

## **GOVERNANCE, POLICIES, AND PETITIONS**

### **Graduate Program Governance**

*The Graduate Affairs Committee* is the faculty committee responsible to the departmental faculty for the conduct of the graduate program. The Graduate Affairs Committee serves as the admissions committee for the graduate program, makes recommendations for fellowships, prepares for the annual evaluation of all graduate students by the faculty, acts on student petitions, and generally conducts the affairs of the graduate program. This Committee includes two elected graduate student representatives who participate in its deliberations, except on matters concerning individual graduate students.

*The Graduate Advisor* is Chairperson for the Graduate Affairs Committee. The Graduate Advisor conducts the Pro-Seminar each fall (Sociology 232,), serves as advisor to all graduate students in the core program, and is available to all graduate students for consultation and advice. All petitions to the Graduate Division must be signed by the Graduate Advisor, and any problems related to the graduate program are initially handled through the Graduate Advisor. Graduate students with grievances of any kind should first approach the Graduate Advisor, who may then direct them to the appropriate university office.

*The Graduate Assistant* handles the administrative details for the graduate program, maintains graduate student files, and provides students with any information they may need regarding departmental and Graduate Division requirements and procedures.

*Graduate Student Association (GSA):* The Graduate Student Association is the head legislative and executive body of the Graduate Student Association of UCR and acts both as a watchdog Committee and as liaison in representing the interests of graduate students with the various segments of the university. It appoints graduate student members to academic senate and administrative committees, both on campus and statewide. Its members are elected by the graduate students of each department. The officers of the council are also the officers of the Graduate Student Association of UCR. Regular meetings are held as announced and are open to the public.

*Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA):* The SGSA is the departmental graduate student organization. All Sociology graduate students are automatically members and new students are encouraged to participate. The SGSA holds regular informal meetings and represents the interests of graduate students in influencing the departmental decisions relevant to the graduate program or faculty. In addition, the SGSA sends representatives to the GSA to keep the SGSA abreast of campus wide issues that affect students.

## **Graduate Program Policies**

### ***Academic Leaves and Withdrawals***

When a student enrolls in the graduate program, it is anticipated that he or she will be continuously enrolled for each subsequent quarter during the regular academic year (Fall, Winter, Spring) until receiving a degree. If, for any reason, a student does not plan to enroll for any regular academic quarter, he or she must file a petition for a leave and the leave must be approved by the Graduate Division.

The policy of the department is to grant leaves only under extraordinary circumstances, such as illness or family emergency. If a student fails to register for classes and does not make prior arrangements to go on leave, that student automatically forfeits graduate status and must reapply for admission to the program.

Should it become necessary for a student to take leave during an academic quarter, it is equivalent to withdrawal for that quarter. All classes being taken at the time are recorded as having been dropped. Failure to obtain an approved leave of absence under these circumstances will result in an "F" in all courses in which he or she is enrolled. If a student withdraws without having been granted a leave of absence, formal readmission will be necessary should the student wish to return to the University. A student who withdraws runs the risk that the department may not accept a later application for readmission; readmission is not automatic.

Under very unusual circumstances, students may enroll on a part-time basis. Part-time enrollment is discouraged by the department because of the difficulties it presents for completing the graduate program in a timely fashion.

### ***Incomplete Grades***

The grade of incomplete ("I") is given only when there is demonstrable need for granting a student additional time for completing course requirements, when the student's work is of passing quality, and only with the consent of the instructor. Students should not assume that incomplete grades will be given automatically.

A student is given one quarter in which to remove an Incomplete. Should s/he fail to do so, the Incomplete grade automatically becomes an "F" or NC. It is possible under extenuating circumstances to petition for an extension of time for the removal of an Incomplete. Forms for this purpose are available from the Graduate Assistant. Such petitions require approval and signatures of the Instructor, the Graduate Advisor and Dean of the Graduate Division.

Students with 7 or more units of Incomplete grades are not eligible for appointment as a TA or as a GSR, nor are they eligible to compete for Fellowships. In addition, the Graduate Division makes regular requests of the Department about the progress of students who have Incompletes. Thus, a student should take great care to complete course

work within the stipulated time period and to make up any Incomplete as quickly as possible.

### ***Late Adding, Dropping and Other Petitions***

To add or drop courses after official deadline, there is a form available from the Graduate Assistant. The Add/Drop Form requires the signature of the instructor involved (for adds only), the Graduate Advisor, and the Dean of the Graduate Division (if required).

The Graduate Division also has a general form for unusual situations and circumstances (e.g., extension of the time period for an incomplete, back-dating graduate status to the undergraduate period for a specific number of units, transfer of residence, and the like). In sum, if there isn't a specific form for the particular problem at hand, this petition will undoubtedly cover the situation. In problematic situations it is a good policy to check with the Graduate Assistant, or the Graduate Advisor first, and to consult with the Graduate Division if questions remain unresolved.

### ***Grades***

*Graduate Division Policy:* The Graduate Division requires that all graduate students maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 per unit in all graduate division courses taken. A student whose GPA drops below 3.0 per unit is placed on informal probation by the Graduate Division.

*Departmental Policy:* The department regards a GPA of 3.5 as a minimum, and students below a 3.5 GPA are regarded as marginal for the Ph.D. A grade of "B" in a graduate course signifies performance that is marginal at the Ph.D. level. A grade of B- in a graduate course signifies a level of performance that is unacceptable to the department for a graduate student. Students who are permitted to remain in the program will ordinarily be required to audit again a core course in which they receive a grade of B-, taking all course examinations and fulfilling all course requirements successfully.

A grade of C+ or lower in a graduate course is a failure. It is cause for immediate department action to be considered at the next faculty meeting. Based on an evaluation of the student's overall performance, the faculty may either recommend to the Graduate Division that the student be terminated from the graduate program, or place the student on departmental probation. In the latter case, the student is required to audit the course in which s/he received the grade of C + or lower and fulfill all course requirements successfully.

A student with two or more C+'s, or lower grades, is subject to immediate termination.

### ***Substitution of Coursework***

All students must complete the basic program. Students who have had graduate courses elsewhere similar to courses offered in the sociology department at UCR may petition the

Graduate Affairs Committee for up to eight units of credit for their previous work. However, it is anticipated that required core courses and seminars in the student's areas of specialization will be taken within the department.

### ***Annual Faculty Evaluation of Graduate Student Progress***

During the Spring Quarter of each academic year, the Graduate Assistant assembles the necessary information for an evaluation of the progress of each student in the graduate program. The annual evaluations are conducted at a special June meeting of the entire departmental faculty. All information is taken into account, including but not limited to performance in courses, grades, and faculty evaluation of professional papers. If a student has a grade of "I" in a course at the time of the evaluation, the instructor of the course may indicate a tentative grade, based on completed work, for use in the student's overall evaluation.

Based on the faculty's evaluation, each student receives a letter from the Graduate Advisor. The outcome of the evaluation may be: (1) a letter informing the student of satisfactory progress, (2) a letter mentioning one or more areas of faculty concern (e.g., low GPA, too much time taken preparing for qualifying exams), (3) a letter requiring specific actions of a student by a stated deadline, or (4) a letter notifying the student that he or she has been recommended to the Graduate Division for termination from the graduate program and stating the reason (e.g., low GPA, expiration of a time limit set by the department in a previous letter for the completion of, some requirement, grade(s) of C in the core program). Formal notification of termination is made by the Graduate Division.

Occasionally, a student may work closely with a professor who leaves the department before the student is evaluated for admission to the Ph.D. program or before the student is evaluated at some other critical juncture of her or his studies. In such cases, it is a good policy for the student to arrange for the professor to write a letter before s/he leaves UCR. This letter can be placed in the student's file and utilized when the faculty is making an assessment of the student.