



## UCSD Department of Sociology Field Examination Guidelines

Effective Fall 2016, students must complete two *field exams* by the end of Winter quarter of their third year. By no later than Week 7 of Spring quarter during the second year, students must identify a lead advisor and a second committee member for two research areas and inform the Graduate Coordinator of their exam committees via the [Field Exam Declaration Form](#). For each of the (2) field exams, students and their committee must agree on a reading list/bibliography for their research area. The students then spend a few months reading these materials, and then will write an exam in which they respond to prompts prepared by their faculty exam committee.

One month prior to taking each exam, and in consultation with the field exam committee, students should determine the dates for their five-day-written-exams as well as the oral exams. Students will need to schedule a room for the oral defense with the department's Student Affairs Assistant allowing approximately one-hour per exam. The oral exam for each field area should take place *no more* than one week after the completion of the written exam. Students will be evaluated on the basis of both the written and oral portions of their field exams.

Specifics of new field exam system follow. We should note that students may complete their exams before the dates indicated below, but not after.

- By the end of the second year, the student must be in contact with four faculty members who will constitute two exam committees (two faculty members per field). The student will designate a lead advisor for each field exam; the lead advisor for each exam will be in charge of helping the student devise a reading list/bibliography for the exam.
- For each of the two field exams, the student's two faculty committee members will collaborate to develop a prompt for their respective exam, with the lead advisor taking the lead.
- By the end of Fall quarter of their third year, the student will identify a five-day period that ends no later than Friday of Week 7 of Winter quarter to take the written portion of each exam. At the same time that they schedule the written portion of the exam, the student will also schedule the oral portion of their exam, to take place within one week after the written portion will be completed. The student may have two five-day periods to cover the written portion of both exams, which means that a student could spend up to 10 days during Winter quarter writing their exams (i.e. maximum five days for each written exam; though these two five-days periods need not be contiguous).
- The exams will be open book, open note. Exams will have a maximum page limit of 20 pages, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. The

student is expected to cite material from the reading list throughout the exam, but no separate References section is necessary. The lead advisor for each exam will be charged with administering that exam and making sure the exam is handed in at the end of the five-day period.

- Details regarding exam administration (electronic, hard copy) and submission will be at the discretion of the committee; but under no circumstance will late written exams be accepted (i.e. a late written exam will be considered a failed field exam, the details of which are described below.)
- Upon completion of the written portion of each exam, the student will then go on to take the oral portion of that exam. Only the two faculty who wrote and read the exam are required to attend the oral defense for their field. Each oral defense will be 1 hour—again, to be held within one week of completing the written exam at a date that was scheduled in advance (see above).
- Ultimate pass/fail of each field exam will be on the basis of both the written exam and the oral defense; the student will not receive a separate grade for each. Upon completion of the oral defense, the student will exit the examination room while the two committee members confer. The student will then be invited back into the room to receive and discuss the committee members' evaluation. Possible grades for each field exam are high pass, pass, conditional pass, and fail.
  - A grade of *high pass* will be reserved for students who demonstrate extraordinary command of the material in both written and oral components of the exam—exceeding the minimum requirements for this milestone.
  - A grade of *pass* will be awarded to students who have met the requirements for this milestone, considering their cumulative performance on both written and oral portions of the exam.
  - A grade of *conditional pass* may be assigned at the committee's discretion—in particular, for cases where the student's performance on *either* the written *or* the oral portion of the exam was deemed inadequate. For example, a student who performed adequately at the oral portion of the exam but inadequately on the written portion of the exam might be asked to re-write the written portion of the exam under faculty supervision.
  - A grade of *fail* will be reserved for students whose performance on *both* written *and* oral sections of the exam is deemed unacceptable by the committee. The student will then have to retake the entire exam—including a new written prompt and a new oral defense—following the same protocol described above (except that instead of Friday of Week 7 of Winter quarter, the written portion of the rescheduled exam must be completed no later than Friday of Week 7 of Spring quarter, with the oral portion of the rescheduled exam to be held within a week). In cases of especially poor performance on the written portion of the exam—i.e. in cases where it would not be possible for the student to receive a passing grade, regardless of their performance on the oral portion of the exam—the committee reserves the right to cancel the oral exam altogether.

Students must pass *both* field exams by the end of Spring quarter of their third year to continue in the program. This means that a student must receive a passing grade on both exams by the end of Spring quarter, and that any “conditions” associated with one or both exams must be satisfied. Two signed and completed [Field Exam Area](#) forms should be returned to the Graduate Coordinator, the student will receive a copy and the original with signatures will be retained in the student’s record.