

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you very much for your interest in our Master of Arts Program in Sociology at Sacramento State University. To have your application considered, you need to apply online and make sure your application fee and all your transcripts are received by the Graduate Office before March 1, 2020. All supplemental materials can be uploaded onto the Office of Graduate Studies online application, though you can also send it directly to the department of sociology (see page 2).

If the graduate office does not receive your application, your application fee, and your transcripts by March 1, 2020, your application will not be reviewed by the university or the department for admission recommendation.

Please read the following four documents (Pages 2 to 6) and the information on the website from the Office of Graduate Studies.

If you have any other questions about the sociology graduate program, please contact us directly. The best way to get in touch with us is through email and phone.

We look forward to reviewing your application materials soon.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Carrigan, Ph.D., Graduate Program Coordinator/Chair of
Admissions Committee

Aya Ida, Ph.D.

Charles Varano, Ph.D.

I. Applying to Sacramento State Sociology Graduate Program

Our graduate program presents opportunities for systematic studies that differ significantly from the undergraduate experience. Our graduates are prepared to be independent and analytical researchers/scholars that can succeed in any profession focused on improving the human condition. Small seminars provide close student-faculty interaction and promote a supportive learning environment. Our program design supports working people who want to attend classes part-time. The department typically offers 4 classes per semester, and the classes are scheduled in the evening and meet once per week. A total of 30 semester units are required, including 24 semester units of coursework and six units of thesis work.

Most of our graduate students majored in Sociology as undergraduates, but we also accept students who majored in other disciplines, providing they have taken 18 units in Sociology, including the following courses or equalivents (with a grade of B or better):

- Soc. 101 – statistics
- Soc. 102 – Research Methods
- Soc. 192 – Sociological Theory

The graduate application for Fall 2020 is online October 1. All the application materials must be received by the **Office of Graduate Studies** by March 1, 2020. The required application materials include 1) the application form, 2) fees, and 3) all official transcripts. Graduate Studies Office phone is (916) 278-6470.

Please send the supplemental materials **DIRECTLY** to the Sociology Graduate Program Director March 1, 2020:

- 1) two letters of recommendation from anyone who knows your potential to be a successful graduate student, preferable professors
- 2) two writing samples (see below)
- 3) a statement of purpose (see below)
- 4) one copy of all the transcripts (unofficial copies are fine for the department).

Jacqueline Carrigan, Ph. D.
Director, Sociology Graduate Program
Department of Sociology
Sacramento State University, Sacramento
6000 J. Street,
Sacramento, CA 95819-6005

The two writing samples should include 1) an empirical research paper from your capstone class, methods class (i.e. Soc. 102 for Sacramento State students), or any other class, and 2) a short essay of no more than 800 words: “How I became aware of class, gender, race/ethnicity, and/or other inequalities?” Students’ ability to think sociologically and to conduct academic and/or applied social research is very important for admission consideration.

The admissions committee uses the writing samples to evaluate if the student can effectively apply sociological perspectives, quantitative and/or qualitative research methods, and problem solving skills to analyze and explain significant social issues, questions, or problems facing our communities.

The students’ statement of purpose should reflect their interest and ability to succeed in the graduate program. Students’ statements should demonstrate clarity and understanding of sociology and their objectives for acquiring the degree. Background, work history, and internship/volunteer experiences that relate to their sociological research/teaching interests may be considered as evidence of their commitment to graduate studies. A focused area of study that fits with the program’s offering is also valuable evidence of commitment and interest in our sociology program. See section IV below for guidelines on writing the statement of purpose.

II. Guideline for Admission to the Sociology Graduate Program

The Sociology Graduate Admissions Committee has developed the guidelines for admission to the sociology graduate program. Five general categories constitute the criteria for admission: 1) 3.0 grade point average (GPA); 2) two writing samples that include an empirical research paper from a capstone or methods class (e.g., Soc. 102) and a short essay; 3) statement of purpose; 4) two recommendation letters; and 5) diversity.

Grade point average is an important factor in the admission process, and a GPA of 3.0 or better is desired. Higher GPAs will have an advantage, but the grade point average will be contextualized to avoid excluding exceptional students with demonstrated evidence of academic excellence in Sociology. In analyzing the context of an individual GPA, the committee will look at the GPA (1) that relates to the discipline (Sociology), (2) that reveals anomalies (e.g., a good GPA that was disrupted by an odd semester [outlier---personal hardship/tragedy] that does not reflect the more solid/stable pattern of academic excellence), and (3) that demonstrates familiarity/proficiency with sociological theory and methods (exceptions may be made if the student took comparable classes from other social science disciplines).

Whether students are able to conduct academic and/or applied social research is also very important for admission consideration. Two writing samples can provide us with valuable information to evaluate whether students can use sociological perspectives, quantitative and/or qualitative research and statistics, analysis and problem solving skills, information acquisition skills, and communication skills to effectively carry out social research projects which analyze and explain significant social issues, questions, or problems facing our local community, our state, or our nation and to provide insightful solutions or suggestions for decision-making.

The students' statement of purpose should reflect their interest and ability to succeed in the graduate program. Students' statements should demonstrate clarity and understanding of sociology and/or their objectives for acquiring the degree. Background, work, internship/volunteer experiences that relate to their sociological research/teaching interests may be considered as evidence of their commitment to our graduate program. Also include a discussion of areas of interest within the field of sociology.

Letters of recommendation that discuss substantively the student's academic ability and related experiences that enhance the student's preparation for graduate school are also very important. The letters should show good understanding of and familiarity with the student in the areas that would be indicative of the ability to succeed in the sociology program.

The inclusion of graduate students from historically underrepresented groups in higher education is also a consideration.

III. Guidelines for Writing the Statement of Purpose

I.

Please feel free to share with us anything that would help us evaluate your application to our graduate program. You can consider the following questions in an essay of no more than 1,000 words:

- 1.** Why are you interested in sociology and our graduate program?
- 2.** What are your research interests?
- 3.** How good are your written and oral communication skills?
- 4.** How confident are you that you will be able to finish a thesis and why?
- 5.** What do you plan to do after you graduate from the master's program?
- 6.** How would your background contribute to the diversity of our graduate program and the university?

IV. Guidelines for Writing the Letter of Recommendation

Please give these guidelines to the professors or others who write your recommendation letter and ask them to address the following questions in the letter. Your professors can add anything that would help us evaluate your application to our graduate program:

1. Describe the student's interest level in sociology.
2. Describe the student's research interests.
3. Describe the student's written and oral communication skills.
4. How confident are you that the student will be able to finish writing a thesis?
5. Is there anything else you think we need to know in order to evaluate the student to see if she/he can finish our master's program successfully?