



**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

Substantive Program Modification Form

UNIVERSITY:	SDSU
CURRENT PROGRAM DEGREE:	M.S.
CURRENT PROGRAM MAJOR/MINOR:	Sociology
CURRENT SPECIALIZATION:	N/A
CIP CODE:	45.1101
UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:	School of Psychology, Sociology & Rural Studies
BANNER DEPARTMENT CODE:	SPSR
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE:	College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
BANNER COLLEGE CODE:	3S

University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.

Dennis D. Hedge

Vice President of Academic Affairs or
President of the University

2/3/2025

Date

1. This modification addresses a change in:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total credits required within the discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Total credits of supportive course work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Total credits of elective course work | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total credits required for program |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program name | <input type="checkbox"/> Existing specialization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CIP Code | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modification requiring Board of Regents approval
<i>Must have prior approval from Executive Director or designee</i> | |

2. Effective date of change: 2025-2026 Academic Year

3. Program Degree Level:

Associate Bachelor's Master's Doctoral

4. Category:

Certificate Specialization Minor Major

5. If a name change is proposed, the change will occur:

On the effective date for all students

On the effective date for students new to the program (enrolled students will graduate from existing program)

Proposed new name: **Social Science**

6. Is the program being modified associated with a current articulation agreement?

Yes No

a. If yes, will the articulation agreement need to be updated with the partner institution following the approve of the program change? Please explain:

7. Primary Aspects of the Modification:

<i>Existing Curriculum</i>				<i>Proposed Curriculum (highlight changes)</i>			
Pref.	Num.	Title	Cr. Hrs.	Pref.	Num.	Title	Cr. Hrs.
				CD	604	Community Analysis	3
SOC	501	The Research Process	3	SOC	501	The Research Process	3
SOC	504	Sociological Inquiry	3	SOC	504	Sociological Inquiry	3
SOC	590	Seminar	1	SOC	590	Seminar	1
SOC	707	Sociological Practice and Public Policy	3	SOC	707	Sociological Practice and Public Policy	3
				SOC	710	Research Methods	3
				SOC	711	Qualitative Research Methods	3
		Select one of the following:				Select one of the following:	
		<i>Option A: Thesis</i>				<i>Thesis</i>	
SOC	798	Thesis	5	SOC	798	Thesis	5
		Electives	15			Electives	6
		<i>Option B: Research/Design Paper</i>				<i>Non-Thesis</i>	
SOC	788	Research Problems/Projects	3	SOC	788	Research Problems/Projects	3
		Electives	19			Electives	11
		<i>Option C: Coursework Only</i>				<i>Option C: Coursework Only</i>	
		Electives	25			Electives	25
Total number of hours required for degree				Total number of hours required for degree			
		Option A	30			Thesis	30
		Option B	32			Non-Thesis	30
		Option C	35				

Additional Admission Requirements:

Current:

GRE: Required

TOEFL: Required score of 575 paper-based, 90 Internet-based

IELTS: 6.5

Each applicant is required to provide two signed letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the student's academic record as part of the graduate school application process. In addition, we require that interested applicants submit a writing sample (past term paper for example) and a personal statement. The personal statement should outline the applicant's academic goals and describe how those goals connect with SDSU faculty expertise and interests.

Proposed:

GRE: Required

TOEFL: 90 Internet-based

TOEFL Essentials: 9.5

IELTS: 6.5

Duolingo: 115

Each applicant should have 2 signed letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the student's academic record. It is required that applicants also include a writing sample and personal statement. The personal statement should identify the student's academic goals and describe how those goals fit with the faculty's expertise and interests.

8. Explanation of the Change:

SDSU requests approval to reactivate the M.S. in Sociology (SMS.SOC). To improve the reach of

this program, better serve the needs of students, and enhance transparency, the university also proposes the following changes:

- Rename the program (M.S. in Social Science).
- Eliminate Option A (Thesis Option), B (Research/Design Paper Option), C (Coursework Only) language and replace it with more streamlined Thesis/Non-Thesis Options.
- Align the curriculum for the M.S. and Ph.D. programs.

For substantial modifications requiring Board approval, complete the items below. References to external sources should be documented with a footnote (including web addresses where applicable).

9. Date of approval from the Executive Director or designee.

1/3/2025

10. Identify the program modification requested.

SDSU requests approval to reactivate the M.S. in Sociology (SMS.SOC). To improve the reach of this program, better serve the needs of students, and enhance transparency, the university also proposes the following changes:

- Rename the program (M.S. in Social Science).
- Eliminate Option A (Thesis Option), B (Research/Design Paper Option), C (Coursework Only) language and replace it with more streamlined Thesis/Non-Thesis Options.
- Align the curriculum for the M.S. and Ph.D. programs.

11. Provide justification for the desired modification.

SDSU seeks to reactivate the M.S. (and Ph.D.) in Sociology, a move that will improve its ability to meet its goal of achieving R1 status as described in Pathway to Premier 2030. The proposed name change will help the program succeed in its second iteration. It will make the program more marketable by targeting a broader set of students, and it will allow SDSU to strengthen the program by tapping into faculty expertise in the social sciences in several of SDSU's colleges, including the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, the College of Education & Human Sciences, the College of Nursing, and the College of Pharmacy & Allied Health Professions.

The SDSU Graduate School has revised SDSU Policy 2:17 Credit Requirements for Graduate Credential Programs. The Graduate School adjusted the language to no longer refer to master's programs using Option A (Thesis Option), B (Research/Design Paper Option), C (Coursework Only), and D (Coursework Only – Professional Program) but to move forward with Thesis and Non-Thesis options that will require a minimum of 30 credits. The School of Psychology, Sociology and Rural Studies has updated the M.S. in Social Science program requirements to change the non-thesis option from 35 credits (Option B) and 35 credits (Option C) to 30 credits.

Finally, the third change aligns the M.S. and Ph.D. so that students can enter the doctoral program immediately after completing a bachelor's degree. Previously, the Ph.D. program required a completed master's degree for admission and SDSU's M.S. program had almost no curricular intersection with the Ph.D. This arrangement required the home unit to maintain two separate and non-overlapping curricula. Under the proposed modification, the M.S. curriculum will naturally align with the Ph.D. curriculum.

12. Would the requested modification require a change to the catalog description and/or the program learning outcomes? If so, describe.

Yes, the catalog description and student learning outcomes will require minor modification to reflect the expanded scope of the reactivated program.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students receive intensive and extensive classroom and practical training in teaching in-class and online resources at the college/university level.
- Students receive intensive and extensive classroom and practical training in applied and public social sciences.
- Students acquire the skills to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) so they can determine the extent to which their instruction makes a difference in their students' academic development.
- Students receive a solid grounding in the core areas of social science theory and both qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Students develop research and practice and/or teaching expertise in an emphasis area.

13. Indicate the number of students currently enrolled in the program.

There are no students currently enrolled in the M.S. in Sociology.

14. Describe the real impact to students.

The proposed name better represents the nature of the degree to potential employers. Students who graduate from this program will possess strong research skills that can be applied across the social sciences. The revised master's coursework will provide a more seamless fit with the doctoral program.

15. Describe the real impact to the university.

SDSU's strategic plan, Pathway to Premier 2030, places the university on a road toward R1 status. Reactivating the M.S. in Sociology and rebranding it with an interdisciplinary emphasis will substantially enhance SDSU's efforts to meet this goal.

16. Describe any cost associated with the program modification.

There are no costs associated with any of these modifications. Aligning the M.S. and Ph.D. curriculum in particular will allow the program to operate more efficiently.

17. Describe any risks and unintended consequences associated with the program modification.

The only risk of any note is that SDSU could be misjudging the market's perception of "social science" branding versus "sociology" branding. SDSU expects the downside cost of such a mistake to be minimal.

18. Would this modification be effective for current and future students, or only students who enroll following the change?

This modification would be effective for students who enroll following the change. There are no students currently enrolled in the M.S. in Sociology.