



(First Draft)

## **Ministry of Education**

# **Identified Competency Focus Areas and Core Courses for Ethiopian Higher Education Institutions' Exit Examination**

## **Program: Sociology in BA**

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## 1. Introduction

It is obvious that the world we lived in yesterday and the present one are not the same as society is under a continuous dynamism due to internal and external factors. In the context of the undergoing massive socioeconomic development process, there is a need for trained manpower equipped with sociological knowledge, approaches and theories; those who can inform and usefully guide societal development endeavors. The dynamics and complexity of human social behavior, culture, group structure, social institutions and organizations, patterns of intra- and inter-personal interactions, group and community relationships are crucial in human development processes. Besides, the contemporary society is getting more dynamic in terms of ethno-cultural composition that calls for harmonious co-existence among these diverse groups. Hence, the current development, environment, and societal discourse would be unsuccessful if it neglects the sociological investigation and understanding of these issues.

In this age of globalization, which manifests itself in social, cultural, economic, political and spiritual transformation arena, having sociological insights plays a paramount role. Sociological knowledge enables us to critically question, analyze, interpret and evaluate the dynamics and complexities of social processes and interactions in the face of an ever increasing globalization. We can capitalize on this advantage of sociology to tap the opportunities and potentials of globalization for the benefit of our national socio-economic, cultural, and political development endeavors.

In addition, urbanization, rapid population growth, and modernization intensify the existing social pathologies and generate new ones. In the context in which the present world is experiencing such situations, we need professionals equipped with sociological knowledge and approaches to better understand, analyze, interpret and address multi-faceted problems emanating from these situations. Thus, various governmental and non-governmental actors working in the spheres of human development, socio-cultural protection, community empowerment, and rehabilitation programs need qualified professionals armed with sociological knowledge and skills, and good attitude.

The undergraduate program in Sociology has immense contribution in meeting national development goals. It specifically contributes to the national programs, policies and plans in solving political, cultural, socio-economic and other developmental problems of Ethiopian society. The program also helps to understand social and cultural basis of social institutions, and organizations and groups of diversified ways of life, thinking and practices. Such understanding in turn enables to effectively manage structural problems and to appreciate heterogeneity as well as to use opportunities induced by these situations. The degree program in Sociology equips students with strong general backgrounds to understand our diverse societies and to engage in problem solving activities. By doing so, the program has greater importance in

producing qualified professionals who are able to contribute to the solution of the country's current intricate and multifaceted socio-cultural, socio-economic, political, and administrative problems that demand an organized and informed intervention.

In recognition of the importance of sociology as one of the social science disciplines, the government has authorized the opening of sociology departments in several universities of the country. Over the past several years, the department of sociology was opened in different higher learning institutions in Ethiopia, with Addis Ababa University taking the pioneering role, followed by University of Gondar and Jima University. Currently, sociology undergraduate program is given in the majority of the public Universities in Ethiopia and it is one of the highly preferred programs by most students from the social science stream. As a result, over the last several years, large number of students graduated in sociology and joined the labor market.

However, as many observers agree, the quality of education and graduates' competency level is below the requirement at the national level (Eyob *et al.*, 2022), and sociology is not an exception to this very fact. One potential way to address this problem and enhance quality of education could be through offering exit exams. As El-Hassan *et al.* (2021) stated, curriculum-based national exit exams play a crucial role in program assessment and measuring student achievement of program learning outcomes. These examinations are thought to have significant effects on how teachers teach and how students study. Hence, considering its role in enhancing educational quality, currently, the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia has planned to introduce national exit exam for selected programs. Sociology is one of the selected programs to have an exit exam in the coming academic year (2015 E.C). To this end, the Ministry selected two Universities (Haramaya University and Hawassa University) to identify competency focus areas and core courses for the Sociology BA exit exam preparation.

This draft guideline is generally prepared by consulting international experiences and with the intention of putting all undergraduate Sociology programs on the same page in making necessary academic and administrative preparations to effectively implement the exit exam. Most importantly, it will have immense benefits in making students ready and prepare in advance for the examination.

To this end, competencies of undergraduate program for Sociology graduates and 15 courses have been identified from the nationally harmonized curriculum. Then, competencies are matched with courses to guide the preparation of examination for Sociology graduates.

The guideline is organized in Five Sections and is presented hereunder.

## ❖ Objectives of the Exit Examination

The national sociology exit exam shall have the following objectives:

- Producing skilled and competent manpower to national and international market;
- Assessing students' educational achievement in major areas of sociology;
- Ensuring whether the graduation profile of Sociology curriculum has achieved at least common standards of knowledge and practical skills;
- Improving public trust and confidence in the activities of sociology professionals;
- Facilitating the efforts of students to revise the core learning outcomes of the courses covered by the exit examination;
- Ensuring all graduates from HEIs satisfy the requirements of the labor market and employability through the national wide implementation of competency-based exit exam; and
- Creating competitive spirit among Sociology departments in Ethiopia with the vies to encouraging them to give due attention to the national standards.

## ❖ Significance of the Document

It is important to set competency areas of the subject matter of sociology in order to measure how much graduates have acquired the skills, knowledge and attitudes required. The following show us the significance of setting competencies and identifying core courses of the program:

- To set competencies that help to assess the basic skills, knowledge and attitude of graduating students; and
- To systematically identify the core courses that will be included in the exit exam.

## 2. Expected profile of graduates

The graduates of Sociology B.A. program from Ethiopian Universities are supposed to acquire wide-ranging conceptual, pragmatic, methodological and civic competencies that shall prepare them to undertake the following tasks:

- Evaluate, critically appraise and discuss various sociological theories and perspectives that inform our interpretation of social processes and institutions;
- Develop and undertake sociological research projects, while being capable of documenting, writing up and critically assessing empirical findings;

- Embark on multidisciplinary and thematic research projects that will broaden our understanding of social processes from various vantage points and perspectives;
- Promote well informed civil discourse within local communities, Ethiopia, and beyond;
- Apply sociological perspectives to solve community and organizational problems;
- Enhance the development of Ethiopia in sustainable manner through participation in poverty reduction programs;
- Serve as change agents by ensuring active participation and effective team work amongst community members and by applying sociological knowledge and practice.
- Positively influence national policy making and implementation exercises at different levels of government administration encompassing the local, regional and federal levels;
- Work to improve the rural and urban livelihoods through devising effective policies and strategies, and conducting problem solving research;
- Participate in the development of socio-economic, cultural, environmental, and governance policies in the multilingual and multicultural society of Ethiopia;
- Advocate on behalf of disadvantaged groups, including, minorities, the poor, the handicapped, the dislocated, famine victims, women, children, etc., who require a culture sensitive and compassionate understanding to their causes; and
- Function effectively in positions like socio-economic planning, rural and urban development, technology transfer, health and social service delivery, relief provision, labor relations, culture office, teaching, rehabilitation services, and crime prevention and control, etc., where sociological perspectives and methods are in high demand.

### **3. Competencies and learning outcomes**

#### **3.1. Competencies**

Up on graduation, Sociology professionals will demonstrate the following competences:

##### **A. Knowledge**

- Have a good understanding of the workings of human society and utilize the analytical power of sociological theories to understand the Ethiopian condition;

- Have good understandings of the Ethiopian ethno-linguistic and religious groups, its linkage to the greater global Societal network, and how the intra- and inter-societal interactions have shaped the present day Socio-cultural identities of Ethiopian people;
- Analyze and criticize contemporary societal issues at national, regional and international levels using the insights and theories of Sociology; and contribute for policy debates and formulation; and
- Serve as change agents by ensuring active participation and effective teamwork amongst community members and by applying sociological knowledge and practice.

## **B. Skills**

- Be able to carry out sociologically sound research projects independently as well as in teams; and utilize basic computer software in such researches;
- Be able to formulate, evaluate, and influence policy making and implementation exercises at different levels of government administration encompassing the local, regional and federal levels;
- Be able to advocate on behalf of vulnerable groups, including, minorities, the poor, the handicapped, the dislocated, famine victims, women, children, etc., who require a culture sensitive and compassionate understanding to their causes;
- Be proficient in interpersonal dialogues, and proficiently communicate sociological ideas in writing and oral delivery;
- Be proficient in project designing, implementation and evaluation; and
- Be able to understand and foresee the impact of social dynamics on people and engage in prevention of social pathologies; and diagnose them at individual, group, and community levels.

## **C. Attitude**

- Display empathy and deeper understanding of, and respect for, the values, ethos and objective conditions of various communities and ethnic groups, and maintain professionalism.

### 3.2. Learning outcomes

By the time of graduation, sociology professionals should be able to:

- apply sociological concepts and theories to understand various social phenomena;
- understand the workings of human society and utilize the various sociological theories to understand the Ethiopian condition;
- analyze and critically evaluate contemporary societal issues at national, regional and international levels using the insights and theories of Sociology; and contribute for policy debates and formulation;
- understand the Ethiopian ethno-linguistic and religious groups, its linkage to the greater global societal network, and how the intra- and inter-societal interactions have shaped the present day socio-cultural identities of Ethiopian people;
- show the ability to generate, interpret, and evaluate sociologically relevant data to draw evidence-based conclusions and policy recommendations;
- serve as change agents by ensuring active participation and effective teamwork amongst community members and by applying sociological knowledge and practice;
- integrate sociological theory and research to assess various social phenomena and social policies;
- carry out sociologically sound research projects independently as well as in teams; and utilize basic computer software in such researches;
- formulate, evaluate, and influence policy making and implementation exercises at different levels of government administration encompassing the local, regional and federal levels;
- advocate on behalf of vulnerable groups, including minorities, the poor, the handicapped, the dislocated, famine victims, women, children, etc., who require a culture sensitive and compassionate understanding to their causes;
- proficiently interact in interpersonal dialogues, and properly communicate sociological ideas in writing and oral delivery;
- skillfully design, implement and evaluate projects;
- understand and foresee the impact of social dynamics on people and engage in prevention of social pathologies; and diagnose them at individual, group, and community levels;
- Display empathy and deeper understanding of, and respect for, the values, ethos and objective conditions of various communities and ethnic groups, and maintain professionalism.

#### 4. Courses to be included in the Exit Exam

Courses for the exit exam were selected based on the graduate profile and competencies outlined in the harmonized curriculum (May 2021) for Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology. Based on the direction from the MoE, a total of 15 courses, which are thought to best fit the competences that sociology graduates are expected to demonstrate up on graduation, were selected. The selected courses and the competencies that align with the courses are outlined in the following table.

##### Course to be Included in the Exit Exam

N o .	Thematic areas	Selected courses	Credit hour	ECTS
1.	<b>Theme One: Social Institutions</b>	Social Institutions I: Sociology of Family, Education and Religion	4	7
		Social institutions II: Political Sociology and Sociology of Law	3	5
		Sociology of Work, Industry and Organization	4	7
2.	<b>Theme Two: Sociological theory</b>	Sociological Theories I: Classical Perspectives	4	7
		Sociological Theories II: Contemporary Perspectives	4	7
3.	<b>Theme Three: Social Research Methods</b>	Social Research Methods I: Qualitative Research Methods	3	5
		Social Research Methods II: Quantitative Research Methods	3	5
4.	<b>Theme Four: Social policy, Planning and Project Administration</b>	Social Policy and Planning	3	5
		Project Design and Management	3	5
5.	<b>Theme Five: Social Problems, Issues, and Intervention Methods</b>	Social Problems and Methods of Intervention I	3	5
		Social Identities: Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism	4	7
		Criminology and Correctional Administration	4	7
6.	<b>Theme Six: Social Change and Development</b>	Sociology of Modernization and Development	4	7
		Rural Sociology and Rural Development	4	7
		Urban Sociology	3	5
Total				



## 5. Conclusion

As one of the means of educational quality assurance, the exit exam becomes a mandatory exam which will be taken by graduating students on campus during their terminal semester of the program. Accordingly, the aforementioned 15 courses are selected for the same and thematized into six themes. Though the exit exam is considered as one of the tools for educational quality assurance, there could be several challenges in the course of implementing it. Among other things, it is challenging to select courses among the existing several courses as almost all courses are relevant for sociology graduates, identify the domains which are going to be tested, and decide the nature of the exam. As the content of the exam is expected to be objective, it could be difficult to evaluate students' technical skills. Besides, since the exam is going to be implemented in the program for the first time, students may not be psychologically ready.

## Appendix

List of evaluator/ validators

No	Name	Role	University
1	Alelegn Abera	Validator	Arbaminch
2	Birhanu Gudissa	Validator	Salale
3	Muluken Tamirat	Validator	Wolaita Sodo
4	Tesfaye Muluye	Validator	Injibara