

Sociology Discipline

Profile:

Part 1: Overview

Profile: Sociology at Macquarie offers research-led teaching programs at undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels. It also offers postgraduate research student supervision. The distinctive strengths of the discipline reside in its contributions to: original social and political theory; commentary on established bodies of social and political theory; empirically based social commentary and analysis; and, applied social analysis especially in relation to social policy, program management, evaluation and action research.

Qualifications: Academic staff in Sociology at the level of associate lecturer and above would normally be expected to have research experience and publications. A PhD is normally regarded as essential for recruitment to the associate lecturer position and above. Applied research experience especially in social policy and related fields is also reasonably common and considered an asset. Industry links that relate sociological research to its applied uses (in curriculum design and delivery, short courses, consultancy work, action research) are valued.

The formal academic qualifications of sociology staff are sometimes in another social science: politics, history, industrial relations, human geography, political economy, cultural studies, or discourse analysis. This reflects the discipline's character as a synthesising science as well as a complex set of exchanges between disciplines within the broader universe of social science. The pattern of lateral recruitment is less evident now than in the past when sociology was not as established as it has become in the Australian academy, but it can be expected to persist in rare instances.

Research experience and commitment: All staff are expected to qualify for the Research Active status set out in the in the Macquarie University Research Strategic Plan and to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to research and publication. Research in sociology is of several significantly different types. Some of the most common are: field surveys; participant observation; personal history interviewing; archival documentary research; secondary analysis of statistical material, and action research. Purely theoretical and basic research are acknowledged forms of sociological research. Applied social research which informs the teaching curriculum and results in publications is valued. The field of discourse analysis is also one in which sociological training can be applied.

Publications: Publications can take any of the following forms: monographs; edited collections; chapters in books; articles in journals; conference proceedings; multi-media teaching and/or research materials. The number, frequency and length of publication vary greatly according to the

problem, the research method and the publication format (e.g. the slow-matured book vs. the analysis of current policy developments). An internationally recognised monograph that has taken several years to research and write may be an important indicator of research standing and quality. So too might be several major articles on related topics that are published in refereed journals or as book chapters. Appropriateness of publication is the relevant criterion. Appropriate journals range from those with purely academic circulation to those that are read by more generalist and/or practitioner audiences. The latter categories should be especially noted as apt and important forms of publication of sociological work in the light of the reflexivity of social science, and as having their own rigour. Refereed journal articles in sociology and cognate disciplines are significant indicators of quality and recognition.

A list of quality journals and publishers in contemporary sociological research is available in the Department's Research policy. However, the interdisciplinary character of work in Sociology and the range of genres it transverses suggest that such ranking of journals is not always a reliable guide to the quality of research. A variety of means (including peer and media comment and the use of research and publications in the teaching programs at other universities, as well as invitations to offer papers) might need to be employed to assess the quality and impact of research.

Postgraduate supervision: Staff are expected to assume a role in postgraduate supervision. This means that they recruit postgraduate research students or accept, as appropriate, the invitation to work with a particular student, work effectively with them, and facilitate their completion within or close to time.

Research grants and funding: Where appropriate staff are expected to seek competitive research grants and funds for their research. However, it is worth noting that a considerable proportion of the discipline's research output requires little more than the staff member's time, dedication and skills. Thus, research grant activity needs to be weighed in relation to the quality and nature of publication output. Internationally recognised scholarship is valued for how it contributes to the academic standing and quality of the discipline.

Professional Development/Teaching: All staff are expected to be able to demonstrate commitment to excellence in teaching. Regular evaluations of units via TED's surveys and reflective self-reporting are part of the teaching and learning culture upheld by the Sociology department. Staff are actively encouraged to pursue teaching awards in recognition of superior performance.

University and community service: All staff are expected to contribute to the administration of the discipline. Staff at level C or above are expected to demonstrate from time to time academic and intellectual entrepreneurship and leadership as indicated in, for example, the organisation of a special seminar series or conference, the editing of a special journal issue on a major debate or contemporary problem, the leadership of a cross-disciplinary enquiry, or the attraction of distinguished scholars as visitors to

the discipline. Teaching and research links with other disciplines and universities are valued as are appropriate industry links. Community service may take any of the following forms: short course teaching; consultancy work; commissioned applied research; activity as a public intellectual contributing to public discussion and debate; service on government committees; community-based advocacy and advisory roles.

Part 2. Qualifications, Teaching, Scholarship and Research, Service to the University/Community.

Note: the requirements of each level accumulate from one level to another –that is, what is required at level A is also required at level B etc., unless otherwise specified.

Qualifications

Level A:

- PhD in Sociology or a cognate social science – or evidence of a close to completion PhD – is normally required.

Level B

- PhD in Sociology or a cognate social science

Level C:

- PhD in Sociology or a cognate social science.

Level D:

- PhD in Sociology or a cognate social science.
- Honours or awards in recognition of academic or scholarly distinction and/or an international academic reputation are desirable.

Level E:

- PhD in Sociology or a cognate social science.
- Also honours or awards in recognition of academic/scholarly distinction and an international academic reputation are essential.

Teaching

Level A:

- Higher education teaching experience of one to two years including casual academic tutoring in Sociology or relevant units in other disciplines and/or relevant work experience.
- Will be expected to contribute to: tutorial teaching; lectures; convenorship of units; and, as appropriate, supervision of research students at Honours, Masters coursework and Postgraduate levels.
- Will be expected also to be keeping up to date with relevant literature

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and research which bears on unit content and design.

- A background and/or interest in computer-assisted teaching and learning is highly desirable.
- Teaching contact hours are normally eight per week plus office hours research supervision contact time.

Level B:

- Higher education teaching experience of two or more years in sociology and/or relevant units in other disciplines, including independent unit convenorship, lecturing, tutoring, and thesis supervision.
- Will be expected to contribute to the normal range of teaching duties including research student supervision *and* to discipline professional development activities concerning quality assurance, innovative curriculum design and delivery.
- Will be expected to maintain a knowledge of relevant literature and research across 200-300 level curriculum areas as well as to be able to contribute generalist topics in sociology.

Level C:

- Evidence of effective postgraduate research supervision is essential.
- A capacity to undertake the efficient administration of large units is also essential.
- Will be expected to contribute leadership to the teaching programs at undergraduate, Honours and Masters coursework levels in ways that include responsiveness to quality assurance and contemporary standard of academic excellence.

Level D:

- Evidence of effectiveness in attracting students to the postgraduate levels of the discipline is essential. These include the Masters course work programs and postgraduate research student development and effective post-graduate supervision.
- Leadership in the development of the discipline's teaching quality is essential. This could be indicated in a number of ways including: innovative strategies of quality assurance which engage students and/or peers; improvements in the management of undergraduate, postgraduate and/or masters coursework programs of study; the development of an innovative curriculum and design which is shared within the profession
- Mentoring of individual staff and contribution to their professional development as teachers and researchers is essential.

Level E:

- A demonstrated capacity to provide overall academic leadership for

the discipline in ways which contribute to the integration of its teaching programs and the effectiveness of their delivery. This may include the sponsorship, liaison and partnership with other disciplines, universities and industry.

Scholarship and Research

Level A:

- Evidence of an active research and publication program is essential.
- Normally, one publication and one conference or seminar presentation per year is expected. These should be of sufficient substance and quality as to be able to attract favourable comment from respected and senior academics in the disciplinary specialisation involved.

Level B:

- Evidence of a planned research and publication program over a three year cycle is desirable. Normally, at least one refereed publication and one conference or seminar presentation per year is expected. The sharing of research communication and exchange with peers and postgraduate research students is also highly desirable.

Level C:

- Evidence of a sustained record of significant research and publications is essential. Publications may include: monographs; edited collections; chapters in books; articles in both refereed and non-refereed journals; conference papers, and multi-media products. Normally, progress towards the publication of a book demonstrating substantial scholarship would be expected.
- Indication of the development of an international reputation for research and publication in the discipline (or allied fields) is highly desirable.
- Contribution to the development of the discipline, its professional association and/or the wider Australian academy, is also highly desirable.

Level D:

- Research and publications that contribute leadership to the field as indicated by appropriate peer review is essential. Such leadership may include: original work which carves out a new field or aspect of an established field; a high level synthesis of established contributions to the discipline or sub-discipline; articulation of an area or problematic across different disciplines.
- A sustained record of research which would normally include at least two scholarly books and a consistent history of refereed publications or a portfolio of equivalent applied and policy reports.

Level E:

- Evidence of a sustained international reputation for excellence and originality in research and publication is essential.
- Normally, one book or monograph reflecting the depth of research interests every three to five years, with annual conference papers, journal articles or book chapters reporting work in progress or reflecting research interests.

Service to the University and Community

Level A:

- Will be expected to contribute to some aspect of the discipline's administration. This may include such things as: assistance in the organisation of the large teaching units; library ordering and liaison work.
- Participation in the discipline's meetings is essential.

Level B:

- Responsibility for one of the discipline's administrative portfolios in such areas as the following is essential: undergraduate studies; routine management of equipment and technology needs.
- Evidence of involvement in one of the following is highly desirable: the discipline's professional association (TASA); interdisciplinary dialogue; cross-institutional links; practitioner worlds and communities; policy work; public intellectual life; debate and discussion; community-based advocacy and work.

Level C:

Will be expected to assume one of the discipline's senior administrative portfolios. These include: convenorship of Honours; convenorship of one of the two Masters coursework programs; directorship of postgraduate studies, Research Co-ordinator.

- Contribution to a Divisional committee is desirable.
- Contribution to the life of a professional association, journal or cross-disciplinary network is expected. This can be expressed in any of the following: membership of editorial boards; office-bearing in a professional association; regular reader reports for a journal; organisation of a conference session or panel; organisation of a workshop, internet discussion group or conference.

Level D:

- Will be expected to be available as a responsible, effective and efficient head of department.
- Contribution to Division and university committees is expected.

Level E:

- Will be expected to offer senior academic management and leadership to the discipline, Division and university as appropriate.

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- Leadership in the development of cross-institutional ties and exchange with universities either in Australia and/or overseas is highly desirable.

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