PhD in Rural Sociology

Degree Requirements

The PhD is a 72 credit hour minimum with no more than 6 hours of readings or problems courses, and a maximum of 12 dissertation research hours toward the 72 hour requirement. Coursework taken toward a master’s degree in the social sciences may count toward these requirements. A student must complete thirty hours of coursework beyond the master’s degree.

Areas of Professional Expertise

In addition to the required core, every PhD student will be required to complete an “area” of concentration comprised of a minimum of 12 credits (in the case of a minor or certificate requiring less than 12 hours, a student must complete an additional 3 hours of coursework related to this area of concentration.

Qualifying Process

To qualify for continuation in the Ph.D. program students must complete two full enrollment semesters at the start of their program in which they take core sequence courses and make a B or above in all courses taken. (The qualifying requirement must be met. In some cases waivers may be given within one year of enrollment in the Ph.D. program.)

Comprehensive Examination Process

To be an official candidate for a doctoral degree the student must have passed a comprehensive examination for admission to doctoral study. This is the major examination in the doctoral training program, and must be passed BEFORE FORMAL WORK ON THE DISSERTATION IS BEGUN. It is administered by the Doctoral Program Committee.

Successful completion of a comprehensive examination must occur within five years of beginning the doctoral program. A student is ready to take the comprehensive examination when he/she has:

- Completed all of the courses listed in his/her Plan of Study with satisfactory grades.
- If they entered the program with a Masters degree that did not require a thesis, they must have written and submitted a paper for review in a scholarly journal. A copy of the paper as well as information as to where it was submitted must be in a student’s file.
- Submitted and received approval from their advisory committee for their dissertation research proposal.
- Submitted an approved copy of the dissertation proposal to be kept in the student’s departmental file until the dissertation is actually completed.

The comprehensive examination consists of both a written and an oral examination.

- These are designed and administered by the advisory committee of the Ph.D. student.
- The comprehensive examination is designed to evaluate a student’s preparedness to proceed with the dissertation.
- Students are normally given two opportunities to pass this examination.
- A copy of the completed comprehensive examination will be filed with the director of graduate studies and kept in the departmental student record.

Written Comprehensive: The written portion of the examination will evaluate competency in theory and methods in the student’s specialty area, as well as their readiness to conduct their dissertation research. After the advisory committee indicates that a student has passed the written portion of the comprehensive examination, the oral examination will be given.

Oral Comprehensive: The oral portion of the examination will address issues raised on the written examination and in the student’s dissertation plans. This exam is open to faculty and students; the location and time must be publicly announced a minimum of two weeks before the examination takes place. The public part of the examination will be limited to the presentation of the student’s research proposal followed by questions about the proposal. Following the public oral examination the student’s advisory committee will complete the examination in private.

Dissertation Requirements

Successful completion of a dissertation or a research monograph, according to the regulations of the Graduate School is required.

- The dissertation must be completed within five years of the completion of the comprehensive examination.
- All members of the committee are expected to take an active part in the preparation of the dissertation.
- The student’s committee is to conduct an oral final examination (“defense”) of the dissertation/monograph.
- This examination cannot be scheduled until the advisory committee members have received a completed draft copy of the dissertation.
This examination is to be open to faculty and students and must be publicly announced at least two weeks before the exam. Candidates should provide the Rural Sociology Department Office with an announcement including (a) the title of the dissertation, (b) the date and location of the orals, and (c) the advisor's name.

Faculty and students may attend orals and question candidates, but cannot be present when the vote on the result of the examination is taken.

At least four committee members must vote to pass a dissertation in order for the degree to be completed.

The candidate must be enrolled to defend their dissertation.

The defense must be scheduled when MU is officially in session.

The Report of the Dissertation Defense form (D-4) and the Approval Page, which must be signed by all members of the approved committee, should be sent to the Graduate School after the defense has been completed and must include an electronic copy as specified by the Graduate School.

Admissions

Applicants are required to meet two sets of minimum qualifications for admission: the requirements of the PhD in Rural Sociology program (https://gradstudies.missouri.edu/degreecategory/rural-sociology) and the minimum requirements of the Graduate School (http://gradschool.missouri.edu/admissions/eligibility-process/minimum-requirements.php). Because requirements vary, you must refer to a degree program's graduate admission page to learn about specific admission criteria, application deadlines, eligibility and application process. Before official admission to the University of Missouri, your application materials will be reviewed by both the Graduate School and the degree program to which you've applied.

Admission Contact: Carol Swaim
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