Fact Sheet
PhD in Sociology – College of Liberal Arts
Preparing individuals for academic or applied careers in Sociology

The Program Description

The doctoral degree in Sociology at the University of Massachusetts Boston is designed to prepare students for outstanding academic careers as well as for leadership roles as applied sociologists in public and private agencies and research organizations through stimulating coursework and independent research experiences. Based in the vibrant city of Boston, the PhD program is uniquely positioned to expose students to the issues that are at the forefront of the nation’s conversations regarding race, crime, equality, health care, immigration, identity, and public policy.

The PhD Program in Sociology builds on the success of our MA Program in Applied Sociology and the research and scholarly accomplishments of our dynamic faculty. PhD students complete a core set of courses in social theory and research methods and specialize in an area of their interest.

Doctoral students also have the opportunity to complete requirements for the Graduate Certificates in Survey Research or Forensic Services.

Graduate assistantships provide doctoral students with opportunities to conduct research in collaboration with faculty and to teach classes under faculty supervision. The PhD Programs offers funding for full-time doctoral students consisting of a tuition credit, bi-weekly stipend, and a contribution to student health insurance. Students work up to 18 hours per week in either research or teaching roles at the university to receive assistantship benefits.

Faculty Expertise and Funded Research

University of Massachusetts Boston’s Sociology faculty are experts in the areas of health sociology, criminal justice, social psychology, survey methodology, immigration, gender and identity.

https://www.umb.edu/academics/cla/sociology/faculty

Current faculty research is funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, American Sociological Association, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Science Foundation, and Massachusetts state agencies.

Admission Requirements

Applicants for the 36-credit post-MA PhD program must have an MA degree in sociology, or a related field from a nationally accredited college or university or its international equivalent. The review committee will admit applicants with degrees in other disciplines at their discretion. The program directors will review coursework from other graduate programs on a case-by-case basis to determine transferability of credits.

Preference will be given to all applicants whose transcripts show completion of these courses with a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.25 and graduate GPA of 3.50, taken within the past seven years. Applicants are required to submit GRE Verbal and Quantitative scores to be considered for admission. Admission standards are similar for those who have not yet completed an MA degree.

Complete Applications include:
- Official transcripts for all undergraduate and/or graduate programs attended.
- GRE General test scores and, when applicable, TOEFL scores.
- Three letters of recommendation from persons with whom the applicant has had extensive academic and/or professional contact.
- Academic writing sample
- An essay of no more than 1,500 words addressing the following one’s specific interest in a PhD in sociology and rationale for pursuing the PhD, current major research and interests in the field of sociology, and professional post-PhD goals.
- Completed application form and required fee.

Applications are due January 31 for Fall admission. All applications must be submitted online through UMass Boston Graduate Admissions. Late applications will not be accepted. https://www.umb.edu/admissions/grad/apply

(Page 1 of 2)
To Complete the PhD in Sociology

Students with an MA in Sociology:
- Required to successfully complete 36 credits of coursework, pass both the Theory/Methods and the Substantive Area comprehensive exams, research and write a dissertation, and successfully defend the dissertation.

Students without a MA in Sociology:
- Must first complete requirements for UMass Boston’s 36-credit MA in Applied Sociology.
- Complete the 36 credits of coursework, pass both the Theory/Methods and the Substantive Area comprehensive exams, research and write a dissertation, and successfully defend the dissertation.

Please note: Courses to fulfill MA degree requirements may not be counted towards completion of the additional PhD program requirements.

Required Courses:

SOCIOL 607 – Contemporary Social Theory
Further the knowledge of sociological theory, covering theoretical trends after World War II. With a solid theoretical basis in classical theory, students will understand the evolution of theory from an enormous variety of contexts. These contexts led to the formation of such things as social movements, political parties, trade unions and organized mass actions.

SOCIOL 609L – Qualitative Methods and Field Research
Introduce students to qualitative research methods. Student practice the skills needed to observe the world around us by attending to social phenomena descriptively and analytically. This course functions both as a seminar and a research workshop, in which students learn by doing.

SOCIOL 652 – Advanced Quantitative Analysis
Reviews multiple regression and various regression diagnostic techniques, this course covers factor analysis, regression approaches appropriate for binary and count data outcomes, survival analysis, and hierarchical linear modeling.

SOCIOL 897 – Pro-seminars in Graduate Professional Development in Sociology

SOCIOL 899 – Dissertation Credits (Minimum of 6)

Elective Courses:
Any sociology department graduate course or up to 6 credits of coursework from any other university graduate program.

Research Resources for Graduate Students
include computing laboratories, a survey research center, centers and institutes conducting research on a range of social policy issues, an active graduate student organization and extensive online and shelved library resources. Out membership in the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) provides access to hundreds of datasets for research on important topics. The Boston area itself provides a rich environment for making valuable academic connections and future career opportunities.

Affordability & Environment
As the only public university in Boston, the cost of graduate study is substantially less than that of the programs offered by our neighbors. The campus houses research and teaching laboratories, a greenhouse, theaters, an art gallery, an observatory, athletic facilities, extensive computing resources and the Healey Library. We sit on a peninsula in Boston Harbor that is also home to the JFK Presidential Library and the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate. We are easily reached by public transportation with our own stop on Boston MBTA’s Red Line and are conveniently located right off of Route 93.

UMass Boston’s diverse and focused student body creates an atmosphere of open inquiry and lively discussion that is ideal for higher learning. Graduate study at UMass Boston includes over 30 doctoral programs and more than 90 masters, post-masters, and graduate certificate programs.

For Further Information about the Doctoral Program in Sociology, contact:

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Additional Opportunities for Graduate Study
- MA in Applied Sociology
- Accelerated BA/MA in Applied Sociology
- Graduate Certificate in Survey Research

https://www.umb.edu/academics/cla/sociology/graduate_programs