is responsible for reviewing and approving the program of study for every graduate student each semester (after approved by the student's advisor(s), acting on all petitions, and making recommendations for the composition of comprehensive examination and thesis committees). There is currently an Associate Director of Graduate Studies (Jeremy Fiel) assisting the DGS with these responsibilities.

Each first-year student is assigned a provisional advisor or co-advisors for the first year. The student will work with their advisor(s) on research or teaching tasks for approximately twenty hours per week (with a minimum of 15 hours a week) except for the first semester of study, which is devoted entirely to coursework. If the student is assigned multiple advisors, the student should consult with the advisors to determine how research hours should be split. At the conclusion of the first year, the student, advisor(s), and the graduate committee will decide together whether the first-year advisor(s) should remain the student's primary advisor(s) for the following year.

## The Graduate Staff

The program administrator provides information, assists in processing applications, and maintains the students' files while they are enrolled. The staff will keep up with which form must be filed with which office to ensure that students remain in good standing. They will also assist with finding the right resources and solutions to whatever problems may arise. Students should take responsibility for being familiar with all paperwork needed to advance their degree progress as well.

## Graduate Student Association

The Sociology Graduate Student Association (GSA) is an officially recognized student organization. It has four committee roles elected each year by current Sociology graduate students: two Graduate Representatives to consult with the Graduate Committee and attend Graduate Committee meetings, a Treasurer (and Professionalization Coordinator), and a Communications and Social Event Coordinator. The GSA has a faculty sponsor (currently Jeremy Fiel). The Sociology GSA broadly aims to empower and engage all graduate students in departmental decision-making processes to maintain a high level of academic excellence, cohesion, and wellbeing of our graduate students. All current and matriculated graduate students in the department of sociology will be considered voting members of the SOCI GSA and are eligible to seek and hold office in the elected committee if they are not currently on any forms of disciplinary probation. For more detailed information on the SOCI GSA's mission, purpose, etc., please refer to the SOCI GSA constitution.

## The Faculty

The following provides a brief overview of each full-time faculty member's research interests and experience in the department.

**JENIFER L BRATTER**, Professor. Bratter received her Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography from the University of Texas at Austin. Bratter's research areas are race and ethnic relations, quantitative methods, family, and demography. Her research explores the implications of race and racial mixing (i.e., interracial families, multiracial identity) for family, identity, and social inequality. Current projects focus on indicators of social well-being such as poverty, residential segregation, and health and the new ways that race is linked to these phenomena. She has recently published works appearing in the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *Demography*, *Social Forces*, *Family Relations*, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, and several upcoming book chapters. Bratter is the Director of the Rice University BRIDGE Initiative.

**TONY N. BROWN**, Professor. Brown earned his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. As a critical race scholar, he can confirm social scientists struggle to specify the meaning and significance of racism for U.S. blacks and blacks of the global south. Hence, he studies how racism works, from the womb to the tomb, to disadvantage blacks and privilege whites. Its workings include interactions across interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels, implicating the mundane and extraordinary in the maintenance of white supremacy. His scholarship covers a broad range of topics including health disparities, race socialization, racial attitudes, racial identity, social determinants of health, psychiatric epidemiology, and the sociology of mental health. He is a Distinguished Professor of Sociology, and the Founding Director of the Racism and Racial Experiences (RARE) Workgroup and the Statistical Training and Research Techniques at Rice University (STaRT@Rice) program.

**BRIELLE BRYAN**, Assistant Professor. Bryan received her B.A. from Vanderbilt University, her M.P.P. from Georgetown University, and her A.M. and Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Policy from Harvard University. Dr. Bryan's research examines inequality and barriers to opportunity

in the United States, with an emphasis on racial inequities and the role of the criminal justice system. Her current projects examine how incarceration and felony conviction shape housing, economic stability, and interaction with the social safety net over the life course. Before receiving her Ph.D., she worked at the Urban Institute, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Foundation Center.

**SERGIO CHÁVEZ**, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Director. After graduating from Hartnell Community College in the Salinas Valley, he received his B.A. and M.S. from UC Davis and his Ph.D. from Cornell University. He was also a postdoctoral scholar in Sociology and the Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Dr. Chavez has conducted field research in the US and Mexico on issues related to internal and international migration, including labor markets, family separation, social networks, and border studies.

**CRAIG CONSIDINE**, Lecturer of Sociology at Rice University. He earned a Ph.D. from Trinity College – University of Dublin, a Master’s degree from Royal Holloway – University of London, and a Bachelor’s degree from American University. As a sociologist, Craig is interested in the sociology of religion, racial and ethnic relations, and diasporic communities' experiences. Craig’s early research focused primarily on American identity through the lens of Muslims, with an emphasis on religious pluralism and Islamophobia. More recent research explored the experiences of young Pakistani Muslim and non-Muslim men in Dublin, Ireland, and Boston, Massachusetts. His Ph.D. project focused on the ethnic and civic nation dichotomy, the impact of crisis racism, intergenerational dynamics in diaspora, and the developments of hybrid and liquid identities.

**CHRISTINA DIAZ**, Assistant Professor. Diaz earned a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research and teaching interests lie at the intersection of social demography, immigration, and family formation. Her projects shed light on the health and well-being of Latin American immigrants who reside in the U.S. or have returned to their country of origin. In her most recent work, Dr. Diaz examines whether—and to what extent—immigration-origin populations influence social, cultural, and economic change in the U.S. She is particularly interested in understanding how “American” culture contracts and expands in response to immigration. Dr. Diaz is a 2018 Career Enhancement Fellow through the (formerly named) Woodrow Wilson National Foundation and has received recognition for her scholarship from the American Sociological Association, the Population Association of America, and the National Council for Family Relations. She is a current Council member of the Population Section for the American Sociological Association.

**JAMES R. ELLIOTT**, Professor and Department Chair. Elliott received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin- Madison and trained as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of North Carolina’s Population Center. His recent research focuses primarily on urban inequality and the environment, with published work on topics ranging from neighborhood and network effects on housing and employment outcomes to social dynamics of natural disaster recovery, hazardous waste accumulation, and related policy responses. He is a former advisor to the National Science Foundation’s Program in Sociology and a recent co-editor of *Sociological Perspectives*, the official journal of the Pacific Sociological Association. He is currently on the editorial boards of *Demography*, the official journal of the Population Association of America, and *American Sociological Review*, the flagship journal of the American Sociological Association.

**ELAINE HOWARD ECKLUND**, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies. Ecklund received a PhD from Cornell University. She is also Herbert S. Autrey Chair in Social Sciences and was Founding Director of the Religion and Public Life Program (2010-2022). Ecklund currently directs the Rice University Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance. As a sociologist of religion, Ecklund's work examines how individuals use gender, racial, and religious identities to bring changes to institutions like science, workplaces, and religious organizations themselves. Ecklund's most recent book is *Varieties of Atheism in Science* (OUP, 2021). Ecklund received the Rice University Charles O. Duncan Award for outstanding research and teaching achievement in 2013 and in 2018 gave Scotland's Gifford Lecture on Science and Religion. In addition to her own scholarly work, Ecklund is deeply committed to mentoring and institution building. She has served as President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and is incoming President of the Religious Research Association. She is entering her ninth year as Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Sociology at Rice University.

**SHANI EVANS**, Assistant Professor. Evans received her Ph.D. in sociology and education and M.S.Ed. in education policy from the University of Pennsylvania, and her B.A in anthropology at Amherst College. As a sociologist and qualitative researcher she focuses on race and ethnicity, space and place, sociology of education, intersectionality, housing and qualitative research methods. In her book, *The World Was Ours: Race, Memory, and Resistance in the Gentrified City*, Evans draws on fifty in-depth interviews and participant observation, the book examines the experiences of long-term residents of a recently gentrified, historically Black neighborhood in Portland, Oregon. She shows how long-term residents respond to the changing meanings of space, while continuing to engage in Black placemaking. Another significant part of her work focuses on how students and parents gain access to high status educational programs and institutions. Her works have been published in *The Sociological Quarterly*, *Sociology of Education* and *Research for Action*.

**JEREMY FIEL**, Assistant Professor. Fiel received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research and teaching focus on education, segregation and inequality, and quantitative research methods. Past projects have sought to understand contemporary racial school segregation better. He has published research on education's role in the processes by which inequality in one generation is (or isn't) passed on to subsequent generations. He is currently researching how recent education policies have affected school segregation and equality of opportunity. Other ongoing research examines how institutions historically have segregated or otherwise regulated different types of relations (economic, political, familial, etc.) between racial categories. He has recently published works appearing in *Sociological Theory*, *Sociology of Education*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Demography*, and *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.

**BRIDGET GORMAN**, Professor and Dean of Undergraduate Students. Gorman received her Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography from Pennsylvania State University. Her research addresses how social conditions and experiences shape group differences in health and well-being among children and adults. During her career, she has organized her research efforts to examine disparities in morbidity, physical functioning, and medical care use across major U.S. demographic groups – particularly racial/ethnic, nativity, gender, and sexuality groups. She is interested not only in how men vs. women, minorities vs. whites, and the foreign vs. native-born differ in health outcomes



but also in how these social categories intersect to shape health outcomes (e.g., black women vs. white men, heterosexual men vs. gay men). A guiding framework for her work is that health disparities are driven by fundamental social causes (e.g., socioeconomic status, social integration, and support) that underlie and shape group differences in health outcomes.

**RACHEL TOLBERT KIMBRO**, Professor and Dean of Social Sciences. Kimbro received her Ph.D. in sociology with a focus in demography from Princeton University. After completing her doctoral studies, Kimbro was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her teaching and research interests include poverty, race/ethnicity, migration, child obesity, maternal health behaviors, and the influence of family dynamics on children's health and wellbeing.

**ANNA RHODES**, Assistant Professor. Rhodes received her Ph.D. in Sociology from Johns Hopkins University. Her research combines urban sociology, the sociology of education, and environmental sociology to investigate household residential decision-making. One area of her research investigates the dynamic relationship between residential and educational inequality, and specifically examines the intersection of families' school and residential choices to explore the role of housing, neighborhood, and school contexts on children's educational opportunities and outcomes. Her current projects examine how low-income families sort into communities and schools across different metropolitan areas and the social processes through which their residential and educational contexts influence children. Another vein of her work examines the residential decisions of households in the wake of disaster, and highlights the ways that climate change and disasters increase economic vulnerability and inequality among households in affected communities.

**ELIZABETH ROBERTO**, Assistant Professor. Roberto received her B.A. and M.P.A. from George Washington University and her Ph.D. in Sociology from Yale University. She has broad research interests in social and spatial inequality, a substantive focus on residential segregation, and methodological expertise in computational social science and quantitative methods. Roberto was a James S. McDonnell Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow at Princeton University and has held positions as a Presidential Management Fellow and Research Analyst at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Brookings Institution, and Government Accountability Office.

**RUTH LÓPEZ TURLEY**, Professor. Professor López Turley directs the [Kinder Institute for Urban Research](#) at Rice University, which brings together data, research, engagement, and action to improve lives. In 2011, she founded the [Houston Education Research Consortium](#) (HERC), a research-practice partnership between Rice University and eleven Houston area school districts, representing over 700,000 students. A program of the Kinder Institute, HERC works to improve educational equity by connecting research to policy and practice, working directly with district leaders. She directed HERC from 2011 to 2022, during which she raised over \$30M so that school districts would not have to pay for research. She also founded the [National Network of Education Research-Practice Partnerships](#), which connects and supports over 60 partnerships between research institutions and education agencies throughout the country. She is a graduate of Stanford and Harvard and is originally from Laredo, Texas.

**AFFILIATED FACULTY**

MINJAE KIM, Assistant Professor. Kim received his Ph.D. in Management (Economic Sociology) from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His research focuses on commitment as a coordination device, addressing questions such as, on one hand, what causes people and organizations to be committed despite alternative options and risks of betrayal, and, on the other hand, how people and organizations respond to others' commitment. In addressing these questions, he studies diverse contexts (e.g., culture, politics, police, startups, labor market, workplace dynamics) and builds on theories in economic and organizational sociology and social psychology. His research has been published in *American Sociological Review*, *Organization Science*, *Sociological Science*, and *Social Science Research*.

#### ADJUNCT AND EMERITUS MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT

RICHARD JOHNSON, Professor in the Practice of Environmental Studies in Sociology. He earned a degree in Civil Engineering from Rice University and a Master's in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia. He is the Executive Director for Sustainability at Rice University, and he co-directs Rice's Environmental Studies program. His work at Rice bridges the operations, administration, teaching, and research functions of the campus to achieve enterprise-wide environmental excellence. Beyond Rice, Richard co-chairs the Texas Regional Alliance for Campus Sustainability (TRACS), and he chairs the Futures Council for the University of Arizona's College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture (CAPLA), helping to guide the CAPLA's leadership role in the university's "Building a Changing World" initiative and beyond.

AMANDA M. JUNGELS, Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Associate Director in the Center for Teaching Excellence at Rice University. She received her doctorate in sociology, specializing in sex and gender, from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia in 2012. Her research and writing focuses primarily on sex education across the life course, sexual violence, and cultural norms of privacy surrounding sexuality. Amanda has taught undergraduate and graduate courses on a wide variety of topics, including introduction to sociology, social problems, sociology of sexuality, sociology of gender, research methods, and interviewing and surveying techniques. At Rice, she teaches undergraduate social problems and gender courses as well as graduate courses in the Certificate in Teaching and Learning program. Amanda is also co-editor of the book *Focus on Social Problems: A Contemporary Reader* (Oxford University Press), currently in its second edition, for use in undergraduate courses on social problems/issues.

JING LI, Quantitative Methodologist and Adjunct Associate Professor of Sociology. She earned a Ph.D. in Sociology and a M.S. in Statistics from University of Texas at Austin. As a social demographer and sociologist, Li is broadly interested in immigration and its intersection with race/ethnicity, education, health and work. Her past projects have focused on Asian American health, education and acculturation. As a methodologist, Li has extensive teaching and consulting experiences in various quantitative research methods. In addition, one of her recent interests is to explore how to best integrate quantitative and qualitative methods to answer research questions for hard-to-find populations.

STEPHEN L. KLINEBERG, Professor Emeritus of Sociology and the Founding Director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research. As director of the annual "Kinder Houston Area Survey" (1982-2022), he and his students have tracked the shifts in demographic patterns, economic outlooks, life

experiences, attitudes, and beliefs among successive representative samples of Harris County residents during four decades of remarkable change. His book exploring the national implications of this research, entitled *Prophetic City: Houston on the Cusp of a Changing America*, was published in June 2020. He is the recipient of twelve major teaching awards at Rice and a much sought-after speaker in the Houston community and beyond. He is a graduate of Haverford College, with an MA from the University of Paris and a PhD from Harvard.

**ELIZABETH LONG**, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Rice University. She has published in the fields of cultural sociology, sociology of gender, sociology of knowledge, qualitative sociology, contemporary sociological theory, and the interdisciplinary fields of American Studies, cultural studies, and women's studies. Her most recent book is *Book Clubs: Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2003). The National Endowment for the Humanities has funded her research. She has served on several Editorial Boards, including *Communication Review*, *Book Research Quarterly*, and *Socialist Review*. She has also served as Chair of the Culture Section of the American Sociological Association and on the Program Committee for the American Sociological Association and the American Studies Association.

**STEVE H. MURDOCK**, Allyn R. and Gladys M. Cline Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Rice University and previously served as Director of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Prior to his appointment at Rice, he was the Lutcher Brown Distinguished Chair in Demography and Organization Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the Institute for Demographic and Socioeconomic Research Director. Before UTSA, Murdock was a Regents Professor and Head of the Department of Rural Sociology at Texas A&M University. He was also the official State Demographer of Texas.

**ROLAND B. SMITH, JR.**, Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, Adjunct Professor of Sociology. He received his B.A. in Anthropology/Sociology from Bowie State University, an M.P.A. in Public and Environmental Affairs from Indiana University, and an Ed.D. in Teaching, Curriculum, and Learning Environments from Harvard University. He teaches ethnographic research methods and mentors students while serving on the Graduate Council and Institutional Review Board. He chairs the Rice Council on Diversity and Inclusion and is the principal investigator/coordinator for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program at Rice, preparing undergraduates for Ph.D. studies. He came to Rice from the University of Notre Dame, where he served as executive assistant to the president, concurrent associate professor of sociology, and founding director of the Center for Educational Opportunity. He also served as a research intern in the United States Senate.

## Transfer Credit

If you are entering the Rice University sociology Ph.D. Program already having completed a Master's Degree elsewhere, you may wonder how many credits will count toward your Ph.D. at Rice University. It is a university requirement that each graduate student spends at least four semesters in residence at Rice University. In addition, the Department of Sociology has stipulated several required courses (including Contemporary Social Theory, Classical Social Theory, Qualitative Research Methods, Statistics courses, and Research Methods). If you have taken similar courses elsewhere and wish for one or more of these requirements to be waived, you should submit to the Graduate Committee, preferably before the beginning of the first semester of study, a request that includes a copy of the syllabus from the similar course, all required written work for the course, and your final grade. If you already completed a master's thesis, this might also count toward your Ph.D. in sociology (although not toward thesis credit). If you wish to have your master's thesis considered instead of our program's required master's thesis, you may submit that to the Graduate Committee for consideration as well. The Graduate Committee will review all course waiver requests and make its decisions early in the fall semester. In addition to these formal guidelines, we are happy to discuss your situation in detail once you arrive on campus. We typically allow no more than six transfer credits, although some exceptions may be made.

## Registration

In addition to these departmental requirements, the following registration rules apply to all graduate students at Rice University:

Students must maintain continuous program involvement and enrollment unless granted an official leave of absence. Failure to register before the registration deadline will result in a de facto withdrawal. All full-time graduate students are required to register for nine credit hours each semester. Students are also required to register for nine credits of Summer Research hours each summer.

All students are required to register in the semester of their dissertation defense. An exception is granted automatically if the defense occurs during the first week of classes and the student was registered during the previous semester.

Registration for all courses must be complete before the end of the second week of the semester. An exception may be granted only in extenuating circumstances.

The last day to drop courses is the end of the seventh week of classes. Students must maintain their required course load. All full-time students must be registered for nine credit hours. An exception may be granted only in extenuating circumstances.

The last day to select to audit a course is the end of the second week of the semester. Graduate students may not take a course pass/fail within their own department.

Additional registration requirements may be found in the [General Announcements](#).

### *How to Register ESTHER:*

To register for classes, add or drop courses, check your grade reports and degree requirement completion, make payments or perform any number of self-serve functions, visit the ESTHER external link system: <http://esther.rice.edu/>.

Please note: Depending on the week of the semester, ESTHER's functions may be limited. If you have questions regarding ESTHER, first check the ESTHER FAQ page ([https://registrar.rice.edu/students/esther\\_FAQs](https://registrar.rice.edu/students/esther_FAQs)), and then call (713 348-4999) or email the Registrar's Office (registrar@rice.edu) for assistance.

What is ESTHER? ESTHER (Employee and Student Tools, Help, and Electronic Resources) is a web application for students, faculty, and staff. Students will use this application to register for classes and retrieve certain data such as grades and account information. Visit the [ESTHER FAQ page](#) for information about what you can do on ESTHER.

### *How to Register for Classes:*

Please visit <https://registrar.rice.edu/students/registration> for information about how to register for classes, special registration, holds, registration FAQs and more.

### Information For International Students

The Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS, <https://oiss.rice.edu>) provides resources and information for international scholars.

### Leave of Absence

A leave of absence is granted only by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies on the recommendation of the Sociology Chair and Director of Graduate Studies and only to graduate students in good standing with the university. Students must obtain approval for leave before the academic semester in question. These requests, approved by the department, must be received in the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prior to the first day of classes.

Leaves are not granted after the first day of class in a given semester. Normally, students may take a leave of absence for no more than two consecutive semesters. The semesters that a student is on leave do not count against the time to candidacy or the time to defense. They do, however, count against the time to degree. Students must pay a reinstatement fee of \$100 on their return from an official leave.

### Short-Term Medical and Parental Leave

If a graduate student cannot fulfill the duties of their appointment due to a medical emergency or the adoption or birth of a child, enrollment and stipend support may be continued for up to six weeks or until the appointment expires (whichever occurs first); the department may also be able to relieve certain duties at the department level.

## Withdrawals

Students who drop out of graduate school either before the term begins or during the term should inform the sociology department chair in writing. The Graduate Staff should complete the Withdrawal Form (available at <http://graduate.rice.edu/forms>) and forward it, with the student's letter, to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

If the student does not withdraw in writing, the student will be marked as "Did Not Return" after the second-week classes in the semester. Students who later wish to resume study must reapply to the university. Readmission requires the recommendation of the department chair and the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. Accepted students must pay a readmission fee of \$325.

When a Withdrawal Form and a letter are submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Admissions and Enrollment Manager sends an e-mail to the appropriate administrative offices stating that the student has withdrawn. If the student receives a stipend, the department must also send a terminating PA form to the Budget and Financial Aid Manager for processing. The Registrar inactivates the student's record. The Cashier handles any refunds to which the student is entitled.

## Readmission

Students who later wish to resume study after a voluntary withdrawal must reapply to the university. Readmission requires the recommendation of the department chair and the approval of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. Readmitted students must pay a readmission fee of \$325.

## Medical Withdrawal

Graduate students may request a medical withdrawal from the university by applying in writing to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at any time during the semester, up until the last day of classes.

Graduate students who wish to seek readmission following a medical withdrawal must submit to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies a written petition for readmission no later than July 1 (June 1 for international students) for the fall semester and November 1 (October 1 for international students) for the spring semester after the medical withdrawal. This petition must include documentation of treatment provided, and students may be required to interview with the director of the Rice Counseling Center or Student Health Services or their designees. The petition also must include an academic plan devised in consultation with the student's advisor, advising committee, or director of graduate studies (depending upon the graduate program's advising structure) and approved by the department chair.

Students who withdraw for psychological reasons within the last five weeks of either the fall or spring semester will not be eligible to apply for immediate readmission. Students who withdraw for psychological reasons while enrolled during the summer session are not eligible to apply for

immediate readmission in the fall; they must wait to reapply for readmission for the spring semester.

Readmission requires the approval of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies and readmitted students must pay a readmission fee of \$325.

### Involuntary Withdrawal

The university may insist on a student's involuntary withdrawal if, in the judgment of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, or their designee, the student's behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following: Poses a threat to the safety or welfare of themselves or other members of the Rice community; Has a serious medical or a psychological condition that the student cannot effectively address while enrolled or which is likely to be severely exacerbated by the Rice academic and/or living environment; Demonstrates behavior that seriously interferes with the education of other members of the Rice community; or Is not able to continue functioning as a student. Following an involuntary withdrawal, graduate students who wish to seek readmission must submit a written petition for readmission to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies no later than July 1 (June 1 for international students) for the fall semester and November 1 (October 1 for international students) for the spring semester.

This petition must include documentation of treatment provided, and students may be required to interview with the director of the Rice Counseling Center or Student Health Services or their designees. The petition also must include an academic plan devised in consultation with the student's advisor, advising committee, or director of graduate studies (depending upon the graduate program's advising structure) and approved by the department chair.

Students who are involuntarily withdrawn for psychological reasons within the last five weeks of either the fall or spring semester will not be eligible to apply for immediate readmission. Students who withdraw for psychological reasons while enrolled during the summer session are not eligible to apply for immediate readmission in the fall; they must wait to reapply for readmission for the spring semester.

Readmission requires the approval of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies and readmitted students must pay a readmission fee of \$325. Further information is available by contacting the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

### Vacation Policy

Graduate students in Sociology are expected to fulfill their research assistant or teaching assistant duties approximately 48 weeks per year for about 20 hours per week, with approximately four weeks of vacation time allowed per year. *Students should work with their advisors in advance to schedule time off.* We recommend that students seek approval from advisors at least four weeks in advance of requested time off to ensure that vacation timing does not conflict with research assistantship duties.

## Establishing Eligibility as a Student With a Disability

Visit <https://drc.rice.edu/about> to learn about the mission and goals of the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students registered with the DRC have a wide range of disabilities, including learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, physical or medical conditions, sensory loss, psychiatric or psychological conditions, etc. The DRC establishes eligibility for disability-related assistance, notifies and consults with faculty on needed accommodations, and provides adaptive equipment or resources as needed. Find more information about Disability Resources for students at Rice at: <https://drc.rice.edu/students>.

New students are advised to contact DRC following admission to ensure eligibility is established, and any needed, reasonable accommodations are evaluated and approved in a timely manner. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Students are encouraged to refer to the Disability Documentation Guidelines found at <https://drc.rice.edu/students>. These guidelines help students and their families know what information is needed to establish eligibility as a student with a disability that necessitates accommodations. For students who wish to document an Attention Deficit Disorder, the guidelines developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) are recommended. Refer to the ETS Resources for Test Takers with Disabilities at <http://www.ets.org>.

The DRC is located on campus in the Allen Center, Room 111. They can be reached by email at [adarice@rice.edu](mailto:adarice@rice.edu), or by phone at 713-348-5841.

## Health Insurance

All degree-seeking students are required to maintain health insurance. If you already have health insurance and want to waive the Rice Plan, complete the Insurance Waiver form indicating that other coverage is in place. Please find the most up-to-date information about Student Health Insurance at <https://graduate.rice.edu/academics/finance/insurance>.

Health Insurance Frequently Asked Questions:  
<https://studenthealthinsurance.rice.edu/resources/faqs>

Payroll Deduction for Health Insurance: <https://studenthealthinsurance.rice.edu/about/payment-plan>

## Stipends

Detailed information on payroll is available at the Controller's Office website:  
<https://controller.rice.edu/payroll-home>.

Sociology Graduate stipends are distributed on a 12-month basis and distributed bi-weekly (as of 8/1/22) through the Rice payroll system. The conditions below must be completed for your check to be released on the appropriate payday:

- You must be registered full-time (at least 9 hours in fall/spring; 9 hours in summer) for the current semester in which you are receiving a student stipend.



- You may be asked to complete your I-9, presenting original documents to your department coordinator or the Payroll Office.
- If you have not submitted to Payroll a W-4 tax form, then you will still receive pay, but taxes will be withheld at the highest rate.

For pay periods, see the Student Payroll Calendars on the Human Resources website at <https://controller.rice.edu/payroll-schedules>.

For specific questions about your stipend not answered here, please contact your department graduate coordinator.

It is important to note that students judged to be not in good academic standing may have their stipends reduced or terminated, even if they are allowed to continue in the program. If a student is at risk of this, it will be clearly communicated in an evaluation letter from the DGS.

### Internal and External Funding

We encourage students to explore additional funding options through grants, awards, and fellowships. Applying for these opportunities builds grant-writing skills and exposes students to foundations, agencies, and organizations that might support their research. Students awarded these opportunities gain support for research or living expenses and recognition that bolsters their academic record.

Grants typically provide funds for research-related expenses, including conference travel. Fellowships often carry prestige and provide training, networking, and mentoring opportunities in addition stipends to support living expenses. The University typically covers tuition support for students who receive competitive external fellowships. Depending on the funding details, students can use these fellowships to supplement their department funding or extend it beyond the term.

The Sociology department, School of Social Sciences, and University provide assistance in identifying and applying for external funding. You can start by discussing potential opportunities with the Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies and your advisor(s).

The School of Social Sciences Research Institute (SSRI) provides assistance in finding opportunities and preparing applications and budgets for external funding proposals. You can find contact information as well as internal and external funding opportunities at the SSRI website: <https://socialsciences.rice.edu/social-sciences-research-institute>.

The University's Office of Proposal Development also has information about external funding opportunities and resources to assist in writing applications and proposals: <https://research.rice.edu/opd/>.

## SOCIOLOGY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The most detailed and current information on curricular requirements and opportunities is available in the Rice University General Announcements.

- You can find general university requirements at: <https://ga.rice.edu>.
- Sociology degree requirements are at: <https://ga.rice.edu/programs-study/departments-programs/social-sciences/sociology/sociology-phd/#requirements-text>

We provide an overview of Sociology requirements here, but the General Announcements prevail as the authoritative source if there are any discrepancies.

The Ph.D. program is typically a five to seven year degree program during which students must complete 90 semester hours of graduate study. The Sociology department does not admit students seeking only a master's degree, although students earn an MA degree en route to a Ph.D. The course work is sequenced and *is typically* completed in two and a half years, at which point students should have completed their master's thesis and earned their MA degree. Students generally take one comprehensive exam (discussed below) soon after completing the MA degree and complete their dissertation in the next two years.

*The program is built on an apprenticeship model, and students who receive funding are required to work on research or teaching tasks with a faculty member in the department for about twenty hours per week (with the exception of the first semester) in addition to fulfilling course requirements, with the exception of the first semester. Such research assignments will be decided with the student's best interests in mind and will generally lead to research publications. Research assistant hours must be research or teaching hours with an advisor, and RA hours generally will not include time spent on independent research projects or the dissertation or master's thesis. In addition, students will complete at least two formal Teaching Assistant assignments during their five years.*

Admission—Students are admitted on a competitive basis. Admitted students must have a baccalaureate degree (BA or BS) or equivalent, a minimum 3.0 (B) GPA in undergraduate work, and the intent to complete a Ph.D. in sociology. Applicants currently have the option of submitting GRE scores. The admissions committee considers GRE scores (if submitted), undergraduate GPA, letters of recommendation, writing samples, a personal essay, and professional experience and strongly encourages applications from women and minority groups. Students admitted to the program are generally offered financial support in the form of tuition scholarships and/or stipends for living expenses.

Academic Advising—Each first-year student is assigned a provisional advisor or co-advisors for the first year. The student will work with the advisor(s) on research or teaching tasks for approximately 20 hours per week (a minimum of 15 hours a week), *with the exception of the first semester*, which is devoted to course-work. At the conclusion of the first year, the student and advisor(s) will decide whether the first-year advisor(s) should remain the student's primary advisor(s). After the first year, students should feel free to consult with the DGS if they would like to change advisors, although these changes will typically only occur at the conclusion of each semester.

Informal Advising—Each first-year student will be paired with a continuing student mentor. This informal relationship serves to help introduce the student to the department's policies, procedures, and social life and is intended to ease the transition into graduate school.

## Required Courses

The Ph.D. program is a five-year degree program (although students often stay a 6th or 7th year but cannot stay longer than eight years). This includes the MA, which is a thesis master's degree.

For general university requirements regarding the Ph.D., please see [Doctoral Degrees](#).

For general university requirements regarding the MA, please see [Thesis Master's Degrees](#).

Students pursuing the MA and Ph.D. degrees in the field of Sociology must complete a minimum of 90 credit hours to satisfy degree requirements. Students will typically obtain a master's degree after two years of study (43 credit hours) and research as a student progresses toward the Ph.D. They will usually need at least an additional three years to complete the requirements for a Ph.D. The coursework is sequenced and will typically be completed in two and a half years. By this point, students will be required to have written their Master's thesis and completed their MA degree. This leaves one year to take the comprehensive exam and complete the dissertation proposal and two years to complete the dissertation.

Each first and second-year student will attend a Teaching and Professionalization Workshop that the department will hold throughout the academic school year. Students who are beyond the second year in the program are strongly encouraged but not required to attend the professionalization workshop.

Faculty conduct research focused primarily on the causes and consequences of social inequality and the patterns and processes of culture. A range of courses are offered. You can find a full list of course offerings and schedules for upcoming semesters at: <https://courses.rice.edu>.

You can find official course requirements and a proposed plan of study in the [General Announcements Requirements for the MA and PhD Degrees in the field of Sociology page](#).

## Professionalization Workshop

First and second-year students are required to attend the Professionalization Workshop (SOCI 610), which the department will hold throughout the academic school year and is led by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Associate Director. With 8-10 meetings per semester (generally on Fridays at 12PM), these will cover a wide range of topics designed to help students prepare for the variety of roles and obligations involved with an academic career, as well as be a chance for each student to become familiar with the research of individual faculty members. Topics may include writing a CV, preparing for academic job interviews, and applying for grants. The Director of Graduate Studies, in conjunction with the graduate student representatives to the graduate committee, generally plans these workshops. Students should register for SOCI 610 each semester (up to four semesters) and will receive one credit per semester for a total of four credits.

## Additional Courses

Until students have passed the comprehensive exam and defended the dissertation proposal, they must enroll in at least one substantive departmental course each semester (e.g., one “on the books” course, generally an elective). Elective courses may also be completed in other departments. Additional options (beyond substantive courses) include SOCI 606, MA Thesis Research, in which students may enroll for 3 hours in up to two semesters. Students also may enroll in SOCI 605, “Non-Thesis Graduate Research,” which generally takes the form of an independent reading course with a professor (usually to prepare for comprehensive exams). As of spring 2020, students should enroll in their primary advisor’s section of these courses.

## Grade Requirements

Sociology students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.66 (or a B-) in all required courses. Please note that this GPA is higher than the 2.33 GPA required by the graduate school guidelines to avoid academic probation. In addition, if a student receives a grade lower than a B- in any required course, they must retake the course in question once more or work with the DGS and major faculty advisor to find a satisfactory summer course. If the student again receives a grade lower than a B, the student is not making satisfactory progress and will be dismissed from the program. After the first grade in a required course below a B-, the student, their advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies will meet to make a plan to assist the student in making adequate progress.

## Master’s Thesis

In addition to required course work, graduate students must also write and orally defend a master's thesis. This should be a publishable-length paper, suitable for submission to a scholarly research journal shortly after it is defended. The master's thesis committee is comprised of three tenured or tenure-track sociology faculty.

## Evaluation of Progress

Below find details of the overall evaluation procedure for the Ph.D. program until ABD.

### Stage 1. Mid Program Evaluation

Guidelines for Mid Program Evaluation (to occur before the end of the 5th semester in the program). The evaluation covers three major components:

- **Core Coursework.** Students will be evaluated stringently in their core courses: classical and contemporary theory, research design, quantitative data analysis I, quantitative data analysis II, and qualitative methods. The Mid Program Evaluation will consider discrete grades in each class and evidence of scholarly development across them over time based on evaluations from instructors and faculty advisor(s). Following the completion of coursework, the student achieves Master’s candidacy. See the General Announcements for requirements for [Thesis Master’s Degrees](#).

- **Research and Teaching Assistance.** Students will be evaluated stringently in their performances as Research and Teaching Assistants. The Mid Program Evaluation will consider input from all Faculty Advisors and Mentors involved in the student's performance of associated duties, including hours performed, quantity of work, and quality of output.
- **Master's Thesis.** To stay on schedule, the Master's thesis should be defended at the end of the second year and must be defended no later than the end of the first semester of the third year. If the MA thesis is not successfully defended, a student will exit the program without an MA. After a successful defense of the Master's Thesis, students will be holistically evaluated by the Graduate Program Committee (GPC). If the Chair of the student's Master's Thesis is a member of the GPC, she or he will provide advisory input to the GPC but recuse themselves from voting on the student's Mid Program Evaluation.

The GPC's evaluation will result in one of three decisions:

- **Continue towards a Ph.D.** Student has shown adequate to excellent performance on core competencies in required courses and assistantship duties, and the student has crafted a thesis that shows true potential for independent scholarship and publication (e.g., a thesis that could eventually be submitted as a scholarly journal article).
- **Exit program with an MA.** While the student has passed required courses, fulfilled basic assistantship duties, and completed a thesis, the student has struggled in significant ways suggesting that our program is not a good fit for the student. The student will be asked to leave the program but will receive the degree of MA.
- **Exit the program without an MA.** If the student has produced a sub-standard thesis and does not successfully defend the master's thesis, the student will be asked to leave the program without an MA completed.

The Mid Program Evaluation will generally occur by the end of the fifth semester in the program.

## **Stage 2. Comprehensive Examination (written and oral)**

Once the student has proceeded through the mid-program evaluation and completed the master's thesis, a committee will evaluate their ability to be an emerging specialist in their sociological sub-fields through the comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination process will involve students conducting extensive reading, preparing for a written and an oral examination that reflects competency, the ability to engage, synthesize, and critique work, as well as understanding conceptual and methodological components of scholarship for the different sub fields relevant to their dissertation. This examination will be closely tied to preparing the student to write a dissertation proposal and teach courses in the areas covered by the thesis.

*The committee.* Generally, the committee administering the exam will also serve on the student's dissertation committee. *With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, the student will*

*identify three sociology faculty to serve on the comprehensive examination committee.* This committee generally reflects diverse substantive areas that are all relevant to the student's developing research agenda and dissertation, and students generally choose faculty for the comprehensive examination committee who represent different sub fields. Demonstration of expertise in subfields means that students should be able to: a) summarize basic questions, issues, and debates within each specialty area; b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations and middle-range theories in each area; c) understand and apply methodological approaches specific to each substantive area; and d) develop specific policy implications of theory and research in each area. For the dissertation committee, *in addition to Sociology faculty members*, at the time of the dissertation proposal defense, the student will identify a faculty member with a primary faculty appointment outside of Sociology to serve on the dissertation committee. Please see "[Thesis Committee](#)" in the General Announcements for Doctoral Degrees.

*Generating the reading list.* The group of Sociology faculty chosen for the comprehensive examination committee will guide the student on crafting the reading list for the examination. The list will be essentially student-generated and aim to elaborate on and inform the research question(s) that the student wishes to pursue for their dissertation proposal in addition to cover core readings for the areas covered by the dissertation proposal and reflecting the substantive areas of expertise of the committee. The comprehensive exam will be aimed at examining the candidate in those areas, which will then lend themselves to the specific dissertation project.

*Comprehensive Examination.* The committee will administer the examination that will include (1) a 12- hour written examination spread over two days (i.e., 6 hours each day), followed by (2) a two-hour oral examination.

*Evaluation.* The committee will evaluate the student's performance on the comprehensive examination.

There are four possible outcomes.

- **High pass** – The student achieves excellence across all three components (i.e., written exam and oral defense of exam). The student *achieves doctoral candidacy* and moves to Stage 3.
- **Pass** – The student performs adequately on the examination. The student *achieves doctoral candidacy* and moves to Stage 3.
- **Conditional Fail/Revisions needed** – The student shows clear ability but does not perform to the standard deemed "passable." In this case, the student will revise one or more parts of the comprehensive examination.
  - This revised examination must take place within a brief period of time (no more than three months after the original exam). The committee must provide the student detailed feedback on what was lacking in their original examination.
- **Fail and Leave the program** – The student performs poorly on the examination, revealing concerns for the student's ability to complete a dissertation. The committee is obligated to provide a detailed memo describing the components of the student's performance.

The Comprehensive examination is expected to occur before the end of the seventh semester.

### Stage 3: Dissertation proposal defense

During the semester that the student prepares for their comprehensive examination, they will also be crafting their dissertation proposal per guidelines in the handbook (below). This will be submitted to faculty *within sixty business days after passing their comprehensive exam*.

*Students ideally will advance to ABD (having completed the comprehensive examination and the dissertation proposal and dissertation proposal defense) before starting their 8th semester, but absolutely no later than the start of their 9th semester in the doctoral program, as required by Rice University policy.*

#### **In brief, the steps after the MA thesis and mid career review to become ABD are:**

- (1) Select comprehensive exam committee.
- (2) Develop reading list in consultation with committee.
- (3) Take written comprehensive exam.
- (4) Take oral comprehensive exam.
- (5) Select members of dissertation committee (usually same as comp committee with addition of outside sociology faculty member).
- (5) Prepare dissertation proposal.
- (6) Defend dissertation proposal.

\*Upon successful completion of steps 1-4 and successful, the student achieves doctoral candidacy. Upon completion of steps 1-6, the student achieves ABD status.

### Teaching

To fulfill the teaching requirements of the Ph.D. program, students will need to:

- Act as a TA for at least two courses as well as possible teaching to help the major advisor(s)
  - TA duties may include holding office hours, assisting students, preparing course materials, grading, guest lecturing, and other activities as needed.
- Take a three-credit course offered by the Center of Teaching Excellence (CTE) on either the Principles for Effective College Teaching (UNIV 500) or Research on Teaching and Learning (UNIV 501).
  - If students choose, they may earn the Certificate in Teaching and Learning offered by the CTE, which includes taking these courses in addition to others (see <https://cte.rice.edu/grads> for details).

After acting as a TA twice and taking the appropriate teaching courses, post-MA students may also apply to teach their own courses or teach a course that is currently on the books. The syllabus for the course that a student wishes to teach must be provided one year in advance of the course. It must be approved by both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, and the course must fulfill a department need. If a student is past the fifth year, teaching in the department would be compensated with pay. The possibility of teaching for salary will vary from year to year and depend on the department's availability of funds and teaching needs. Salary fluctuates, so see the department administrator and the Director of Graduate Studies for specifics.

## Teaching Assistant Work

During semesters that a student acts as a TA, they will need to spend about 10 hours a week on average (at the instructor's discretion) in teaching-related activities for a course and the rest of the time in research. The student will generally be assigned a course to teach that aligns with their own interests and the department's needs. Students may also provide minor help with a course during other semesters, but semesters that a student is not an official TA for a course should be devoted primarily to research with the research supervisor(s). The TAship typically includes a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 independent lectures (for MWF or TTh classes) or a maximum of two lectures (for once-per-week courses), office hours, and substantial grading. The faculty member who supervises the student's TAship is required to provide an evaluation of performance to the graduate committee.

*Timing of the TA-ship.* Normally (although not always), graduate students first TA during their third or fourth semester during their second year in the program. These appointments are assigned by the DGS (with evaluation from the Graduate Committee and input from the department chair). Generally, students are assigned to assist faculty teaching required or large undergraduate courses. For the second TA-ship (which generally occurs after the MA thesis is completed), students must consult with their faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies for the appropriate timing. These second appointments may involve a greater degree of responsibility on the part of the student, such as multiple guest lectures, organization of lecture content, and meetings with students.

## Advance to Candidacy

Upon completing both the comprehensive examinations and dissertation proposal defense, the faculty will vote on whether to grant Ph.D. candidacy to the student. [Rice University rules](#) require that Ph.D. candidacy MUST be achieved prior to the student's ninth semester. This includes defending the proposal and filing the appropriate paperwork (students are responsible for checking the [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website](#) to make sure they understand all paperwork requirements and timelines for submitting relevant paperwork).

## Student Assessment and Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on an ongoing basis throughout the program. On an annual basis, students must turn in a *personal evaluation form* (the template will be provided by the director of graduate studies and the graduate program administrator) and *updated curriculum vitae*. The student's main advisor will then write a short evaluation of the student to be reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies, the Director of Graduate Studies will write a short review, and the compiled annual review document will be put on file with the Department of Sociology. It is strongly suggested that students write regular short, weekly reports describing their research or teaching progress to their advisor and explaining how research hours were utilized.



## Dissertation

After Ph.D. candidacy is granted, students will commence work on their dissertation. Each dissertation committee will consist of at least three tenured or tenure-track faculty members, including one outside faculty member from another department at Rice University (generally students include three sociology faculty members in addition to the member outside the department of sociology, which is required by the university). Students may add additional faculty members to their committee from outside Rice, but a minimum of three Rice faculty must be on the committee (two from the sociology department and one from a different Rice department). Students are urged to have three sociology faculty on their committee, although not required to do so by the university. The key members of this committee will meet annually with the student to examine their research progress and provide a written evaluation of the student's progress. The dissertation itself must follow a three-paper or book format unless the student petitions for a different format and that format is approved by the director of graduate studies, with dissertation committee support. Finally, the candidate must pass a public oral examination, defending their dissertation, to obtain the Ph.D. degree.

## Public Lecture for Final Year Ph.D. Candidates

Generally students who have achieved candidacy will be required to give a lecture in the department (coordinated with the Sociology Colloquium series) during the semester they anticipate going on the job market. This should be a 40-minute lecture that is modeled after an academic job talk. These lectures will be hosted by the department and include faculty and graduate students as audience members. Students must have this completed before defending their dissertation, even if not applying for a university position. Students planning to go on the job market should notify the Director of Graduate Studies in the summer prior to the academic year in which they will be applying for jobs.

## Approval of Ph.D. and Master's Candidacy

Candidacy marks a midpoint in the course of graduate education. Achieving candidacy for the Ph.D. signals that a graduate student has: (a) completed required course work, (b) passed required exams demonstrating their comprehensive grasp of the subject area, (c) demonstrated the ability for clear oral and written communication, and (d) shown the ability to carry on scholarly work in their subject area.

*Students must file their applications for approval of Ph.D. and MA/MS candidacy in the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies on or before November 1 for January conferral and on or before February 1 for May conferral.* Students may take the final oral examination in defense of their thesis only after the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies approves their candidacy. Ph.D. students must be approved for candidacy before the beginning of the ninth semester of their enrollment at Rice.

## Thesis Committee

For both the master's and dissertation theses, the thesis committee administers the oral examination for the student's thesis defense and has final approval/disapproval authority and

responsibility for the written thesis.

A thesis committee is composed of at least three members. Two, including the committee chair, must be members of the student's department faculty; in doctoral thesis committees, one member must have their primary appointment in another department within the university. At least three members of the committee must meet one of the following requirements:

- Tenured or tenure-track members of the Rice University faculty
- Research faculty holding the rank of faculty fellow, senior faculty fellow, or distinguished faculty fellow
- Faculty who have been certified as thesis committee members by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies

The composition of the thesis committee must always meet the guidelines mentioned above. The committee chair need not be the thesis director. The chair, however, must be either a tenured or tenure-track member of the major department or a research faculty member of the major department. Additional members of the committee, who may or may not meet the above criteria, may be selected with the approval of the department chair. These would be in addition to the three required members.

Candidates are responsible for keeping the committee members informed about the nature and progress of their research. They also must establish a schedule for thesis completion and review. The members of the committee, in turn, should review the thesis in a timely manner, approving a preliminary form of the thesis before scheduling the oral examination.

## Dissertation Proposal

Unlike advancing to MA candidacy, advancing to Ph.D. candidacy involves the public defense of a thesis proposal. This is routinely a closed hearing with the student and their committee where they present the scope of their project, its significance and connection to the larger literature, the specific questions and associated research methods employed to conduct the research, and a timeline for completion. This document should be approximately 20-25 pages in length, including an abstract (500-700 words), background literature review of the area related to a central topic (about 5-7 pages), motivating theoretical and empirical rationale, central research questions, the assertion of data collection or description of secondary data source, the rationale for how data collection or data sources will allow an answer to the research question, and detailed timeline for completion of work. If relevant, it should include the rationale for funding needed and plan to get funding. While students should work with their advisor and chair on the exact format, the above are guidelines that students are encouraged to follow.

## Announcement of Thesis DEFENSES (Ph.D. and MA)

*Oral examinations for the doctoral degree must be announced at least two weeks in advance.* Oral examination announcements are to be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies by entering the information into the Graduate Students Thesis Defense Announcement form at <http://events.rice.edu/rgs>. An automatically generated email will be sent to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

Oral examinations for the master's degree must be announced at least one week in advance in the same manner as the doctoral defense.

### Oral Examination in Defense of Thesis

The public oral defense of a thesis is intended to examine a completed body of work and should be scheduled only when the Master's Thesis or Dissertation is essentially completed. At least one copy of the thesis must be available in the departmental office not less than two calendar weeks prior to the oral defense date. The length of the oral examination and the subject matter on which the candidate is questioned is left to the committee's judgment. The student should schedule the defense after consultation with the thesis advisor, who agrees that the thesis is completed and ready to be defended. All members of the thesis committee must be present for the oral defense. A candidate must be enrolled in the semester in which their oral examination is held. Students who defend during the summer must enroll in the summer session of classes. For the purpose of the oral defense only, enrollment in a semester is considered valid through the Friday of the first week of class of the following semester. Students passing the oral examination on or before the end of the first week of classes of any semester do not have to register for that or any subsequent semester, even though they may be continuing to make minor revisions to the final copy of their thesis. Should a candidate fail, the committee chair may schedule a second examination. Students who fail a second time must withdraw from the university.

Students must send a copy of their approval of candidacy form, signed by the thesis committee signifying successful defense of the thesis, to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies within one week after the oral examination. The original approval of candidacy form must be turned in when the thesis is submitted.

No later than six months from the examination date, candidates who successfully passed the oral examination in defense of the thesis must submit two signed copies of the thesis to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. If the thesis is not ready for final signature by the end of the six months, the "pass" will be revoked, and an additional oral defense will need to be scheduled. The candidate must make applications for an extension without reexamination with the unanimous support of the thesis committee, endorsed by the school dean, and approved by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Extensions of this six-month period for completion without reexamination will be granted only in rare circumstances.

Ph.D. students must defend their theses before the end of the 16th semester of their residency at Rice.

### Thesis Regulations and Procedures

The thesis is the principal record of a student's work for an advanced degree. It is permanently-preserved in the library. Instructions for thesis submission and guidelines for thesis formatting are provided by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at the time of approval of candidacy. These instructions are available from the Office of Graduate and Postgraduate Studies and can also be accessed on [their website](#).

## Candidacy

In thesis programs, the attainment of candidacy marks the completion of all requirements for the degree other than those related to research leading to the writing, submission, and defense of the thesis.

## Candidacy Petitions

Each thesis student must petition for candidacy. Petitions for candidacy are available at: <http://graduate.rice.edu/forms/>. Students may take the final oral examination in defense of their thesis only after the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies approves their candidacy.

## Deadlines for Petitioning for Candidacy

Ph.D. students must be approved for candidacy before the beginning of the ninth semester of their residency at Rice. Master's students must be approved for candidacy before the beginning of the fifth semester of their residence at Rice. Additionally, if a student plans to defend and submit a thesis for the next degree conferral, students must file their applications for approval of Ph.D. and M.A./M.S. candidacy in the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies before November 1 for mid-year conferral and before March 1 for May conferral.

When candidacy is approved, a thesis committee consisting of at least three tenured or tenure track- faculty or research fellows are appointed. This committee is responsible for reviewing the thesis and for examining the candidate on the subject matter contained therein. Almost all other actions necessary for the completion of the remaining degree requirements are the sole responsibility of the candidate. Some of these responsibilities are listed below in the order in which they need to be undertaken. Resources for thesis defense and thesis submission are available at: <http://graduate.rice.edu/thesis/>.

## The Candidate's Responsibilities

Consult with members of the Thesis Committee about the nature and progress of research as the project develops.

NOTE: The writing of the thesis should be a serious concern. Correct grammar and spelling and logical organization, and a clear, literate prose style are expected. Guidelines for thesis format are available on the GPS website. Rice's [Center for Academic and Professional Communication](#) offers consultations, workshops, and writing groups to assist in writing.

## Oral Defense

The public oral defense of a thesis is intended to be an examination of a completed body of work and should be scheduled only when the dissertation is essentially completed. At least one copy of the thesis must be available in the departmental office not less than two calendar weeks prior to the oral defense date. The length of the oral examination and the subject matter on which the candidate is questioned is left to the committee's judgment. The defense should be scheduled by the

student after consultation with the thesis advisor, who agrees that the thesis is completed and ready to be defended. All members of the thesis committee must be present for the oral defense. A candidate must be enrolled in the semester in which their oral examination is held. Students who defend during the summer must enroll in the summer session of classes. For the purpose of the oral defense only, enrollment in a semester is considered valid through the Friday of the first week of class of the following semester. Students passing the oral examination on or before the end of the first week of classes of any semester do not have to register for that or any subsequent semester, even though they may be continuing to make minor revisions to the final copy of their thesis.

## Time Boundaries

Ph.D. students must defend their theses before the end of the sixteenth semester of their residency at Rice. Master's students must defend their theses before the end of the eighth semester of their residency at Rice, but please note that our department expects that students will not take more than 2.5 and ideally two years to complete this step. Additional information on time boundaries for graduate students at Rice may be found here. See <https://graduate.rice.edu/academics/candidacy-defense-thesis-submission/candidacy>.

## Procedures

Schedule the final oral examination in defense of the thesis to take place at a time agreeable to all committee members. Be sure to consult the [deadlines](#) listed in the [Academic Calendar](#) to ensure that you meet the defense deadline for commencement. In order to graduate, the final thesis must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies before noon on the deadline listed in the Academic Calendar (or six months after the oral defense, whichever occurs first).

Arrange for public notice to appear prior to the oral examination. Students should note that announcements must be made at least two weeks before the scheduled defense for the doctoral degree. For the master's degree, public notice of the oral examination should be posted one week before the defense. Defense announcements can be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies by filling out the following form: <http://events.rice.edu/rgs/>. When appropriate, an oral examination for the Ph.D. may be scheduled during the summer, and the procedure for the posting of notice is the same as during the regular school year.

The Original Approval of Candidacy form (initials in the top right corner will be red) will be sent to your department as soon as the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies receives the defense announcement. The members of your committee must sign the Candidacy form. If your thesis committee has changed since you achieved candidacy, the candidacy form must be revised prior to your defense.

Within a week after the final oral examination in defense of thesis is passed, a copy of the Approval of Candidacy form, signed (and dated) by the thesis committee, to the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (MS-13) must be submitted online. This signifies a successful defense of the thesis. Students passing the oral examination on or before the end of the first week of classes of any semester do not have to register for that or any subsequent semester, even though they may be continuing to make minor revisions to the final copy of their thesis. Following the successful passing of the oral examination in defense of the thesis, two signed

copies (with original signatures) of the thesis must be submitted online to the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies no later than six months from the examination date. If committee members are unavailable at the time of the thesis submission, arrangements must be made in advance for the title pages to be prepared. Suggestions for completing this title page are available on this website and with your department coordinator. Students who wish to graduate in a particular semester are also subject to the deadlines found in the academic calendar.

If you will not be registered during this six-month period but still need access to the Rice Network, please contact the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Help Desk at [helpdesk@rice.edu](mailto:helpdesk@rice.edu) or 713-348-4357.

Prepare the final copy of the thesis in accordance with instructions contained in the document entitled "[Thesis Format](#)." Note: The Thesis Format instructions are good practice guidelines.

Once the final copy of the thesis is prepared, it must be verified and submitted to the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies using the [new online submission process](#). This replaces the former process that required in-person visits to GPS and the Office of the Registrar.

### Thesis Format

After reviewing these guidelines, if doubt exists about the correct format of the thesis, the candidate is encouraged to consult with the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Office before the final copies are printed. Make sure to consult the GPS office website to determine all formatting guidelines for the thesis.

Thesis Template Library: <https://graduate.rice.edu/current-students/candidacy-defense/thesis-templates>.

### Thesis Submission

No later than six months from the date of the examination, candidates who successfully passed the oral examination in defense of the thesis must submit two unbound copies with original signatures of the thesis to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. If the thesis is not ready for final signature by the end of the six-month period, the "pass" will be revoked, and an additional oral defense will need to be scheduled. The candidate must make applications for an extension without reexamination with the unanimous support of the thesis committee, endorsed by the school dean, and approved by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. If the end of the sixth month falls on a weekend or holiday, the thesis is due on the business day preceding the deadline. Extensions of this six-month period for completion without reexamination will be granted only in rare circumstances.

All Forms: <https://graduate.rice.edu/academics/forms>

### Travel Support

A core part of the graduate student experience is students presenting their work and engaging

with scholars at academic conferences. The department offers some travel support, representing one of several options students seeking support may pursue. Below is a summary of the travel policy for the department.

What does travel funding cover? Support for travel may be extended to cover some or all of the following travel-related expenses: hotels or other lodging arrangements, airline flights to and from the destination, mileage for gas to and from the destination, parking, public transit tickets, and/or taxis. In the event of a conference or course, travel funding may also cover the costs of registration or attendance. In some instances, per diem travel support may be available to cover the costs of meals.

Identifying a funding source. There are multiple avenues by which students may obtain funding for travel. It is important to note that students must identify a funding source and what it will cover prior to making travel arrangements to receive support from the department.

*Student Departmental Travel and Research Fund.* The department will fund student travel and other allowable research expenses up to the total amount in the student's fund during the time the student is a Ph.D. student. Students who wish to use the departmental travel fund will need to submit an application, which is available under the "[Resources](#)" tab on the Sociology Graduate Students page. This form must be filled out, signed by the student's academic advisor, and returned to the Program Administrator (Cristal Ogletree) to request funding to be considered by the Director of Graduate Studies. *Students are responsible for keeping track of their own research account expenses.* Along with the application, students should attach any relevant supporting documents that outline why they are traveling and/or what they are doing (e.g., presenting a paper at a conference). It is important to note that submitting an application for departmental funding does not guarantee travel support. The Director of Graduate Studies will review these applications, and the Program Administrator will notify students of the outcome.

*Advisor Provided Travel Support.* Students should discuss with their academic advisor whether travel support is available for each travel event. If a student's advisor had agreed to provide travel support for a particular trip, the student should then discuss with their advisor the amount of funding that will be provided for the trip (e.g., a lump sum) and/or what expenses will and will not be covered. Prior to making travel plans, the student should email the Department Administrator (Cristal Ogletree) to notify them that the student's advisor will be funding their travel expenses. The student's advisor should be copied (CCed) on this email.

*Student Grants.* Students who wish to use their own grant accounts to fund their travel do not need approval to do so. Students should notify the Program Administrator of the funding source when turning in receipts for reimbursement or assistance in ensuring that the receipts are returned to the foundation or agency in the case of an external grant.

*Non-Departmental Funding.* For any other funding sources, please follow the appropriate procedures for using funding and obtaining reimbursement. The Program Administrator is not involved with travel funding procedures when funds are provided from outside the department.

## GUIDELINES

Please check the [GPS office website](#) and [General Announcements](#) for the most recent guidelines. The GPS office may have current guidelines that take precedence over this handbook.

The following guidelines were adopted to assure fairness in problem resolution for graduate students at Rice University. The first goal is to comply with Rice's policies while striving to uphold standards and raise the quality of graduate programs. The second goal is to provide graduate students with an environment that has high standards, clear assessments of their achievements, and fair and transparent procedures for handling cases of inadequate academic progress.

### DISMISSAL

The two most common grounds for dismissal of a graduate student are (1) inadequate academic progress or (2) a disciplinary violation resulting in a Rice University sanction.

Graduate students are placed on academic probationary status by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies if their overall grade point average falls below 2.67, their semester grade point average falls below 2.33, or they receive an unsatisfactory grade in a research credit course. The period of probation extends to the end of the next semester in which the student is enrolled. If that probationary semester results in an overall grade point average below 2.67 or a semester grade point average below 2.33, the student may be dismissed without further warning. Graduate students with a cumulative or overall grade point average below 2.00 may be dismissed by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies without a probationary period. Additionally, students with two unsatisfactory grades in research during their graduate student tenure at Rice may also be dismissed by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies without further warning. As a courtesy, students will be notified of their probationary status once final grades have been received and posted to their records. S/U grades cannot be used to end probationary status for low overall grade point average.

Graduate programs must provide students with detailed requirements, deadlines, and other program policies upon entry to the program. Students are then responsible for meeting program and university requirements in their program of education. A student failing to meet departmental or university requirements, such as failing to meet grade requirements, failing to pass required examinations by the required time, or failing to advance to candidacy or defend their thesis within the required time, is subject to dismissal without further warning.

When a student is judged not to be making adequate academic progress, they must be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal and given clear information about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students similarly situated in the program. If the student does not meet the stated requirements within the time frame specified, they will be dismissed by the graduate program.

It is difficult to give a precise and general definition of "adequate academic progress" for graduate students due to the variation in requirements among different graduate programs. Nevertheless, some general principles do apply. For example, most graduate programs consist of



two stages. The first stage, preceding candidacy, typically consists of explicit requirements and milestones, such as course requirements, exams, research projects, and the like. In this stage, adequate academic progress typically means compliance with the requirements and milestones of the program and research progress when applicable. The second stage, post-candidacy, is often referred to as "all but dissertation" (ABD). In this stage, graduate students are expected to conduct research and write and defend their theses/dissertations. As the second stage typically lacks explicit intermediate milestones, it is harder to assess academic progress during this stage. Therefore, it is extremely important for graduate programs to make their expectations explicit for post-candidacy graduate students.

Post-candidacy graduate students often enroll only in research courses. Such courses can offer standard letter grades or satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) grades. Grading mode, however, must be uniform within a section of a research course. Thus, all students in such a section should receive letter grades or receive S/U grades.

Graduate programs must establish mechanisms for tracking, reviewing, and documenting the academic progress of graduate students on an ongoing basis and must provide graduate students a written assessment of their academic progress at least annually. In some graduate programs, this ongoing progress review is carried out by a student's thesis committee, while in others, it is carried out by a standing faculty committee. Although a student's supervisor plays an important role in reviewing the student's academic progress, the responsibility for conducting the review process lies with the program. It requires the involvement of additional faculty members in the program. For graduate students who are primarily engaged in coursework, for example, professional master's students, the transcript is an adequate form of written assessment.

Dismissal of a graduate student requires that the student be notified of their dismissal from the graduate program. Such a notice is distinct from any earlier warning, which lets the student know of the possibility of dismissal. All dismissal notices and warnings of possible dismissal must be in writing, with a copy sent to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Email communication is considered to be "in writing." (Academic units should archive copies of all email communications pertaining to student dismissal.)

Because of the serious consequences of dismissal from a graduate program, dismissed students must receive a 15-day notice of the dismissal. Such notice may precede the trigger for the dismissal. For example, a program can notify a student 15 days before an examination that failure to pass the examination with a certain minimum grade would result in dismissal. In general, dismissal should not take effect during a semester in which the student is enrolled. Dismissals that take effect during a semester are exceptional and must be approved by the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. A dismissal will be held in abeyance until the petition and appeal process is concluded, as students may petition for a dismissal to be revoked as described below.

Graduate students often receive financial support in the form of a graduate stipend and tuition waivers. The termination of financial support to a graduate student, while not equivalent to dismissal, is a serious action that could deprive students of their financial ability to continue graduate studies. Consequently, the procedure to terminate a student's financial support before the end of the financial-support commitment period should be analogous to those for dismissal as described above.

Active participation in required academic activities (for example, laboratory work in certain science and engineering programs) is a basic condition for continued financial support. Students who are absent from such required activities for contiguous two weeks without permission and without mitigating circumstances may be subject to termination of financial support. In addition, they may be judged to be not making adequate academic progress. Thus, if absences have to occur, they must be pre-arranged with the student's supervisor, except for medical and family emergencies, in which cases timely notification is required. Graduate advisors and programs should be aware of unexplained student absences. They must immediately provide written warnings when students are not present and carrying out required academic activities for more than one week.

When the source of a graduate stipend is an externally sponsored research grant, the principal investigator is responsible for certifying that compensation paid to those who are supported by the grant faithfully corresponds to actual effort in carrying out the sponsored research. This process is referred to as "effort certification." The requirements above to give students warnings and notices before dismissal or termination of stipend are separate and independent of the effort-certification requirement. If a principal investigator determines that a graduate student is not contributing to the sponsored project that is the source of the student's stipend, then the charge for the affected pay period must be reallocated to another fund by the program.

## PETITIONS and APPEALS

The General Announcements provide current details of all [Dispute Resolution processes](#). Graduate students may petition for exceptions to academic requirements, regulations, and judgments. A course requirement is an example of an academic requirement. Allowed time to degree is an example of an academic regulation. Course grades and dismissals from programs are examples of academic judgments.

In general, petitions will be handled at the lowest appropriate level. A petition regarding requirements, regulations, or judgments of a graduate program will be handled at that level, that is, by the program. Such petitions need to follow procedures established by these programs. A petition regarding University requirements, regulations, or judgment must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; a recommendation from the program must accompany such a petition. When the program's recommendation is negative, or when the petition requests a major exception—for example, an extension of allowed time to degree by more than 1/2 semester—the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies may also obtain the recommendation of the school overseeing the program (when relevant) and the Graduate Council with regard to such petitions.

Petitions for exceptions to academic requirements, regulations, and judgments should be viewed as unusual rather than typical. Extensions of various time limits, such as time to candidacy or time to defense, will not be granted routinely. Students requesting such extensions have to document the unusual circumstances justifying their request, demonstrate their academic progress towards the goal, and provide a concrete plan for meeting the goal within the requested extension.

Petitions regarding academic decisions must be submitted in writing within 15 days from the time that the student knew or should reasonably have known of the decision being petitioned or within 15 days after an informal effort to resolve the situation has not been successful. Petitions seeking exceptions to academic requirements or regulations should be submitted in writing at least 30 days before the requirement or regulation takes effect. For example, a petition to extend allowed time to degree should be submitted at least 30 days before the deadline in effect. Late petitions may be dismissed, except for unusual situations when a delay is justifiable by the unit receiving the petition. Petitions must be acknowledged in writing immediately upon their receipt by the receiving unit. Email communication is considered to be "in writing".

A student (or other parties affected by the decision) is allowed only one level of appeal from a decision regarding a petition. In general, the appeal process will be resolved at the lowest level possible. When the petition is decided at the department level, the appeal must be submitted to the school. When the petition is decided at a school level, the appeal must be handled by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. When the petition is decided by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the appellant may submit an appeal to the Provost. An appeal must be submitted within 15 days from receipt of the decision that is being appealed. Late appeals will be dismissed, except for unusual situations when a delay is justified. Appeals must be acknowledged in writing immediately upon their receipt by the receiving unit. Email communication is considered to be "in writing".

A petition/appeal should indicate the requirement, regulation, or judgment on the subject of the petition/appeal, the specific exception requested, and the grounds for the request. An appeal must indicate why the decision involving the earlier petition was incorrectly decided. Grounds for a petition/appeal could be procedural errors by academic or administrative personnel or special circumstances found to be mitigating by the unit receiving the petition/appeal. Disagreement over-evaluation of academic quality will not be considered an appropriate basis for petitions/appeals unless the evaluation is patently unreasonable by the unit receiving the petition/appeal. Petitions involving a violation of University policy or improper conduct by University personnel will be handled as grievances (see Grievances).

Petitions and appeals should be resolved within 30 days of their submission. A resolution of the petition or appeal must be achieved within 60 days. When such a resolution cannot be achieved within 30 days, students will be informed of the delay before the 30 days are over. A lack of resolution of a petition within 60 days is an acceptable cause for an appeal.

An academic program directly managing graduate students must establish a standing Petitions, Appeals, and Grievances Committee. A petition by a student will be handled by a committee consisting of at least three faculty members. The committee must be independent of the cause for the petition. (The department chair or dean may appoint ad-hoc members to the committee to ensure the committee's independence.) Members of a student's thesis committee must not participate in handling a petition by the student.

The committee will investigate the circumstances and reach a decision regarding the petition. Their written report to the graduate director and the chair (or dean) will describe the circumstances, the decision, and the rationale for the decision. The graduate director or chair (or dean) will convey the final decision to the student and include the committee report. (Redaction

from the report is allowed to protect the privacy of other students.) In case of decisions by the faculty members of a graduate program acting as a committee of the whole, petitions will also be considered by the Petitions, Appeals, and Grievances Committee, which will reconsider the decision in view of the information provided in the petition. This committee may choose to bring the matter back for consideration by the faculty members of the academic program, acting as a committee of the whole. For petitions submitted to the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the dean may, in their discretion, similarly handle these by enlisting the assistance of a subcommittee of the Graduate Council, which will submit its report to the chair of the Council and the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

An appeal handled by a school may be handled by the school dean or by an associate dean. The handling officer may convene an ad-hoc faculty committee or establish a standing committee. An appeal handled by the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies may be referred to a subcommittee of the Graduate Council, composed of three faculty members (representing diverse disciplines within the university) and a graduate student. Such committees must be independent of the cause for the petition. In general, officers or committees handling the appeal should not try to substitute their judgment for that of the unit handling the petition. Rather, their task is to consider whether the petition was handled appropriately, whether all relevant circumstances have been considered, and whether University policy has been appropriately interpreted and applied. Nevertheless, a petition decision may be overturned if the officer or committee handling the appeal finds the petition decision to be patently unreasonable.

All time frames in this procedure refer to academic calendar days and exclude mid-term, interterm, and summer recesses. (This exclusion does not apply to a student who is enrolled during the summer.) All petitions and appeals, as well as responses to petitions and appeals, must be in writing. Email communication is considered to be "in writing". (Academic units should archive copies of all email communications pertaining to petitions and appeals.)

## GRIEVANCES

Grievances are different from petitions and appeals. Petitions and appeals involve exceptions to academic requirements, regulations, and judgments. A grievance is a complaint regarding inappropriate conduct by other students, faculty members, or staff. Inappropriate conduct encompasses inappropriate personal conduct, such as sexual harassment, and inappropriate official conduct, such as violation of University policies. Specific policies exist to address grievances based on discrimination or sexual harassment, and these policies must be followed in situations involving these issues. Grievances against another student may be raised with the assistant dean of student judicial programs and addressed under the Code of Student Conduct. In other cases, a student may present a grievance in writing at the lowest appropriate level, typically the department or school. If a satisfactory resolution is not obtained at that level, the student may appeal the outcome of the grievance by presenting the problem at the next administrative level, such as the school, Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Provost, or President. Grievances against non-faculty staff members may also be brought to the Employee Relations Director in Rice's [Human Resources office](#).

The procedures for handling grievances are analogous to those for handling petitions and appeals. Students submitting grievances must so indicate in their submissions.

## PROBLEM RESOLUTION

During the course of graduate studies, problems that do not fall under the category of grievances described above may arise in the relationship between a graduate student and their program or their advisor. Students should attempt to resolve such problems by informing the appropriate faculty members and working together to resolve the problem. When attempts to resolve the problem informally are unsuccessful, the following problem resolution procedure will be used:

1. The student will submit the problem in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will then attempt to resolve it.
2. If the student remains unsatisfied, the problem will be presented to a program committee for resolution. This committee will be a standing committee and not the student's own thesis/dissertation committee. Both the student and the program chair will submit a written record of their views to this committee.
3. If the student remains unsatisfied, the problem will be referred to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. A written report of proceedings at stage 2 will be presented to the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies, along with all other written materials generated during the investigation. The dean may, at personal discretion, handle these in a similar manner by enlisting the assistance of a subcommittee of the Graduate Council, which will submit its report to the chair of the Council and to the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies. The decision of the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies is final.

The time frame for handling problem resolution is similar to that for handling petitions, appeals, and grievances. Students may seek guidance on any of these procedures through discussions with the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

### Title IX Policy Governing Experiences of Discrimination

All current rice policies can be found at <https://policy.rice.edu>. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://sjp.rice.edu/code-of-student-conduct>.

[Policy 828](#) pertains to sexual misconduct. [Policy 829](#) pertains to consensual sexual or romantic relationships in the educational or workplace environment. You can find more information and reporting forms here: <https://aeeo.rice.edu/sexual-misconducttitle-ix>.

[Policy 830](#) pertains to discrimination and harassment, and [Policy 830A](#) pertains to processes for investigating accusations of discrimination or harassment

Rice encourages any student who has experienced an incident of sexual, relationship, or other interpersonal violence, harassment, or gender discrimination to seek support. There are many options available on and off campus for all graduate students, regardless of whether the perpetrator was a fellow student, a staff or faculty member, or someone not affiliated with the university.

When seeking support on campus, students should be aware that Title IX requires most employees to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to Title IX professionals on

campus who can act to support that student and meet their needs. The therapists at the Rice Counseling Center and the doctors at Student Health Services are confidential, meaning that Rice will not be informed about the incident if a student discloses to one of these Rice staff members. Rice prioritizes student privacy and safety and only shares disclosed information on a need-to-know basis.

If you are in need of assistance or simply would like to talk to someone, please call Rice Wellbeing and Counseling Center, which includes Title IX Support: (713) 348-3311.