

**Ministry of Education**

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

**Program: - BA in Sociology**

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1. **Introduction**

It is a clear fact 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 this 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 rapid urbanization, population growth, and modernization, 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.

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 endeavors. By doing so, the program has greater importance in producing qualified professionals who are able to solve 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 been 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 *etal.*, 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, *etal.* (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 prepare a guideline for exit exam preparation and organized a consultative workshop at Bishoftu on July 18, 2022. The main objective of the workshop was to give direction and orientation on the preparation, procedures and administration of the national exit exam.

Accordingly, the team from the above two universities identified the courses and organized them based on the three learning domains used to test competency: knowledge, attitude, and skill. Therefore, this draft guideline is prepared to identify courses for the planned exit exam.

1. **Expected profiles 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 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 identification of income diversification strategies for the poor and vulnerable sections of society;
* 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**

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

* Have a good understanding of the workings of human society and utilizing the analytical power of sociological theories to understand the Ethiopian condition; Be able to analyze the conditions of Ethiopian society, its constituent sub- societies and its interaction with global society using the various sociological theories;
* Have good understandings of the Ethiopian ethno-linguistic and religious groups, displaying empathy and deeper understanding of, and respect for, the values, ethos and objective conditions of its various communities and ethnic groups; its linkage to the greater global Societal network; how the intra- and inter-Societal interactions have shaped the present day Socio-cultural identities of Ethiopian people;
* Be well- versed in international, national and regional level policies relevant to the field of sociology and professional practices;
* Be proficient in designing project proposals and conducting project evaluation works;
* Be able to carry out sociologically sound research projects independently as well as in teams, thereby demonstrating proficiency in the applications of theories both in qualitative and quantitative research; and utilize basic computer software sin such researches;
* 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;
* Be proficient in displaying appropriate professional and ethical standards that fit with Sociological science; easily and smoothly getting into the lives of the people, be ready always to teach and influence others;
* 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;
* Be proficient in interpersonal dialogues, and proficiently communicate sociological ideas in writing and oral delivery;
* Serve as agents of change in mobilizing and participation of members of society for societal improvement and change.

**4. Course identification**

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. In another way, these courses are believed to measure the three competency areas (knowledge, attitude and skill) of the graduates. 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.

**Expected Competencies and Course to be Included in the Exit Exam**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | **Thematic areas** | **Selected courses** | **Competencies** |
| **Knowledge** | **Skills** | **Attitude** |
|  | **Sociological theory** | Sociological Theories I: Classical Perspectives | Have a good understanding of the workings of human society and utilize the analytical power of sociological theories to understand the Ethiopian condition | Able to practice cultural relativism in a heterogenous society like Ethiopia  | Appreciate and promote diversity  |
| Sociological Theories II: Contemporary perspectives |
|  | **Social Research Methods** | Social Research Methods I: Qualitative Research Methods | Have a better understanding about the basics of sociological research | Be able to carry out sociologically sound research projects independently as well as in teams; and utilize basic computer software in such researches | Develop an attitude of evidence based solution to various social problems |
| Social Research Methods II: Quantitative Research Methods |
|  |
|  | **Social policy, Planning and Project Administration** | Social Policy and Planning | Know how to formulate social policy and administer projects | Influence policy making and implementation exercises at different levels of government administration and administer projects;Be proficient in project designing, implementation and evaluation | Develop emphatic attitude toward people in need of public services |
| Project Design and Management |
|  | **Social Problems and Intervention Methods** | Social Problems and Methods of Intervention I | Understand and foresee the impact of social problems (including conflict) on people and engage in their prevention; and diagnose them at individual, group and community levels | Able to solve social problems using various sociological intervention mechanisms  | Develop a mindset that believes that every social problem can be solved amicably  |
| Social Problems and Methods of Interventions II: Application of Sociological knowledge |
|  | **Sociology of Ethiopian Societies**  | Sociology of Ethiopian Societies | 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 | Able to accommodate diversity in their day to day life  | Display empathy and deeper understanding of, and respect for, the values, ethos and objective conditions of various communities and ethnic groups |
|  | **Contemporary Social Issues** | Globalization, Social Movements, & Civil Society | Analyze and criticize contemporary societal issues at national, regional and international levels using the insights and theories of Sociology | Contribute for policy debates and formulation by suggesting policy recommendations to deal with various contemporary social issues  | Have unbiased attitude when dealing with these contemporary issues |
| Social Identities: Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism |
| Sociology of Gender  |
| Environmental Sociology |
|  | **Social Change and development**  | Sociology of Social Change | Able to understand social change, and factors that facilitate and hinder it.  | Serve as change agents by applying sociological knowledge and practice, and ensuring active participation and effective teamwork amongst community members | Develop a favorable outlook towards positive social change |
| Sociology of Modernization and Development |

**5. Conclusion**

 As one of a means of educational quality assurance, giving exit exam becomes mandatory. Accordingly, the aforementioned courses are thematized and selected for the same. Though it is considered as a tool for educational quality assurance, there are and could be several challenges in the course of implementing it. Among other things, it is difficult to select courses, 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, evaluating students’ technical skills may become difficult. Besides, since the exam is going to be implemented in the program for the first time, students may not be ready psychologically.