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Introduction

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook has been prepared by the faculty of Sociology Department to assist students in understanding and completing the curriculum of the Master of Science in Sociology (MS) and the Certificate in Applied Social Research (CASR). Although the Handbook attempts to explain in as much detail as is necessary for understanding the curriculum and administrative procedures, we urge you to consult your advisor or the Sociology Graduate Program Director as needed.

Administrative procedures and forms described here are accurate at the time of writing. However, this document is revised only periodically, so procedures and forms may be different than those indicated here. Always check the VCU Academic Calendar website for current deadlines, the Graduate School website for current forms, and the graduate section of the Sociology Department website for current news. Also, pay close attention to emails and announcements on the Blackboard Sociology Graduate Student Organization (SGSO) website and consult with the Sociology Graduate Program Director, as needed.

A good general source for VCU information is the VCU Insider. The Insider contains information relevant to students’ needs and serves as a guide to the various programs and organizations within the university dealing with specific questions and concerns. There’s a section on university policies in addition to maps of VCU’s campuses and a university calendar. Note that the Insider contains the University’s Honor System Policy, which is a fundamental guide for the Sociology Graduate program. All students are encouraged to refer to the VCU Insider often for useful student information. Other useful information can be found on the VCU website; of particular importance is the VCU Graduate Bulletin.

Program Address

Sociology Graduate Program
919 W. Franklin St. (Crenshaw House)
P.O. Box 842543
Richmond, VA 23284-2543
Phone: (804) 828-4028

1 See the following "The Master of Science in Sociology (MS)" section for information about the SGSO website.
Website: sociology.vcu.edu

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Mission of the Sociology Graduate Program

The Master of Science in Sociology Program is designed to prepare students for employment in professions related to sociological practice or continued study at the Ph.D. level. Students receive comprehensive training in sociological theory and methodology and have the opportunity to pursue specialized interests or interdisciplinary study. Our goal is to produce well-trained, highly skilled sociologists who are prepared to study the social world and effect positive social change within the highest ethical standards.
The Master of Science in Sociology (MS)  
(Revised Spring, 2014)

Curriculum Options and Instructional Modes

The curriculum of the MS Sociology Program includes two academic options: thesis and applied sociology. Students who are interested in pursuing a PhD are encouraged to consider the thesis option. Students who are interested in pursuing a professional position should consider the applied sociology option. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their options with sociology faculty members.

In addition to the two options, the program offers two different instructional modes: on-campus and online. The applied option is available both to on-campus and online students. The thesis option must be taken as an on-campus student. Both academic options are intended to provide students with a strong background in sociological theory, methods, and a variety of substantive topical areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Modes</th>
<th>Decision before beginning program</th>
<th>Decision after 18 credit hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-campus student</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Applied Sociology Option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online student</td>
<td></td>
<td>Applied Sociology Option</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mode-option choices are also summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Mode</th>
<th>Academic Option</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Student Decision Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>Applied Sociology</td>
<td>CAP (Campus Applied Program)</td>
<td>After 18 credit hours; for full-time students at the end of second semester of coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>Thesis Option</td>
<td>After 18 credit hours; for full-time students at the end of second semester of coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Applied Sociology</td>
<td>OAP (Online Applied Program)</td>
<td>When accepted into the MS degree program; before beginning first classes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The curriculum requirements and academic regulations for the Applied Sociology Option are identical, whether completed in the online or on-campus instructional mode. Students who desire to take their courses online must enroll as online applied sociology students at the beginning of their program and continue in that program until graduation. Other features of the OAP program are discussed later in this handbook.

On-campus students must decide whether to apply to progress to the thesis or not by the time they have completed 18 credit hours, usually at the end of their second semester in the program. See the "Thesis Option Curriculum" section below for details.

**General Curriculum Requirements for All Students**

All students must complete a minimum of 36 semester hours, as approved, with an overall grade point average of 3.0 or above. A student who does not maintain a 3.0 average may be dropped from the MS program at any time by the Graduate Program Director. A review of all first-year graduate students will be conducted at the end of their second semester by the Graduate Program Committee. The purpose of this review will be to assess all first-year students on their satisfactory/unsatisfactory progress toward the degree.

**Thesis Option Curriculum**
Thirty-six hours of graduate coursework must be completed as follows:

- SOCY 502 Contemporary Sociological Theory
- SOCY/STAT 608 Social Statistics (Prerequisite: SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent)
- SOCY 601 Methods of Sociological Research (Prerequisite: SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent)
- SOCY 602 Applications of Methods of Sociological Research (Prerequisite: SOCY 601)
- Electives - 24 hours, typically including 6 credit hours of SOCY 698 Thesis.

Students entering before fall, 2014, are allowed to present up to six credits of independent study (SOCY 692) and six credits outside the department for graduation. However, exercising these options to the fullest is generally discouraged in order to give students sufficient exposure to sociology as a discipline and to seminar experiences. Students entering fall, 2014, and later are allowed to present up to six credits of a combination of independent study courses and courses outside the department for graduation. Regardless of entry date, independent study requires the approval of a sponsoring faculty member and the Graduate Program Director (see more detailed description in later section and form in Appendix B). Regardless of entry date, courses taken outside the department require the approval of the Graduate Program Director (see form in Appendix C).

Students desiring to follow the thesis option must apply to progress to the thesis by the time they have completed 18 credit hours (at the end of the second semester in the program for full-time students). The Thesis Progression Application (Appendix A) must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director by June 1 for fall and November 15 for spring. Applications will reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee. Students who do not submit a Thesis Progression Application or who are not approved will follow the applied option requirements in their remaining coursework. Decisions will be announced by June 15 for fall and December 1 for spring semester, so that students will be prepared to register for the appropriate course - SOCY 698 Thesis Credit or SOCY 693 Internship.

During their second year of the program, students in the thesis option develop and publicly defend an M.S. thesis under the guidance of a thesis committee including three faculty members: (1) the thesis advisor, who must be a full-time faculty member in the Sociology Department, and (2) two committee members, one of whom must be from a department, program, or area of specialization other than that in which the student is enrolled. See Appendix D for a "Guide to Thesis Completion" and the Academic Policies section for additional administrative information. Thesis students may present up to six
thesis credits in SOCY 698 for graduation.²

Typical full-time thesis student schedule, entering in fall semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Semester</td>
<td>Second Semester</td>
<td>First Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 502</td>
<td>SOCY 601</td>
<td>SOCY 602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY/STAT 508</td>
<td>SOCY/STAT 608</td>
<td>SOCY 698 (3 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Elective</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Applied Sociology Option Curriculum**

Thirty-six hours of graduate course work must be completed, as follows:

- SOCY 502 Contemporary Sociological Theory
- SOCY/STAT 508 Introduction to Social Statistics or SOCY/STAT 608 Social Statistics (Prerequisite: SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent)
- SOCY 601 Methods of Sociological Research (Prerequisite: SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent)
- SOCY 602 Applications of Methods of Sociological Research (Prerequisite: SOCY 601)
- SOCY 693 Internship (6 credit hours).
- Electives - 18 credit hours

Students entering before fall, 2014, are allowed to present up to six credits of independent study (SOCY 692) and six credits outside the department for graduation. However, exercising these options to the fullest is generally discouraged in order to give students sufficient exposure to sociology as a discipline and to seminar experiences. Students entering fall, 2014, and later are allowed to present up to six credits of a combination of independent study courses and courses outside the department for graduation. Regardless of entry date, independent study requires the approval of a sponsoring faculty member and the Graduate Program Director (see more detailed description in later section and form in Appendix B). Regardless of entry date, courses taken outside the department require the approval of the Graduate Program Director (see form in Appendix C).

Typical full-time applied sociology student schedule, entering in fall semester:

² In order to maintain continuous enrollment (see "Academic Policies: MS and CASR" section), thesis students may accumulate more than 6 credits of SOCY 698. However, only 6 credits will be counted toward graduation requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Semester</strong></td>
<td><strong>Second Semester</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 502</td>
<td>SOCY 601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY/STAT 508</td>
<td>Elective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Elective</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Internship (DRAFT)**

The internship is a key feature of both the Applied Sociology option and the Certificate of Applied Social Research. It is intended as a professional experience in a field of interest to the student. For most students, it will be a first professional experience. A student currently employed in an organization may propose to intern in that position, provided that appropriate opportunities are available for integrating sociological theories and/or methodologies with ongoing professional activities.

In the internship, students undertake a practical, applied work experience, typically in a governmental or nonprofit agency. Because of the individual focus of the internship, each student’s experience will be unique. Work assignments have varied from narrow research projects to general involvement in a wide range of agency policy and management decisions, depending upon the needs of the organizations and the degree of involvement by the student's supervisor.

The internship (SOCY 693) may be undertaken at any time after the completion of SOCY 502, SOCY 508, and SOCY 601. Six credit hours total are required. Each 3-credit internship requires 150 hours of work at an agency or organization, in addition to time spent on the internship project. The internship addresses the experiential needs of the student by providing: (1) a setting for students to integrate classroom knowledge with specific job situations and apply this knowledge to organizational problems, (2) an environment in which the student can learn how to deal effectively with others in mutual goal-directed activities, and (3) a means for students to understand the work processes and complexities common in such organizations.

**The Internship Process**

Students will be required to locate a paid or volunteer position that enables them to apply the sociological principles and/or methodologies they have studied. When appropriate, students may be allowed to complete the internship in their current work
position. Students must identify an internship supervisor in the work setting. The supervisor will make the final decision about whether a student is qualified to complete an internship with the organization. If so, the student consults with the supervisor to determine work responsibilities. Any problems that develop in the course of the internship should be reported by the supervisor or the student to the Internship Coordinator. At the end of the semester, the supervisor will be asked to complete an evaluation of the student’s performance in the position.

Typically, students take 3 credit hours of internship (SOCY 693) during each of two semesters in their second year in the program. The departmental Internship Coordinator must approve enrollment in SOCY 693 prior to the semester in which the student begins the experience. Throughout the course of the internship, students are responsible for logging their completed hours, as well as ensuring their field supervisor completes a mid-term and final evaluation of their performance. In addition, all internship students must conduct a project applying sociological principles, theories, and/or methodologies to their internship experiences. The student must receive approval for the project from the Internship Coordinator.

The process and time line involved in the internship are as follows:

1. **The internship position:** Prior to registration for SOCY 693, the student locates a potential internship position and meets personally with someone at the agency or organization to discuss duties and expectations of the position. Students who do not have definite plans for an internship placement should contact the department's Internship Coordinator to discuss their interests and options. After identifying a potential position, all students should discuss the nature of the position and how it relates to their studies with the Internship Coordinator. All internship positions must be approved by the Internship Coordinator prior to registration in SOCY 693.

2. **Registration for SOCY 693:** After receiving the approval of the departmental Internship Coordinator, the student should enroll in SOCY 693 Internship for either 3 or 6 credit hours, depending on the nature of the position. Under ordinary circumstances, students in the Applied Option will complete three credits in fall and three in spring semester during their second year in the program. Students in CASR are required to complete only one internship course for 3 credit hours.

3. **Conduct of the internship:** Throughout the course of the internship, students are responsible for logging their completed hours and ensuring that their field
supervisor completes a mid-term and final evaluation of their performance. The field supervisor's evaluations should be sent directly to the Internship Coordinator.

4. **Internship Project:** Prior to or shortly after beginning their internship, students should consult with the Internship Coordinator about their ideas for a sociologically relevant internship project. For example, if a student planned to write a formal internship paper, the requirement might be to submit a 15-20 page paper integrating sociological theory and principles with the internship experience at the end of 3 credits and a culminating paper of 30-35 pages at the end of 6 credits. All projects require prior approval of the Internship Coordinator.

5. **Final Submissions:** At the end of each 3-credit internship, the student should submit the following to the Internship Coordinator: (1) completed time logs for work in the organization, (2) the agreed-upon components of the internship project. The student also requests that the field supervisor send a final evaluation to the Coordinator.

**Internship Project**

In consultation with the Internship Coordinator, the student designs an internship project for each 3-credit SOCY 693 course in which he/she applies sociological concepts to the work setting and experiences. Projects may be continued through two semesters in the Applied Sociology option, provided that the student produces a final product for grading at the end of each semester. Though scholarly papers are generally acceptable as internship projects, students are encouraged to complete innovative projects that showcase their expertise in applying sociological principles to the setting.³ (Details of the project requirement are currently under development. This section will be updated when new information is available.)

At the end of the semester, the Internship Coordinator will assign a grade on the A-F scale to the final internship project. In order to pass SOCY 693, students must meet all requirements and guidelines described herein and earn an "A" or "B" on the final project; a grade of "C" or below on the project will result in a grade of "Fail" for the internship.

³ The effort involved in creating the final project should be comparable to writing a final paper for a graduate course. As a rough guide, a typical final course paper would be approximately 20-25 pages in length and reference 20 or more academic sources.
and the student will be required to redo the entire internship. The Internship Coordinator will also consider the supervisor's evaluation in the determination of whether to award the student a "Pass" or "Fail" for SOCY 693.

**Internship Expectations**

Students conducting internships as part of their sociology graduate coursework should keep in mind that they are representing VCU, the College of Humanities and Sciences, and the Sociology Department. The faculty expects students to maintain professional standards in behavior and appearance and be respectful of the organization's staff, mission, and clients. Students are expected to fulfill all commitments, report to the organization when scheduled, work all hours as agreed-upon, be punctual, and perform the duties assigned to the best of their ability. Creating positive relationships with organizations is also important in order to provide future students with excellent internship opportunities. If at any time students experience problems in their internship experiences, they should contact the Internship Coordinator immediately.

**Independent Study**

If formal course offerings are not available in an area of interest for a student, and the student is academically prepared to undertake work in this area, enrollment in an independent study course is an option. The course designation used by the department is SOCY 692 Independent Study (1-6 credit hours). To use this course mechanism to pursue independent studies, the student must have the sponsorship of a Sociology Department faculty member.

The student must propose a project or subject for investigation to the faculty supervisor and negotiate the appropriate number of credit hours. The Independent Study Contract must be approved by the Graduate Program Director before registration for SOCY 692 (form in Appendix B). Note that this form must include a short description of the research or subject of inquiry, the name and signature of the supervising faculty member, and the number of credit hours to be earned. In general, approximately 150 hours of work on the course are expected for each 3 hours of credit. Students are expected to submit weekly progress reports to their faculty supervisors. Students should request a preliminary evaluation of their progress from their supervisor by mid-semester. Each 3-credit independent study should propose the equivalent of a 20-25 page formally written paper with an extensive reference list of academic sources.
Independent study requires the approval of a sponsoring faculty member and the Graduate Program Director (see more detailed description in later section and form in Appendix B).

**Courses Taken Outside the Department**

Students in the MS program are occasionally allowed to take courses outside the department in an area related to their interests. Courses taken outside the department require the approval of the Graduate Program Director (see form in Appendix C).

**Sociology Graduate Student Organization (SGSO)**

The department has set up a Blackboard site to communicate program information to graduate students. The Graduate Program Director enrolls students in the organization when they are accepted into the program and receive an eID. They can then access the site through the VCU portal or the Blackboard home page. Students who are not enrolled or who have trouble accessing the site should contact the Graduate Program Director.

**Curriculum Advising**

The principal student advisor is the Sociology Graduate Program Director. All graduate students are encouraged to communicate via email or in person with the Director at the beginning of each semester to decide their course of study. In addition, the signature of the Director is required for a variety of actions, including independent study approval and graduation application. If a student is unsure of how to proceed with any action in the Program, the Graduate Program Director should be consulted.

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4 Blackboard is VCU’s online learning management system. To access Blackboard use the myVCU Portal or go to blackboard.vcu.edu. Use your eID and password to log in.
Online Applied Program  
(Revised Spring, 2014)

Students in the Online Applied Program (OAP) complete the same curricular requirements as do on-campus applied sociology option students. However, all courses are offered online. All courses are fully online; that is, there is no requirement for students to come to the VCU campus at any time during their studies. OAP enrolls students from a wide variety of backgrounds. Many are employed in professional positions that are related to applications of sociology or related fields. As noted above, students who wish to participate in OAP must enroll in the program at the beginning of their graduate work and remain in the program until completion of the degree.

Students who are admitted to OAP will be given a detailed orientation to the technologies and processes used in the program. Emphasis will be on use of open (free) technologies and minimal equipment. As of this writing, student orientation materials are still in development. This handbook will be revised when more information is available, but students can be assured that technologies will be as user-friendly and inexpensive as possible.

As with the on-campus applied sociology option, the goal of OAP is to provide students with:
   1. a sophisticated understanding of sociological concepts and theories,
   2. facility in the use of sociological research methods, and
   3. the ability to apply sociological methods and theory to their current or desired areas of professional interest.

In addition, OAP takes advantage of the Internet to develop a distinctive program that encourages:
   1. development of a learning community among students to promote collaboration and critical thinking,
   2. utilization of online open resources to promote student engagement, and
   3. development of students’ professional online presence as a unifying element of the program experience.

A key feature of OAP is the continuous development of a digital professional presence over time in the program. Students who enter OAP acquire a domain name and hosting services. They each create their own open-source WordPress site that allows them to:
   • collect and curate content related to their coursework,
   • write reflectively about their experiences in the program,
• share their work with other students and the broader public (with accommodations for privacy where desired),
• see and comment on other student’s work,
• archive and organize their accumulated work,
• develop their work into a professional web presence that can be tailored to suit their particular needs and further their career goals long after they leave the program.

By developing their online site over time, students experience the program in a more integrated fashion, rather than as simply an assemblage of individual courses. In turn, each course in the program has a basic WordPress site on which students’ posts related to course material are automatically aggregated, so that all course participants can read and respond. Professors are able to view student posts in other courses and see what work they are doing there, which provides a larger context within which to understand student development. Work that students produce is shared not only with the professor but with other students and even the world at large (with privacy exceptions, as desired).

Students have numerous opportunities to reflect upon their own process of learning and share those reflections with others. Students are expected to use their online space to respond to each other’s reflections, creating dialogue about the learning experience, and thereby encouraging the development of community among the student cohort. Further, the option seeks to empower students to use their online space to communicate sociological insights and analyses as part of their professional work and online identity, regardless of their particular field.
The Accelerated BS/MS Degree in Sociology
(Revised Spring, 2014)

The accelerated B.S. and M.S. program allows qualified students, with a major in sociology, to earn both degrees in a minimum of five years by completing approved graduate courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. The program will provide students with the opportunity to expand and deepen their knowledge of sociology, enhance their credentials for the job market and/or to prepare for further professional education. Students in the program may count up to 12 hours of graduate courses toward both the B.S. and M.S. degrees. Thus, the two degrees may be earned with a minimum of 144 hours instead of the 156 required if the degrees are pursued separately.

The program is restricted to students who have demonstrated a clear interest in sociology. Minimum qualifications for admittance to the program include completion of 90 undergraduate credit hours with an overall GPA of 3.0, and a minimum of nine credit hours in sociology with a GPA of 3.3. Prior to being formally considered for admittance and before enrolling in graduate courses, the student must complete the graduate school application, submit GRE general aptitude scores, and supply supporting information required for admission. All students admitted to the program must meet the graduate student standards of performance, e.g., maintain a 3.0 GPA, and satisfactorily complete all requirements for the degree.

The Graduate Program Director will provide guidance of students in this program. Students who are interested in this program should consult with the graduate program director and the departmental advisor before they have completed 90 credits.

Requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Sociology include the completion of a minimum of 120 credits. Students in the accelerated program may take up to six graduate sociology credits in each of the final two semesters of their undergraduate course work. These courses are shared credits with the graduate program, meaning that they will be applied to both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. A maximum of 12 graduate credits may be taken prior to completion of the bachelor’s degree.

The Bachelor of Science degree will be awarded when the student has completed all requirements for the undergraduate degree, which may include the 12 graduate sociology credits. The graduate sociology courses that may be taken, once a student is admitted to the program, are:
- SOCY 502 Contemporary Sociological Theory (may be used to meet the undergraduate major requirement for SOCY 402 Sociological Theory and a required course in the graduate program)
- SOCY/STAT 508 Introduction to Social Statistics (a required course for the applied option in the graduate program and may fulfill elective requirement in the undergraduate major)
- SOCY/STAT 608 Statistics for Social Research (a required course for the thesis option and an elective course for the applied option in the graduate program and may fulfill elective requirement in the undergraduate major)
- SOCY 601 Methods of Sociological Research – Prerequisite SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent (a required course in the graduate program and will fulfill SOCY 320 requirement in the undergraduate major)
- Other SOCY graduate courses, with the approval of the graduate program director, may serve as an elective requirement for the M.S. degree and an elective for the undergraduate major.

All accelerated program students must have their schedules approved by the Graduate Program Director prior to registration.
Certificate in Applied Social Research  
(Revised Spring, 2014)

Program Description

The 18-credit Graduate Certificate in Applied Social Research (CASR) may be earned separately or simultaneously with the MS. To earn the certificate separately, students must apply directly to the VCU Graduate School by completing the generic application forms, and submitting them along with the application fee. Standardized scores are not required for the CASR. Students who have been accepted into the MS program and are interested in earning the CASR simultaneously with the MS must submit the generic graduate school application only. No fee or supporting materials are required. Using this option, CASR credits will count simultaneously for the MS degree.

To earn the CASR, students must complete 18 credit hours, including 4 required methods/statistics courses in Sociology, 1 internship and 1 3-credit elective.

Required Courses:

- SOCY/STAT 608 Social Statistics (Prerequisite: SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent)
- SOCY 601 Methods of Sociological Research (Prerequisite: SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent)
- SOCY 602 Applications of Methods of Sociological Research (Prerequisite: SOCY 601)
- SOCY 656 Social Network Analysis OR SOCY 603 Seminar in Population Dynamics
- SOCY 693 Internship (3 credit hours; must focus on applied social research)
- Elective (3 credits) - One of courses below or another graduate course in methods or statistics; permission of Graduate Program Director required if not listed below:
  - SOCY 603 Seminar in Population Studies
  - SOCY 656 Social Network Analysis
  - *PADM/GVPA 625 Public Policy Analysis
  - *PSYC 631 Evaluation Research: Psychological Perspectives
  - *URSP 621 Introduction to Geographic Information Systems
  - *URSP 622 Community Socioeconomic Analysis Using GIS
*Courses in other programs may have prerequisites or require permission of the instructor. Check the VCU course list for current information.

See the Applied Sociology option for a full description of the internship procedure, but note above that the CASR internship must focus on applied social research activities. Students may not be able to enroll full time or complete the certificate in one year given the limits on course scheduling.

**Transfer to the MS Program before Completion of the CASR Program**

Students enrolled in the CASR Program may apply to the Sociology MS program. A new application to the VCU Graduate School is required; however, certain documents from the CASR application, such as undergraduate transcripts, may be used. Credits received in the CASR may be transferred to the MS Program. Note that students must take the GRE as part of the MS application. Successful performance in the CASR does not guarantee admission to the MS Program.

**The Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory (SERL)**

Founded by Sociology Department faculty members in 1982, SERL is a VCU-affiliated applied research unit. Currently, SERL is a part of the Center for Public Policy in the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. The Lab conducts a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative social scientific and behavioral research projects, often for nonprofit or governmental agencies, and serves as an interdisciplinary university center for teaching, research, training and community service.

Students in the CASR program have often fulfilled their internships at SERL, gaining direct experience in sampling procedures, questionnaire development, interviewing, computer applications, and/or statistical analysis of the data. Contact the Graduate Program Director if you have interest in an internship experience here.
Student Financial Aid
(Revised Spring, 2014)

Many graduate students are eligible for some amount of financial aid which is available in various forms, including loans, grants, scholarships, and work-study funding. Contact the VCU Financial Aid Office for information.

In addition, the Sociology Department awards several graduate assistantships on a competitive basis to full-time, on-campus students. Online students in the Applied Sociology option are not eligible for departmental assistantships. The exact amount and conditions of the assistantships may vary from semester to semester. Graduate students who are fully funded by graduate assistantships must register for nine credit hours a semester. Contact the Graduate Program Director for current information.
Library and Computer Resources  
(Revised Spring, 2014)

Library Resources

The VCU Library has a wide variety of resources available to students. A good place to start to familiarize yourself with library resources is the link on the library site to the Research Guides home page. Here you will see a wide variety of guides indexed by subject. The Sociology Research Guide home page shows links to the most popular resources for literature searching as well as general information (e.g., "Writing a Literature Review") and contact information for the sociology reference librarian. At the time of this writing, that's Dr. Nita Bryant, who has a Ph.D. in Sociology and is a former member of the department.

On the Sociology Research Guide home page, you'll see a link to the Sociological Abstracts database. This is the primary source for sociological works; however, notice that other databases are also listed. Depending on your interests, you may find other resources useful. All library databases may be accessed from the “Databases” link on the library home page.

Also on the Sociology Research Guide page, you'll see an important link to ICPSR data sets. ICPSR, the "Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research," is a repository of thousands of data sets on numerous topics that are freely available to graduate students for analysis. Following this link will take you to a detailed explanation of how to set up an account in order to download data from ICPSR. For additional suggestions about freely available data, see the Data Sources link on the Sociology Research Guide page. As discussed in the thesis section, secondary data analysis is an excellent choice for thesis work.

Another very useful Research Guide on the library site is the one for RefWorks. We strongly advise using a bibliographic program like RefWorks to organize your sources. RefWorks enables you to locate all of your sources in one digital space and output bibliographies in many styles, including ASR and APA styles. RefWorks also features a small plug-in ("Write-N-Cite") for Microsoft Word that formats in-text citations and creates a bibliography in the style you prefer. As you do literature searching using library databases, you can add sources automatically into your RefWorks bibliographic database.

5 However, we also strongly advise that you double check the formatting of your bibliographies and in-text citations carefully. No software is perfect.
Yet another useful Research Guide is for Interlibrary Loan (ILLiad). Many resources that are not available from the VCU Library are freely available through Interlibrary Loan. Articles are usually available as pdf files, and books can be picked up at the library or delivered. Delivery also includes students not residing in the metro-Richmond area, but will take some time. See the following document for details: Interlibrary Loan Borrowing Privileges and Fees.

Many other library resources are available. You should consider this discussion only a partial overview. We encourage you to explore the VCU Library website and contact Dr. Bryant for more information.

A few more links:

**Research Guides for:**
- **Graduate Students**
- **Distance Education Students, Faculty, and Staff.**
- **Find Books, Articles, and More** (includes videos on searching).

Video tutorials on the library’s YouTube channel, for example:
- **Using Interlibrary Loan**
- **Developing a Search Strategy.**

Helpful information for locating e-books, including:
- **Locate e-Books in VCU Libraries Search**
- eBook Collection from EBSCOhost (formerly NetLibrary)
- ebrary: Academic Complete Collection (recent e-books)

**Computer Resources**

**Computer Accounts**

All students will have VCU computer accounts set up for them as part of the admissions process. VCU Technology Services has a QuickStart Student Guide that displays a number of links to computer services information. An available pdf file provides more information.

As discussed on the VCU Technology Services "Computer and Network Resources Use Policy" page, all individuals having a University computing account are bound by this VCU policy: "All users of these resources are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner. VCU computer and network resources are conducted in a public forum, and users must respect the rights and privacy of other users, share the resources
equitably and follow VCU policies and local, state, and federal laws relating to copyrights, privacy, security, and other statutes regarding electronic media."

Important aspects of the policy for VCU computer account users are:

- Actions that harass, threaten, or otherwise cause harm to individuals are prohibited;
- Actions that impede, impair or otherwise interfere with the activities of others are prohibited;
- Actions which download or post to University computers, or transport across University networks, material that is illegal, proprietary or in violation of University contracts are prohibited;
- Use of computer and network resources for commercial purposes, other than University-approved business, is prohibited;
- The University may monitor electronic activities and inspect data files and communications of individuals.

Further details may be found on the "Computer and Network Resources Use Policy" page.

Software Available to Students

VCU has licensed a number of licensed software products that are freely available to students. The Technology Services Software Center page displays these. Students are eligible for discounts on other popular software products. See the Software Purchasing page for details.

Two free products are of particular importance to Sociology graduate students:

1. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) - This is the quantitative data analysis package that is used in the statistics and methods courses taught in the department. SPSS is available either as a free download (Windows or Mac) or through remote access to the program on a VCU server. To use the server option, students must obtain a free App2Go account. See "To request an App2Go server account" on the SPSS on the App2Go Server page.
2. Nvivo, Atlas.ti, QDA Miner, WordStat - These are qualitative data analysis software programs that are available to students on the App2Go server. Thesis students who are analyzing qualitative data should consider using one of these programs.
Academic Policies – MS and CASR
(Revised Spring, 2014)

Introduction

Students must be familiar with and follow the academic regulations prescribed for the University and the College in the VCU Graduate Bulletin. The materials in this handbook do not attempt to repeat or summarize these general regulations, but represent specific departmental policies that students must additionally follow. Of particular importance are the general academic regulations. You should familiarize yourself with these materials before beginning graduate study in the department.

In addition to academic regulations, VCU policies with direct application to students are discussed in the VCU Insider. These include policies related to honors violations, classroom conduct, sexual harassment, affirmative action, alcohol/drugs, and others.

Time to Completion of the Degree

A graduate student is considered full-time when taking a minimum of nine and a maximum of 15 credits per semester. Since the MS program requires 36 hours of credits, a student enrolling in nine credits in both fall and spring semesters can finish the program in two years. Graduate courses are occasionally offered during the summer, but not on a predictable basis. The amount of time to completion can be quite variable for part-time students.

In order to finish in two years, we strongly recommend that thesis students undertake some form of secondary data analysis. If analyzing secondary data that does not contain identifying information, students will not require approval of the VCU Institutional Review Board. The General Social Survey is an example of a secondary data set often used by sociologists that does not contain identifying information. Good sources of secondary data relevant to sociological topics include government sources and the ICPSR data repository. Use of the repository is free to enrolled VCU students. Additional information is available on the ICPSR page of the VCU library system.

Collection of primary data typically involves human subjects research, as defined by the VCU Institutional Review Board (IRB), which requires filing and approval of IRB forms prior to data collection. See the IRB website for the official definition of human subjects research and appropriate filing forms. After IRB approval, the data collection process can be lengthy as well. Thesis students collecting primary data often require 2 1/2 to 3
years to complete their programs.

As specified in the VCU Graduate Bulletin, the time limit for completion of a graduate certificate or Masters degree is six years. Students should keep this time limit in mind when planning their programs.⁶

**The Grading System**

Every student is assigned a letter grade for each course that is completed in the MS or CASR Program. This grade is recorded on the student’s permanent transcript with the University. The grade on the student’s university transcript is the official grade for the course. Course grades are assigned numerical equivalents, totaled, and divided by the number of credit hours completed to arrive at the student's Grade Point Average (GPA). The GPA is important to the student in remaining in good standing in the MS Program and in qualifying for the MS degree. It also plays an important role in recommendations by the faculty, in qualifying for Alpha Kappa Delta (the sociology honor society), and in being considered for various College of Humanities and Sciences and university awards that recognize scholarship.

With two exceptions discussed below, SOCY 693 Internship and SOCY 698 Thesis, course academic achievements are graded on a 4.0 scale. Letter grades are assigned that carry numerical weight. The following equivalency table demonstrates this relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>NUMERICAL WEIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grade of "A" indicates high competency in understanding and applying the coursework. A "B" indicates competence in understanding and applying course elements. For graduate student grading purposes, the grade of "C" indicates that the student did not achieve minimum competency in understanding and/or applying the course elements. A "C" grade is a failing grade in graduate studies, as are the grades of "D" or "F".

⁶ A limited number of extensions may be granted if approved by the Sociology Graduate Program Director and the dean of the Graduate School.
After the completion of each course, the course instructor assigns a grade to each student. The instructor's system of grading should be explained in the course syllabus and discussed at the beginning of each course. Students who have any questions about the grading system should request an explanation of the system from the instructor.

Faculty Role in the Assignment and Change of Grades

The instructor is the principal determiner of course grades. Instructors have the responsibility for determining an initial grade for a course, for authorizing an incomplete ("I") grade, and changing a grade after it has been given. There are only two instances in which anyone other than the course instructor can issue or change a grade.

The first is a formal grade appeal by the student. In this situation a final grade determination is made by a Grade Review Committee. Students who wish to pursue a grade appeal should consult the Graduate Bulletin for instructions.

The second occasion for a grade assignment by faculty other than the instructor is when the instructor is unavailable for reviewing the course materials and assigning a grade. This can occur when a student receives an incomplete (I) grade in a course and the instructor leaves the University temporarily or permanently. When a faculty member departs, they are asked to continue their responsibility for grade assignments for their students. Most will accept this responsibility and will leave instructions about how they can be contacted. The student must contact the faculty member, arrange to transmit the appropriate materials, and notify the department that this has been done.

Some faculty, by personal decision or lack of ability to continue academic assignments, will leave the grading decision to the current program faculty. When this occurs, the Graduate Program Director will assign the responsibility for determining a grade to the faculty member most qualified to make that decision. Usually, students will confer with that faculty member about the course requirements and grade expectations.

The Grades of "P" and "F"

The grades of "P" (Pass) and "F" (Fail) are utilized only in SOCY 693 Internship (3 credit hours). The grade of "P" is assigned the weight of 3.00 quality points for purposes of evaluating student progress in the program. "Fail" receives a 0 quality point rating. However, the grade received in the Internship is not included in the student's overall grade point average. Any student receiving the grade of "F" on the Internship must repeat the course until it is passed.
The Grades of Satisfactory (S), Unsatisfactory (U) or Fail (F) in the Thesis Course

Grades in SOCY 698 Thesis are recorded each semester as "S" (Satisfactory), "U" (Unsatisfactory), or "F" (Fail). There is no limit to the number of these credits a student may take while pursuing completion of the degree. Receipt of the grade of U is formal notification to the student of unsatisfactory progress. Students who receive one or more grades of U will be considered for possible termination. A student who receives a final grade of F in the thesis course will be terminated from the graduate program. A grade of S or U is not included in the calculation of the GPA. A grade of incomplete (I) may not be assigned for a course approved for satisfactory, unsatisfactory or fail grading. A grade of U is a permanent grade. Future satisfactory performance is reflected in the assignment of the grade of S in subsequent semesters.

The Grade of "Incomplete" (I)

Incompletes in courses are discouraged as general practice by a student or faculty member. However, there are circumstances in which an incomplete grade will be assigned. This occurs when the student is unable to complete some of the coursework, usually a term paper or research project by the end-of-semester deadline. Emergency situations will sometimes preclude students from completing all course requirements. Each instructor should inform students about her/his "incomplete grade" policy at the beginning of each semester. Faculty members are not obligated to allow incompletes in their courses. Normally, faculty will agree to the assignment of an incomplete grade in cases of personal emergency or competing work assignments. When this occurs, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the faculty member and make arrangements for completing these requirements.

For the purposes of grading, the student and the faculty member must come to an agreement about the completion of course requirements. If the student has not completed all course work and does not contact the instructor to negotiate an incomplete, the instructor will enter a final grade based on the work completed. Final grades are due soon after the end of the final exam period. Thus, students cannot wait until after the grades have been submitted before negotiating the incomplete grade.

Changing the Incomplete Grade to a Regular Grade

Incomplete grades do not remain forever on a student transcript, if they are not completed. University policy is that the grade of "I" is automatically changed to the grade of "F" after one regular (fall/spring) semester, if another grade is not reported by
the instructor. A faculty member will not agree to assign an incomplete unless an agreement is reached about the work to be completed and the date for completion. That date cannot be beyond the end of the next regular semester. Thus, an Incomplete grade given at the end of the fall term must be changed by the instructor before the end of the spring semester. An Incomplete grade recorded at the end of the spring or summer term must be completed by the end of the next fall semester.

University grade records for the previous semester are swept at the end of the next semester. All "I" grades are automatically changed to the grade of "F." These failing grades are automatically added to student transcripts.

Students who do not complete course requirements, negotiate the grade of "I" with the faculty member, but do not complete the course work during the following semester, will discover that the grade for the course has been changed to an "F." When the work is completed, the instructor will need to file a Change of Grade Form. Extensions for an incomplete in a course must be negotiated with the instructor of record or with the Graduate Program Director if the faculty member of record is unavailable.

The Grade Point Average (GPA)

The grade point average is important to maintaining good academic standing in the MS or CASR program. All students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 on all coursework to remain in good academic standing. The 3.0 GPA is the minimum required for graduation from these programs.

Termination for Academic Insufficiency

The faculty can decide to terminate a student for academic insufficiency under several conditions. These are as follows:

1. The student's grade point average falls below 3.00.
2. The student receives the grade of "C" in more than two courses; the earning of a third "C" automatically terminates the student from the program, regardless of the presence on the record of offsetting "As."
3. The student receives a grade of "D" or "F" in one course.
4. A student admitted provisionally to the MS program fails to maintain a 3.00 grade point average for the first three courses taken in the program.

The faculty will also terminate (or advise voluntary termination for) a student for academic insufficiency when the student seems unable to raise a GPA above the 3.0 level necessary for graduation. The academic records of all students in the MS and
CASR program will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee after the end of every semester and students notified if any of the conditions of academic insufficiency apply.

A student terminated from the graduate program may appeal the termination to the Graduate School. See the Appeal Process page in the Graduate Bulletin for details. A student terminated from the program for cause may not be reconsidered for admission to the program for two full years from the date of termination. The student would then follow the normal application process prescribed by the program and the School of Graduate Studies.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**

All students are expected to make satisfactory academic progress toward their degrees. After grades are entered at the end of a semester, the Graduate Program Director will review the records of all students in the program. If conditions of academic insufficiency or unprofessional conduct exist, the student will be considered for termination from the program by the Graduate Program Committee. See the Satisfactory Academic Progress page in the Graduate Bulletin for details.

**Continuous Enrollment**

Once admitted to a degree program, a graduate student is expected to comply with minimum enrollment of one course per 12-month period from the beginning of his/her program. A graduate student who has completed course requirements for a degree must register for at least one credit at VCU each fall and spring semester until the degree is awarded. Students must be enrolled during their graduation semesters. If the student does not meet continuous enrollment minimums, she/he must reapply to the program through the Graduate School.

**Class Attendance Policy**

Each faculty member determines class attendance policy for her/his classes. Some faculty members require attendance at each class. If this is the policy, students should be absolutely certain that they contact instructors either before missing the class, or soon thereafter, if the absence is an emergency. Instructors can insist that individuals withdraw from classes if they are missing too much of the subject matter. Class attendance policy should be stated in each course syllabus. If it is not, students should ask instructors about their policy regarding class attendance.
Leaves of Absence from the MS and Certificate Programs

If a student who has been formally admitted is unable to attend classes for one full academic term or more, a formal leave of absence from the MS Program must be requested in writing (email will do). This is accomplished by submitting a petition or a letter to the Graduate Program Director requesting a leave of absence and stating the amount of time that the leave of absence will require. This request will automatically be granted by the program and will be forwarded to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The student’s request for a leave of absence will be entered into the record. The student will be allowed to return and register at a later time, without any penalty or the need to reapply to the University and the program. Leaves of absence temporarily suspend continuous enrollment requirements; however, they do not extend time limits for completion of degrees.

Any student who does not register for classes for more than one calendar year and who has not requested a leave of absence will be required to re-apply to the University and to the MS or CASR Program and pay the application fee again.

Withdrawals

Withdrawal from Classes

Withdrawing from classes without prejudice is permitted. The deadline for withdrawal is noted on the VCU academic calendar for every semester. Students who wish to withdraw from a class need not submit a reason for the action. Withdrawals may be completed through eServices.

Health-related Withdrawals

For a protracted illness, a student may choose to ask for an approved leave of absence (see "Leaves of Absence" above). Some students may experience medical conditions that make them unable to complete their studies once a semester is in progress. If an illness occurs after add/drop but before the last day to withdraw, as specified on the academic calendar, students should withdraw from their classes through the normal withdrawal process through eServices.

After the last day to withdraw for the semester and before a final class grade has been assigned and/or posted to the academic history, students with medical problems must petition their academic deans (or dean designees) for a medical withdrawal from all courses. Students must present documentation of their medical condition that
establishes a significant degree of impairment in continuing their studies. See the Graduate Bulletin for additional information.
Students must understand that graduate school is not simply an extension of undergraduate education. Graduate school is a completely different world and academic experience. The majority of undergraduate students do not go to graduate school; it requires a much higher level of commitment, motivation, dedication, perseverance, and effort than undergraduate education. If you are willing to make the commitment, the payoff is well worth it.

**Coursework**

The amount of coursework required in graduate classes is much greater than that required in undergraduate education. A full course load at the graduate level is 9 credit hours (typically 3 courses). You should expect to read an average of 100 pages per week for each course. You should expect to write a 20-25 page final paper, or its equivalent in project form, in addition to several smaller assignments for each course. Some courses also include midterm and final examinations. You should prepare diligently for each class by reading all assigned materials and preparing notes in order to participate actively in class discussion. You should expect to prepare and give oral presentations or lead discussions regularly in each class. Graduate classes tend to be smaller than undergraduate classes, so each student is visible and expected to contribute. Though online classes in the program will typically have a different structure for participation, the expectation of full participation in course activities is identical.

**Attendance**

Attendance requirements vary by instructor, but in general, attendance is expected at all class meetings in graduate courses; it is not a time to “blow off” class. If an emergency arises that prevents you from attending class, you must notify the instructor as soon as possible and take full responsibility for making up any missed work.

**Faculty/student interaction**

You should expect to become better acquainted with the professors in graduate school. Class sizes are smaller, and there tends to be more mentoring and advising at this level than at the undergraduate level. Sociology faculty members are very supportive of students and generous with their time; we enjoy helping students navigate their graduate studies and professional pursuits. Students should remember, however, that
faculty members are not peers. They are still in a position of authority and should be addressed as “Dr.” or “Professor.” They also have a number of demands on their time including administrative duties, research obligations, other teaching responsibilities, and publishing pressure. You should respect the many demands on faculty members’ time by:

- Always making an appointment ahead of time if you need to meet; unless specifically invited to do so by the faculty member, do not simply show up at her/his door unannounced.
- Always preparing for meetings with faculty; know what you want to get out of the meeting; bring a list of questions and any materials/documents pertinent to the conversation; let the professor know why you want to meet.
- Expecting to meet for no more than 15-30 minutes unless otherwise agreed upon beforehand.

In sum, treat your faculty members and peers with respect, and be proactive. If you are unsure of how to proceed at any point, talk with a faculty member. Students who put the most effort into their graduate education will reap the most benefits.

**Conclusion**

Getting started on the right foot is certainly important to any graduate student. If you have questions and are uncertain about how to proceed with any of the requirements of your courses and programs, consult your advisor or the Graduate Program Director. This will make you a more productive and successful graduate student.
Associations and Organizations
(Revised Spring, 2014)

**Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD)**

Alpha Kappa Delta is the international Sociology honor society was founded in 1920 by Dr. Emory S. Bogardus, a sociologist at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Its purpose is to promote the scientific study of society and stimulate, facilitate, and recognize excellence in academic scholarship. Since its founding, more than 490 chapters have been chartered in the United States, Canada, China, Finland, the Philippines, Taiwan and Singapore. VCU’s chapter of AKD was formed in 1970 with 22 charter members. The name, Alpha Kappa Delta, was chosen because the letters represent the first letters of three classical Greek words that embody the function of society. They are “anthropos” meaning (hu)mankind; “katamanthano” meaning to examine closely or to acquire knowledge, and “diakoneo” meaning to do service. The mission of AKD members is to “investigate humanity for the purpose of service.”

Graduate students who maintain good standing in the program are invited to join AKD. We host an induction ceremony with keynote speaker and reception every Spring.

Please contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Jeff London (jlondon@vcu.edu), for more information.

**Students for Social Action (SOSA)**

Students for Social Action is a student organization sponsored by the department. As explained on its Facebook page, the group is dedicated to the pursuit of social justice:

"Students for Social Action aims to examine, act, and improve modern social and political institutions in the VCU/Richmond community. Our charge is not merely limited to shining a light on various issues at their intersections, but is also to develop and execute ways to combat these issues within our communities. Our goal is to create a forum for academic and city communities to speak openly about these issues with a positive, results-driven approach. We are willing and interested in collaborating with local officials, organizations, and other student groups who are community-minded and equally results-driven. Our desire as an organization is to strengthen and encourage community activism, organizing, and analysis to enact political and social action within the VCU/Richmond community."
Recent events have included:

Oct., 2013 - Q&A session with representatives from the gubernatorial campaigns of Terry McAuliffe and Ken Cuccinelli.

Feb., 2014 - Hosted a one year anniversary forum for the Living Wage Campaign, which has the goal of securing a living wage for workers on the VCU campus.

Feb., 2014 - Hosted a free screening of the movie *Inequality for All*, which highlights the growing income inequality in the U.S., narrated by Robert Reich.

SOSA has regular meetings in the department, and all interested students are invited to attend. Please contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Jeff London (jlondon@vcu.edu), for more information.

**Phi Kappa Phi**

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi is a national honor society which was founded in 1897. The VCU Chapter was established in 1976. It is the only university-wide society at VCU. The primary objective of Phi Kappa Phi is the recognition and encouragement of superior scholarship in all disciplines. Membership in the Society is by invitation only. Invitations are extended to graduating seniors, advanced degree recipients, and faculty members who have demonstrated academic excellence. Each year the faculty of the Sociology Program nominates its top scholars for this prestigious university award.

**Outstanding Graduate Student Award**

At each December and May graduation, the Sociology faculty present this award to one graduate student.

**Other Academic and Service Awards**

Other recognitions for excellence in academic performance and service to the University are made at the annual College of Humanities and Sciences Student Awards Night held during the spring term of each academic year. At that event, students who have achieved academic excellence, received fellowships, and have contributed to the life of the University are recognized by the Dean of the College for their achievements.
Career Advising and Development  
(Revised Spring, 2014)

The M.S. in Sociology is a versatile credential that prepares students for a wide variety of employment options or serves as the foundation for entry into a Ph.D. program. Many of our Applied Sociology graduates are working in professional careers in non-profit organizations and government agencies or in community colleges as faculty members. Our Applied Sociology students have often found their internship placements lead to the development of professional networks and employment opportunities. Our thesis students are typically very successful in their Ph.D. program applications, and many have joined the higher education professoriate or are employed as advanced level researchers in non-profit organizations or government agencies. In addition, the VCU career center offers individualized career and professional development services. Please visit the University Career Center for more information.

The American Sociological Association describes career opportunities for sociologists with a graduate degree as follows:

“With advanced degrees, the more likely it is that a job will have the title sociologist, but many opportunities exist—the diversity of sociological careers ranges much further than what you might find under "S" in the Sunday newspaper employment ads. Many jobs outside of academia do not necessarily carry the specific title of sociologist:

- Sociologists become high school teachers or faculty in colleges and universities, advising students, conducting research, and publishing their work. Over 3000 colleges offer sociology courses.
- Sociologists enter the corporate, non-profit, and government worlds as directors of research, policy analysts, consultants, human resource managers, and program managers.
- Practicing sociologists with advanced degrees may be called research analysts, survey researchers, gerontologists, statisticians, urban planners, community developers, criminologists, or demographers.
- Some MA and PhD sociologists obtain specialized training to become counselors, therapists, or program directors in social service agencies.

Today, sociologists embark upon literally hundreds of career paths. Although teaching and conducting research remains the dominant activity among the thousands of professional sociologists today, other forms of employment are
growing both in number and significance. In some sectors, sociologists work closely with economists, political scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, social workers, and others, reflecting a growing appreciation of sociology’s contributions to interdisciplinary analysis and action.”

Read more about the sociology master's degree in a study conducted by the American Sociological Association, “What Can I Do With a Masters Degree?: A Study of Masters Candidates.”
Graduation Requirements and Process  
(Revised Spring, 2014)

**Thesis Option - Admission to Candidacy**

The Admission to Candidacy process applies only to thesis students. After successfully defending a thesis proposal but before formally beginning the final research phase, the student must file the "Admission to Candidacy" form. The current form as of this writing is shown in Appendix F; consult the [Graduate School forms](#) page to download and complete an updated form. The form must be signed by the thesis advisor, other thesis committee members, and the Graduate Program Director. We advise bringing a copy of this form to the thesis proposal defense for signatures (assuming a successful defense).

Note on the form that graduate students approved for candidacy must register for at least one graduate credit hour (e.g., SOCY 698) during each fall and spring semester until the degree is awarded, including the semester of graduation.

**Graduation Application**

Application for graduation takes place at the beginning of each regular University semester, including the summer sessions. The date of the last day of application for graduation is listed in University publications and on the [Academic Calendar](#).

At the beginning of the semester, students eligible to graduate will be notified by email of the graduation process and provided a link to the graduation application. Only students eligible to graduate during the current semester will receive this email. The email notification will be sent to the official VCU student email address and will include submission deadlines and guidelines. A separate graduation application must be filed for each degree/certificate the student plans to complete (e.g., MS and CASR). A student must be enrolled at the time of application (i.e., during the semester in which the student graduates).

Students planning to graduate in the current semester should read the "Information for graduate students" in the "Graduation" section on the [Graduate School forms](#) page. A [short video](#) explaining the graduation application process posted by VCU Enrollment Services will be helpful also. Select the link at the end of the eServices process to the formal Graduation Application. Complete all parts of the form by typing in the pdf document as directed; print the finished application. Submit it, along with a copy of your unofficial graduate transcript from eServices, to the Sociology Department.
advising office. The current application form is shown in Appendix G and may be viewed or downloaded from the Graduate School forms page. It is the responsibility of the student to complete the application as accurately as possible.

Students who wish to make changes on their submitted application must notify the Graduation unit in the Office of Records and Registration.

Conferring the Degree

After a student has completed all of the degree requirements and had a graduation application approved, the degree requirements will have been met. An individual is considered as graduated at the end of the semester in which the degree requirements were met.

There is a difference between having fulfilled graduation requirements and having a degree conferred by the University. Virginia Commonwealth University confers degrees twice each year at the end of the fall (December) and spring (May) semesters in a graduation ceremony. The official commencement program will list the names of all persons who have completed degree requirements and have been recommended by the faculty for graduation. Graduation applicants who have completed their degree requirements during the summer will have their degrees conferred at the following December ceremony.

Commencement

Information about a particular semester's graduation activities may be found on the VCU Commencement Website. The University-wide ceremony is held on a Saturday morning at the Richmond Coliseum during the spring and at the Siegel Center during the fall. Candidates are officially awarded their degrees, but except for PhD recipients, do not walk. The Sociology Department holds its own graduation ceremonies at a different time of day on the Monroe Park Campus. Check the Commencement website under "Departmental Ceremonies" for day/time/place information. This is a much more informal ceremony at which all candidates get to walk and are congratulated individually by the faculty members. If you will be attending the Sociology graduation, contact the departmental office to register your attendance, obtain tickets for guests, and ask any questions.
Appendix A: Guidelines for Thesis Progression Application

Students considering the thesis option are encouraged to use assignments in their first year courses to develop thesis topic ideas. Ideally, students will also identify a thesis advisor prior to submitting the thesis progression application. If the student has not identified a thesis advisor, the Graduate Program Committee will choose an advisor in consultation with all parties after approving the application. Students considering application should examine recent Sociology Department theses on the SGSO website, so that they are aware of the general format and complexity of successful theses.

Application due dates for approval are: June 1 for fall; November 15 for spring. Applications will be submitted to and reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee. Decisions will be announced by June 15 for fall and December 1 for spring semester, so that students will be prepared to register for the appropriate course (SOCY 698 Thesis Credit or SOCY 693 Internship). Once accepted for the thesis option, students must adhere to their advisor’s recommendations in order to receive continued support for the thesis option.

The Thesis Progression Application should be approximately two pages in length and must include specification of:

- A thesis topic;
- A clear research question(s);
- A tentative theoretical framework;
- Reference to approximately five relevant academic sources;
- Verification that the data needed to complete the thesis can be obtained by the student, either: (1) a existing secondary data set, or (2) a feasible primary data collection protocol, complete with budget, if applicable;
- A tentative timeline for completion of the thesis.

Students must also qualify to conduct a thesis per the following:

- Throughout the course of the graduate program have earned no Cs and no more than 2 Bs;
- Demonstrate strong writing and analytical skills as evaluated by the Graduate Program Committee;
- A majority vote of acceptance to conduct a thesis project by the Graduate Program Committee.
Appendix B: Independent Study Contract

Instructions: Complete and submit this form to the Graduate Program Director prior to registration for a SOCY 692 course. Please sign this form and have your faculty research sponsor do the same. If you fail to get the Graduate Program Director's signature before enrolling, the course may not be counted toward your degree/certificate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Term:</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCY 692 Section Number:</td>
<td>Credit Hours:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty Supervisor:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of the Proposed Independent Study Project (including description of final product)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous SOCY 692 courses (with dates):</td>
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<tr>
<td>I agree to conduct the above independent study per the terms outlined in the Sociology Graduate Program Handbook.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Sponsor Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approval:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Program Director Signature:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C: Approval for Courses Taken Outside the Department

Instructions: Complete and submit this form to the Graduate Program Director prior to registration for a course to be taken in a VCU department other than Sociology or at another college/university. If you fail to get the Graduate Program Director's signature before enrolling, the course may not be counted toward your degree/certificate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student name:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester/year of proposed enrollment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Request to take course:**

- **At college/university (if not at VCU):**
- **In which department:**
- **Course number & name:**
- **Course description in bulletin:**

**Previous courses taken outside the department in the M.S. program (with dates):**

**Reason(s) for this request:**

**Approval:**

- **Graduate Program Director:**
- **Date:**
Appendix D: Guide to Thesis Completion

The thesis option is recommended for students who are interested in, and are qualified to pursue, a Ph.D. in Sociology. Faculty members recommend the most outstanding students for the thesis option. The thesis experience is challenging and rewarding, and students should be well informed about the process and well prepared to make the commitment before choosing this option.

Ideally, students pursuing the thesis option will select a thesis advisor before submitting the Thesis Progression Application (Appendix A) at the end of their second semester. If the student has not selected an advisor, the Graduate Program Committee will appoint one in consultation with the student and faculty member. Following approval of the application by the Graduate Program Committee, students should begin development of a thesis proposal under the guidance of the advisor. The thesis committee is made up of three faculty members. The member designated as the student's thesis advisor must be a full-time faculty member in the Sociology Department. One member of the thesis committee must be from a department, program, or area of specialization other than that in which the student is enrolled.

The M.S. thesis normally should be comparable to a publishable article (in length and format), although with a somewhat more extensive literature review and fuller elaboration of the theoretical framework and research procedures. Implications for future research, theory, and/or action should also be discussed. The stylistic conventions of either the American Sociological Association (ASA) or the American Psychological Association (APA) should be used, depending on the preference of the thesis advisor. See Appendix E for a short ASA format guide. The full version of the guide may be purchased from the bookstore of the American Sociological Association. Many guides to APA format may be found on the internet. The VCU library links guides to the APA formats for Electronic Sources and General Guidelines. We recommend using RefWorks, a free bibliographic program supported by the VCU Library to format in-text citations and reference lists. See "Library and Computer Resources" for more details.

Theses are defended publicly, after having been announced and distributed to the faculty one week in advance. Any faculty member present may express reservations regarding the acceptability of the thesis. However, the student’s thesis committee makes the final departmental decision regarding acceptability of the thesis by majority vote. The general expectation is that a thesis should demonstrate the student's ability
to conceive and carry out an adequate research project rather than produce publishable material.

Here is a listing of the typical steps involved in working through a thesis:

1. Develop an idea for a thesis problem or proposal. Students should do this as soon as they begin the program, using every class to develop ideas. Coming up with a good topic is critical! Consider the advice of Dr. John Mahoney, a former faculty member:

   “Choose your topic carefully, keeping in mind that the research topic must be something that can be done. Graduate schools are littered with the bones of students who have come up with great ideas that are impossible to research either because of ethical concerns or because it is impossible to gather the data needed to complete the study. This is where consulting with your thesis advisor is critical. “

   Students are strongly encouraged to approach faculty members who are involved with ongoing research about taking part in one of their projects for their thesis, or to identify an existing data source to analyze. Although students may choose to collect their own, original data, they should realize that this will significantly delay their progress.

2. Bring your idea/statement of the problem to a faculty member/or advisor to discuss the feasibility of the project and who should chair the thesis committee. After completion of 18 credit hours in the program, the student submits the Thesis Progression Application (Appendix A).

3. The student and advisor should ask at least one other member of the department to be on the committee. Finally, a faculty member outside of the department must be selected to be the outside representative.

   Take care to establish a good working relationship with your advisor. Find out what the expectations are and stick to them. Remember that your advisor has many other obligations and responsibilities. Do not expect immediate turnaround and feedback on drafts. Remember that your advisor is not responsible for finding articles, analyzing data, writing up results, etc., or keeping you focused and motivated. Those are your jobs!
4. Begin working on the thesis proposal with the chair/advisor and other members of the committee. Establish a structured set of dates for completion of each step of the thesis project. Be aware that most faculty members have 9-month appointments and are not under contract during the summer. They may not be available to provide guidance or feedback on thesis projects over the summer. August graduation is not guaranteed for students who do not defend in time for May graduation.

5. Schedule a formal defense of the thesis proposal with the committee before the end of the fall semester of the second year. The proposal must be successfully defended and the Admission to Candidacy form (Appendix F) submitted the semester before the student intends to graduate. The purpose of the proposal defense is to discuss the research problem with the committee and define the steps intended to take to answer the research question(s). At this point, the student should have developed a statement of the problem, a review of the current literature in the area (not necessarily as detailed as the final literature review), and the methodology section, which includes the procedures to be used to answer the research questions. If conducting original research (primary data), the student should not have any data collected at this point.

6. Once the proposal has been approved by the thesis committee:
   - If your project involves collecting primary data on human subjects, the appropriate VCU IRB application forms must be submitted before any data are collected for the thesis project. By definition, a thesis is considered to be research. Here is the federal definition of human subjects:
     "A human subject is a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual or (2) identifiable private information."
   If you are analyzing a secondary data set containing no identifiers, such as the General Social Survey, IRB submission is not required. However, most student projects involving primary data collection will require submission of IRB forms. This is required by the department, the Graduate School, and the University. See the VCU IRB website for forms and additional information. You may begin filling out the IRB forms before formal approval by your thesis committee, but cannot submit them until after a successful defense.
   - Complete and submit the Admission to Degree Candidacy form. See the Graduate School’s forms page for a copy.

7. Collect and/or analyze the data, working closely with the thesis advisor and
committee members.

8. Submit drafts of sections to the thesis advisor and committee members, as agreed.

9. Rewrite the proposal into a final thesis copy including analysis, findings and conclusion/discussion. Be sure to change verb tense from future (as in the proposal) to past tense (since project has been completed). The final copy should follow the VCU guidelines in the Thesis and Dissertation Manual on the Graduate School website.

10. Schedule the thesis defense with the three faculty members on the committee. The defense should occur at least one week before the last day of classes. Also, you should have your advisor send an invitation to the thesis defense to all Sociology faculty members, along with an electronic copy of the thesis, one week in advance of the defense. Bring a copy of the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Approval Form to the thesis defense. If your defense is successful and any corrections are minor, the two committee members other than the advisor may be willing to sign the form and rely on the advisor to verify later corrections.

11. Make corrections as indicated by the thesis committee. Submit the Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Approval Form to the Dean's office for signature by the deadline date identified on the VCU Academic Calendar, typically about one week after the last day of classes. Submit the final thesis electronically to the VCU Digital Archives by the deadline date identified on the VCU Academic Calendar.

12. Decide whether to have any hard copies of the thesis bound. The VCU Library no longer offers binding services for hard copies of theses. However, the Thesis and Dissertation Manual contains information about professional binding services.

13. Graduate! Check the VCU Commencement Website for information and be sure to come to the Sociology Department's graduation ceremonies!
Appendix E: American Sociological Association Style Overview

Quick Tips for ASA Style

Plagiarism

The ASA has a firm commitment to full and proper attribution and authorship credit, as set forth in the ASA Code of Ethics.

(a) In publications, presentations, teaching practice, and service, sociologists explicitly identify credit, and reference the author when they take data or material verbatim from another person's written work, whether it is published, unpublished, or electronically available.

(b) In their publications, presentations, teaching, practice, and service, sociologists provide acknowledgment of and reference to the use of others' work, even if the work is not quoted verbatim or paraphrased, and they do not present others' work as their own whether it is published, unpublished, or electronically available.

Text Citations

Citations in the text include the last name of the author(s) and year of publication. Include page numbers when quoting directly from a work or referring to specific passages. Identify subsequent citations of the same source in the same way as the first. Examples follow:

If the author's name is in the text, follow it with the publication year in parentheses:
…in another study by Duncan (1959).

If the author's name is not in the text, enclose the last name and publication year in parentheses:
…whenever it occurred (Gouldner 1963).

Pagination follows the year of publication after a colon, with no space between the colon and the page number:

Note: This is the preferred ASA style. Older forms of text citations are not acceptable: (Kuhn 1970, p. 71).

Give both last names for joint authors:
…(Martin and Bailey 1988).

If a work has three authors, cite all three last names in the first citation in the text; thereafter, use et al. in the citation. If a work has more than three authors, use et al. in the first citation and in all subsequent citations.

First citation for a work with three authors:
…had been lost (Carr, Smith, and Jones 1962).

Later: …(Carr et al. 1962)

If a work cited was reprinted from a version published earlier, list the earliest publication date in brackets, followed by the publication date of the recent version used.
…Veblen ([1899] 1979) stated that…

Separate a series of references with semicolons. List the series in alphabetical or date order, but be consistent throughout the manuscript.

…(Green 1995; Mundi 1987; Smith and Wallop 1989).

Reference Lists

A reference list follows the text and footnotes in a separate section headed References. All references cited in the text must be listed in the reference section, and vice versa. It is the author's responsibility to ensure that publication information for each entry is complete and correct.

• References should be double-spaced.
• List all references in alphabetical order by first author's last name
Include first names and surnames for all authors. Use first-name initials only if an author used initials in the original publication. In these cases, add a space between the initials, as in R. B. Brown and M. L. B. Smith.

(See additional guidelines in the full text of the American Sociological Association Style Guide.)

**Books**

**Author1** (last name inverted), **Author2** (including full surname, last name is not inverted), and **Author3**. Year of publication. Name of Publication (italicized). Publisher’s city and state, or province postal code (or name of country if a foreign publisher): Publisher’s Name.

**Examples:**


**Journal Articles**

**Author1** (Last name inverted), **Author2** (including full surname, last name is not inverted), and **Author3**. Year of publication. "Title of Article." Name of Publication (italicized) Volume Number (Issue Number): Page numbers of article.

**Examples:**


**E-Resources**

Articles and books obtained from the Internet follow the same pattern as those cited above, with the exception that page numbers are omitted and the URL and date of access are included.

**Examples:**


**Web sites**

A general rule may be applied to citing of Web sites: If the Web site contains data or evidence essential to a point being addressed in the manuscript, it should be formally cited with the URI and date of access.

In the text of the paper cite as: (ASA 2006)

In the reference list:


For information or to purchase a copy of the ASA Style Guide, please contact:

Publications Department
American Sociological Association
1430 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 383-9005
(publications@asanet.org)

Click here to purchase a copy of the ASA Style Guide!
Appendix F: Admission to Candidacy Form for Thesis Option Students

Admission to Master’s or Doctoral Degree Candidacy

Student: __________________________________________

VID# ____________________________ VCU Email Address __________________________

Degree ____________________________ Program __________________________

My signature acknowledges that I have read and understand the following policies regarding research involving human or animal subjects and that I am fully aware of all requirements for successful completion of my degree program, including continuous enrollment.

Research involving human or animal subjects must receive approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before collection of data may begin. I understand that failure to obtain a copy of the IRB or IACUC approval form from the project principal investigator will negate the use of that data for my thesis/dissertation or in any form of presentation or publication. (information on human and animal subjects can be found at http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/guidelines.htm and http://www.research.vcu.edu/iacuc/index.htm.)

University Graduate Council and Graduate School continuous enrollment policy requires that any student engaged in any form of study at VCU that involves use of university facilities, laboratories/studios, and/or libraries, or who is supervised by or consults regularly with a faculty member concerning graduate work on a project, work of art, thesis, or dissertation must register formally for a course while engaged in these activities, including the semester in which the student graduates.

Graduate students approved for candidacy must register for at least one graduate credit hour of VBA 710 work fall and spring semester until the degree is awarded (including the semester of graduation). Students should consult with their program directors regarding additional enrollment requirements.

Graduate students with approved leaves of absence are exempted from continuous enrollment requirements for the LOA period. Note: While a LOA temporarily suspends continuous enrollment requirements, it does not extend the time limit for degree completion.

Student’s signature ____________________________ Date: __________________________

Major Advisor and Advisory Committee Members (if applicable): PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

Major Advisor: __________________________________________

Committee Member: __________________________________________

Additional Committee Members: __________________________________________

The program director, major advisor and/or advisory committee (if applicable) have approved this student for admission to candidacy effective (sem/yr) ____________ and confirm the following (check all that apply). Degree candidacy will be approved for a current semester only, based on the date the form is received in the Graduate School. The Degree Candidacy form must be submitted BEFORE the student formally begins the final thesis/dissertation/final research project BUT NO LATER THAN the semester preceding the semester in which the student graduates.

☐ All provisional or probationary conditions of admission have been met.

☐ A 3.0 GPA has been maintained on all graduate coursework attempted after acceptance into program (for repeated courses, both original and repeat grade must be included in calculation of graduate GPA).

☐ No more than 6 semester hours or 20 percent of total semester hours attempted (whichever greater) at "C" or below level (C, D, F). Note: The number of hours recorded for courses from which student withdraws are not included in calculation of 20 percent.

☐ At least one-half of required coursework designated exclusively for graduate students (600 or higher at VCU). Identify all 600-level courses that restrict undergraduate enrollment.

☐ Written and oral comprehensive and/or qualifying examinations (if required) have been passed.

☐ The thesis or dissertation prospectus (if required for candidacy) or final research project has been approved.

☐ The student is in compliance with the time to degree limit (6 years certificates and masters, 8 years doctorate).

☐ Other/Comments: __________________________________________

Approval signatures:

Major Advisor & VCU Email Address: __________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Graduate Program Director & VCU Email Address: __________________________________________

Date: __________________________

School Dean/Designee & VCU Email Address: __________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Graduate Dean/Designee: __________________________________________

Date: __________________________
Appendix G: Graduation Application Form
VCU APPLICATION TO GRADUATE – FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS
PART I: APPROVAL SHEET

CANDIDATE’S NAME: ___________________________   STUDENT NUMBER: ___________________________

SECTION A: CANDIDATE
After initiating the online eServices portion of the graduation checkout procedure, submit the following documentation to your academic advisor:
1. eServices copy of unofficial graduate transcript.
2. Application to Graduate—for all graduate students (Instructions/Checklist: Part I: Approval Sheet; Part II: Commencement Program/Diploma Information; Part III: Graduation Worksheet, if required by program director)

SECTION B: PRELIMINARY REVIEW AND APPROVAL
We have reviewed the academic record of the candidate against program, school, Graduate School and Graduate Council degree requirements and certify that the candidate should complete all degree requirements, including (if applicable) successful defense of thesis/dissertation and all related T/D processing, by the end of the current semester.

Advisor’s Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________
Graduate Program Director’s Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________
School Dean/Designee’s Signature – PRELIMINARY: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________

SUBMIT PARTS I AND II WITH PRELIMINARY APPROVALS TO THE RECORDS AND REGISTRATION/GRADUATION OFFICE (1015 FLOYD AVE., BOX 842520) NO LATER THAN THE DATE INDICATED IN ESERVICES EMAIL TO ENSURE THAT THE CANDIDATE’S NAME WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM.

Maintain file copy of signed form for final signature approval processing

SECTION C: FINAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL
We have reviewed the academic record of the candidate against program, school, Graduate School and Graduate Council degree requirements and certify that all degree requirements have been fulfilled, including (if applicable) successful defense of thesis/dissertation and all related T/D processing. We approve this candidate for the awarding of the degree.

Advisor’s Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________
Graduate Program Director’s Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________
School Dean/Designee’s Signature – FINAL: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________

Submit part I with final approvals to the Graduation Office for degree to be posted and diploma to be released. Deliver in person if deadline is imminent to (1015 Floyd Ave., Harris Hall).

SECTION D: NOTICE THAT CANDIDATE DID NOT COMPLETE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS
Advisor’s Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________
Graduate Program Director’s Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________
School Dean/Designee’s Signature: ___________________________   Date: ___________________________

Submit part I to Records and Registration/Graduation Office ASAP to confirm the student’s continuation in the program and to ensure that the student’s matriculation to the program will be reopened for future registration.

Student must re-initiate their application to graduate process via eServices to graduate in a future semester.
VCU APPLICATION TO GRADUATE – FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS
PART II: COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM/DIPLOMA INFORMATION
(To be completed by Graduate Degree Candidate)

1. GENERAL INFORMATION
   Student Number: ____________________________
   Name: ______________________________________
   School: ______________________________________
   Major: ______________________________________
   Concentration: ________________________________
   Degree: _____________________________________

   Degree Requirements to be completed by:
   Year: ___________ Month (Check one): August _______ December _________ May ________

2. PRINT NAME/HOMETOWN INFORMATION EXACTLY AS YOU WISH THEM TO APPEAR ON DIPLOMA AND IN COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM:
   Diploma Name: ______________________________
   Hometown City/State: __________________________

3. UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE, YEAR OF GRADUATION, AND INSTITUTION
   Degree ____________________________ Year of Graduation __________________________
   Institution ______________________________

4. PREVIOUS GRADUATE DEGREE, YEAR OF GRADUATION, AND INSTITUTION
   Degree ____________________________ Year of Graduation __________________________
   Institution ______________________________

5. ALL CANDIDATES: Please provide a permanent address to which the Records & Registration/Graduation Office can mail your diploma. If you do not want your diploma mailed, please check the box below and provide a telephone number at which the Graduation Office can reach you when your diploma is available for pick-up. If you have any questions, contact the Graduation Office at (804) 828-1917.
   Address: ____________________________________________________________
   ☐ Please do not mail my diploma. Telephone number: __________________________

6. PH.D. CANDIDATES: (FOR PUBLICATION IN THE COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM)
   Dissertation Title: ______________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

   Dissertation Advisor(s): ________________________________

I understand and confirm that I have met or will meet upon successful completion of the proposed course schedule (i.e., current courses) the university and academic requirements for my degree.

Candidate’s Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: ________________
To be completed by Graduate Degree Candidate and reviewed by Advisor against the unofficial graduate transcript and Graduation Checklist. If PREFERRED, the Advisor can check coursework, calculate/confirm the graduate GPA, and make notations on the unofficial transcript.

CANDIDATE'S NAME ___________________________ STUDENT NUMBER ___________________________

A. Completed VCU credits. List all courses completed at VCU:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
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Total Completed VCU Credits ___________ Total VCU Grade Points ___________ GPA ___________
B. Transfer Credits. List graduate courses approved for transfer from other universities (must be recorded on VCU transcript).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of University</th>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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Total Transfer Credits

C. Pending Credits. List all pending graduate coursework to be presented for graduation, including registration for all current required coursework; all coursework for which grades of I, CO, NG or PR have been assigned; and, if applicable, final defense or thesis/dissertation and all related T/D processing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course No.</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Instructor’s Name</th>
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Total Pending Credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMARY</th>
<th>CREDITS</th>
<th>CURRENT VCU GRADE POINTS</th>
<th>CURRENT GPA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed VCU Credits (Part A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer Credits (Part B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pending Credits (Part C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credits To Be Presented</td>
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<td>FINAL VCU GRADE POINTS</td>
<td>FINAL GPA</td>
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<td>Total Credits Required</td>
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