ASA Task Force Recommendations on the Undergraduate Major

Recommendation 1: Departments should develop a mission statement, goals, and learning objectives for their sociology program and make them public, especially to students.

Recommendation 2: Departments should gage the needs and interests of their students, and department goals and practices should, in part, reflect and respond to these needs and interests as well as to the mission of the institution.

Recommendation 3: Departments should require introductory sociology and a capstone course in sociology as well as coursework in sociological theory, research methods, and statistics for the sociology major.

Recommendation 4: Departments should infuse the empirical base of sociology throughout the curriculum, giving students exposure to research opportunities across several methodological traditions, providing repeated experiences in posing sociological questions, developing theoretical explanations, and bringing data to bear on them.

Recommendation 5: Departments should structure the curriculum of required major courses and substantive elective courses to have at least four levels with appropriate prerequisites. At each succeeding level, courses should increase in both depth and integration in the major while providing multiple opportunities for students to develop higher order thinking skills and to improve their written and oral communication skills.

Recommendation 6: Within this four-level model, departments should also structure the curriculum to include one (or more) content area or substantive sequences which cut across two or more levels of the curriculum. Departments should design sequences to develop students’ skills in empirical and theoretical analysis along with their knowledge about one or more specialty areas within sociology.

Recommendation 7: Departments should structure the curriculum to develop students’ sociological literacy by ensuring that they take substantive courses at the heart of the discipline as well as across the breadth of the field.

Recommendation 8: Departments should structure the curriculum to underscore the centrality of race, class, and gender in society and in sociological analysis.

Recommendation 9: Departments should structure the curriculum to increase students’ exposure to multicultural, cross-cultural, and cross-national content relevant to sociology.

Recommendation 10: Departments should structure the curriculum to recognize explicitly the intellectual connections between sociology and other fields by designing activities to help students integrate their educational experiences across the disciplines.
Recommendation 11: Departments should encourage diverse pedagogies, including active learning experiences, to increase student engagement in the discipline.

Recommendation 12: Departments should offer community and classroom-based learning experiences that develop students’ critical thinking skills and prepare them for lives of civic engagement.

Recommendation 13: Departments should offer and encourage student involvement in out-of-class (co- and extra-curricular) learning opportunities.

Recommendation 14: Departments should develop effective advising and mentoring programs for majors.

Recommendation 15: Departments should promote faculty development and an institutional culture that rewards scholarly teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Recommendation 16: Departments should assess the sociology program on a regular basis using multiple sources of data, including data on student learning.