Thank you for considering the PhD program in Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder!

Our program offers solid training in the foundational theories and methods of the discipline and allows you the flexibility to pursue interests in a variety of specialty areas. The Department of Sociology at the University of Colorado is a well-respected center for teaching and research. Here you can work with award-winning faculty members who have been recognized for their research, teaching and service.

We offer the following areas of specialization:

- Crime, Law and Deviance
- Environmental Sociology
- Gender
- Health and Population Studies
- Qualitative & Interpretive Sociology

The Application Process

The PhD Application Instructions provide step-by-step instructions and helpful hints to help you through the application process. Please read this document thoroughly before beginning an application.

Applications to the PhD program must be competed by December 1. We offer fall admission only.

In order to apply, you must meet the following admission criteria:

1) Hold a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an accredited college or university 
   (or complete by the first day of classes for the term applied).
2) Minimum 3.00 undergraduate grade point average.
3) Submission of GRE General Test scores (at least 1100 combined on verbal and quantitative)

To complete an application the following materials are required:

- Online graduate application
- GRE General Test scores
- Three (3) letters of recommendation
- One unofficial transcript from every college or university attended
- Statement of purpose in essay form (one to two single-spaced pages)
- (Optional) Writing sample (up to 10 double-spaced pages)
Funding

Most students receive financial support by working as teaching assistants. In general, this funding covers tuition and a portion of the cost of health insurance and includes a monthly stipend. As teaching assistants, students are responsible for a variety of duties including grading papers and exams, helping to design assignments, holding office hours, and leading recitation sections. More advanced students can receive funding as research assistants or graduate part-time instructors.

The **Graduate Teacher Program** supports graduate students in teaching endeavors by offering college teacher training, supporting research skill development, and providing career preparation opportunities.

The **Office of Financial Aid** also offers financial support for graduate students.

Requirements for the PhD Degree

Students receive the PhD degree after fulfilling the following requirements. Students should aim to fulfill these requirements within five to six years.

1) **Minimum Course Hours:** Students must complete a total of 45 hours of course work credit hours. At least 24 hours must be in the Department of Sociology on the Boulder campus. All courses taken within the Department of Sociology must be numbered 5000 or above to qualify for graduate credit.

2) **Successful Completion of Required Seminars:** These include Data 1/Quantitative Methods 1, Data 2/Quantitative Methods 2, Logics of Qualitative Research, Sociological Theory and a second theory seminar of the student’s choice.

3) **Completion of Equivalent of "Preliminary Exams":** Satisfactory completion of the five required classes during the first two years in the program represents what the Graduate School refers to as the "preliminary examination."

4) **Successful First- and Second- year Reviews:** At the end of the first and second years, faculty members teaching required courses, faculty mentor/advisors, and faculty supervising teaching assistants conduct a review of students’ progress.

5) **Successful Completion of Breadth and Depth Course Requirements:** Students are required to take three courses in the area they identify as their primary specialty to satisfy the depth requirement. To satisfy the breadth requirement, students are required to take one course in each of two additional areas, chosen from among the department’s core areas.

6) **Successful Completion of Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam:** Students must complete the required 45 hours of course work before taking the specialty area comprehensive exam.

7) **Successful Defense of Dissertation Proposal:** Students should prepare a written dissertation proposal and orally defend it before the Dissertation Committee.

8) **Completion and Successful Defense of the Dissertation:** Students should complete dissertation research and defend by the end of their sixth program year.
Typical Sequence Through the Program

When you enter the program you will be in a cohort of approximately 12 students. Students typically focus on required courses during the first year. Graduate students are expected to take two or three seminars each semester. We encourage students to work with their faculty advisors to determine the course load for the first year based on prior course work, etc. Beyond the first year, we recommend that students take three courses each semester.

Each incoming student will be assigned an individual faculty advisor who will help guide the student through the first year of the program. Under the first-year advising system, students are encouraged to work with the first-year advisor to explore the program, the research specialties of the department, and their own developing research interests while getting to know faculty members. Once a student has had an opportunity to meet and work with a variety of faculty, decisions regarding long-term advisors should be made. Beginning in Year Two of the program, graduate students are expected to seek their own faculty advisors.

Students in their first year are required to attend the Graduate Forum. Students will meet bimonthly throughout the academic year with the forum leader. The primary purposes of the forum are to introduce faculty and their research to the first-year cohort and to provide a communal forum for the cohort to discuss issues of concern with the forum leader.

Professionalization Seminar. The department offers an ongoing Professionalization Seminar (“Prosem”) led by a group of elected graduate students.

During your first two years, the course work will focus on theory and methods. Then, you will work with your advisor to develop your specialty area in your third and fourth years. Upon successful completion of your specialty comprehensive exam, you will be admitted to candidacy and begin your dissertation research.

Community

The department views the recruitment and retention of an inclusive and diverse student body as an essential component of a successful graduate program. Besides enhancing the quality of our program by bringing a larger diversity of experience to it, recruitment and retention of students from many different backgrounds and experiences will increase the diversity in the profession of sociology overall. Our department is committed to improving the diversity of the student body and the graduate program experience.

As a student, you are encouraged to become involved in the United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS) at the University of Colorado Boulder. UGGS is committed to enhancing the graduate student experience by interacting with the university administration on matters such as financial aid, etc. UGGS has worked with the Graduate School to develop the Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

Nestled at the foothills of the majestic Rocky Mountains in scenic Boulder, Colorado, the University of Colorado is the premier teaching and research university in the Rocky Mountain West.

Frequently Asked Questions

We invite you to apply for our program!
Still have questions? Please visit our FAQs for more information about our program and the application process.