

Sociology MA Handbook

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Starting in 2017, we have two separate Handbooks: one for the MA program and one for the PhD program. The Department is grateful to students, staff, and faculty for their support and assistance with preparing the Handbook.

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Welcome to your program, the Department and Carleton!

We extend a warm welcome to you and look forward to working with you.

An important part of the introduction to your graduate studies is the recognition that Carleton University, and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, occupy land that is the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people. Moving towards living justly on stolen land is an ongoing task to which we must all contribute. We encourage you to engage in the relationships, dialogues and actions for change that contribute to social, economic and environmental justice.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information and guidelines for various aspects of your graduate studies. We are proud of the student-led character of our Sociology graduate programs. This means that while there are some features of your program that are determined by existing University and Department regulations, there are many aspects about which you have options and choices. We encourage you to discuss these options and choices with your First Year Advisor (if you are a first-year student) or Supervisor and Committee (if you are beyond your first year).

About the MA Handbook

The Sociology MA Handbook is meant to be an easy-to-use guide to help students navigate their Sociology MA Program at Carleton University. The Handbook is revised and updated as needed. Any corrections or suggestions should be submitted to the Sociology Graduate Programs Coordinator, and/or the Graduate Administrator. An electronic copy of the Handbook is sent to all sociology MA students at the beginning of the Fall term, and can be found on our website thereafter.

PLEASE NOTE: The Handbook is not the official [Graduate Calendar](#) and while we have tried to be as accurate as possible, the Graduate Calendar contains official University policy and will be deferred to in any cases of conflict.

Please check the official [Academic Year](#) for important dates and deadlines (for payment, application for graduation etc.) for the current year. Be aware that in some cases there are Departmental deadlines that are in advance of the University deadlines.

Useful General Contact Information and Websites

Departmental Contacts:

Carlos Novas, Sociology Graduate Coordinator
Email: CarlosNovas@cunet.carleton.ca
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Room B779, Loeb Building
1125 Colonel By Dr.
Ottawa, ON K1S 5B6

Kiley Johnston, Graduate Administrator
Room B753, Loeb Building
Phone: 613-520-2600 ext. 2587
Email: KileyJohnston@cunet.carleton.ca

Websites:

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
<http://carleton.ca/socanth/>

Sociology Graduate Student Forms
<https://carleton.ca/socanth/student-life/graduate/resources-forms/>

Office of Graduate Studies
<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/>

Graduate Calendar
<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/>

CUPE 4600 (Teaching Assistants' Union)
<http://www.cupe4600.ca/>

Key Resources for Graduate Students

Graduate Administrator and Sociology Graduate Programs Coordinator

The Graduate Administrator (Kiley Johnston) and Sociology Graduate Programs Coordinator (Dr. Carlos Novas) are located in the Loeb Building, on the 7th floor. They are both available to help you with questions or concerns about your program. She is the person to contact for assistance with administrative issues. The Sociology Graduate Coordinator is there to help you with decisions regarding the academic side of your program, with any glitches that are of concern to you, and with thinking about the next steps you might take after you graduate.

Your First Year Advisor

When you are admitted you are assigned a first year advisor. This is a person who you can contact over your first year to discuss course selection, program questions or any other issues about your studies. The first year advisor is not the supervisor of your thesis or research essay. Choosing your thesis/research essay supervisor is something you should do in the Winter term of your first year. Of course, your first year advisor may be someone who you would like to be your supervisor. If so, this would need to be discussed with them.

The First Year Advisor has the important role of mentoring graduate students as you start your program. The mentoring role has three dimensions: routine contact, program advice and personal support. It is recommended that you meet with your first year advisor at least four

times over the course of your first year - two in the Fall term and two in the Winter term. If they do not contact you to set up meetings, you can email them to find a time. They will be happy to answer your questions about the program, give you advice about course selections, and review your grant application materials.

Your MA Supervisor

Your supervisor is a key person in your MA program. Supervisors help students at every stage of their program, from finding committee members, identifying research topics, formulating research projects, designing research activities, discussing analyses, providing constructive suggestions, to disseminating thesis research through possible conference presentations or publication. Supervisors also write reference letters for students when they apply for scholarships, further studies, or employment.

It is your responsibility to seek out and secure a supervisor. When considering candidates for this position, it is important to think about areas of academic expertise and supervisory styles. We encourage students to get to know faculty research interests through consulting the [Department website](#), taking courses or auditing them, attending colloquia and other events. However, to really assess whether someone will be the right supervisor for you, it is important to meet them and discuss this possibility with them. Let them know what sort of supervision you need and want and find out from them what sort of supervisory style they have to offer. If you are meeting someone you have not taken a course with, bring along some material that will help to introduce you to them (for example, a short [1 page] information sheet with your courses and grades, and a statement of your research interests). You can also bring along a small sample of your writing to show them. You can have a meeting like this as a way to gather information - arranging a meeting to discuss supervision does not commit you or the faculty member to anything.

In addition to a supervisor, for an MA thesis you will need one committee member. Find your supervisor first, and then discuss possible committee members with them. If you are doing an MRP you will work only with the supervisor, and a second reader will come in at the end of the process to review your work and determine a grade for it in consultation with your supervisor.

A satisfactory relationship between a graduate student and a supervisor is critical to the student's success. The relationship should be one of mutual respect, openness, a shared commitment to the completion of the student's research project, and high professional integrity. Graduate Studies provides clear guidelines about responsibilities and expectations of supervisors and graduate students (<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/graduate-supervision-responsibilities-expectations-policy/>).

Your supervisor and committee members should normally give you feedback on any writing you submit within two weeks; if this will not be possible for them because of vacation time or leaves of absence, they should communicate any delays to you in a timely way. Because they frequently have a large number of deadlines, many faculty respond well to including with your drafts notes of the form "Dear Dr. Supervisor/Committee Member, I will plan to send you a reminder to send feedback on this draft two weeks from today."

Concerns may arise in the supervisory relationship. Some of these can be avoided if the supervisor and student have conversations early on and reach an agreement on responsibilities and expectations. Students are also strongly encouraged to approach the Graduate Coordinator to talk about any concerns and get advice.

Occasionally students may wish to change supervisors. If this happens, students are invited to approach the Graduate Coordinator for assistance in transitioning to a new advisor.

Your Peers

Your fellow students are a wonderful resource for information and support. The Department has been fortunate to attract dedicated and supportive graduate students who are full of enthusiasm for their work, the research of their peers, the activities of the Department and the discipline of Sociology. Enjoy their company, and don't hesitate to draw on their considerable expertise in navigating graduate life at Carleton.

Department Website

The Department website is an excellent place to find information on program details, course offerings, useful links, faculty and staff listings, and other issues that are of interest to students enrolled in the Department (i.e. upcoming events, Department news, research blog posts by faculty and graduate students, award recipients, job opportunities, etc.).

There is also a [listing of graduate students](#) and a brief discussion of their research areas and interests. Please send your name, a brief statement or list of your areas of interest to the Graduate Program Administrator, Kiley Johnston, at kileyjohnston@cunet.carleton.ca.

Graduate Studies

Graduate Studies is the office with ultimate responsibility for graduate programs at Carleton. Their office is 512 Tory Building. More information about them - and about graduate matters, services, requirements and activities is at <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/>.

Library Resources

The Carleton Library has many resources available to students. These include: interlibrary loans through OMNI, article access and downloading via a number of databases, study spaces, etc. For more information and instructions for graduate students, see <https://library.carleton.ca/services/services-graduate-students>. The library resource person for Sociology is [David Jackson](mailto:davidc.jackson@carleton.ca) (davidc.jackson@carleton.ca).

Faculty Offices

All Sociology faculty offices are on the 7th floor of the Loeb Building.

Teaching Rooms

Most graduate courses are taught in the Department in rooms A715 and A700 Loeb Building. Many undergraduate courses (for which you might TA) are taught in A720 Loeb Building.

Student Office Space

There are a number of graduate student office spaces available to students on 7th floor Loeb

Building. Students may pick up a key from the Graduate Administrator and hold onto it until they complete the program. Students awarded a Teaching Assistantship can use this space for holding office hours with their students.

Graduate Lounge & Department Lounge

We have a new graduate student lounge as of April 2025, located in D783 Loeb. The lounge is code access and the code will be sent out ahead of the Fall term. There is a fridge, microwave and computer located in the lounge for grad student use. The Department lounge is room B742 on the 7th floor of the Loeb Building. You are welcome to use the lounge during regular office hours. The key to the Student Mailroom also opens B742.

Mail

You will have a mailbox for both internal and external post. These boxes are located in B754 Loeb Building. The mailing address is the same as the Department's.

IT Services

See <https://carleton.ca/its/get-started/new-grad-students/> for information about your computing account, email, network connections, and file storage on network drives. Please note - all communication between students and Carleton staff, faculty and administration must occur via your Carleton student email account.

Teaching and Research Assistantships

Teaching Assistantships

Teaching Assistantships (TAs) are awarded through Graduate Studies. If you are admitted to the graduate program as a full-time student, you will automatically be assessed for eligibility for a Teaching Assistantship. Generally, assistantships are awarded on an annual basis. MA students are eligible for teaching assistantships for 4 terms. A full (1.0) teaching assistantship requires 260 hours of work over two academic terms, or an average of 10 hours per week during the Fall and Winter terms. In accordance with the Collective Agreement, TAs have the opportunity to complete up to five hours of paid pedagogical training each academic year (September to end of March) in which they are assigned as TAs. If you hold a TA-ship in both the Fall and Winter terms you can earn these five hours over the course of both terms. Fall-only graduate TAs need to complete their training hours before Nov. 30 to receive full payment and Winter-only and full-year TAs need to do so before March 30. In addition (i.e. over and above these hours) new TAs need to complete a one-time, mandatory training in their first weeks of employment. After completion, TAs are compensated for 5 hours pay (see article 23.03). There are helpful steps for completion of the compliance training on the [Carleton TA Support website](#). Please see the TA Mentor (if there is one) and/or union representatives with questions regarding compulsory training, or anything that relates to your rights, benefits, and responsibilities.

Students holding Teaching Assistantships are members of CUPE 4600. The Collective Agreement between Carleton University and CUPE 4600 governs Teaching Assistantships. The Agreement covers in part working conditions, workloads, scheduling and duties. Students are urged to read the Handbook for Assistants issued by local 4600 for details concerning rights and other duties. TA assignments are handled by the Department Administrator in consultation with the Department Associate Chair.

According to the Collective Agreement, the employer has the right to assign TA duties. In practice, that right is delegated in the first instance to the Department Associate Chair (assisted by the Department Administrator) who assigns TAs to courses, and in the second instance to the course instructor who supervises the work of a TA, and actually sets specific duties. The Department will respect seniority in making TA assignments and will also alter them when a TA's duties conflict their own course work.

As a full-time student you are expected to be available on a weekly basis for TA duties. If you intend to conduct fieldwork outside of Ottawa, or if you plan for other reasons to take a leave of absence, you need to decline your teaching assistant position. This involves filling out an Application for Leave from TA Duties on Carleton Central.

The TAship funds are paid through payroll, twice per month. However in September, January, and May, the first payroll (Sept 14, January 14, May 14) is held over to the end of the month for registration purposes.

Research Assistantships

Some faculty members hold external research grants or contracts that enable them to hire qualified students as research assistants. While the nature of the work required will differ, ten hours of work per week is the normal maximum. Eligibility for research assistantships generally includes competence in various aspects of qualitative or quantitative research methods, bibliographic software, literature reviews, as well as a substantive interest in the topic with which the research project deals.

In contrast to the assignments of Teaching Assistants to undergraduate courses, the selection of Research Assistants (RAs) is at the discretion of those faculty members who are running funded research projects. If you are interested in an RA position, please contact faculty directly, or let the Graduate Coordinator know of your interest and availability.

Scholarships, Awards, Travel Funds

Internal Scholarships

University scholarships may be awarded to qualified incoming graduate students. Their financial value varies and is a function of the student's academic performance.

Scholarships are normally paid out over three terms –Fall, Winter, and Summer.

To receive a scholarship payment for a given term, graduate students must be registered as full-time during the Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer term associated with that payment. In essence, this means that students must pay tuition fees during the summer in order to receive scholarship payments during the summer.

For more information on internal scholarships, see:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/awards-and-funding/internal-awards/>

External Scholarships

Applications must be submitted in the Fall term prior to the academic year for which the scholarships are granted. Students should regularly consult the Graduate Studies website and

funding agencies' websites (see below) to keep themselves informed about eligibility criteria, deadlines, availability of applications forms, and so on. The University offers workshops in September on writing applications for Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) scholarships and Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS). In addition, the Department offers assistance to applicants including a scholarship application workshop for all graduate students in September.

Information on SSHRC's scholarship programs can be found at <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/apply-demander/index-eng.aspx>.

Information on Ontario Graduate Scholarships can be found at <https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal/en/A-ZListofAid/PRDR019245.html>.

There are also a variety of other external awards and scholarships available. <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/awards-and-funding/external-awards/>

Grad Studies offers information about funding and new student information at <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/new-students/>;

and the Terms & Conditions booklet at <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/new-students/terms-and-conditions/>

Travel Funds

Graduate Studies distributes a small travel grant to students who are travelling to present a paper at an academic conference. Students apply for these funds as soon as they receive an email from the organizers stating that their paper has been accepted on the conference program. Normally, students are allowed to apply for a travel bursary once per fiscal year (i.e., from May 1 until April 30 of the following calendar year). In addition to supporting documentation, the application requires a statement of support (e.g., an email) from the student's Supervisor. The completed form and supporting documentation must be submitted several weeks before any planned travel. The application is submitted through Carleton Central. More detailed information can be found here:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/awards-and-funding/internal-awards/#travel>

Students may also apply to the Graduate Student Association (GSA) for supplemental funds. For more information, see: <https://gsacarleton.ca/grants-and-awards/>.

Intellectual Activities in the Department

Department News

We are looking forward to announcing news related to your intellectual activities as a graduate student at Carleton. Please write to the Graduate Administrator about refereed presentations at scholarly/governmental conferences, invited presentations, or publications so that we can share your news on the Department website.

Graduate Conferences

There are one or two graduate student conferences held each year which are organized by

graduate students from this Department. These conferences allow students to present their work to a supportive audience and gain valuable experience at both presenting and responding to academic work. There are also interdisciplinary graduate student conferences at Carleton hosted in other departments that will be of interest for students, notably the ones hosted by the Institute of Political Economy and ICSLAC.

SOAN Colloquium Series

The Sociology and Anthropology Colloquium Series provides an opportunity for a variety of speakers to present their work. If you are interested in presenting in the series, please contact the Graduate Coordinator.

Professional Development Opportunities

Departmental Training Opportunities

The Department offers many professional development opportunities including the Teaching Sociology seminar, events about teaching, and the Colloquium Series. For more detailed descriptions about these, please go to the section on Intellectual Activities in the Department. These are announced on the Department website and updated regularly, so be sure to check often.

Department-specific pedagogical training can be found on Carleton Central under the “TA Training” tab.

Graduate Studies Training

Carleton University’s Graduate Studies offers a number of opportunities for professional development: <https://carleton.ca/gradpd/calendar/>

MyGradSkills.ca

Carleton University graduate students can also complete online workshops on [MyGradSkills.ca](https://mygradskills.ca). These workshops include a number of self-paced, online modules on a range of topics, including teaching & learning, career development, community engagement, and entrepreneurship.

Mini-Course Program (MCP)

Each year, Carleton University offers a week-long series of mini-courses students in grades 8-11 (Ontario) and Sec. 2-5 (Québec). These mini-courses are taught by instructors and graduate students. This is an excellent opportunity to develop your teaching skills and test out classroom materials. More information can be found here [<https://carleton.ca/mcp/>].

CO-OP

The Master’s in Sociology Concentration in Quantitative Methodology has the option of completing a co-operative education designation by registering as a co-op student. Adding a co-op designation requires an addition of two work terms that may be taken successively or be separated by one or more study terms. While on a work term the co-op office will register students in SOCI 5913. Please visit the [Co-operative Education Program](https://carleton.ca/co-op) website for further details.

Others

Career Services [<https://carleton.ca/career/>]

Job Postings [<https://carleton.ca/career/job-search-support/job-postings/>]

Sociology and Anthropology Graduate Student Caucus (SAGSC)

The SAGSC is a representative body of graduate students in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. It is a student-run caucus that works to promote graduate student issues, enhance student communication, and ensure proper representation at Departmental and student governance meetings. The SAGSC provides a safe(r) space for Sociology and Anthropology graduate students to work together in a collegial, friendly, and constructive manner. Caucus membership offers a platform for individuals to contribute to the overall graduate student experience at Carleton University, as well as provides a means for students to add credentials to their academic profiles and CVs.

The SAGSC maintains a listserv (electronic mailing list) that is available to all enrolled graduate students. Subscription to this listserv is voluntary, but it is a valuable tool for communicating with peers around areas such as job and funding opportunities, social and activist events, caucus meetings and concerns, upcoming conferences, lectures, etc. The listserv is only for graduate students (faculty and administrative staff are not subscribed) so it also serves as a place for discussion and community building around issues/concerns that are of interest to Sociology and Anthropology graduate students.

The SAGSC is involved in organizing many academic and social events throughout the year. In the spring, the caucus puts on its annual graduate student conference that showcases the interdisciplinary work of graduate students from different universities across Canada. Our annual themed conference allows students to present their work to a supportive audience and gain valuable experience at both presenting and responding to academic work.

Elections for positions in the SAGSC take place in early September. Sociology and Anthropology graduate students are asked to attend the elections in order to nominate themselves and/or their colleagues for caucus committee positions. Usually positions within the Caucus go to those who volunteer for them. However, if there is more than one candidate for a single position, those convening during the first SAGSC meeting will vote in favour of a single representative. These positions vary in duty and time commitment, and can range from a few hours a week to less than one hour a week. The SAGSC meets monthly so that members can update each other on what they have been up to in their differing positions and share valuable information. All positions in the Caucus are certified in the Carleton University co-curricular record.

SAGSC Positions

Co-Chairs (2 positions, preferably 1 Anthropology and 1 Sociology student)

Equally and jointly responsible for:

1. alternating chairing of all regular caucus meetings (one per month);
2. co-chairing the Orientation Committee (next year).

The two elected Co-Chairs work together to ensure that their workloads are divided equally. Normally, the Co-Chairs are not members of the Departmental Board, nor are they responsible for fulfilling any of the duties of other members of the SAGSC as outlined in

the constitution. The co-chairs are the go-to people for the Caucus. They draft agendas for each meeting, send out official communications, round up volunteers for Caucus initiatives when none are available, and delegate tasks to others where they cannot complete them alone.

Social Coordinator / Committee

Carried out by a single person or a group, this position entails planning all social events, with the help and input of others in the Department and on the Caucus executive. Normally, there is at least one social event per term, and these have included pub nights, sporting events (bowling, curling etc.), parties and so on. The position also requires effort to entice students to attend the events by drafting emails, as well as creating posters and announcements.

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Reps (2 positions)

GSA reps are responsible for attending all GSA meetings (one per month) and for representing the interests of Sociology and Anthropology graduate students on the GSA. Following each GSA meeting, they report the proceedings and related GSA activities at regular caucus meetings or by e-mail when urgent issues are raised. If they choose, they may become members of the GSA executive or committees.

Attendance at GSA meetings is crucial—we get \$200 if we attend each one. Proxies are allowed, so long as they are worked out in advance of the meeting.

Secretary

The secretary takes the minutes at each regular caucus meeting and, within two weeks of each meeting, distributes those minutes to all in attendance and to those who sent their regrets. This individual also keeps all caucus records.

Student Resource Liaison

The student resource liaison is responsible for:

- a. working with the Chair of the Department (or representative) to advocate for student resources such as computers and office renovations;
- b. communicating the status of resource allocation to the Caucus; and
- c. communicating student needs to the Chair (or representative).

Communications Coordinator

The communications coordinator is responsible for:

- a. acting as primary liaison between the graduate student body and the Caucus executive, and fielding general enquiries from graduate students that are not clearly under the purview of another member of the caucus;
- b. advising the graduate student body of Caucus activities and events, including all meetings, via the soc-anth graduate list-serve;
- c. creating notices for Caucus activities and events, and posting them throughout the Department.

As often as possible, the Communications Coordinator should be solely responsible for writing and sending emails from the SAGSC executive to the soc-anth graduate listserv.

Treasurer

- a. keeps records of caucus funds and expenditures;

- b. administers caucus funds; and
- c. makes reports of the caucus's financial situation at the regular caucus meetings in January, April, and September, and at other times as required.

Departmental Board Representative Co-ordinator

As a Departmental board representative, the Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- a. acting as primary liaison between the Departmental faculty (including the Departmental Chair) and the Caucus Executive on all matters directly related to the activities of the Departmental Board;
- b. ensuring that all Departmental Board Representatives (see below) are aware of upcoming Board meetings and that the Representatives attend Board meetings on a regular basis;
- c. informing the Executive if Board Representatives are not fulfilling their responsibilities in attending Departmental Board meetings;
- d. ensuring that all Departmental Board Representatives become registered New University Government (NUG) representatives upon their election; and
- e. making regular reports to the Caucus regarding the monthly meetings of the Departmental Board.

Departmental Board Representatives (Board Reps) (6 positions) Representatives are responsible for attending all Board meetings and voting (or abstaining) on all motions. Regular attendance at Board meetings is required.

When possible, the composition of the Board Representatives should be reflective of the composition of the graduate student body, with representation from M.A. Anthropology, M.A. Sociology, as well as Ph.D. Anthropology and Sociology students.

Graduate Committee Representatives (3 positions)

- a. Anthropology Graduate Committee Representatives are responsible for attending all meetings of the Anthropology Graduate Committee, save those regarding admissions and scholarships.
- b. Sociology Graduate Committee Representatives are responsible for attending all meetings of the Sociology Graduate Committee, save those regarding admissions and scholarships.

All reps are expected to provide brief synopses of meetings at each regular meeting of the caucus.

Conference Committee

Although designated to one person in the constitution, this position has, in recent history, been taken on by a number of people working as a committee. The committee is responsible for:

- a. organizing the annual graduate student themed conference held in the Spring;
- b. working with (and coordinating) other interested people in planning the conference;
- c. soliciting funds from various sources including all the Departments and Faculties involved;
- d. soliciting abstracts and participants from all the participating Departments;
- e. advertising and promoting the conference to both faculty and students; and
- f. setting up the proceedings and related activities (e.g. lunches) on the day of the

conference.

Outreach and Advocacy Coordinator

Recent events have fostered the need for a more politically-oriented caucus. The O&A Coordinator works on mobilizing graduate students in our Department to become involved in the broader University, community, and global political issues of concern to students. This might include keeping students informed of current events via the list-serve, organizing meetings, and helping to connect students to movements outside the Department.

Union Stewards (3 positions)

As stewards of CUPE 4600 (our TA union), union stewards are responsible for attending the Stewards' Council of CUPE 4600 on behalf of Sociology and Anthropology graduate students who are employed as teaching or research assistants. The stewards will convey information and concerns between the Department and the Executive Council of CUPE 4600, and will act as resource people for teaching and research assistants should any grievance arise. They will also provide updates to the Caucus at regular meetings, in person or via email.

Colloquium Organizer

This position entails working with two to four faculty members (to be announced) to bring academic speakers to the Department to discuss their research, academic work, etc. It involves planning (booking the room, refreshments), soliciting speakers and overseeing the events as they happen.

Graduate Student Workshop Series Committee

Members of this committee work with graduate students and faculty to organize workshops aimed at enhancing the professional knowledge of MA and PhD students. In the past, workshop themes have included conference presentations, academic writing, building a CV, the job talk, teaching, and other issues.

Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series Coordinator

The Brown Bag Lunch Series Coordinator solicits presentations featuring the research of graduate students and faculty in the Department. The position also entails selecting faculty and student discussants for each presentation, booking a digital projector and room for the lectures, and sending announcements for each event using the Department and graduate student list-serves.

Professional Associations

As a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at Carleton University you are a member of a number of professional associations. These associations provide services and advocate for your interests to a number of different administrative bodies.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) [<http://gsacarleton.ca/>]

The Graduate Student Association is your main source of representation, advocacy and support services on campus.

The GSA represents the collective interests and the general welfare of the graduate students

of Carleton University. Its primary goals are to establish and maintain a barrier free academic and social environment in which all students can thrive. It acts as a line of communication between the graduate student community and the administration. It also strives to support the professional development of its members in addition to their emotional and financial wellbeing. Finally, they are a centre of political, intellectual and social contact for graduate students.

The Graduate Students' Association is governed by a Council [<http://gsacarleton.ca/council/>] made up of graduate student representatives from each Department.

Did you know?

- The GSA is Local 78 of the Canadian Federation of Students [www.cfs-fcee.ca].
- The GSA administers your health plan [<http://gsacarleton.ca/healthplan/>]
- The GSA offers low-cost printing and photocopying.
- The GSA can make you an International Student Card [<http://gsacarleton.ca/isic-cards/>]

CUPE 4600

It is likely the case that you will be a Teaching Assistant for some period of time during your time in the Department. Local 4600 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE 4600), represents all Teaching Assistants, internally-funded Research Assistants, and Contract Instructors at Carleton University.

CUPE 4600 Resources

Download a work log

http://media.wix.com/ugd/b510f3_d3f75a53cfab498da64eae468ee5f381.pdf

Your T.A Collective Agreement

<https://cupe4600.ca/unit-1/u1-collective-agreement/>

TA Benefits

<https://cupe4600.ca/unit-1/u1-health-benefits/>

Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) & CFS-ONTARIO

In addition to your membership in the GSA you are also a member of the Canadian Federation of students [<https://www.cfs-fcee.ca/>]. The main goal of the Canadian Federation of Students is to establish a system of post-secondary education, in Canada, that is accessible to all, which is of high quality, which is nationally planned, which recognizes the legitimacy of student representation, and the validity of student rights, and whose role in society is clearly recognized and appreciated.

The CFS operates at two levels, the provincial (CFS-ON) [cfsontario.ca] and federal (CFS national) .

Graduate Student Caucus

Within CFS Ontario is a Graduate Student Caucus (OGC)

<https://cfsontario.ca/apropos/structure/> whose main purpose is to promote the interests of its member graduate constituencies to the provincial government and all other external authorities whose jurisdiction affects graduate student affairs; and to act as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas between Ontario member associations.

The OGC meets twice a year in conjunction with the Ontario Annual General Meeting and Ontario Semi-Annual General Meeting to discuss issues prevalent to graduate students. At this time, the Caucus collectively reviews matters that affect students on member locals' campuses, as well as campaigns and policies that may be implemented within the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario.

Wellness Information and Resources

While graduate school can be intellectually stimulating and personally fulfilling, it is not without its struggles. Graduate school takes a lot of time, money, and effort. It is important to remember to practice self-care in ways that feel good to you and fit into your everyday life. Below are some resources that promote mental, emotional, financial, and physical wellness.

Also, if you find that something in the program just isn't working for you, you might want to talk to your supervisor, committee, or the Graduate Coordinator about the possibility of creating alternative plans that make graduate school more conducive to your lived experiences.

Mental, Emotional and Social Wellness

Carleton Health and Counselling Services

Full-time and part-time graduate students can access both medical and counselling services through Carleton University. The costs for these services are included in your tuition.

a. Medical services

The team of medical professionals at Carleton University includes family physicians and registered nurses. These individuals provide outpatient medical services to all graduate students.

Appointments can be made for general health concerns:

<https://wellness.carleton.ca/health/health-clinic-services/>

b. Counselling Services

Confidential and private counselling services are offered to current graduate students. Different services are available to students living off-campus, on-campus, and for international or exchange students.

<https://wellness.carleton.ca/counselling/>

c. Crisis Support

Health and Counselling Services also provides online information for crisis situations and support. Please see link below.

<https://wellness.carleton.ca/get-help-now/>

d. Health Promotion Services

Health Promotion Services “...educate, promote and advocate for optimal student health and academic success by working in collaboration with students, faculty, services and community agencies, while providing opportunities for student engagement in individual and community health and wellness issues.” There are five health promotion teams: mental health; sexual health, drug and alcohol, healthy lifestyles, and leave the pack behind.

<https://wellness.carleton.ca/health-promotion/>

Equity Services

Equity Services “...supports Carleton University’s commitment to diversity as a source of human excellence, cultural enrichment and social strength.” Equity Services works to create a safe(r) work and academic environment that is free of discrimination, injustice, and violence. Equity Services promotes understanding, respect, peace, trust, openness and fairness.

Equity services addresses some of the following important social justice issues: academic and employment accommodations, discrimination and harassment, gender neutral bathrooms, Aboriginal education, and many others. The work of Equity Services is attached to the [Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures](#) that were implemented in 2001 and updated in 2025.

<https://carleton.ca/equity/>

<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Human-Rights-Policy-and-Procedures-2025.pdf>

Sexual Assault Support Services

Sexual Assault Support Services are free, confidential, and available to all students, faculty, and staff at Carleton University. The Sexual Assault Support Services are located in 503 Pigiarkvik (formerly Robertson Hall). Some of the services offered include short term counselling; safety planning; public education and training; information on sexual violence; peer support volunteers (mid-Sept to April); and many others.

<http://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services/>

Women’s Centre

The Women’s Centre is a safe(r) and inclusive space located on the third floor (Rm 308) of Nideyinàn (formerly the University Centre). They offer free pregnancy tests, menstrual products, and condoms, as well as provide peer support. It is the only space on campus that has a room dedicated solely to woman-identified folks. This woman only space can be used for prayer, breastfeeding, napping, homework, and peer support. The Centre also houses the largest feminist library on campus.

<https://students.carleton.ca/services/womxns-centre/>

<https://www.cusaonline.ca/service-centres/womens-centre/>

Gender and Sexuality Resource Centre (GSRC)

The GSRC aims to provide a safe(r) space for students of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations. They offer peer support and mentorship programs, free safer sex supplies, and referrals to community resources. They also provide information on topics such as healthy sexuality and sexual violence prevention. The GSRC houses the second largest queer library in Ottawa. <https://www.cusaonline.ca/service-centres/gsrc/>

<https://www.facebook.com/cusagsrc/>

Racialized and International Student Experience (RISE)

The Racialized and International Student Experience (RISE) “aims to be a safe(r) space for Carleton students of all racial, ethnic, cultural and international identities through peer-to-peer dialogue, programming, and support. RISE hosts a series of events throughout the year”.

<https://www.cusaonline.ca/service-centres/rise/>

Unified Support Centre

USC provides a variety of services such as patrols and safe walks for students on campus and in the Ottawa community, food support to help alleviate and address food insecurity at Carleton University, and additional support for the well-being of the Carleton community.

<https://www.cusaonline.ca/usc/>.

Paul Menton Centre (PMC)

PMC provides academic accommodations and support services for students with disabilities. PMC “...is committed to facilitating the integration of students with disabilities into all aspects of Carleton’s University life.”

<https://carleton.ca/pmc/>

OPIRG-Carleton

OPIRG is a student-run public interest groups that focuses on important social justice issues, works to address community issues, and pushes for social change. It is the centre for student organizing and activism on campus. This space stresses the need for critical social dialogue and engagement on campus.

<http://www.opirgcarleton.org/>

Carleton Disability Awareness Centre (CDAC)

“CDAC is a peer support, advocacy, and community space for students who experience disability, chronic illness, neurodiversity, or inaccessibility.” It provides information and awareness about disability by working to challenge misconceptions through events and programming. CDAC accommodates the needs of diverse individuals with visible and non-visible disabilities.

<https://www.cusaonline.ca/service-centres/cdac/>

Ojigkwanong Indigenous Student Centre

Ojigkwanong, Carleton’s Indigenous Student Centre, is located in Paterson Hall (Rm 228). Ojigkwanong provides a space to learn about and practice First Nations, Inuit, and Metis cultures, traditions, and worldviews. During the school year, the Centre hosts social gatherings, cultural events, and visiting elders. The Centre has a kitchenette, lounge, study spaces, computer lab, printer, phone booth, Elder’s room, and smudge room.

<https://carleton.ca/indigenous/cisce/students/ojigkwanong-indigenous-student-centre/>.

Financial matters

CUPE 4600

1. TA Advance

Carleton does not issue the first pay check to Teaching Assistants until the end of the first month of each term. Teaching Assistants holding a TA position of 130 hours can apply for the TA Advance, and receive short-term funding to help them bridge the gap in income. Via the TA Advance, you can receive up to \$750 in the middle of the first month of the term. Any amount received via the Advance is repaid to Carleton through automatic deductions on your first three pay checks.

You can download the TA Advance application [form here](#):
<https://cupe4600.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/227/2025/09/TA-Advance-Form-2025.pdf>.
Applications should be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Provost by email at: MaddiBruining@cunet.carleton.ca by January 8th, 2026.

2. Gender Affirmation Fund

The Gender Affirmation Fund (GAF) was created in 2018 through a line item in the annual budget of CUPE 4600 for the purpose of supporting members seeking to align their gender expression with their gender identity. Transgender, gender variant, and gender non-conforming workers deserve to feel comfortable in their gender expression while at work. Transgender, gender variant, and gender non-conforming people face systemic barriers to adequate employment and healthcare. While the GAF cannot undo systemic transphobia and medical neglect, this fund provides some relief and demonstrates the union's commitment to our members seeking to affirm their gender identity. As of the 2023-2024 academic year, both the CUPE 4600 Unit 2 Health Insurance Plan and the Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan offered through Green Shield both include a \$10,000 lifetime benefit for gender affirming care, with a \$5,000 annual limit. Form more info, [click here](#).

3. Hardship Fund

The Emergency Fund is available to CUPE local 4600 Members who have experienced an unexpected hardship within the last three months resulting in financial emergency. This fund is available only to Members of the Local

In order to apply, you **must be currently employed as a TA/RA/SA** with some exceptions:

- those on approved medical leave
- those without a TAship during the summer months
- those who have held contract in the last 5 months

The Emergency Fund (Article 29) may be accessed for one of the following reasons:

- (a) Unexpected situations that result in a need for emergency assistance (e.g., fire, flood, theft).
- (b) Domestic violence and/or abuse situations that result in a need for emergency assistance.
- (c) Unexpected and abrupt homelessness that results in a need for emergency assistance.
- (d) Situations impacting personal health, psychological, or safety needs requiring emergency assistance.

For reasons (a) and (d), we ask that Members fill out the description section of the application form to describe the nature of the emergency and provide attachments of invoices, bills, overdue notices, or other relevant documentation.

For reasons (b) and (c), detailed explanation and documentation is NOT required, but Members may attach relevant documentation such as expenses, eviction notices, or brief descriptions of the financial emergency. If the applicant chooses to include a description, personal and/or sensitive information is not required.

See [Guidelines](#) for what does not qualify. [Apply to the fund here.](#)

Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The GSA has a number of grants and awards available to Graduate Students who find themselves in need, such as the accessibility grant, emergency grant, visible minority grant, etc. These funds are managed by the GSA and you can find the full list of them and how to apply here: <https://gsacarleton.ca/grants-and-awards/>

Food Assistance

1. The Ottawa Good Food Box

The Ottawa Good Food Box provides students and other Carleton community members with produce from local farmers at a significantly reduced cost in comparison to retail prices.

<https://www.ottawagoodfoodbox.ca/>.

2. Emergency Essentials Assistance Program

The Emergency Essentials Assistance Program offers students hampers of food and essentials when they are in need. To order a hamper, you must fill out the hamper request form provided on the Unified Support Centre (USC) website. If you are requesting a hamper for the first time, you need to fill out an electronic Food Bank Intake Form. It is recommended that you request your hamper between 36 and 72 hours before the desired pickup or delivery time. Students are limited to two hampers per month.

<https://unifiedsupportcentre.ca/food-centre/emergency-essentials-assistance-program/>

Physical Wellness

Carleton Athletic Centre

- a. All full-time and part-time graduate students have access to the Carleton fitness centre, pool, jogging track, and squash courts located in the Athletic Centre on University Road. Fees for these athletic services are included in your tuition costs.
<http://athletics.carleton.ca/>
- b. The Athletic Centre offers fitness classes, personal training sessions, and private swimming lessons; however, students must pay additional fees to access these services and classes. At the beginning of each semester, students are invited to try out all fitness classes at no charge for a week-long period before making decisions about which classes they might want to join. All Carleton students receive a 25% discount on all fitness classes offered.
- c. If fitness classes or personal training sessions do not appeal to you, graduate students also have the option to join an adult rec league or an intermural league. Each of these leagues has many different sports for you to choose from. If you do not feel like

committing to a league or joining a team, you can participate in open recreation sports. The open recreation options allow you to drop in during designated times to play your favourite sport with no commitment.

Graduate Student Association (GSA)

Grad Recreational Softball League (GRSL)

GRSL "...is a slow pitch league, open to interested players of any calibre, with a minimum of seriousness and a maximum of fun. The league is strictly recreational and non-competitive. Those of all skill levels are welcome to play. Weeknights from early May to the end of August, a variety of teams come out to the baseball diamond behind the Nesbitt Biology Building."

<https://gsacarleton.ca/gsa-softball-league/>

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has its own softball team – the Barflies - that has been a star of the GRSL for many years. Contact Professor Aaron Doyle if you are interested in joining.

Off Campus Wellness Resources

Mental Health Crisis Line 613-722-6914

www.crisisline.ca

Good2Talk: Post-Secondary Student Helpline 1-866-925-5454

www.good2talk.ca

Kind (LGBTQ supports) 613-563-4818

www.kindspace.ca

Ottawa Distress Centre (24-hour help line) 613-238-3311

Gay Line Ottawa (613) 238-1717

Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women 613-237-1000

www.octevaw-cocvff.ca

Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre Office line 613-562-2334

Crisis line 613-562-2333 www.orcc.net

Sexual Assault Support Centre of Ottawa Support line 613-234-2266

Office line 613-725-2160 www.sascottawa.com

Odawa Native Friendship Centre 613-722-3811

www.odawa.on.ca

Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health 613-748-0657

www.wabano.com

Minwaashin Lodge – Aboriginal Women’s Support Centre Crisis line 613-789-1141

Office line 613-741-5590 www.minlodge.com

Immigrant Women’s Services Ottawa Help line 613-729-1119

Office line 613-729-3145 www.immigrantwomenservices.com

Planned Parenthood Ottawa 613-226-3234

Options counselling, pregnancy tests, sexual health resources www.ppottawa.ca

Morgentaler Clinic 613-567-8300

www.morgentaler.ca

Family Services Ottawa (Counselling, LGBTQ supports) 613-725-3601

www.familyservicesottawa.org

Sexual Health Centre 613-234-4641

STI tests & treatment, HIV testing, pregnancy testing

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/sexual-health-clinic.aspx?mid=29307>

AIDS Committee of Ottawa (ACO) 613-238-5014

www.aco-cso.ca

Centretown Community Health Centre 613-233-4443

<https://www.centretownchc.org/>

South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre 613-737-5115

www.seochc.on.ca/

“How to Survive Graduate School” Resources

Books

Haggerty, K. D., & Doyle, A. (2015). *57 Ways to Screw up in Grad School: Perverse Professional Lessons for Graduate Students*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Goldsmith, John A., Komlos, John, and Schine Gold, Penny. (2001). *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career: A Portable Mentor for Scholars from Graduate School through Tenure*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Silvia, Paul. (2007). *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Rossmann, Mark H. (2002). *Negotiating Graduate School: A Guide for Graduate Students*

(2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Peters, Robert L. (1997). *Getting What You Came for: The Smart Student's Guide to Earning a Master's or Ph.D.* (2nd edition). New York City, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Lamott, Anne. (1995). *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Toronto, Ontario: Random House.

Bolker, Joan. (1998). *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company LLC.

Eco, Umberto. (2015). *How to Write a Thesis*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Becker, Howard S. (2007). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article* (2nd edition). Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory C., and Williams, Joseph, M. (2008). *The Craft of Research* (3rd edition). Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Cham, Jorge. (2002). *Piled Higher and Deeper: A Graduate Student Comic Strip Collection*. Los Angeles, California: Piled Higher and Deeper Publishing.

Cham, Jorge. (2005). *Life is Tough and then You Graduate: The Second Piled Higher and Deeper Comic Strip Collection*. Los Angeles, California: Piled Higher and Deeper Publishing.

Cham Jorge. (2007). *Scooped! The Third Piled Higher and Deeper Comic Strip Collection*. Los Angeles, California: Piled Higher and Deeper Publishing.

Belcher, Wendy Laura. (2009). *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Online Resources

1. Surviving Grad School (and hopefully thriving) (Blog)
2. Inside Higher Ed (Online Resource)
3. Finish your Thesis with Dora (Blog)
4. The Thesis Whisperer (Online Newspaper)
5. Dissertation Diva.com (Blog)
6. The Professor is In (Blog)

7. Gradhacker Industries, Inc. (Collaborative Blog)
 8. The Grad Student Way (Blog)
 9. My Graduate School (Blog)
 10. PhD Life: A Blog about the PhD Student Experience (Blog)
 11. Get a Life, PhD (Blog)
 12. Alternative PhD: Finding New Paths in Academia and Outside the Ivory Tower (Blog)
 13. Everyday Sociology (Blog)
 14. Tenure, She Wrote (Blog)
 15. Emerging Scholars (Blog)
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The Master's Degree in Sociology - General Information

Program Requirements (in typical chronological order)

- Course work (number of courses depends on program pathway). Courses run for one term and are each worth a 0.5 credit.
- Completion of a research essay, thesis, or additional course work.
- An oral defence of the research essay or thesis if applicable

Academic Standing

Candidates must obtain a grade of B- or better in each credit, however grades of A- and above are expected.

Registering

Registration deadlines are firm. It is your responsibility to confirm that all documentation associated with completion of an undergraduate degree has been received by Graduate Studies.

Registration is not automatic; you must register every July/September (for Fall and Winter) and May (for Summer). Late registration carries a fee. Registration is done online through [Carleton Central](#) which is accessed through the Carleton University homepage.

Course Work

The Department makes available the current course offerings before every Fall term (changes can still occur early in the Fall term and also before the Winter term) and posts them on the Department website. Students can also check Carleton Central for a current list of offerings. There are often special topics sociology courses offered by various instructors. Please note that not all courses that appear in the Graduate Calendar are offered every year. Students have the option of taking up to one (1.0) full credit worth of courses outside the Department (this includes courses at Ottawa University). Other options for satisfying the course work requirement (such as reading courses/tutorials) can be negotiated with the Graduate Coordinator.

SOCI 5809 (Logic of the Research Process) and SOCI 5005 (Recurring Debates in Social Thought) are required in your MA course work.

You must signal an intention to begin thesis work by registering in SOCI 5909 (equal to two [2.0] credits). Registration for thesis work should not start until after other course work is completed. Once registration for SOCI 5909 begins, continuous registration is required in every subsequent term (including Summer) until your program is completed, unless on an approved leave of absence.

If you opt to do a research essay you must register for SOCI 5908 (equal to one [1.0] credit). Registration for the research essay must begin no later than the start of the second full year. You cannot be registered for the research essay for more than three consecutive terms.

If you are doing a Thesis or MRP (research essay), you must have your supervisor in place by

the end of August (the beginning of your second academic year in the program) and have a project proposal that they agree is a workable MA project.

Thesis, Research Essay and Course Work Program Options

The Master's degree in Sociology is a research-based degree. The research component can be achieved by a thesis (worth 2.0 credits), a research essay (worth 1.0 credits), or coursework. All options require five (5.0) full credits and differ in the proportion of credits allocated to course work versus research. The choice between these programs depends on many factors and should be discussed with your first year advisor, your supervisor and/or the Sociology Graduate Programs Coordinator. Both the thesis and the research essay program options are good preparation for further graduate work at the Doctoral level.

You will be asked in your application to the master's program whether you wish to pursue the 'Thesis' option or a 'Non-Thesis' option, which includes both the Research Essay and Course Work options. Those in the 'Thesis' option pay tuition by term, and must register continuously in the thesis from the start of their program until completion, including in the summer term. Those in the 'Non-Thesis' options register and pay tuition for their specific credits on a per-credit basis; they only pay summer tuition for any credits they choose to take in that term. (The total tuition paid is designed to be roughly equal across all options, although the actual amount for the Thesis option depends on how many terms the student is enrolled before defending and submitting the final thesis). See the online tuition estimator to calculate fees, here: https://central.carleton.ca/prod/pkg_online_fee_assess.p_main

If you are not sure which option you prefer, you should default to selecting the Thesis option. You can also change to an alternative option at a later date. These different program options are described in further detail below.

The **course work program** option allows students to engage in critical reflection by taking courses and being involved in smaller writing projects. We counsel students to take up this option if they have wide-ranging interests that are not settling on a specific research project, are experiencing particular difficulties with writing longer-form work, or if the cadence of taking courses works best in their life.

Both the thesis and research essay are meant to demonstrate the student's strong engagement with a body of theoretical and/or substantive research. They both aim to be creative and innovative in their offering of sociological insights. They both develop a standpoint that represents the voice of the student. The two main differences between the research essay and the thesis are of scope and the type of claim they make.

A **research essay** assesses and evaluates existing research. Its primary material is a critical reflection on the work of others, organized around a clearly specified topic. In some cases, a research essay may consist of a preliminary exploration of original or secondary data (for example a small number of key informant interviews, or a review of a Stats Can survey). While guided by a broad research question, its main purpose is to raise new questions and issues. The research essay can have a wider scope than a thesis because it can be more speculative and agenda-setting. Its role is to provide illustrative evidence, rather than definitive, well-documented answers. The end result of a research essay could be a well-

grounded set of new research questions or the initial exegesis and preliminary development of a working argument. We advise students to take this option if they are interested in mapping out an area of research, if they know they do not want to spend several months collecting primary data, if they are daunted by the length of the MA thesis, or if they've changed their project focus significantly and wish to take more courses to build their foundation of understanding before embarking on writing.

The overall scope of a **thesis** is quite focused, and the standards and evidence are higher. The expectation is that, as an original contribution to an ongoing conversation in Sociology, the thesis will identify ways to push ideas forward by providing evidence, argumentation, and critical commentary addressing the research questions posed. There are many ways to do an MA thesis. Those in the past include interrogation of a particular theorist or theoretical tradition, of a significant sociological concept, and of substantive issues. Theses can draw on and produce many different sorts of information – for example, archive material, visuals, internet text, field research, survey data – as well as combinations of evidence in a mixed method approach. They frequently include some form of data collection and reflection, but this is not required. We counsel students to engage the thesis option when they have a clear sense of a doable research project, have made a connection with a supportive supervisor by the end of their first year, have completed their coursework requirements in a timely way, and feel inspired to take up a more substantive piece of writing.

Master's Thesis and Research Essay – Main Differences Summarized

	Thesis	Research Essay
Credits	2.0	1.0
Proposal	10 pages	1-2 pages
Manuscript Length	100 pgs	50 pgs
Content	original application of new or existing knowledge to a new research question, problem, or setting; may be based on fieldwork, literature review, archives, artefacts, etc.	raises issues based on review of others' work; primarily a research paper drawing on already-existing research materials
Committee/ examination	1 Supervisor and 1 Committee Member; 1.5-2 hour publicly announced oral examination with Committee Members and External Examiner	1 Supervisor and 1 Second Reader; 45-60 minute oral examination with Committee Members
Final manuscript deposit	An electronic copy is deposited to Graduate Studies via Carleton Central	Graduate Administrator/Departmental library
Grade	Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory	Letter grade

Thesis / Research Essay Proposal

After your MA course work is completed, you will need to prepare a proposal for your thesis or research essay. A thesis proposal has a working title and should be a compact document (maximum 10 pages). It specifies the subject for investigation which frames the research and identifies the procedures to be followed. In order to develop a proposal you must have a sense of the field, i.e. what is 'known' and 'claimed' about the issue, and a well-specified research question. You need to be explicit about how you'll approach your research questions and the strategies you plan to use to support your own claims. A research essay proposal is a more concise document, normally 1-2 pages. A handout that outlines each component of the thesis/research essay proposal is distributed and discussed in courses and workshops throughout the first year.

Thesis Program Option – Further Details

The Master's thesis provides an original contribution on a specific topic located within a wider research field.

Thesis supervisor and committee membership:

The Master's thesis is directed by a supervisor and one committee member. The supervisor must be a member of the core faculty at Carleton. Co-supervision is possible. One co-supervisor and/or a committee member can be drawn from the broader academic community. Additional committee members are permitted but this is an exceptional practice. Once you have identified your supervisor and committee member, you should have them sign the [Advisory Committee Form](#). You must then send it to the Graduate Administrator to add to your file. Please see <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/forms-policies/> for graduate supervisor guidelines and appointment policies.

Thesis proposal:

After you complete 3.0 credits of course work, you'll write a thesis proposal (maximum length 10 pages) in consultation with, and approved by, your supervisor and committee member. Upon approval, the supervisor and the committee will sign the [thesis proposal approval form](#), and this should be sent to the Graduate Administrator. The draft of your proposal should be complete by the first week of September of your second year.

Research Ethics approval:

If you will be doing interviews or otherwise engaging in original research involving human subjects you will need to complete a research ethics application. Normally you'll go over this in the winter term of your second year, but there are also substantial resources at the Research Ethics site, along with templates and forms. It is not unusual to begin the research ethics process at the end of Winter term, with many students beginning interviews over the summer. This approach can save a lot of time, since REB only meets monthly and they are frequently overloaded at the start of term. See submission dates and so on here: <https://carleton.ca/researchethics/>

Writing the thesis:

As you begin your writing process, which will frequently include reflecting on your interviews or data collection as you do it, you may feel unmoored - the process of writing the thesis is the biggest and frequently the least scaffolded writing task you'll ever have taken on. We offer a

thesis writing class that you are welcome to attend. It is also a good idea to set up your own process and collective support system. Many students find having writing groups, partners, and teams very useful in the second year of the MA. You should avoid dropping out of touch with your supervisor, even if you feel that you haven't done as much work as you had intended to at any particular point. Even if - and perhaps especially if - you are having a hard time with your writing, meet with your supervisor and committee member regularly.

Completing and defending the thesis:

It can be several months between when you submit the first complete draft of your thesis to your supervisor and committee member and the actual defence date and submission of the final version of your thesis after the defence. However, we have noticed that sometimes students tend to underestimate the length of time needed for these final steps. To assist you making plans, below we have outlined these steps and suggested time usually needed for each of them:

Preparing your thesis:

Producing an M.A. thesis that meets the high standards of the department and an external examiner is a challenging (and rewarding) process that normally requires multiple rounds of revisions. You should allow your supervisor and committee member sufficient time to comment on at least one full draft of your thesis, and for you to revise the draft substantially based on these comments. Often, before submitting a draft of the entire thesis, students submit individual chapters of the thesis for comments by the supervisor and committee member, and then revise them based on those comments. Sometimes supervisors look at chapters before you send them to the committee member. However, this should not be an unbreakable rule - your committee member is there to support you and will want to work with you as you write the thesis. Normally you should allow 2 weeks and perhaps longer depending on the time of the term and the number of chapters, for the supervisor and committee member to comment on your draft. You should then allow time for the supervisor and committee member to review any revised drafts, before they give you the OK to submit the examination copy of the thesis on Carleton Central. Multiple rounds of revisions are not unusual.

Planning your defence:

In addition to completing the thesis, you must carefully work out a plan with your supervisor in order to make sure you can schedule your defence, submit the defence copy of your thesis, and then submit the final thesis copy by the end of a particular term. Discuss with your supervisor and committee member about whom to have as the internal/external examiner. Once the internal/external examiner and the date has been confirmed, please submit the MA Thesis Defence Fillable Form to the Graduate Administrator to provide us with information needed for setting up your defence, at least **4 weeks** before the proposed defence date. Please see the defense timeline document at end of handbook for the full process.

Submitting your defence copy:

In addition to completing the thesis, you must carefully work out a submission timeline with your supervisor in order to make sure you can schedule your defence, submit the defence copy of your thesis, and then submit the final thesis copy by the end of a particular term and the set university deadline. Please note that the defence copy of the thesis must be uploaded to Carleton Central **at least 3 weeks before the defence**. Thesis preparation information can be

found on the Graduate Studies website at <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/resources-page/thesis-requirements/>. Please do not include acknowledgements in the defence copy – this page should be left blank and acknowledgements added in the final deposit only.

Submitting your final thesis copy:

After your defence, you may be asked to do further revisions before uploading your final copy to Carleton Central. This can take as short as several hours to as long as a few days or more, depending on the extent of revisions you will be asked to do. The deposit of final thesis copy **must** be received by the set due date for any given term (before the close of registration for the next term) in order to be recommended for Graduation.

We no longer have hard copies printed for the libraries or the department. If you would like copies printed and bound like the department copies (red with gold lettering), personal copies (for yourself and your supervisor) may be dropped off directly to Graphics. Supervisor and student copies are copied and bound at the student's expense. The cost of binding through Graphic Services is estimated at \$26.00 per copy plus tax or a coiled bound copy at \$4.75 plus tax and is payable at the time of deposit;

Thesis oral examination:

After completion and submission of the written thesis, there is an oral examination which you attend, along with your supervisor, committee member, an external examiner from another academic program in the University (arranged by the supervisor in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator) and the defense chair. The chair of the oral exam is responsible for the conduct of the examination, and ensures that the required forms are returned to the Graduate Administrator's office. With the oral examination chair's permission, you may invite other students or family to attend.

You begin the oral examination with a brief statement outlining the research process which produced the document under examination, and which locates your thesis work in your academic career. The defence is about an hour and a half in length. Revisions to the thesis document may be required following the defence. The thesis is evaluated on a distinction/pass/fail basis. The External Examiner from outside Sociology must agree with the evaluation of the thesis. An electronic copy of the successfully examined thesis is uploaded. For more information about the defence, please see Grad Studies [Thesis Examination policy](#)

The thesis program requires 3 (3.0) credits of course work (6 courses including SOCI5005 and SOCI5809). At least two of the course work credits (4 courses) must be at the graduate (5000) level. The remaining credit (2 courses) may be selected from either courses offered at the senior undergraduate (4000) level, or courses offered outside the Department, subject to the approval of the advisor and the Graduate Coordinator. Outside courses must be related to your area of interest.

Detailed guidelines for the format of the thesis can be found at:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/thesis-forms-templates/>
These guidelines provide a technical framework for the preparation of theses.

Research Essay Program Option – Further Details

The primary material for the Master's Research Essay is the work of others organized around a clearly specified topic and focus. While guided by a broad research question, a major part of a research essay's purpose is to raise new questions and issues.

Supervision and committee member:

For the Master's research essay, the committee consists of one supervisor drawn from core faculty and a second reader, selected from core faculty or the broader academic community. You may identify a second committee member early on, but this is not required until the essay is to be examined. Once you have identified a supervisor, you should have the supervisor sign the [Advisory Committee Form](#). You must then send it to the Graduate Administrator. Please see <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/graduate-supervision-responsibilities-expectations-policy/> for graduate supervisor guidelines and appointment policies.

Research essay proposal:

While there is no formal requirement for a research essay proposal, writing one is strongly recommended. A short 1-2 page statement of your research objectives and investigative strategies can help to clarify the topic of your essay and focus your efforts. The draft of your proposal should be complete by the first week of December of your second year.

Writing the MRP:

As you begin your writing process, you may feel unmoored - the process of writing the MRP is the biggest and frequently the least scaffolded writing task you'll ever have taken on. We offer a thesis writing class that you are welcome to attend if you're writing an MRP. It is also a good idea to set up your own process and collective support system. Many students find having writing groups, partners, and teams very useful in the second year of the MA. You should avoid dropping out of touch with your supervisor, even if you feel that you haven't done as much work as you had intended to at any particular point. Even if - and perhaps especially if - you are having a hard time with your writing, meet with your supervisor regularly.

Research essay oral examination:

Upon completion and submission of the research essay, there is an oral examination which includes you, your supervisor, and a second reader. The oral examination begins with your brief statement outlining the research process which produced the document under examination, and locates the work in your academic career. The defence is about an hour in length. The research essay will be assigned a letter grade that is agreed upon by the supervisor and the second reader.

The research essay requires 4 (4.0) credits of course work (8 courses including SOCI5005 and SOCI5809). At least 3 (3.0) of the credits (6 courses) must be at the graduate (5000) level. The remaining credit (2 courses) may be selected from either courses offered at the senior undergraduate (4000) level, or courses offered outside the Department, subject to the approval of the course instructor, your advisor and the Graduate Coordinator. Outside courses must be related to your area of interest.

Course Work Program Option – Further Details

The normal requirements for completing a Master's Degree through the course work program are 5 (5.0) credits (10 courses including SOCI5005 and SOCI5809). At least 4 (4.0) of the credits must be at the graduate (5000) level. SOCI 5005 and SOCI 5809 are normally required. The remaining credit may be selected from those offered at the senior undergraduate level (4000). You may also take up to 1 (1.0) credit outside the Department, including courses offered at another University, subject to the approval of the course instructor, your supervisor and the Graduate Coordinator. Outside courses must be related to your area of interest. Students normally take 3 (3.0) credits (6 courses) during their first year and 2 (2.0) credits (4 courses) during their second year.

Concentration in Quantitative Methodology

The concentration in quantitative methodology can be combined with the thesis, research essay, and course work pathways(see above). There are prescribed courses that must be taken ([see Graduate Calendar](#)). If you are doing this option, you can also take part in up to two work placements, where each work placement counts as 0.5 credit (one course). You must organize work placements yourself, although placements must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator.

Please see the Graduate Coordinator as soon as possible when you start your program (and regularly afterwards) to keep on top of specific deadlines and requirements.

Timelines for Completing the Sociology Master's Programs

The following are activities and suggested timelines for completing the Master's program in Sociology. These are based on the Department's requirements. Please see the [Graduate Calendar](#) for specific dates and official regulations. Each timeline corresponds to one of the three streams open to MA students: thesis, research essay, and course work program options (see above).

Thesis Program Timeline

Year 1

July/August

-Select courses and register for the Fall and Winter terms. It is recommended that Master's students take 6 courses in the Fall and Winter terms (3 courses per term) in their first year. Courses SOCI 5005 (Recurring Debates in Social Thought) and SOCI 5809 (The Logic of the Research Process) are required as part of the MA course selections.

Please see timetable for course offerings. Note: One course equals 0.5 credit and the thesis equals 2.0 credits.

August/ September

-Deadline for fee payment and registration (see <https://carleton.ca/studentaccounts/dates-deadlines/> for the precise dates).

September – Start of Fall term

-Contact assigned first year advisor to review program requirements and discuss/agree on course selections.

October/November

- Complete preparation for external scholarship applications for MA 2nd year (OGS, SSHRC).
- Deadline for OGS applications (applicable for 1st year MA)

December

- Deadline for SSHRC applications (applicable for 1st year MA)
- Review course selection for Winter term

January - Start of Winter term

- Check in with your first year advisor.
- Make final course selection for Winter term.

January -April

- Start exploring in more detail possibilities for a) the thesis research as well as b) faculty candidates for thesis supervisor and committee member.
- Talk with potential thesis supervisors; decide on a supervisor and committee member.

May-August

- Prepare thesis proposal (and ethics application if needed). Begin fieldwork if possible.
- Register in Spring/Summer

Year 2

August/ September

- August 31: For thesis option: have supervisor in place with preliminary approval for thesis project.
- Deadline for fee payment and registration (see <https://carleton.ca/studentaccounts/dates-deadlines/> for the precise dates).

September-April

- Continue to conduct research and write thesis or MRP.

September

- Optional - Prepare SSHRC application for PhD studies (due mid-October).

October

- Optional: Prepare OGS applications for PhD studies.

April (registration for spring/summer also possible)

- Submit defence copy of thesis to Graduate Office and orally defend thesis.

Research Essay Program Timeline

Year 1

July/August

- Select courses and register for the Fall and Winter. It is recommended that Master's students take 6 courses in the Fall and Winter terms (3 courses per term) in their first year. Courses

SOCI 5005 (Recurring Debates in Social Thought) and SOCI 5809 (The Logic of the Research Process) are required as part of the MA course selections. Please see timetable for course offerings. Note: One course equals 0.5 credit and the MRP equals 1.0 credit.

August/ September

- Deadline for fee payment and registration (see <https://carleton.ca/studentaccounts/dates-deadlines/> for the precise dates).

September – Start of Fall Term

- Contact assigned temporary advisor to review program requirements and discuss/agree on course selections.

October/November

- Complete preparation for external scholarship applications for MA 2nd year (OGS, SSHRC).
- Deadline for OGS applications (applicable for 1st year MA)

December

- Deadline for SSHRC applications (applicable for 1st year MA)
- Review course selection for Winter term

January - Start of Winter term

- Check in with your temporary advisor.
- Confirm course selection for Winter term.

January -April

- Start exploring in more detail possibilities for a) the focus of the research essay, as well as b) faculty candidates for a supervisor.
- Confirm a supervisor for the research essay.

May-August

- Summer registration is optional for MRP pathway, but you must register in order to receive any funding (dept. scholarship etc.)

Year 2

August/ September

- August 31: select courses for Fall term and ideally have MRP supervisor and proposed project in place. Inform Graduate Administrator if you are making any program changes.
- Deadline for fee payment and registration (see <https://carleton.ca/studentaccounts/dates-deadlines/> for the precise dates).

September-December

- Select remaining courses.
- If courses have been completed, register for the Research Essay (SOCI 5908) for Fall and Winter terms and begin research. Note: Once registration for the Research Essay has started, you must complete the essay within three consecutive terms

September

-Optional - Prepare SSHRC application for PhD studies (due mid-October).

October

-Optional: Prepare OGS applications for PhD studies.

April (registration for spring/summer also possible)

-Submit defence copy of research essay to your supervisor, and orally defend research essay. Submit final, revised copy to the department.

Course Work Program Timeline

Year 1

July/August

-Select courses and register for the Fall and Winter. It is recommended that Master's students take 6 courses in the Fall and Winter terms (3 courses per term) in their first year. Courses SOCI 5005 (Recurring Debates in Social Thought) and SOCI 5809 (The Logic of the Research Process) are required as part of the MA course selections. Please see timetable for course offerings. Note: One course equals 0.5 credit.

August/ September

-Deadline for fee payment and registration (see <https://carleton.ca/studentaccounts/dates-deadlines/> the precise dates).

September -Start of Fall Term

-Check in with the assigned advisor to review program requirements and discuss/agree on course selections.

January - Start of Winter term

- Check in with your temporary advisor.
- Confirm course selections for Winter term.

May-August

- Summer registration is optional for course work pathway, but you must register in order to receive any funding (dept. scholarship etc.)

Year 2

August/ September

- August 31: select courses. Inform Graduate Administrator if you are making any program changes.
- Deadline for fee payment and registration (see <https://carleton.ca/studentaccounts/dates-deadlines/> for the precise dates).

September

-Check in with the assigned Advisor to review/agree on course selections for Fall term.

January

-Check in with the assigned Advisor to review/agree on course selections for Winter term.

Going on extension, leaves of absence, part time status, and withdrawing in good standing

Extension

If you won't finish your degree in the university-dictated timeline, you will need to apply to go on extension. This requires the sign-off of your supervisor and the Graduate Coordinator. During extension, students are no longer eligible for research or travel funding, do not receive internal scholarships, and are out of the Priority TA category (but can still apply for Out of Priority TAs). The extension request should include a timeline for the planned work. Full details can be found here: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/extension-policy-and-procedures/>

Leave of absence

If you encounter health difficulties, personal challenges, family developments, exciting non-academic career possibilities, or any other life circumstance that gets in the way of grad school, you may apply for a Leave of Absence, which pauses your time to completion clock, scholarships, and TAs. Documentation is normally required, although sometimes exceptions can be made (e.g., if it is a medical LOA you need a medical certificate, or if it is a professional LOA you need an employer letter, and so on). We are happy to help you figure out what is needed and help you work with Graduate Studies on this. It is frequently better to go on LOA while you still have time in your program than to need to go on extension. For more information, see: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/leave-of-absence-procedures/>

Going part-time

Changing to part-time status is also an option if you are working full-time outside of campus, particularly if you will otherwise be forced to apply for extension. You cannot receive scholarships or committed funding (such as priority TAs) if you are on part-time status, however. For more information on the limitations for switching to part-time status, see the [Graduate Calendar](#) or talk to the Graduate Administrator.

Withdrawal and readmission

If you feel you must withdraw entirely from your graduate program due to personal circumstances, you should talk to your Supervisor and the Graduate Administrator about withdrawing 'in good standing.' This leaves open the possibility of applying for readmission in the future. Note that if you withdraw in good standing and later wish to be readmitted, you are subject to the following limitations: 1) you must submit a new application to the program, 2) you can 'pick up where you left off', but must complete all program requirements within 10 years (i.e., coursework older than 10 years will not be accepted toward the degree), and 3) you must return and re-register for a minimum of three terms (i.e., you cannot only return for only one or two terms and then defend your thesis).

Sociology Master's Programs - Student's Checklist

This check list will help you to keep track of your program progress and remind you of important and mandatory steps on your way to getting your Master's degree. These and any other forms can also be obtained from the Department's Graduate Office and online at either the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, or the Department, websites.

FIRST YEAR ADVISOR

Initial consultation re: course selection (complete by 2nd week in September of your 1st year)

COURSE APPROVAL FORM

Signed by First Year Advisor (complete by 2nd week in September of your 1st year)

REVISION OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students who wish to enrol in research essay or course work options must inform the Graduate Administrator (complete by end of 2nd term)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE (THESIS AND RESEARCH ESSAY OPTIONS)

Selected and confirmed (form signed and filed with Graduate Administrator) (complete by end of 2nd term)

SUPERVISOR FORM (COURSE WORK OPTION)

(complete upon transfer to the Course Work Option)

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM (THESIS and RESEARCH ESSAY OPTIONS)

Approved by advisory committee/supervisor and form signed; form filed with Graduate Administrator (complete by end of 2nd term)

THESIS or RESEARCH ESSAY (DEFENCE DRAFT)

Electronic copy of MA thesis submitted at least 4 weeks before defence date. Hard copies may also be required depending on preferences of examiners. Hard or electronic copies of a research essay due at least one week before defence date.

Thesis Defence Preparation Timeline

***Please note this timeline is using the latest possible final upload date as an example. If you can start this process earlier, this is ideal.*

1. The first step in preparing for your thesis defence is to consider the approximate date you wish to defend. You and your supervisor should look up the final upload date for the term in which you plan to defend, which you can find on the [Academic Year/Dates page](#). This deadline is generally 1-2 weeks into the following term.

For example: if I want to defend and complete the program during the summer 2026 term, then I would look for the following in the academic dates: *Graduate students who have not electronically submitted their final thesis copy to Graduate Studies will not be eligible to graduate in fall 2026 and must register for the fall 2026 term.* This will land in the first few weeks of September, so the date can be found in the Fall term section, and you would be considered a Fall graduate.

You will want to give yourself at least 2 weeks after the defence to complete any corrections, before uploading the final thesis by the deadline in the Academic Calendar.

2. **5 weeks** before your proposed defence date, you, your supervisor and your committee member need to discuss who will be the internal examiner for your defence.

* Your committee will determine the date of defence and confirm this date with the internal examiner.

3. **4 weeks** before the proposed defence date, send the completed *MA Thesis Defence Fillable Form* to the Graduate Administrator. This form will be used to build your file.
4. **3 weeks** before the defence date, you will be asked to upload the defence copy of your thesis.
5. The department will assign a defence chair, set the Zoom meeting or book a room for the defence, circulate the electronic copy of your thesis, and paperwork to all examination board members.
6. Once you have successfully defended your thesis, the revisions (if applicable) must be made, and the final copy must be uploaded to Carleton Central by the deadline.

Sample Timeline

1. *August 4* – meet with your supervisor/committee member to decide on, AND confirm the external examiner's availability for your defence date/time;
2. *August 11* – your supervisor is to send the completed *MA Thesis Defence Fillable Form* to the Graduate Administrator;

3. *August 18* – you will be notified to upload the defence copy of your thesis on Carleton Central;
4. *September 8* – defence takes place
5. *Sept. 9-21* – corrections to your thesis will take place, **your supervisor will approve the corrections, and will notify the Graduate Administrator** that the final, defended, and corrected thesis is ready for final upload.
6. Once corrections are completed the Graduate Administrator will release the final upload notification on the system. You will receive an email, and you will upload your final, defended and corrected thesis on Carleton Central. **You will have until September 22nd to upload your final defended and correct thesis.**