

## **Northeastern Sociology PhD Probation Policy<sup>1</sup>**

The Graduate Committee (GC) monitors the performance of students to ensure that they are making satisfactory progress toward the PhD degree. The entire faculty of the Department discusses the progress and standing of all graduate students annually, usually in spring, at the Graduate Student Academic Progress (GSAP) meeting. Students will receive a letter from the Graduate Program Director (GPD) documenting their progress in the program as satisfactory, needs remediation, or unsatisfactory.

Sometimes unforeseen circumstances delay student progress. If you think you may be delayed in reaching an academic milestone, please speak with your advisor and the as soon as possible.

Students who have not defended their first field statement (FS) by June 1st of the second year will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress. If they have not defended the FS by the deadline, they will be placed on probation from the program and a timeline must be submitted by June 1, and approved by the FS committee and submitted to the GC for final approval. If no timeline is submitted, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

Students who have not defended their second field statement (FS) by March 1 of the third year will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress. If they have not defended the FS by the deadline, they will be placed on probation from the program and a timeline must be submitted by March 1 and approved by the FS committee and submitted to the GC for final approval. If no timeline is submitted, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

Students who do not have an approved dissertation proposal by September 1 of their fourth year will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress. If the proposal has not been approved by the deadline, they will be placed on probation from the program until the proposal has been approved. If not defended by October 15 of their fourth year, they will be removed from the program.

Students who have not defended their dissertation by April 10 of the fifth year and have not received approval of their planned timeline to degree from the GSAP will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress and may be withdrawn from the program.

Students who have not completed requirements after receipt of a Dissertation Completion Fellowship may be withdrawn from the program, unless documentation is provided as to why the dissertation was not defended during the semester in which the fellowship was awarded.

Students will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress and will be put on probation for:

1. failing to make up incompletes within a year, failing to maintain a B average overall or a B+ average in Sociology courses for two consecutive semesters,

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<sup>1</sup> Effective Fall 2023, policy approved by faculty 4/5/23

Students may be withdrawn from the program if they're not able to rectify the above by the end of the following semester.

A student who fails their FS defense or dissertation proposal defense will be offered a second chance to defend. Every effort will be made to support students preparing to retake these requirements. However, a student who fails to make satisfactory progress toward retaking any of these examinations will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress and will be withdrawn from the program.

Students making unsatisfactory progress cannot serve as Instructor of Record in the Department. Under special circumstances they may be allowed to petition the GC for approval.

The procedure for withdrawal is as follows:

1. A notice of intention will be sent to the student by the GPD at least two weeks prior to a GC vote. During this time, the student may solicit support for continuation in the program from faculty members.
2. The GC will review the supporting statements from faculty and the appeals from the student in a scheduled meeting. The student may attend a portion of the GC meeting to speak on their own behalf. The GC, after review, will put the matter to a vote. Based on the outcome, the GPD will forward the recommendation to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School.
3. The GPD will notify the student of the outcome no later than one week after the GC meeting.

Faculty will be notified about students who are withdrawn from the program at the next scheduled faculty meeting.

### **Recommendations to students and advisors**

Students who believe they have chosen the wrong graduate program are urged to seek counsel early in residency.

As noted, the GSAP may also recommend that students whose work in the early phases of the program is beneath the Department's standards for the PhD leave the graduate program with an MA degree after completion of the required MA coursework. Such a recommendation is reached in consultation with the student, their advisor, and others familiar with their academic work.

### **Other possible reasons for probation:**

Students who have not maintained contact with their programs for more than one month may be put on probation at the discretion of the department.

The program will make a reasonable effort to contact the student to outline what actions must be taken to return to satisfactory progress. If the effort to make contact is unsuccessful and/or if the student continues to not make satisfactory progress, the student will then be withdrawn.