

SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS GRADUATE CREDIT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Person-in-Charge	Eric Plutzer
Program Code	SURRES
Campus(es)	University Park

The certificate in Survey Research Methods shall provide supplemental training to graduate students in social science, health, education, and policy-related graduate programs at Penn State. The collection of data by questionnaire, web surveys, phone or personal structured interviews is a highly specialized technique whose "best practices" and "cutting edge" change frequently. The data collected by surveys typically violate assumptions of random sampling that undergird graduate-level courses in applied statistics. Those earning this certificate will have supplemental training in data collection and take a coherent cluster of courses in applied statistics that will provide them with superior preparation for completion of their dissertation, and for employment in the academic, public, and private sectors.

Effective Semester: Summer 2019

Expiration Semester: Summer 2024

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-admissions/how-to-apply/>). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>). International applicants may be required to satisfy an English proficiency requirement; see GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/gcac-305-admission-requirements-international-students/>) for more information.

All applicants must be enrolled in and have completed 18 credits in a graduate degree program at Penn State. A graduate grade-point average of 3.30 or higher shall normally be required. All applicants will be required to submit a letter from their academic adviser or department head that explains how the certificate program will enhance the student's primary course of study.

Certificate Requirements

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in Graduate Council policy GCAC-212 Postbaccalaureate Credit Certificate Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-212-postbaccalaureate-credit-certificate-programs/>).

All certificate recipients will be required to complete two core courses, two additional electives at the 500 level, and one hands-on internship or apprenticeship experience.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
PLSC/SOC 518	Survey Methods I: Survey Design	3
PLSC/SOC 519	Survey Methods II: Analysis of Survey Data	3

PLSC/SOC 595A	Survey Research Practicum	1
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Electives

In addition to the required courses listed above, students must select any two additional 3-credit courses in intermediate or advanced applied statistics or interviewing techniques, as approved by the chair of the Survey Research Center (SRC) Faculty Advisory Committee.¹

Total Credits	13
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¹ There is no specific list of courses because offerings in the social and behavioral sciences change frequently and are most often offered under the 597 rubric. As a general rule, these courses must be at the 500 level, and they must have prerequisites equivalent to two semesters of applied statistics. For example, offerings in SOC that require prior completion of SOC 574-SOC 575 and offerings in PLSC that require prior completion of PLSC 502-PLSC 503 would normally be eligible. We will apply comparable criteria for advanced methodology electives in departments such as (but not restricted to) Human Development and Family Studies, Education, and Psychology. These departments have offered relevant courses on topics such as:

- Hierarchical Modeling,
- Latent Class Analysis,
- Item Response Theory,
- Time Series,
- Analysis,
- Survival Analysis,
- and the Analysis of Missing Data.

In addition, some regularly offered classes, such as HDFS 526, SOC 578, and STAT 506, would satisfy the requirement.

Students accepted into the certificate program will submit a "Planned Program of Study" form annually. Approval by the Chair of the SRC Faculty Advisory Committee shall constitute formal approval for a course to count in meeting this requirement. All courses used to meet the requirements of the Certificate may be double-counted towards the student's doctoral degree program if permitted by the program.

Courses

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will become familiar with key theoretical and methodological paradigms in modern survey research.
2. Students will acquire skills in the analysis of surveys employing clustering, differential probability of selection, and stratification.
3. Students will learn how to apply the Total Survey Error framework to data analysis and questionnaire design.
4. Students will learn about modern alternatives to sample surveys, including non-probability web panel methodology.
5. Students will integrate this knowledge in an applied internship.

Contact