

DESPERATELY SEEKING MENTORS: THE IMPACT OF
DEPARTMENT-LEVEL AND GENDER-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS
ON MENTORING IN GRADUATE DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

There has been much research on gender inequality in higher education and the benefits of mentoring. However, since mentoring has been a predominantly male experience, most research with female students focuses on advising relationships. However, for women, there is a significant difference between experiences of advising and mentoring – with problematic effects for women. Attrition rates are high for men and women; however, the causes of female attrition are unique and possibly related to their mentoring experiences. It is important to explore how department members shape department culture, which in turn, shapes the activities members engage in. This study explores how department-level and gender-related characteristics are related to informal and formal mentoring in graduate departments of sociology. Bivariate correlations indicated that these characteristics, gender-related characteristics in particular, had significant relationships with mentoring. This study concludes with a discussion of these relationships, an overview of policy implications, and suggestions for future research