

RURAL SOCIOLOGY

Graduate Program Head	Dave Ablor
Program Code	RSOC
Campus(es)	University Park (Ph.D., M.S.)
Degrees Conferred	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Master of Science (M.S.) Dual-Title Ph.D. and M.S. in Rural Sociology and Demography Dual-Title Ph.D. and M.S. in Rural Sociology and Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society Dual-Title Ph.D. and M.S. in Rural Sociology and International Agriculture and Development Dual-Title Ph.D. and M.S. in Rural Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
The Graduate Faculty	View (https://secure.gradsch.psu.edu/gpms/?searchType=fac&prog=RSOC)

All degree programs emphasize a comprehensive understanding of the various facets of societal organization pertinent to the rural sector. While breadth is encouraged, areas of special interest and research include rural social change, community structure, population, rural community development, the structure of agriculture, natural resources, and the environment.

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/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/>).

GRE scores are not required for admission.

Prerequisites for the master's program include 3 credits in rural sociology or sociology, and additional credits in either field. If the entering student does not have these prerequisites, they must be made up at the University during the early part of the master's program.

Students with a 3.00 junior/senior average (on a 4.00 scale) and with appropriate course backgrounds will be considered for admission. The best-qualified applicants will be accepted up to the number of spaces that are available for new students. Exceptions to the minimum 3.00 grade-point average may be made for students with special backgrounds, abilities, and interests.

Degree Requirements

Master of Science (M.S.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

All students are required to have training in sociological theory, statistics, and research methods.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

All students are required to have training in sociological theory, statistics, and research methods.

There is no foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. degree; the student is expected to substitute such courses and instruction necessary to generate superior capabilities of inquiry into an analysis of basic and/or applied rural sociological problems.

Dual-Titles

Dual-title M.S. and Ph.D. in Rural Sociology and Demography

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs/>).

Admission Requirements

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Rural Sociology and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Demography dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Demography Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/demography/>). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Demography prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

Degree Requirements

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Rural Sociology. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in Demography, listed on the Demography Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/demography/>).

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Rural Sociology and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Demography program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Rural Sociology and Demography. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>), the Ph.D. committee of a Rural Sociology and Demography dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the Demography Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Demography, the member

of the committee representing Demography must be appointed as co-chair. The Demography representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their Ph.D. committee and reflects their original research and education in Rural Sociology and Demography. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Dual-Title M.S. and Ph.D. in Rural Sociology and Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs/>).

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Rural Sociology and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society Bulletin page. Doctoral students should enroll in a dual-title graduate degree program early in their training, and no later than the end of the fourth semester (not counting summer semesters) of entry into the graduate major program.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Rural Sociology. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society, listed on the Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society Bulletin page.

The qualifying examination for Rural Sociology will satisfy the qualifying exam requirement for the dual-title degree program in TREES. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees, the Ph.D. committee of a Rural Sociology and Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society, the member of the committee representing Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society must be appointed as co-chair. The Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their Ph.D. committee and reflects their original research and education in Rural Sociology and Transdisciplinary Research on Environment and Society. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Dual-Title M.S. and Ph.D. in Rural Sociology and International Agriculture and Development

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs/>).

Graduate students with research and educational experiences in rural sociology may apply to the Rural Sociology/INTAD dual-title degree program. The goal of the dual-title RSOC/INTAD degree program is to enable graduate students from RSOC to acquire the knowledge and skills of their major area of specialization in RSOC, while at the same time gaining the perspective and methods needed to work internationally. Graduate study in this program seeks to prepare students to assume leadership roles in professions in international agriculture and development requiring state-of-the-art methodological training, as well as of conceptual expertise in rural sociology and in one or more of RSOC's four signature areas:

1. agriculture and food systems,
2. community and international development,
3. natural resources and environment,
4. rural social demography.

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Rural Sociology and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the International Agriculture and Development dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the International Agriculture and Development Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/international-agriculture-development/>). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in International Agriculture and Development prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

Degree Requirements

To qualify for a dual-title degree, students must satisfy the requirements of the Rural Sociology program in which they are primarily enrolled. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in International Agriculture and Development, listed on the International Agriculture and Development Bulletin page (<http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/international-agriculture-development/>).

Degree Requirements for the Dual-title M.S.

The master's in Rural Sociology and INTAD is a dual-title degree awarded to students who are admitted to the Rural Sociology master's program and admitted to the dual-title degree in INTAD. In addition to the requirements of the Rural Sociology degree, dual-title degree students must complete a minimum of 12 INTAD course credits (400, 500, or 800 level) as follows:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
AE 450		3
CEDEV 505	Leadership Development	3
INTAD 820	International Agricultural Development Seminar	3
3 credits of internship or applied courses/ independent studies with international development content		3
Total Credits		12

Some courses may satisfy both the graduate major program requirements and those of the INTAD program.

Master's Thesis & Final Oral Examination

Students must write a master's thesis on a topic that reflects both the graduate program in Rural Sociology and the dual-title offering in INTAD.

All members of the student's committee for the dual-title master's degree will be members of the Graduate Faculty. The committee must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from INTAD. A Degree Committee form should be filed upon selection of the committee members and should be approved by the INTAD Academic Program Committee Co-chair.

Students in the dual-title master's degree program in RSOC and INTAD will also be required to pass a master's thesis defense covering the general field of Rural Sociology and INTAD, with emphasis on the student's area of specialization. The oral exam is to be administered by the student's thesis committee. A favorable vote of a two-thirds majority is necessary for passing.

Degree Requirements for the Dual-Title Ph.D.

The Ph.D. degree in RSOC and INTAD is a dual-title degree awarded only to students who are admitted to the RSOC doctoral program and admitted to the dual-title degree in INTAD. The minimum course requirements for the dual-title Ph.D. degree in RSOC and INTAD, in addition to the RSOC requirements, are as follows.

Students must complete a minimum of 18 INTAD course credits with study in the following categories:

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
INTAD 820	International Agricultural Development Seminar	3
RSOC 517	International Rural Social Change	3
RSOC 508	Sociology of Agriculture	3
or RSOC 555	Human Dimensions of Natural Resources	
Select 9 credits from INTAD elective curriculum/courses with international development content/internships/independent study		9
Total Credits		18

Courses totaling a minimum of 18 credits must be taken at the 500 or 800 level; particular courses may satisfy both the RSOC requirements and those in the INTAD program. Final course selection is determined by the student in consultation with their INTAD advisers and their major program advisers. Students who already hold a master's degree from another institution may petition to have equivalent course credits accepted.

Graduates of the dual-title INTAD master's degree program who wish to pursue an INTAD doctoral degree must re-apply to the INTAD program for admission. INTAD master's degree credits may be carried over to the doctoral program. Six additional INTAD credits will be required. INTAD master's degree graduates who pursue an INTAD Ph.D. are required to

take the INTAD 820 (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/search/?P=INTAD%20820>) International Agricultural Development Seminar a second time.

Qualifying Exam

The qualifying examination will be based on the procedures of the major department and will have an international dimension. Although not encouraged, the dual-title degree student may require an additional semester or more to fulfill requirements for the dual-title degree program. Therefore, under exceptional circumstances, the qualifying exam may be delayed at the discretion of the student adviser in consultation with the INTAD program coordinators. The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from RSOC and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the INTAD program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role.

Committee Composition

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>), the Ph.D. committee of an RSOC and INTAD dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the INTAD Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in INTAD, the member of the committee representing INTAD must be appointed as co-chair.

Comprehensive Exam

Each Ph.D. student must pass a comprehensive (combined written and oral) examination in rural sociology, research methods, and statistics, and two or more chosen areas of specialization. It is expected that one of these areas will be INTAD. A separate comprehensive examination is not required by the INTAD program, but the INTAD representative on the student's Ph.D. committee must have input into the development of and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Doctoral Dissertation & Final Oral Examination

Ph.D. students enrolled in the dual-title degree program are required to write a doctoral dissertation on a topic that reflects their original research and education in both Rural Sociology and International Agriculture and Development. The dissertation should contribute to the body of knowledge in international agriculture. Upon completion of the student's doctoral dissertation, a final oral examination is scheduled. The exam is administered by the student's Ph.D. committee and focuses on the student's dissertation research. A public oral presentation of the dissertation is also required. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School, and the student must pass the final oral examination.

Dual-Title M.S. and Ph.D. in Rural Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs/>).

Admission Requirements

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Rural Sociology and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Women's,

Gender, and Sexuality Studies Bulletin page (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/womens-gender-sexuality-studies/>). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

Degree Requirements

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Rural Sociology. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, listed on the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Bulletin page (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/womens-gender-sexuality-studies/>).

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Rural Sociology and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Rural Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>), the Ph.D. committee of a Rural Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least two members of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the Ph.D. committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, the member of the committee representing Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies must be appointed as co-chair. The Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies representative on the student's Ph.D. committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their Ph.D. committee and reflects their original research and education in Rural Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Minor

A graduate minor is available in any approved graduate major or dual-title program. The default requirements for a graduate minor are stated in Graduate Council policy GCAC-218 Minors (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-218-minors/>).

Student Aid

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/funding/>) section of the J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits ([\[education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/\]\(https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-901-graduate-assistants/\)\) set by the Fox Graduate School.](https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-</p>
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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.

Rural Sociology (RSOC) Course List (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/university-course-descriptions/graduate/rsoc/>)

Learning Outcomes

Master of Science (M.S.)

1. Graduates will be able to demonstrate conceptual understanding in core rural sociological theory and research methods and ethics at the level required to contribute to the discipline and/or practice.
2. Graduates will be able to critically analyze the work of others in their field and apply that knowledge to problems of domestic and/or global interest.
3. Graduates will be able to synthesize theory and empirical literature to generate innovative approaches to research and execute a research strategy and explore implications for policy and/or practice.
4. Graduates will be able to effectively convey sociological ideas, arguments, and findings in formal presentations and in written work.
5. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to collaborate in a collegial and ethical manner with other professionals and a commitment to active citizenship in society at large.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

1. Graduates will be able to demonstrate deep conceptual understanding and proficiency in core rural sociological theory, research methods and ethics, as well as mastery in two selected concentration areas at the level required to contribute to the discipline.
2. Graduates will be able to critically analyze the work of others in their field and apply that knowledge to problems of domestic and/or global interest.
3. Graduates will be able to synthesize theory and empirical literature to generate innovative approaches to research and execute a research strategy to create new scientific knowledge and explore implications for policy and/or practice.
4. Graduates will be able to effectively convey sociological ideas, arguments, and findings in formal presentations and in written works to scholars in the field and to policy audiences.
5. Graduates will demonstrate the ability to collaborate in a collegial and ethical manner with other professionals within and across disciplines and demonstrate a commitment to active citizenship in the discipline and society at large.

Contact

Campus	University Park
Graduate Program Head	Dave Abler
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)	Brian Clemens Thiede
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Program Website	View (http://aeese.psu.edu/graduateprograms/rural-sociology/)