DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & CRIMINOLOGY

Graduate Student FAQs Fall 2021

Q1: What are the Fall 2021 Grad College (GC) deadlines?
A: Here are the key deadlines.

Q2: When is the VERY LAST DAY I can defend my MA/dissertation to graduate in Fa21?
A: The very last day is 11/19/21.

Q3: When is the VERY LAST DAY to notify the front office of your intent to defend your MA/dissertation to graduate in Fa21?
A: The GC needs to know by 10/12, and so you will need to notify the front office by 10/5.

Q4: How do I set up and complete my MA/dissertation defense or Terminal MA Exam in Fall 2021?
A: Follow these steps:
   1. Obtain permission from your committee chair to proceed with scheduling a defense.
   2. Confirm that your committee members agree that you are ready to defend.
   3. Find a date/time that works for the committee.
   4. If you want to officially graduate in December 2021:
      a. You need to contact the front office to start the GC paperwork at least two weeks prior to your defense date OR by 10/5 whichever date comes first.
      b. Complete your Application for Degree by 10/1/2021. Note: there is no fee to cancel this application, but there is a $20 late fee if you miss deadline. Also click through the entire graduation checklist to register for commencement and be informed about other important graduation logistics.
      c. As noted above, make sure to schedule your defense/exam on or before 11/19/21.
      d. If you are doing a dissertation or “MA with Thesis” (as opposed to “MA with research paper”), you must officially deposit your thesis by 12/6/2021 at 5pm. Please do not wait to submit your thesis until the deadline day. This will give the Graduate College time to review the thesis to determine if it is complete, and to notify you if there are missing materials that will need to be submitted before the deadline.
   5. If you are OK with officially graduating in Spring 2022 but want to defend in Fall 2021:
      a. You need to contact the front office to start the GC paperwork at least two weeks in advance of the defense date.
      b. Complete your Application for Degree according to the Spring 2022 deadlines.
   6. Once you have successfully defended on the planned defense date, the front office will submit your completion paperwork to the grad college within 48 hours.

Q5: How do I set up and complete my prospectus defense in Fall 2021?
A: Follow these steps:
   1. Obtain permission from your Dissertation Committee Chair to proceed with scheduling a Prospectus defense.
   2. Confirm that your committee members agree that you are ready to defend.
   3. Find a date/time that works for the committee.
   4. For students who took two area exams prior to August 2019 (and thus the prospectus is your GC doctoral comprehensive exam), you need to give the front office two weeks’
notice prior to your prospectus defense date so that they can start/submit the GC pre-defense paperwork. Once you have successfully defended, the front office will submit your completion paperwork to the grad college within 48 hours.

5. *For students who have completed the brand new take-home comprehensive exam*, the prospectus will not require GC paperwork. But still notify the front office roughly two weeks in advance so they can prep your in-house paperwork.

**Q6: What steps do I follow if I want to take the take-home comprehensive exam in January 2022?**

*The Graduate Manual will be updated shortly with all comp exam deadlines. Briefly, your scope statement is due December 1st and you should use the Fall semester to organize your committee and prepare your scope statement. Please reach out to the DGS if you are planning on taking the January take-home exam.*

**Q7: Where can I find a summary of INTERNAL fellowships I can apply for?**

*A:* [https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/fellowships/internal](https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/fellowships/internal)

**Q8: What are the relevant deadlines for internal grants applications for Fall 2021?**

*A:* Students must submit to the department in PDF format all their materials TWO WEEKS before the published official deadline. Here’s the breakdown of deadlines for all internal awards for which deadlines have been published:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fellowship Type</th>
<th>STUDENT Deadline</th>
<th>FACULTY Deadline</th>
<th>Final/DGS Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>GC Post-Comp</td>
<td>TH 9/9</td>
<td>TH 9/16</td>
<td>TH 9/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC Ballard &amp; Seashore</td>
<td>TH 9/9</td>
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<td>Small Grants</td>
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<td>GC URM MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Scholarship &amp; Publishing Studio (Summer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC Summer</td>
<td>TH 2/24</td>
<td>TH 3/3</td>
<td>TH 3/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q9: Where can I find a summary of the common EXTERNAL fellowships that UI students apply for?**

*A:* Check out the following links:

- [https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/professional-development/external-fellowships-support](https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/professional-development/external-fellowships-support)
- [https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/fellowships/internal/fellowship-incentive-program](https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/fellowships/internal/fellowship-incentive-program)

**Q10: I need help identifying fellowship opportunities that I should apply for. What can I do?**

*A:* There are multiple ways to become more knowledgeable about the funding landscape:

- Talk to your advisors, committee members, and DGS for recommendations. Ask peers about their funding plans.
- Attend [fellowship webinars](https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/fellowships/internal/fellowship-incentive-program) hosted by the Grad College/Grad Success.
• Make a Fellowship Consultation Appointment with Grad Success. Indicate that you are looking to identify opportunities given your research area and program stage.
  o We have heard from multiple students that these appointments are *very* useful and that the staff are incredibly knowledgeable about the funding landscape.
• Make an appointment with Kris Ackerson (Grant Development Manager) at the Iowa Social Science Research Center. The ISRC provides three services for graduate students: (1) support with budgets and budget justifications, (2) editing and feedback to be eligible for the Fellowship Incentive Program ($400), and (3) routing proposals to the Division of Sponsored Programs.
• Sign up for funding alerts with the Pivot Funding Database.
• Sign up here for the Grad Success newsletter (“GradNav”) to receive reminders about major fellowship opportunities and to stay in the loop on other professional development opportunities.
• The OVPR Research Development Office is geared towards helping faculty identify and apply for external grants. They do, however, maintain a Resource Library of winning proposals for a variety of national graduate student fellowships across many disciplines.
• Follow funding organizations on social media.

Q11: I need help developing a fellowship application that I’m currently drafting. Where I can get feedback?

A: There are multiple opportunities for feedback:
• For EXTERNAL applications: make a Fellowship Consultation Appointment with Grad Success to workshop a draft. “Please send proposals 5 days in advance of your revision deadline for an appointment.”
  o PS If you are receiving feedback on an external application from Grad Success, consider applying for the $400 Fellowship Incentive Program for your preparation work.
• For EXTERNAL applications, typically national fellowships: make an appointment with the Grant Development Staff at the ISRC, such as with Kris Ackerson and/or Kate Gloer.
• For INTERNAL applications: make an appointment with the Writing Center.
• For NSF GRFP applicants: enroll in SOC5800 Writing for National Fellowships.
• For NSF DDIRG applicants: watch this webinar from the ISRC.
• For any application, ask your advisors and writing group colleagues for comments and suggestions.
• Do not forget to get feedback on your CV along with writing samples and application questions.

Q12: I would like to improve my grant writing skills. What do I do?

A: There are several opportunities you could pursue:
• Grant and Fellowship Writing Seminar for PhD, MFA, and DMA students in the Humanities, Arts, and the Social Sciences. Note: This call should be coming out in late Fall 2021 for the Summer 2022. Click here to browse the Summer 2021 call.
• Ask the DGS to book a Grant Writing 101 Workshop from the Office of Grad Success.
• Learn to write grant proposals through various grad courses, such as Sarah Harkness’s research methods course and Alison Bianchi’s grad seminar on Social Psychology.
• Take the Graduate Writing course offered in our department (SOC5250: Students improve their skills in academic writing and publication; how to write abstracts and project summaries; preparation of articles for submission to professional journals; creation of grant proposals.)

Q13: I would like to get better at articulating my research ideas to non-specialist audiences. What can I do?
A: Participate in the GC’s public scholarship competitions (Three Minute Thesis or 3MT competitions for short) and the accompanying workshops that help you learn to communicate complex ideas more effectively.

Q14: Where can I find information about talks on campus this semester?
• Soc & Crim: https://clas.uiowa.edu/sociology/workshops/departmental-colloquium
• Soc & Crim: https://clas.uiowa.edu/sociology/workshops
• Iowa Innovation, Business & Law Center: https://ibl.law.uiowa.edu/
• UIowa Lecture Committee: https://lectures.uiowa.edu/

Q15: Who do I ask if I have questions about policies and procedures?
A: Start with the Grad Manual before asking our Academic Services Coordinator (James Herzig) or our Departmental Administrator (Sara Pettit). They will consult with the Grad College, the DGS, and the DEO as needed.

Q16: Who do I ask if I have questions about classes/research/career?
A: Start with your primary advisor.

Q17: What does it mean to “route” something through Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP)?
A: If you are applying for an external GRANT OR FELLOWSHIP of ANY KIND, you need to electronically forward your application to DSP (UI gatekeeping office for grants & fellowships) for approval first. This is called ROUTING. Failure to route can lead to all sorts of trouble. This is because for legal and accounting reasons, the funds that you receive from outside sources must go through the university first and not you directly. If you have any questions about this, please ask. Also: “When in doubt, route.”

Q18: What does it mean to be on “short hours” and why should I care?
A: “Full time” status for a graduate student is 9 semester hours of courses. If you do not meet this threshold, it should mean you are making good progress toward your degree and are working on projects like your dissertation/thesis, prospectus, comps, etc. If in this situation, you should declare “short hours” status by completing a short hours form. This form serves the following purposes: 1) A student may be obtaining financial aid that requires a minimum of half-time or full-time status; 2) A student may be deferring previous student loans and needs to be at half-time or full-time status; 3) IRS regulations state that a student employee has to be doing research in fulfillment of their degree and enrolled as at least a half-time student in order to
qualify as exempt from FICA withholdings. (The short version: Failure to submit a short hours form when going on short hours may affect your financial aid and/or your taxes.)

Q19: How can I apply for research funding and travel funding from the department?
A: In the past, the department has set aside funds to help students pay for research and travel to conferences. Last year, students could apply for up to $400 for research (e.g., software licenses, transcription, survey participants, etc.). The DGS will update you on information regarding the availability of funds for AY2021-2022 as soon as information is available.

Q20. How can I improve my job market materials for academic or non-academic jobs?
A: See below for some important resources and training opportunities.

- For academic job applications: We highly recommend the 5-day workshop “Managing the Market” offered in July by Grad Success. Each day is geared towards a specific document, with an info webinar first followed by a writing workshop. Be on the lookout for the registration call for Summer 2022.
- For non-academic job applications: We highly recommend a new workshop offered by GC and CLAS w. help from Grad Success: The CLAS PhD Career Prep Bootcamp. This bootcamp features faculty and alumni panels, LinkedIn and networking support, and instruction on how to use IDP resources. In Summer 2021, it took place in mid-August with roughly 25 participants. Be on the lookout for the registration call for Summer 2022.
- For any kind of job, you can always make individual appointments with Grad Success to discuss your job docs: https://grad.uiowa.edu/grad-success-appointments
- Ask your advisor(s) for general strategies and for editing feedback on job market materials. These materials often require multiple rounds of revision.
  - For those applying for jobs in the Fall semester, note that faculty are often traveling or busy with ASA towards the end of the summer, so definitely reach out at the start of the summer to prep job docs.
  - We recommend that you prepare job market materials on departmental letterhead.
- In the Fall 2021, a faculty member will be assigned the role of Job Market Coordinator to provide feedback to graduate students regarding job docs. To receive feedback on a document, students will be required to have received at least one round of feedback on that document from Grad Success. Attending the Managing the Market workshop, the Career Prep Bootcamp, or making an individual appointment with Grad Success would satisfy that requirement.
- Ask the DGS or Job Market Coordinator for examples of job materials from recently hired assistant professors and former students.