

## **WSU Sociology Professional Expectations and Code of Conduct <sup>1</sup>**

The Sociology Department considers graduate students to be professionals in training. Training involves course work and skills development, but also learning how to thrive in a professional environment. We anticipate that graduate students, like all members of the department, will behave in ways that are professional, and will use their time in the program to develop concrete professional skills. These include the specialized academic knowledge students learn in classes, but also the social and interactional skills necessary in order to transition into professional settings following degree completion. We encourage graduate students to act appropriately and professionally upon arriving at WSU for graduate studies. Among our professional expectations are the following:

1. That graduate students demonstrate efficiency and dependability to both professors and fellow students, as well as the undergraduates whom they teach. This includes:
  - Responding in a timely manner to professional communications, including email.
  - Practicing being a sociologist in training as a TA and/or RA, which are opportunities for training as a teacher and/or researcher. Taking TA jobs seriously may include attending class regularly, holding office hours, taking notes, doing assigned readings, and being attentive in lectures, depending on the expectations of the instructor.
  - Students should be proactive about discussing potential deadline and other conflicts with faculty ahead of time; on those occasions when students fail to adhere to deadlines, they should take personal responsibility.
2. That graduate students build and maintain professional personas, and present themselves professionally in speech, behavior, and comportment. This includes treating each other and the larger professional community with respect throughout their time at WSU:
  - Students should treat others professionally and work to promote collegial relationships. Participation in idle gossip or excessive complaining serves to form a negative view of the person engaging in this behavior, and can be damaging to the larger department environment. Serious concerns should be brought to attention of faculty and department administration in order for solutions to be pursued.
  - Students should recognize and respect each other's personal, emotional, and physical boundaries. In graduate school, the lines of friend and colleague can be blurred, but in the workplace, such undefined boundaries can elicit unintended consequences.

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<sup>1</sup> Some sections of this policy have been adapted from <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/01/05/essay-five-professional-skills-graduate-students-learn>.

- WSU Executive Policy 15 states that, “Discrimination in all its forms... destroys mutual respect and a trusting environment, can bring substantial personal harm to individuals, and violates individual rights.” In keeping with this policy, implicit or explicit harassment, intimidation, unwanted inquiries, and/or unsolicited advances on the basis of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, age, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or expression are considered unacceptable within professional settings. Students should familiarize themselves with university policies, including Executive Policy #15 (<https://oeo.wsu.edu/executive-policy15/>) and the Standards of Conduct for Students (<http://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=504-26>). Other university conduct policies can be found here: <https://oeo.wsu.edu/publications-and-policies/>.
  - Students should also try to recognize and respect other department members’ racial and gender identities by using correct language and pronouns.
3. That graduate students become active participants in the discipline, including through engagement in activities that occur outside of class, including:
- Creating a professional CV early on, to keep track of progress and professional careers. Students are encouraged to update their CVs regularly, both for their own records and on the department website.
  - Attending department colloquia and other professional talks, including job talks, practice talks, and dissertation defenses.
  - Attending lectures around the university, including those sponsored by other departments and units.
  - Presenting research at department colloquia, as well as regional, national, and even international conferences when financially and logistically possible.
  - When financially possible, joining professional organizations such as the American Sociological Association, regional sociological associations, and other associations consistent with professional interests, and graduate student associations at WSU and beyond.