

Academic Promotion Discipline Statement

Discipline area: Human Society

Discipline: Sociology

School: Social Work and Arts; Agricultural, Environmental and Veterinary Sciences

Discipline Overview

Sociology is the study of society, encompassing the structure of society and its functioning as part of a system; the nature, contents and complexity of human social behaviour; the fundamentals of human social life; and interactions between humans and their external environments. The discipline is academic in nature and not practised as a stand-alone profession outside academia.

Within sociology, there are 26 areas of specialisation (Australian Sociological Association) with the largest being health sociology, applied sociology, sociology of education, genders and sexualities, and more recently, environmental studies. Within universities, sociologists are employed in a range of departments including humanities and social sciences, education, health and nursing, environmental studies, and communications.

Emerging in the early 19th Century in response to major social change and political upheavals, sociology was first taught in the US in 1890, with the first sociology departments established in the UK after World War II. In Australia, sociology departments were first established in the 1950s and 1960s. The Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand was established in 1963.

An academic sociologist would typically follow a traditional academic path entering academia at Level B following completion of a PhD.

Gender Profile

Profession/Industry	60% female / 40% male
Source: Job Outlook (2018)	(other social professionals including sociology)
Higher Education Sector	Data not currently available
University	60% female / 40% male

Discipline Context and Expectations

INDUSTRY ACCREDITATION	There are no accreditation requirements for courses in the discipline of sociology.
DISCIPLINE PEDAGOGIES	Undergraduate or postgraduate coursework are taught using the usual pedagogies of higher education. With no external accreditation or registration requirements, there can be considerable scope to develop/refine subject

	content and delivery. There are no mandated workplace learning requirements.
STUDENT PROFILE	<p>As sociology may be incorporated into a range of professional vocational-focussed degrees (such as nursing, social work, human services), service teaching, and thus agility and capacity to adapt teaching to a diverse audience, is highly desirable.</p> <p>Students are a mix of online and face-to-face.</p>
STUDENT FEEDBACK/ PERFORMANCE	There are no unique discipline specific attributes in relation to student feedback.
RESEARCH APPROACH	Sociologists are expected to be active and impactful researchers in their area of expertise. Sociologists would typically engage in either individual or team-based research, the latter sometimes in cross-disciplinary teams. Given their social research skills, sociologists will sometimes undertake contracted research or consultancies for government or industry.
PUBLICATION	Journal articles in Q1 and Q2 journals are highly regarded, and sole authored book are very highly regarded. A mix of single /co-authored is the expectation with authors listed in order of contribution. Publication expectations follow the usual expectations for an academic discipline in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Where sociology is undertaken in an inter-disciplinary context, publication norms may vary dependent on the publication discipline and publication requirements of the particular journal.
CONFERENCES	No discipline specific conferences of note
GRANTS	Research grants, though not essential to carry out research, are important for larger research projects. In 2019, for example, there were 20 ARC Discovery projects funded in the primary field of sociology (code 1608) – and almost half of these were in health sociology. Sociologists may also partner with transdisciplinary groups for applied research, for example in environmental or human services research. Grant from government departments are also typical.
HDR SUPERVISION	Sociology usually attracts a healthy number of HDR students. It is expected that mid-career and senior academic sociologists would be supervising and co-supervising graduating HDR students
RECOGNITION	Some professional awards are awarded by the Australian Sociological Association however receiving these awards is not required to demonstrate outstanding contribution to the discipline and only available to association members.
EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT	Sociology academics are expected to be active contributors/commentators in public affairs in their area of expertise. Their leadership and impact may be within university, community and/or a diverse range of social and political policy domains depending on their area of specialisation.
PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION	No professional registration required for this discipline.



Prepared by	Academic Promotion Team	
Authorisation	Name	Approval Date
Discipline Advisers	Professor Wendy Bowles Associate Professor Ben Wilson	
Head of School School	Professor Wendy Bowles Social Work and Arts	21 September 2021

