

**ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work**  
**Policy Manual**

**AY 2009-2010**

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Note. In addition to the School of Social Work policies outlined in this manual, all students should be aware of the ASU Graduate College policies, found at:  
[http://graduate.asu.edu/academic\\_policies.html](http://graduate.asu.edu/academic_policies.html)

## **PREPARING FUTURE SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARS**

"...doctoral education occupies a particularly critical place in the overall structure of social work education because it is the training ground for almost all those who become faculty members and who build and disseminate the profession's knowledge base" [Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work, 1992].

### **Purpose**

The purpose of our doctoral program is to "prepare future social work scholars." While there are many possible definitions of scholarship, the Arizona State University School of Social Work adheres to a broad definition.

A scholar in social work engages in research, teaching, and service. Our program introduces students to the complex range of roles and responsibilities of faculty and other social work roles of leadership. Critical thinking and creativity in research, teaching, and service are at the core of our program.

Given the cultural and economic diversity of the Southwest, our program also strives to elaborate the human potential embedded in our region's distinct experiences and perspectives. The University offers opportunities for scholarship integrating diverse cultural experiences such as those offered through specialized programs, including American Indian Studies and Chicano and Chicana Studies, African and African American Studies and Asian Pacific American Studies. We hope that our graduates will play key roles in integrating diversity in their social welfare activities with local, state, and regional groups.

### **Academic Load**

Students must demonstrate scholarly competencies that are tailored to individual interests. These competencies include micro/macro theories and perspectives on critical issues in social work and social welfare, research methodologies (qualitative & quantitative), and professoriate/leadership training in research, teaching and service.

Our doctoral degree requires that a student take a minimum of 36 course credit hours beyond the MSW degree. Students may need to take additional course work to achieve the competency requirements set by the program or set by their graduate supervisory committees. Students must also take a minimum of 24 credit hours of dissertation related research (12hours of SWG 792 and 12 hours of SWG 799).

## Course Work

The 36 minimum hours of doctoral course work includes:

- 1) 12 hours of **required 700-level social work courses** approved by the Doctoral Program Committee,
- 2) 12 hours of **research methods and statistics** selected from an approved list provided by the Doctoral Program Committee, and
- 3) 3 hours of **theory course in a social science discipline** approved by the Doctoral Program Committee, and
- 4) 9 hours of **directed electives** in an identified and chair-approved substantive area of which no more than three of these hours may be used in readings and conference or independent study courses.

## Dissertation and Research Hours

Once the 36 minimum course credit hours are completed, students are also required to register for 24 hours of dissertation research credit (SWG 792 before proposal defense and SWG 799 after). Students must be registered for at least one credit hour during the semester (including summer) when they defend their dissertation prospectus. At least one of the dissertation hours must be taken in the semester the student expects to defend his or her dissertation.

## REQUIRED UPPER LEVEL COURSES

### Research and Statistics Courses

Research productivity requires competence in statistics, methodology, and professional writing. Our doctoral students are expected to demonstrate intellectual and analytical achievement in each of these areas. When this set of required research courses is completed, the minimum competencies include:

- conceptual understanding and application of advanced statistical procedures and analysis,
- conceptual understanding and application of quantitative and qualitative designs, and
- critical analysis of research biases in terms of cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, social class, age, sexual orientation, disability and other facets of human diversity.

The twelve required hours are typically the minimum hours necessary for such achievement. If more courses are necessary to attain these competencies, their credit hours cannot be used to satisfy the minimum requirements in other areas. However, a student may petition to take additional courses in this area if he or she can provide other than a "basic competency" rationale and his or her advisor/chair approves.

The courses listed below have been previously approved by members of the Doctoral Program Committee. Others may be petitioned for and added after review by the Doctoral Program Committee.

Statistics:

EDP 502/COE 502 Intro to Data Analysis  
EDP 552 Multiple Regression and Correlation Methods  
EDP 554 Analysis-of-Variance Methods  
EDP 652 Multivariate Procedures for Data Analysis  
EDP 654 Structural Equation Modeling in Educational Research  
PSY 530 Intermediate Statistics  
PSY 531 Multiple Regression in Psychological Research  
PSY 532 Analysis of Multivariate Data  
\*\*REC 598 Statistics and Data Analysis  
SOC 505 Applied Regression Analysis  
SOC 507 Social Statistics IIIA: Categorical Data Analysis  
SOC 508 Social Statistics IIIB: Structural Equation Analysis  
SOC 509 Social Statistics IIIC: Event History Analysis  
STP 530 Applied Regression Analysis  
STP 532 Applied Nonparametric Statistics  
STP 533 Applied Multivariate Analysis  
JUS 509 Statistical Problems in Justice Research  
JUS 630 Data Analysis for Justice Research  
JUS 650 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis  
COM 608 Multivariate Statistical Analysis of Data in Communication

Research Methods:

CPY 702 Research Methods in Counseling Psychology  
JUS 620 Justice Research and Methods  
PSY 555 Experimental/Quasi Designs for Research  
SOC 501 Practicum in Survey Research  
SOC 502 Practicum in Survey Research  
SOC 588 Methodological Issues in Sociology  
EDP 503/ COE 503 Introduction to Qualitative Research  
EDP 651 Methods and Practices of Qualitative Research  
\*\*JUS 500 Justice Research Methods  
JUS 521, Qualitative Data Analysis and Evaluation  
COM 501 Research Methods in Communication  
COM 609 Advanced Qualitative Research Methods in Communication  
\* COM 508 Quantitative Research Methods in Communications  
COM 509 Qualitative Research Methods in Communications  
PAF 501 Public Service Research I  
FAS 579 Applied Research in Marriage and Family Therapy  
POS 601 Advanced Experimental Research  
POS 602 Advanced Survey Research  
POS 606 Qualitative and Textual Analysis  
PAF 601 Seminar: Policy Analysis and Evaluation  
REC 500 Research Methods

\* Sometimes taught as Statistics. Check with Instructor.

\*\* Not always offered on regular basis

## Required Social Science Theory Course

With the purpose of adding conceptual depth to the analysis of substantive areas that students want to select as their area of specialization, Ph.D. students are required to take a social science graduate theory course outside the School of Social Work. Students, in consultation with their advisor or chair will decide which of the courses listed below might contribute more directly to the analytic framework that the student is interested in pursuing. Others may be petitioned for and added after review by the Doctoral Program Committee.

- JUS 610 Law and the Social Sciences
- JUS 640 Theoretical Perspectives on Justice
- POS 545 Themes in Political Thought
- CDE 531 Theoretical Issues in Child Development
- FAS 531 Family Theory Development
- SOC 585 Development of Sociology
- SOC 586 Contemporary Sociological Theory
- SOC 591 Social Psychology
- PAF 521 Organization Theory
- \* ASB 540 Method and Theory of Sociocultural Anthropology and Archaeology
- \* ASB 541 Method and Theory of Social and Cultural Anthropology
- EDP 530 Theoretical Issues and Research in Human Development
- EDP 540 Theoretical Views of Learning
- PSY 550 Advanced Social Psychology
- PSY 551 Advanced Social Psychology
- PSY 569 Advanced Study of Personality
- PSY 582 Community Psychology
- \*\* ECN 509 Macroeconomic Theory and Applications
- \*\* ECN 510 Microeconomic Theory and Applications
- COM 504 Theories and Models in Communication

- \* Need Permission of Instructor
- \*\* Need Override of Pre-requirements from Chair

## Directed Electives

The student, with the guidance of his or her advisor, must choose nine graduate hours in **one academic discipline** [e.g., psychology, sociology, economics, history, religion] **OR in one substantive area** [e.g., social work, family studies, justice studies, educational policy, public administration, health services administration] that complements the student's broader professional focus on selected CSWE content area(s): values and ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, populations-at-risk, human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field practicum.

<b>PROPOSED PH.D. COURSES 2009-2010</b>	
<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>
<b>Year 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social Work Knowledge Building</b></li> <li>• <b>Research Methods</b></li> <li>• <b>Statistics or Qualitative Research</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social Work Pedagogy/Welfare State*</b></li> <li>• <b>Theory</b></li> <li>• <b>Statistics or Qualitative Research</b></li> </ul>
<b>Year 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Welfare State and Social Work</b></li> <li>• <b>Directed Elective</b></li> <li>• <b>Directed Elective</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Proposal Development Seminar</b></li> <li>• <b>Social Work Pedagogy/Welfare State*</b></li> <li>• <b>Directed Elective</b></li> </ul>

**NOTE:** All Readings and Conference must be approved by the Ph.D. Coordinator.

\*Social Work Pedagogy is taught in the Spring semester of odd number years and Welfare State in the Spring semester of evenly numbered years

## **ADMISSIONS**

Admission to the Ph.D. program in the School of Social Work is based on the following criteria:

- An M.S.W. from an accredited school of social work preferably with two or more years of post-MSW employment in human services. Though an MSW is preferred, exceptions may be made for students with a B.S.W. from an accredited school of social work and a master's degree in a related field and for students from countries without accreditation.
- Undergraduate and graduate grade point averages
- Scores of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), with emphasis on verbal and analytic scores
- Quality and extensiveness of social work experience
- Experience with diverse populations
- Research potential and creativity as demonstrated in requested essays and references
- Goodness-of-fit with program goals
- Good professional standing
- Three letters of recommendations
- Availability of School of Social Work resources
- Experience in social work teaching or research and other scholarly activities (not required)

For international students, additional criteria include TOEFL (score above 550- paper and 213-computer) and SPEAK (score of 55), the appropriate visas, and prior to coming, a potentially sufficient and multi-year financial package.

Applications should arrive at the School by February 1<sup>st</sup>. The School will consider applications for admission to the Ph.D. Program in February and upon space availability thereafter until April 1<sup>st</sup>. To be considered at an admissions meeting, a candidate's file must be completed no later than the first day of the month in which the meeting is to be held.

Admission is limited by available faculty resources, School and University resources, and the number of students already admitted. Prior admissions and faculty load are two of several conditions that influence admission decisions.

## **Application Process**

All applicants must apply to the School of Social Work and to the Graduate College. Apply electronically to the Graduate College at: <http://www.asu.edu/graduate> The required Graduate College application fee must also be submitted. The School of Social Work application materials are available on the School of Social Work's web page: <http://ssw.asu.edu>

## **Action on Application**

To apply to the Ph.D. Program the submission of the following materials is required:

- Official undergraduate and graduate complete transcripts
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) results
- Required essay
- Three letters of recommendation
- TOEFL or Speak exam results for international students whose native language is not English

Admission decisions will be based on:

- 1). The academic, research and creative potential that can be inferred from the above materials;
- 2). The quality and extensiveness of social work experience (e.g., work with diverse populations, practice - scholarly involvement);
- 3). The goodness of fit between the applicant's and the school's goals;
- 4). For non-English native speakers the ability to participate in the program as indicated by a score no lower than 550-paper/213-computer in the TOEFL or 55 in the Speak exam.

The Doctoral Program Committee may call or interview an applicant to clarify the purposes for which doctoral study is sought and about other information in the application. Faculty, School and University available resources, at a given time, might also affect admissions.

Acceptance to the Ph.D. Program occurs when the Doctoral Program Committee and the University's Graduate College decide that the applicant records meet the required standards of the program, and the plans and professional goals of the candidate are viewed as compatible with the capabilities and interests of the School of Social Work faculty.

Acceptance may be on a regular or provisional basis. In the latter case, the Committee defines the terms within which provisional admission is granted. The student is notified of her/his acceptance, the name of her/his advisor, and the term in which he/she will be accepted.

## **Financial Aid**

Application for financial assistance is made to the Program Coordinator of the Doctoral Program in consultation with the Doctoral Program Committee, who then submits the materials to the Office of the Director, School of Social Work. Every effort is made to provide some support for all full-time doctoral students through some combination of tuition waivers and teaching/research assistantships for the first two-year periods contingent on the availability of resources.

**Eligibility for Financial Assistance.** Students who receive assistantships must be full-time students, take only advisor-approved courses and meet all the criteria published by the Graduate College and the School of Social Work. For new students, the Doctoral Program Committee will evaluate each student's admissions package comparatively. For continuing students, current academic achievement will also be evaluated comparatively by the Doctoral Program Committee. Recommendations are sent to the Director.

Awards may be used for both recruiting and retention of doctoral students; thus both new and continuing students may apply for them. More recently admitted students will be given priority. All awards are contingent on the availability of resources.

To prepare for the professoriate, all students are encouraged to participate in one or two Teaching Assistantship positions -- as approved by the Doctoral Program Coordinator.

**Awards of Graduate Assistantships.** For new students, the priority criteria are academic and practice merit, research and teaching interests as presented in the admissions application, and skills as well as School needs in those areas; and for continuing students the PhD Program Coordinator will evaluate the student's performance in the program and the program's needs and forward their recommendations to the Director.

**Research Assistantships.** These assistantships are funded by the Principal Investigators of grants. Thus, Principal Investigators offer these positions contingent on grant funds and other grant limitations.

# **ADVISING AND INITIAL ACADEMIC BENCHMARKS**

## **Definition of Students Goals & Interests**

Given the required courses and program structure, the student is to assume initiative in planning an individualized doctoral program to achieve his or her goals and interests.

## **First Year Advising**

During the first year of the program (full residency) the Ph.D. Program Coordinator will be the advisor of all incoming students. The Coordinator will report to the Ph.D. Program Committee on the progress of the students and difficulties they may encounter. The Ph.D. Coordinator will be responsible for:

- advisement of all incoming students up to the time they pass the qualifying exam;
- meet with all enrolled students once a semester;
- meet with chairs of supervisory committees once a semester;
- update the policy manual every year;
- report regularly to the Ph.D. Committee on these tasks.

The role of the advisor is:

- a) educational planning for the Program of Study in light of student goals and interests as well as all other required paperwork by the program and the Graduate College, and
- b) referral to other faculty members who seem best qualified in the theoretical and substantive fields in which the student has interests.

The role of the student is to accept final responsibility for developing relationships with SSW and ASU faculty who share their theoretical and applied research interests, and for formalizing such mentoring relationships into his or her graduate supervisory committee. The student has final responsibility for locating such faculty and then completing his or her dissertation under their supervision.

## **Registration**

Prior to registration, the student must meet with the Ph.D. Program Coordinator to assure that degree requirements are being met. After securing necessary signatures on the course registration form, the student may register for courses through usual University channels (see Academic Services Office, UCENT 800).

All students must register and complete at least one SSW "required doctoral course" each consecutive semester until such courses are completed. The only exception is for part-time students who have completed their residency year and who may then delay registration in the required courses if approved by their advisors or chairs.

## **Full-time Student**

The normal academic load is 9-12 credit hours per semester. A full-time student is one who takes a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester.

## **Residency**

Within the first year of matriculation, all students must complete the School of Social Work residency requirement [a minimum of 9 credit hours in each semester of consecutive Fall/Spring or Spring/Fall semesters excluding summers]. Waivers may be requested from the Program Coordinator of the Doctoral Program (waiver forms are available in the Office of Academic Services, UCENT 800). Decisions on waivers will be made by the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program in consultation with the Ph.D. Program Committee.

## **Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence**

A student may petition the ASU Graduate College for a leave of absence for a maximum of two semesters during their entire program. A petition for a leave of absence, endorsed by the members of the student's supervisory committee and the head of the academic unit, must be approved by the Graduate College dean. This request must be filed and approved before the anticipated absence.

An approved leave of absence will enable students to re-enter their program without re-applying to the university. Students who do not enroll for a fall or spring semester without an approved leave of absence by the Graduate College are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Student removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program. A student on leave is not required to pay fees, but in turn is not permitted to place any demands on university faculty or use any university resources.

## **The Qualifying Exam**

After the student has completed 18 doctoral-level credits, presumably at the end of the first year of study and of required residency, the student must take a qualifying exam. The exam will be constructed by the Doctoral Program Committee based on the courses taken by the student.

The qualifying exam is given prior to the beginning of the fall semester of the second year. It is a five-hour exam, closed book that covers content based on the required social work doctoral seminars, beginning/intermediate research methods and statistics. If a research article or any other document is used for analysis, the student shall receive a copy in advance.

The exam will be given at the beginning of the fall semester. If the student fails the exam, it may be taken only once more, prior to the beginning of the spring semester. If a student fails the qualifying exam twice, a recommendation will be made to the Graduate College to withdraw the student from the program.

The exam will be evaluated by the Doctoral Program Committee. Results will be available within two weeks of the exam. A student who has not taken or passed the qualifying exam must petition the Doctoral Program Committee to begin second year course work and indicate their intention to take the exam prior to the beginning of the spring semester.

## **Graduate Supervisory Committee**

After passing the qualifying exam, students are held responsible for forming their Graduate Supervisory Committee. This involves several steps:

- a) formally establishing a mentor/mentee relationship with a faculty member who agrees to work with the student on a research area of mutual interest and who agrees to chair his/her graduate supervisory committee,
- b) discussing with the chair about other faculty who may potentially serve as members on the supervisory committee for the comprehensive exam and dissertation,

If the student has difficulties in locating a chair by the end of the Fall term of the second year, he/she must write a letter to the Doctoral Program Coordinator specifying the problems encountered. The Doctoral Program Coordinator, with the Doctoral Program Committee, will develop a "commitment plan" for matching the student with a chair.

## **Program of Study**

A student must complete and file a Program of Study (iPOS) after completing 18 credits of required course work and prior to scheduling their comprehensive examination. Filing a Program of Study officially declares the Graduate Supervisory Committee to the Graduate College. The Program of Study is filed online through [My ASU](#). If for any reason a student must make changes to the Program of Study, a Course Change Form must be submitted for approval by the School of Social Work and the Graduate College. The Plan of Study should be completed with the consultation of the PhD Program Coordinator.

## **Comprehensive Exam**

**The student must take his or her comprehensive exam within twelve (12) months of course completion, and then complete a successful proposal defense within eighteen (18) months of course completion.** Extensions for additional time must be done through a petition to the Doctoral Program Committee. Only one extension may be approved. Further requests for extensions will result in probation or termination from the program due to unsatisfactory progress.

## Sample Schedules

The two tables below lay out two possible examples of schedules to meet the required benchmarks:

<b>Three Year Plan</b>			
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	9 credits	9 credits	6 credits
<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	Qualifying Exam	Comprehensive Exam	Proposal Development
	Establishment of Graduate Supervisory Committee		
	12 credits		
	Program of Study		
<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	Proposal Defense	Dissertation	Dissertation
	Apply to Graduate College for admission to Candidacy		

<b>Four Year Plan</b>			
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	9 credits	9 credits	Optional
<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>
	Qualifying Exam	Program of Study	
	Establishment of Graduate Supervisory Committee		
	9 credits	9 credits	

<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	
	Comprehensive Exam	Proposal Defense	
		Apply to Graduate College for admission to Candidacy	
<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Spring</b>	
	Dissertation	Dissertation Defense	

## **THE GRADUATE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE AND ACADEMIC BENCHMARKS**

The Graduate Supervisory Committee, serves the student, the School, and the University in setting standards and promoting the highest level of excellence possible for the student. This is done as the committee and the student together plan for: a) the program of study, b) teaching and service activities, and c) research.

Each member of the committee will actively and fully participate throughout the student's program, from initial planning of the program through the defense of the dissertation. In addition to these functions, the committee may serve as a reference group to which the student and/or chairperson may go in case of misunderstandings or differences of opinion. Unsolved differences should be referred to the Ph.D. Program Committee.

In consultation with the student, the Graduate Supervisory Committee plans his/her formal Program of Study, guiding the student in preparing a reading list for the Comprehensive Exams, evaluating the student's exam performance, supervising the preparation of a dissertation proposal and then approving/failing it, and supervising the potential completion of the dissertation and its evaluation, including modifications as needed.

The chair is responsible for approving the comprehensive exam reading lists from the whole committee, for coordinating the Comprehensive Exam, and generally for guiding the student through the necessary steps for progress in the doctoral program.

### **Composition and Size of Graduate Supervisory Committee**

Each student's graduate supervisory committee must have: a) an "odd number" (3 to 5) of total committee members who vote on committee decisions, b) a minimum of three faculty members, c) at least two, but no more than four, members must be SSW faculty members inclusive of the chair, and c) other ASU, but non-SSW faculty, may serve on the committee. It is recommended that when original data from community sources are collected for the dissertation, a community representative from that organization be included as an additional but non-voting committee member.

The chair must be a full-time faculty member who has been approved by the Dean of the Graduate College to chair a committee. The Ph.D. Program Committee must approve on a case-by-case basis faculty endorsed as eligible to chair from outside the School of Social Work. Criteria for approving chairs are available from the PhD Program Coordinator.

The chair may, until the dissertation proposal is approved, expand supervisory committee membership; thereafter, the chair, committee members, and the student may recommend expansion only with the approval of both the student and all committee members.

## **Appointments and Change of Appointments**

Final and formal appointments of the chair and members of the Graduate Supervisory Committee are made by the Dean of the Graduate College.

The student may choose a different chair or committee members at any time if:

- a) the student has discussed and received permission via a signature from his/her prior advisor,
- b) the new chair/committee member agrees to serve and sends a memorandum about his/her decision to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, and
- c) within three months, the student receives approval from the Graduate College for his/her revised Graduate Supervisory Committee Appointment.

Advisor replacement, due to other than student choice, is done by appointment from the Doctoral Program Committee and may be either a Doctoral Program Committee member or another faculty member such that the advisory load is equitable.

## **The Comprehensive Exam**

Students must be registered for at least one credit hour during the semester (including summer) when they take the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam must be taken within 12 months of completion of all course credits. It is designed to test the student's ability to think critically and creatively about major issues in social welfare and social work, to synthesize the state-of-the-art knowledge with regard to a specific population and/or social problem, to identify current practices relevant to this area, and to demonstrate the skills necessary to undertake independent research.

The student must prepare a reading list, in consultation with his/her supervisory committee, at least six weeks prior to the scheduling of the examination. The committee members will review the list and suggest changes. The committee and the student will agree on a final list. Citations on the list should provide the background to inform the study of the substantive, theoretical, practice/intervention, and method areas of the student's specific area of research. The list should address the general questions included on the comprehensive exam guide available in the Ph.D. Policy Manual.

After the reading list is agreed on, the student will schedule a date to begin the comprehensive

exam. The exam can be scheduled fall and spring, and during the summer term if all members of the supervisory committee are available. The student must complete the Ph.D. Notification of Comprehensive Examination form available in School of Social Work Academic Services to have the exam officially scheduled. The form must be submitted to the Doctoral Program Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the start of the exam. The student must also obtain and complete an “Application for Comprehensive Examinations” from the Graduate College.

The committee members will develop questions for the exam using the suggested outline of questions for the comprehensive exam (see below). The actual exam questions will be adapted to address the specific research area being examined by the student.

The student has two choices of how to take the exam. The student can take the exam at the School of Social Work over a three day period. The student will spend one day (8 hours) on each of three areas. The areas are 1) substantive/intervention or practice, 2) theory, and 3) methods. The three examination days must be scheduled within a six day period. The exam is closed book. At the end of each exam day the student brings the written answers to Academic Services to be photocopied and filed. Students who choose to hand write (rather than type) their examination must take the exams home and type them. The student can only make changes in grammar or spelling before turning in the typed answers, which are due three days after the six day exam period. The student is honor-bound to discuss the exam with no one during the entire exam period, to guarantee that his/her exam work solely reflects his/her work, and agree that any evidence of behavior otherwise or of plagiarism means automatic dismissal from the program.

The second option for the comprehensive exam is for students to take the exam at home using reference material. The student will receive the exam on the agreed upon comprehensive exam start date. The student will have 30 days from the start date to complete the exam and turn it in to the committee chair.

The exam is to be read and evaluated by members of the student’s supervisory committee. There are three possible outcomes for the exam.

A “pass” means the student passed all questions on the exam and may begin work on his/her dissertation proposal.

A “partial rewrite” means the student passed most of the questions on the exam. The student may be allowed to rewrite the parts of the exam that he or she did not pass within three months. If more time expires or if the student fails the rewrite, the student will have failed the exam.

A “fail” means the student must apply for a reexamination. The student must apply for a reexamination no sooner than three months and no later than one year from the date of the original exam (subject to approval by the School’s Director and the Dean of the Graduate College). Only one reexamination is allowed and the student must pass the exam to remain in the program.

Students will be given the results within approximately three weeks after completion of the exam.

## Comprehensive Exam Guide

### Substantive area

1. Provide an introduction and rationale by describing in general terms your substantive area of research.
2. Based on existing literature, provide an overview of the state of knowledge about the identified area of research.
3. Provide a summary of the existing knowledge. Identify possible gaps in the literature.
4. How can you make a contribution to furthering our understanding of the phenomenon? What might be your research question or questions guiding your study? If applicable state its corresponding hypotheses.

### Theory

1. Describe and critique relevant theories that might inform research on the identified area of research or phenomenon.
2. Which theory or combination of theories might you choose as a theoretical foundation to your research design and why?
3. How does your choice of theory/theories relate to your research question?

### Methods

1. What type of theory-based methodology would be most conducive to address the research question you proposed?
2. Given the methodology, what research design might you utilize in conducting the study?
3. Describe the key variables and/or constructs in your research design. How do these variables and/or constructs relate to each other?
4. Discuss sampling, data gathering, measurement issues, analysis, plans, and statistical models and procedures. Address issues of reliability, validity and generalizability.
5. What are the possible limitations of your proposed research design? How would you address or control for those limitations?
6. Discuss all human subjects' issues, voluntary participation of subjects, research with children and other vulnerable populations, and other pertinent ethical aspects related to your research.

### Interventions/Practice

1. Describe and critique interventions that have been designed to address the phenomenon you plan to study. Include information about 1) outcome evaluations (if any have been reported in the literature) and 2) populations that have been included in the interventions (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation (dis)ability status).
2. Discuss why your proposed research is significant to social work. What might be the social work implications of this study? How could this study inform policy, practice, social work education and future research in this area?

## **The Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Hearing**

The proposal must be defended successfully within 18 months after completion of all required course work. It should contain a well-developed rationale and plan for the research. A

substantial portion of the proposal should include the social work focus of the research, an analysis and presentation of a conceptual framework for the research, and a specific plan for completion of the research.

At minimum, the proposal should have:

- a) a general statement of purpose,
- b) a discussion of the significance of potential importance of the study for social work or social welfare,
- c) a statement of the problem including an analytical review of the literature and theory in the area,
- d) the hypotheses to be tested or research questions to be addressed,
- e) a clearly operationalized research plan with definition of the major concepts, statement of assumptions, specification of sources and nature of data, methods and techniques to be used, and a suggested plan for analysis and interpretation of the data, and
- f) the format of the dissertation.

#### Dissertation Format.

In Spring 2009, the PhD Committee approved an alternative dissertation format as an option to the traditional dissertation format. The traditional dissertation is organized into chapters that typically include an introduction, literature review, methods, findings, and conclusions. The newest option is referred to as the 3-paper option. If a student selects the 3-paper option, she or he will write the dissertation as a grouping of three manuscripts designed for publication in peer-reviewed journals. The 3 manuscripts are preceded by an introductory chapter and are followed by a conclusion chapter and a full reference list. Each manuscript is treated as a separate chapter of the dissertation. The manuscripts should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in the introduction to the dissertation. The introduction chapter should include:

- a. A definition or statement of the problem.
- b. The importance of the problem, i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field of social work.
- c. The theoretical foundation(s) supporting the problem/issue.
- d. An overview of the important literature (overview, because each article submitted for 3-paper option will have its own unique literature review).
- e. The research questions.
- f. The methodology to be used to answer the research questions.

One of the manuscripts may be conceptual in nature, and at least two manuscripts must be focused on the student's empirical research. Target journals must be identified in the prospectus and approved by the dissertation committee. The supervisory committee will help select journals

that will challenge the student and offer a reasonable chance of publication success. The students must be the first author on all three manuscripts, and the sole author on at least one manuscript. Authorship must be negotiated and agreed upon in writing as part of the completed dissertation proposal. Any subsequent changes in co-authorship must be approved by all members of the student's dissertation committee in writing. Manuscripts are submitted to journals following the style requirements of those particular journals. However, in the dissertation, the articles *must* follow the ASU Graduate College requirements. Manuscripts may not be submitted for publication prior to the dissertation defense.

The conclusion chapter will briefly summarize the dissertation's major findings, discussion, and recommendations. The student will also present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences) between the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation, striving as much as possible to present the document as representative of a coherent body of work. For the dissertation defense, students will present a final document that includes all the elements required by the ASU Graduate College for a completed dissertation

The 3-paper option, and the traditional dissertation format, must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the Ph.D. program and must be approved at the time of the student's defense of their proposal. Students seeking to pursue the 3-paper option should contact their dissertation chairs to discuss the feasibility of this option. The dissertation format requires the prior approval of the student's supervisory committee.

The perceived advantages to students who choose the 3-paper option include:

- guidance as the student prepares his or her first professional publications.
- the early establishment of a publishing record.
- a contribution to the professional literature.
- increased competitiveness for the academic market upon graduation.

It must be emphasized that the proposal and the dissertation must be focused on social work practice and on knowledge development through quantitative/qualitative research.

The proposal must be developed under the supervision of the student's chair and members of her or his graduate supervisory committee.

The complete proposal must be given to all members of the student's committee and the Doctoral Program Coordinator four weeks before the proposal hearing. The student must also prepare the Graduate College Dissertation Proposal Defense form.

At the proposal hearing, to be chaired by the committee chair, the committee decides by majority vote to accept the proposal as written, reject the proposal, or require major/minor changes in the proposal. Acceptance means the student should pursue candidacy. Rejection means the student must redo or substantially rework the proposal. Rewriting requires the committee decision of how to determine a satisfactory rewrite: by another formal meeting of the committee, individual member review and approval/rejection, or delegation of approval/rejection to the chair.

## **Candidacy**

After having satisfactorily fulfilled all doctoral course requirements, passed the comprehensive exams, successfully defended his/her dissertation proposal, the student is admitted to candidacy. Students who have been advanced to candidacy are still required to maintain continuous enrollment.

Students must enroll for 12 hours of dissertation credit (SWG 799) following the semester in which they are advanced to candidacy and before degree completion.

## **Maximum Time Limit**

Doctoral students must complete all program requirements within a ten-year period. The ten-year period starts with the initial enrollment into the doctoral program. In addition, the student must take the final oral examination in defense of the dissertation within five years after passing the comprehensive examinations.

## **Dissertation and Oral Dissertation Exam**

The dissertation is a critical point in the student's career. The student is expected to take the initiative in work with his/her dissertation committee. The chair is responsible for assuring the overall quality of the dissertation, assisting the student in the completion of appropriate university forms (e.g., Human Subjects), and assisting the student in preparing for, scheduling, announcing and conducting the oral dissertation defense.

The oral exam is not to be scheduled until the dissertation is completely done and formatted according to the Graduate College standards; the dissertation has been distributed to all committee members, the Doctoral Program Coordinator, and the Director's Office; and within 10 working days after the filing of all the necessary School and Graduate College forms.

The purpose of the dissertation oral defense is:

- A. To test the candidate's ability to:
  - 1). explain and justify the dissertation substantively and methodologically;
  - 2). relate the research to other literature in social work and to current events/journal publications.
- B. To evaluate the quality of thought, analytical/scientific writing, and organization of the dissertation.

The graduate supervisory committee, in closed session, will evaluate the candidate's performance and will decide, by majority vote, to: a) pass, b) pass with modifications, or c) fail. A vote for modifications requires the committee to decide the manner of subsequent approval. Appropriate handling of minor modifications requires the approval of the chair. Revaluations of major

modifications require the approval of the Committee.

Revisions to the dissertation are normal and must be completed in a timely manner. If the student is unable to complete revisions to the dissertation and meet the ASU Bookstore deadline for the semester in which the defense is held, the student must complete the revisions, remain registered, and present the finished document to the ASU Bookstore within one year of the defense. Failure to do so will require the re-submission of the document for format review and may result in re-defense of the dissertation to ensure currency of the work.

Once the candidate has passed, he/she is responsible for insuring that the final draft of the dissertation meets the University's requirements for formatting, the number of copies to be filed, and filing on time for Commencement. Guides for formatting are available from the Graduate College.

## **STUDENT PROGRESS, PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, & ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

### **Oversight**

The Doctoral Program Coordinator provides annual reviews of students to the Doctoral Committee regarding: formal appointment of Graduate Supervisory Committees; results of comprehensive exams, proposal defenses, candidacy; and results of dissertation defenses.

The Doctoral Program Committee reviews the content of Programs of Study approved each semester for compliance to minimum requirements. Only the approved Graduate Supervisory Committee may approve a student's Program of Study in preparation for the comprehensive exams.

The Doctoral Program Committee establishes timelines for progress through the program. The timelines are defined through this policy manual for doctoral students.

## **Unsatisfactory Progress**

The Doctoral Program Committee annually reviews the academic performance and sustained progress of each student [grades, timely progress, committees], which if inadequate, will lead to the recommendation to the student's graduate supervisory committee that the student be given one semester's probation time. If student performance and progress during the probation time is unsatisfactory the student will be terminated from the program. Committee recommendations and graduate supervisory committee decisions must be consistent with all Graduate College and Doctoral Program criteria.

If any advisor, chair, or graduate supervisory committee member believes a student is making unsatisfactory progress, it is recommended that the committee as a whole review the student's progress to determine whether additional mentoring would help the student succeed or whether the student should be withdrawn from the program. If committee members are replaced for any reason, the School and the Graduate College must formally approve such replacements.

## **Probationary Status**

A doctoral student is placed on probationary status under the following conditions:

- a) lack of progress in completing the requirements for the degree which includes not meeting the timelines established by the Program and lack of steady progress in completion of all course and other requirements [e.g., comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal, dissertation and its defense], or
- b) GPA of less than 3.00 at the end of any semester.

Probationary status requires that the student complete a plan established by his/her advisor or chair. This plan must contain specific provisions for bringing performance up to acceptable standards within the next semester. Copies must be given to the chair, Doctoral Program Coordinator, Ph.D. Program Committee, and placed in the student file prior to the beginning of the following semester. Probationary students may be denied registration in the absence of such a plan.

## **Termination**

A student shall be recommended for removal from the Doctoral Program under any one of the following circumstances:

- a) If the absence of a probationary plan continues beyond two weeks after the beginning of the intended probationary semester,
- b) Failure to carry out the probationary plan by the recommended timeline,
- c) Probationary status for more than one semester, contiguous or noncontiguous,
- d) GPA falls below 3.00 at the end of 18 credits of graded course work, or after the

next period of 27 credits of graded course work, and

- e) Lack of adherence to professional expectations and standards as outlined by NASW, the School of Social Work, and Arizona State University.

Termination appeals are to follow the procedures in the School of Social Work Student Handbook of Policies and Procedures and the rules and policies of the ASU's Graduate College.

### **Readmission of Disqualified Students**

Students, who do not appeal their termination or whose appeal was denied, may apply for readmission to the Doctoral Program in the School of Social Work provided that:

- a) Any provisions for readmission outlined in the original termination decision have been met, and
- b) At least one full semester but not more than two full semesters have elapsed since the date of disqualification and date of intended enrollment.

All applications for readmission are reviewed by the Doctoral Program Committee which then submits its recommendations to the Director of the School of Social Work. The Director forwards her/his recommendation and the Doctoral Committee's recommendations to the Dean of the Graduate College.