

## C. Prospectus and Dissertation

There are four steps involved in completing the dissertation requirement.

### I. Form a committee

Select a dissertation committee once you have finished coursework and both comps. [This committee will consist of at least three members of the University graduate faculty](#). At least two of the committee members, including the chairperson, must be Sociology graduate faculty. The third member must be a graduate faculty member from outside the discipline of Sociology. Five College Sociology faculty members who are approved as University Graduate Faculty are viewed as “inside” Sociology. Formal appointment is made by the Dean of the Graduate School.

### II. Write and defend a Prospectus

The prospectus is also known as the dissertation proposal. It typically summarizes the relevant literature, lays out your theory, data and method, and could also include preliminary findings. Once your committee has approved your draft, you will present it orally to them discussion and comments. All members of the Department are invited to participate in this oral presentation (“defense”). Your committee will likely recommend changes before final approval of the prospectus.

### III. Write and successfully defend the Dissertation

Upon tentative approval of the dissertation by your committee (usually in next-to-final draft form), the GPD will schedule a final oral dissertation defense. The Graduate School requires at least 3 weeks prior notification of the scheduling of each doctoral defense. Although this examination will focus on the contents of your dissertation, it need not be limited strictly to this topic but may include the general area of the dissertation topic. The University community is invited to attend this examination.

For you to pass the examination, a unanimous positive vote by the dissertation committee is required. This is the typical outcome in our department. If two or more members of the committee cast negative votes, you will fail the defense. If only one negative vote is cast, the outcome of the defense is subject to review and action by the University Graduate Council. These are rare events; successful defenses are the norm. It is also the norm for committees to require revisions even following successful defenses.

### IV. University paperwork

After successfully defending your dissertation, completing any required revisions, and getting final approval from your chair, you need to submit final copies of your dissertation to the Graduate School. These have to be formatted and submitted according to these [guidelines](#). You should also submit a copy to the graduate program assistant for our files.