Doctoral Degree Requirements

The Ph.D. program builds on the kind of skills and knowledge acquired in the SRAM M.S. program in Survey Research and Methodology. To be admitted into the Ph.D. program, applicants must usually have completed a Master’s degree or its equivalent in Survey Research and Methodology, or a related field accepted by the Graduate Committee. Anyone accepted into the program may be required to complete courses that demonstrate that their credentials match the skills and knowledge that students acquire from earning an M.S. in Survey Research and Methodology. These required courses must be completed in order to become eligible to have a Supervisory Committee appointed. Decisions about which courses are required will rest with the Graduate Committee.

The Ph.D. program consists of a minimum of 90 credit hours. These may include transfer credits for students who have earned degrees outside of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; 45 credit hours must be earned after the appointment of the Ph.D. student’s Supervisory Committee. No courses may be taken on a Pass / No Pass basis and all Ph.D. students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Failure to maintain a 3.5 GPA is grounds for termination from the program.

To assist the graduate committee, and advisors, in evaluating academic progress and career development, the program requires the submission to the SRAM office of a Student Activity Report (SAR) by the first Monday of the second week of each semester (with the exception of the first semester of enrollment). Please see the SRAM website under “student resources” for this form.

The Ph.D. program is designed to train students both in the issues that govern sound survey research practice and in the theoretical frameworks of those disciplines that contribute to Survey Research and Methodology. Students will opt for either statistical or design and implementation tracks, each of which have their own sets of requirements. The Ph.D. dissertation must consist of an original research contribution that advances knowledge in the field of Survey Research and Methodology and demonstrates the candidate’s expertise in both practice and theory.

Doctor of Philosophy Curriculum

Language and Research Tool Requirement
Prior to admission to candidacy students must demonstrate proficiency in technical and scientific writing. The student’s supervisory committee may require course work as part of the language and research tool requirement.

Core Requirements (min 15 credit hours)
Core courses are designed to ensure that students acquire the methodological and theoretical skills necessary to design sound Survey Research and Methodological studies. Ph.D. students must satisfy the core course requirements of the SRAM MS program. In addition, the following courses (or equivalents) are required:

- SRAM 915 - Advanced Sampling
- SRAM 921 - Total Survey Error
- SRAM/PSYC/SOCI 947 - Questionnaire Design
SRAM 998 - Advanced Topics in Survey Analysis (Special Topics)
SRAM 998 - Survey Management (Special Topics)

Statistical or Design and Implementation Tracks (minimum of 15 credit hours)
Each student’s supervisory committee will tailor a program of study that best matches the student’s interests and strengths. Students will decide either to follow a statistical track or to follow a design and implementation track in their course of studies. Within either track, their studies will concentrate on essential aspects that contribute to Survey Research and Methodology.

Within the statistical track, students will be required to complete course work and seminars dealing with statistical, probability and sampling theory. For example, courses on the general linear model, mixed and hierarchical linear models, issues in advanced sampling, finite mixture models, analysis of data from complex sample designs, missing data imputation and related topics will be included in this track.

Within the design and implementation track, students complete course work in their areas of interest such as cognitive and social psychology, health and educational research, cross-cultural comparative research, or in any social science discipline that is dependent on survey data to draw scientific inferences.

Comprehensive Examination
In order to advance to candidacy (to be able to submit a dissertation), the student must pass a written comprehensive examination demonstrating mastery of the core areas of Survey Research and Methodology and in the student’s specialty area chosen from the statistical or the design and implementation tracks. In general, students are strongly encouraged to pass the comprehensive examination before submitting a dissertation proposal. See section 3.3 of this handbook for more information on the Ph.D. comprehensive examination.

Dissertation Research (minimum of 12 credit hours)
As an original contribution to the knowledge base of Survey Research and Methodology, the dissertation must consist of an empirical study that includes analysis of primary or secondary data sources, or both. For completion of degree requirements, in addition to a written dissertation, students must pass an oral dissertation defense as required by Graduate Studies.

Survey Research and Methodology PhD Minor
Ph.D. minors must take at least one course from at least four SRAM core areas (excluding Intermediate Statistics) and at least one Advanced Statistics class. Students are required to earn a grade of B or better to earn credit towards the SRAM minor. The minor includes the courses as listed below:

Course Requirements
1. SRAM/SOCI 819 – Applied Sampling
2. SRAM/PSYC/SOCI 947 – Questionnaire Design
3. SRAM 921 – Total Survey Error
4. SRAM/SOCI 818 – Data Collection Methods
5. An Intermediate or Advanced Statistics course from SRAM MS core curriculum
6. One elective from SRAM MS core curriculum with the exception of an Intermediate Statistics course