

University of Houston

Graduate College of Social Work

Doctoral Program Handbook

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Updated Summer 2026

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Letter from the Associate Dean

Welcome to the Ph.D. Program at the University of Houston (UH) in the Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW). It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to a community of scholars committed to advancing knowledge, promoting fair and just treatment for all, and transforming lives through research, education, and leadership. Whether you are beginning your doctoral journey or continuing toward candidacy and dissertation completion, I am honored that you have chosen to pursue your doctoral education with us.

Pursuing a Ph.D. is one of the most intellectually rigorous and personally transformative endeavors you can undertake. Doctoral education extends beyond mastering existing knowledge—it is about creating new knowledge. It requires curiosity, courage, discipline, and perseverance as you learn to ask important questions, challenge conventional thinking, employ rigorous scientific methods, and generate evidence that informs policy, practice, education, and systems change. As doctoral scholars, you are preparing to shape the future of social work and improve the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and societies.

As a leading research institution, we are committed to cultivating scholars whose work has meaningful impact both within and beyond academia. Throughout your doctoral training, you will engage in rigorous research, collaborate with distinguished faculty, develop expertise in research methodologies, disseminate your findings through presentations and peer-reviewed publications, pursue externally funded research opportunities, and contribute to interdisciplinary teams addressing society's most complex challenges. We encourage you to think boldly, embrace innovation, and pursue scholarship that advances fair and just treatment for all, improves health and mental health outcomes, informs public policy, and strengthens communities locally, nationally, and globally.

Doctoral education is also deeply collaborative. Some of the most significant scholarly growth occurs through mentoring relationships, research partnerships, intellectual dialogue, and shared inquiry. Our faculty are invested in your success as researchers, educators, and future leaders. We encourage you to engage actively with faculty across disciplines, participate in research centers and institutes, seek opportunities to collaborate on grant-funded projects, present your work at professional conferences, and become active members of the broader scholarly community. These experiences not only enrich your doctoral education but also prepare you for successful careers in academia, research, public service, and organizational leadership.

Equally important, we recognize that the doctoral journey is one of continual growth. There will be moments of discovery and accomplishment, alongside periods that test your resilience and persistence. Every scholar encounters challenges; what distinguishes successful doctoral students is their willingness to remain curious, seek guidance, embrace feedback, and continue moving forward. We encourage you to take intellectual risks, remain open to new perspectives, support one another, and cultivate a scholarly identity grounded in integrity, humility, and purpose.

Thus, this handbook serves as a guide throughout your doctoral experience. It outlines the policies, expectations, milestones, and resources that will help you successfully navigate each stage of the program—from coursework and comprehensive milestones to dissertation completion and graduation. While the handbook provides an important framework, your doctoral education is ultimately shaped by the relationships you build, the questions you pursue, and the contributions you make. We encourage you to seek guidance early and often from your faculty mentors, dissertation chair, the Ph.D. Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services, and me. We are committed to fostering an environment in which every doctoral student has the opportunity to thrive.

Our vision extends beyond awarding doctoral degrees. We aspire to prepare scholars whose research influences policy, whose teaching inspires future generations, whose leadership strengthens institutions, and whose scholarship contributes to a more fair and just world. We hope you leave this program not only with advanced methodological expertise and a strong publication record, but also with the confidence, vision, and leadership necessary to shape the future of the social work profession and the interdisciplinary communities in which you will serve.

Thank you for entrusting us with your doctoral education. We are excited to accompany you throughout this remarkable journey of scholarship, discovery, and professional growth. We look forward to celebrating your accomplishments, supporting your aspirations, and welcoming you into the next generation of scholars whose work will leave a lasting impact on our profession and our world.

Welcome to the Graduate College of Social Work. Your journey begins here, and we are honored to be part of it.

Warmest regards,

Associate Professor
Associate Dean for Doctoral Education
Humana Endowed Chair in Social Determinants of Health

Welcome

Welcome to the Doctoral Program at the University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW)!

The GCSW is committed to preparing the next generation of social work scholars for faculty appointments in schools of social work or for positions in research, administration, government, social service agencies, etc. As students progress through the doctoral program, they identify, develop, and pursue an area of research that prepares them to contribute to scholarship and advance the knowledge base of social work. Our curriculum is based on the College's mission and vision to prepare diverse leaders in research and practice to address complex challenges, local to global. We train our students to generate and use research evidence to strive to achieve fair and just treatment for everyone at all levels of practice and policy.

The GCSW provides the kind of personal attention that enables students to succeed in their doctoral education. We offer small classes, individualized studies with faculty members, training workshops, and research internships. We also have a doctoral publication that is managed by our doctoral students. Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States with a diverse, multicultural population. The Texas Medical Center, located in the heart of Houston, is one of the largest medical complexes in the world. As such, the greater Houston area offers doctoral students a vast array of opportunities for research partnerships and activities. By emphasizing scholarship and research, GCSW faculty help students engage in critical thinking and intellectual discovery. We welcome you to our doctoral program.

About the GCSW

The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) was established by the Texas State Legislature in 1967 with initial funding of \$150,000. The founding of the GCSW was the culmination of persistent efforts by professional and lay community leaders to develop a graduate professional school in the largest urban area of the Southwest. The "founding" faculty totaled seven individuals and twenty-six students enrolled in the first class. The program was initially housed in a World War II Quonset Hut.

From these modest beginnings, the graduate program evolved over time to its current standing as a nationally recognized graduate social work program. The MSW (Master of Social Work) program has continually maintained its Council on Social Work Education professional accreditation since 1970, and in 1992, the Ph.D. program was approved by the Texas State Coordinating Board.

Dr. Daniel O'Keefe was appointed Dean of the school in September 1967, and the first class of 26 students began the Program in the fall of 1968. Following the untimely death of Dean O'Keefe, Professor David Roberts served as Acting Dean for two years. In July 1973, Dr. Gary Lloyd was appointed Dean of the school and served until January of 1978. From January until July, Dr. Florence Clemenger served as Acting Dean, at which time Dr. Daniel B. Jennings joined the GCSW as Dean, a position that he held until August of 1985.

Dr. Karen S. Haynes was appointed Dean of the school in August of 1985. In 1995, Dean Haynes took a leave of absence to become the president of the University of Houston, Victoria Campus. Former Associate Dean Karen Holmes replaced Dr. Haynes as Acting Dean. Dr. Ira Colby assumed the deanship in 1999 and served in this role until 2015. Dr. Alan Dettlaff was appointed Dean in 2015. Following Dr. Dettlaff's transition back into his role as faculty in 2022, the College was led by two Interim Deans—Drs. Sara Larsen (2022-2024) and Cynthia A. Warrick (2024-2025). Following Drs. Larsen's and Warrick's leadership, Dr. Yarneccia D. Dyson was appointed Dean of the College in June 2025.

Today, the College is housed in its own four-story building on campus and includes thirty-one full-time faculty and many adjunct faculty.

The program currently has over 30 students in various stages of doctoral education. Students come from numerous states, and several international countries, and they reflect the broad racial and ethnic diversity of our greater community.

More than 100 individuals have received their doctoral degree from the University of Houston. The GCSW alumni continue to make significant differences in their clients' lives, help formulate just social policies, while advocating and promoting justice for all people, no matter their stage in life.

The GCSW Doctoral Program Requirements and Curriculum

Doctoral Program Space

Graduate College of Social Work Building

The University of Houston's GCSW has its own building dedicated to its social work students and faculty.

Student Lounge

Doctoral students must use their CougarOne Card to unlock the Social Work Student Lounge (Room 227). For reasons of security, privacy, and insurance liability, please keep the lounge door closed and locked at all times. The Student Lounge has a change machine, soda and candy/snack machine, and a refrigerator.

Doctoral Spaces

We are thrilled to have dedicated spaces on the third floor for the doctoral students! Many of our spaces were revamped and specially designed by Erica Solis, a GCSW MSW Alum!

- Reading Room – Room 321A
- Doctoral Student Lounge – Room 345A
- First Year Students Office – Room 322
- Doctoral Student Office with assigned desk space – Room 333
 - Please contact the Director of Student Advising and Support Services and the Associate Dean if you are interested in one of these spaces.

Doctoral Office Space

The Doctoral Program is housed on the 3rd floor of the GCSW, which includes the administrative and advising offices, a computer lab, a student lounge and student offices. Student mailboxes are located in the Student Lounge (Room 345A). Due to space limitations, office space is not guaranteed to every student; however, every effort is made to assign space to incoming full-time students during coursework and to doctoral students who are Research Assistants.

Doctoral Students Computer Room

The doctoral computer room is located on the third floor of the GCSW building in Room 333. This room is for doctoral students only. Within the room are terminals that will connect to the university's mainframe computer for email and internet services. IBM SPSS Statistics is also installed on the computer in Room 333. Key requests for the computer room are handled by the Doctoral Program Office.

Doctoral Program Requirements

Doctoral Program Goals

The goal of the GCSW Doctoral Program is to prepare social work researchers, scholars, and educators to advance the knowledge base of the profession. The Doctoral Program offers students an opportunity to:

1. Develop a multidisciplinary understanding of complex issues and problems.
2. Focus on innovative methodologies in knowledge building.
3. Conduct research that advances fair and just treatment for all.
4. Foster individual connections and collaborative mentorship.

Doctoral Applicant Attributes

The Doctoral Program seeks applicants with potential to:

1. Contribute new research knowledge that will advance the profession's ability to respond effectively to the social service needs of individuals, groups, families, and communities.
2. Critically analyze the existing theoretical knowledge and value bases of contemporary social work practice and research.
3. Understand the processes of theory construction and validation in the development of social work knowledge.
4. Acquire advanced research competence to: (a) evaluate social work practice and theories which undergird that practice; (b) critically evaluate interventions, outcomes, and effectiveness of services; (c) understand the policies that affect the delivery of social services; (d) evaluate new and evolving needs and problems of individuals families, groups, and communities in general, as well as special populations in need of social work services (e) and advance the College's mission of fair and just treatment for all through critical analysis of structures and policies.
5. Seek and synthesize relevant knowledge and approaches to theory-building in the behavioral and social sciences, the humanities, and other helping professions to enrich social work theory, knowledge, practice, education, and social work research.
6. Understand the historical roots, philosophical value positions, and parameters of social policy that affect contemporary social work and provide the context for social work practice.
7. Understand and critically evaluate contemporary trends and issues in social welfare policy development.
8. Produce and disseminate knowledge in professional publications, lectures, conference presentations, and other mediums to impact policy, practice, research, and education.

Degree Requirements

To be granted the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work, students must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Complete a course of study in the College and related departments at the University specified by the College, oriented towards multidisciplinary understanding of complex issues and problems and the variety of quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, and community engaged research.
2. Pass a written integrative examination indicating proficiency in doctoral coursework.
3. Successfully defend a dissertation proposal that provides a comprehensive overview of the proposed dissertation research study.
4. Complete a dissertation, including an oral defense, addressing some problem of significance that is relevant to social work, social welfare, social justice and anti-racism.

Time-to-Degree

The time it takes to obtain the doctoral degree will generally vary according to your previous preparation, your progress in the program, and the nature of your dissertation research. Students **must** complete the dissertation within 10 years of the date of first enrollment in the doctoral program (see enrollment time limit policy in the Program Policies and Procedures section of this handbook for more information).

Upon successful completion of the Doctoral Program, students are expected to be able to:

1. Conduct studies that contribute to fair and just treatment for all.
2. Apply analytical models and multidisciplinary theories in the study of social problems and human behavior.
3. Conduct research that has a meaningful impact on problems studied.
4. Demonstrate innovation in critical thinking and research.
5. Write competitive grant applications.
6. Disseminate research findings in journal articles, professional conference presentation, professional reports, and through public impact scholarship.

Required Coursework

Curriculum in Doctoral Studies

Our curriculum is oriented towards research that advances the College's mission and vision of achieving just and fair treatment for all in real world and social welfare settings. Students are trained to generate and use valid research evidence to inform the decisions social workers make at all levels of practice and policy. We aim to increase the capacity of our profession to build interdisciplinary partnerships in both research and practice.

Fifty-three (53) semester credit hours (SCH) are required for the doctoral degree: forty-four (44) hours in coursework and nine (9) hours in dissertation research.

Coursework includes 3 core research courses (introduction to research, quantitative research, and qualitative research), an advanced qualitative methods course (grounded theory), and a course on community engaged research using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research designs, 2 statistics courses with labs, theory, social welfare policy analysis, teaching in higher education, grant writing, substantive electives, and a research internship designed to allow for the application of research skills in a real world social work/social welfare setting.

Required Courses for the GCSW Ph.D.		
SOCW 8311	Research Methods I: Introduction to Research	3 SCH
SOCW 8322	Research Methods II: Quantitative Research	3 SCH
SOCW 8323	Research Methods III: Qualitative Research	3 SCH
SOCW 8344	Research Methods IV: Grounded Theory	3 SCH
SOCW 8345	Research Methods V: Community Engaged Research	3 SCH
SOCW 8424	Statistics and Data Analysis I	4 SCH
SOCW 8425	Statistics and Data Analysis II	4 SCH
SOCW 8333	Social Science Theories	3 SCH
SOCW 8334	Social Welfare Policy Analysis	3 SCH
SOCW 8335	Teaching in Higher Education	3 SCH
SOCW 8336	Required Research Internship I	3 SCH
SOCW 8327 38	Grant Writing	3 SCH
At least 2	Electives	6 SCH
		44 SCH TOTAL

Electives

Elective courses enable students to develop their specialized interests within the educational objectives of the Doctoral Program. Students will need to take 2 electives. Electives may be taken in the GCSW or, with the advisor's approval, in other graduate departments at the University of Houston. Students can also take electives at other institutions such as Rice University, UT School of Public Health, Baylor College of Medicine, UT School of Nursing, Texas Woman's University etc. Electives taken at the Graduate College of Social Work must be 8000 level courses. Students are allowed to take 6000 level courses with prior approval from the Doctoral Program Associate Dean and/or Director of Student Advising and Support Services. Please talk to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education to discuss this in detail and see the PhD Program Director for approved list of courses offered outside of the GCSW.

SOCW 8336 (3 Cr.): Required Research Internship

The aim of a Research Internship is to prepare students to be scholars in an academic or research environment. The grading for this course is a letter grade. Students must complete a Request for Course Enrollment Form for the Research Internship ([see Appendix B2 for the Research Internship Course Enrollment Form](#)). The instructor overseeing the internship must sign for approval. The approved form should then be submitted to the Ph.D. Program office prior to enrollment for the course. Students registered for the course without filing the required paperwork and the signed approval from the course instructor will be administratively dropped from the class.

Optional Coursework

Students have the option to expand their specialization knowledge, research skills, and/or teaching skills through the following course offerings:

SOCW 8198 (1 Cr.); SOCW 8298 (2 Cr.); SOCW 8398 (3 Cr.): Independent Study

The aim of an Independent Study course is to develop and pursue expertise in a student's area of specialization for which there is no formal or scheduled classes available. This can involve statistics, research methods, as well as other subject content. Each SCH of Independent Study is equivalent to 3 hours per week of work. Independent Study courses are typically not available to students until they have completed their first year of doctoral course work. Independent study courses count toward the degree as would any elective. Using the Independent Study Request Form, students must make a formal request to the instructor for approved Independent Study coursework and course enrollment ([see Appendix A1, B1 and B2 for the Independent Study Guidelines and Course Enrollment Form](#)). The grading for an Independent Study is S/U or a letter grade.

SOCW 8303 (3 Cr.): Teaching Internship

The aim of a Teaching Internship is to prepare students to teach at the college or university level. The grading for this course is a letter grade. Students must complete a Request for Course Enrollment Form for a Teaching Internship ([see Appendix B3 for the Teaching Internship Course Enrollment Form](#)). The instructor overseeing the internship must sign for approval. The

approved form should then be submitted to the Doctoral Program office prior to enrollment for the course. Students registered for the course without filing the required paperwork and the signed approval from the course instructor will be administratively dropped from the class.

Pre-Dissertation Research

SOCW 8395 (3 Cr.), 8695 (6 Cr.), 8995 (9 Cr.): Pre-Dissertation Research

Focuses on refining of research skills, defining an appropriate dissertation topic, developing a dissertation proposal etc. Students may repeat this course as they move toward an approved dissertation proposal.

Students who have completed the required and elective coursework but have not yet successfully defended their dissertation proposal can enroll in SOCW 8395, 8695, or 8995 (i.e., Pre-Dissertation Research) to maintain continuous enrollment which is a university requirement. Students who take SOCW 8395, 8695, or 8995 in preparation for their dissertation proposal defense must take it on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. Continuous enrollment may also be accomplished by taking other courses such as statistics, methods, independent study or substantively focused courses within or outside the GCSW.

Required Dissertation Course Options

Specific to the dissertation phase, students must enroll in at least 3 SCHs per semester of dissertation research.

SOCW 8399 (3 Cr.); 8699 (6 Cr.); 8999 (9 Cr.): Doctoral Dissertation

Dissertation hours are taken only on satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. Students must have 9 hours of dissertation credits to graduate.

Students who receive graduate tuition fellowships (GTF) must enroll in 9 SCHs each semester. In the semester in which they will graduate, they may enroll in only 3 SCHs if they have already completed the required 9 SCHs of dissertation credits. Please meet with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education (Dr. Quenette L. Walton, LCSW) and/or the PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services (De'Idra Richard, MBA) to discuss this in detail.

Sample Plans of Study

The outline for the plan of study for a suggested sequence of coursework for full-time and part-time students is listed below.

FULL-TIME CURRICULUM

Year 1 (Fall, 1st Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8311	Research Methods I: Introduction to Research	3
SOCW 8424	Statistics and Data Analysis I	4
SOCW 8333	Social Science Theories	3
Total Semester SCHs		10

Year 1 (Spring, 2nd Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8322	Research Methods II: Quantitative Research	3
SOCW 8425	Statistics and Data Analysis II	4
SOCW 8334	Social Welfare Policy Analysis	3
Total Semester SCHs		10

Year 2 (Fall, 3rd Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8323	Research Methods III: Qualitative Research	3
SOCW 8335	Teaching in Higher Education	3
SOCW 8345	Research Methods V: Community Engaged Research	3
Total Semester SCHs		9

Year 2 (Spring, 4th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8344	Research Methods IV: Grounded Theory	3
Elective 8xxx	Elective (outside GCSW recommended: statistics, substantive topic, theory, etc.)	3
SOCW 8327	Grant Writing	3
Total Semester SCHs		9

Year 2 (Summer, 5th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
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SOCW 8336	Research Internship I	3
Total Semester SCHs		3
Year 3 and Beyond		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
Elective 8xxx	Required Elective (outside of GCSW)	3
SOCW 8395, 8695, 8995	Pre-Dissertation Research-- <i>NOT required: for continuous enrollment purposes ONLY</i>	3,6,9
SOCW 8399, 8699, 8999	Doctoral Dissertation Research (9 required)	3, 6, 9
Total SCHs Year 3 & beyond		12
Total SCHs for Required Coursework		44
Total Required Dissertation SCHs		9
TOTL SCHs Required for Degree		53

PART-TIME CURRICULUM

Year 1 (Fall, 1st Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8311	Research Methods I: Introduction to Research	3
SOCW 8424	Statistics and Data Analysis I	4
Total Semester SCHs		7

Year 1 (Spring, 2nd Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8322	Research Methods II: Quantitative Research	3
SOCW 8425	Statistics and Data Analysis II	4
Total Semester SCHs		7

Year 2 (Fall, 3rd Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8323	Research Methods III: Qualitative Research	3
SOCW 8333	Social Science Theories	3
Total Semester SCHs		6

Year 2 (Spring, 4th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8334	Social Welfare Policy Analysis	3
Elective 8xxx	Elective (outside GCSW recommended: statistics, substantive topic, theory, etc.)	3
Total Semester SCHs		6

Year 3 (Fall, 5th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8335	Teaching in Higher Education	3
SOCW 8345	Research Methods V: Community Engaged Research	3
Total Semester SCHs		6

Year 3 (Spring, 6th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8344	Research Methods IV: Grounded Theory	3
SOCW 8327	Grant Writing	3
Total SCHs Year 3 & Beyond		6

Year 3 (Summer, 7th Semester)		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8336	Required Research Internship I	3
Total Semester SCHs		3
Year 4 and Beyond		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
Elective 8xxx	Required Elective (outside GCSW)	3
SOCW 8395, 8695, 8995	Pre-Dissertation Research (NOT required: for continuous enrollment purposes ONLY)	3, 6, 9
SOCW 8399, 8699, 8999	Doctoral Dissertation Research	3, 6, 9
Total SCHs Year 4 & Beyond		12
Total SCHs for Required Coursework		44
Total Required Dissertation SCHs		9
TOTAL SCHs REQUIRED FOR DEGREE		53

The Dual Degree Program (MSW/Ph.D.)

The [MSW/Ph.D. Dual Program](#) is designed only for full-time students pursuing both the MSW and the Ph.D. degrees. A limited number of applicants with demonstrated research experience will be accepted into the Dual Degree Program. This program is designed for applicants whose long-range career goals and experience are consistent with the aims of both the MSW and Ph.D. programs, and who wish to accelerate their education. The combined program also offers a structured educational opportunity for students holding master's degrees in other fields, but who want to earn the MSW while pursuing the Ph.D. The MSW allows graduates to teach practice courses at accredited schools of social work after gaining a minimum of 2 years post-MSW practice experience.

Applicants for the dual degree can apply in two ways:

1. Students can submit applications to both programs simultaneously or
2. Students who are already enrolled in the MSW program may apply for admission to the Ph.D. Program after completing all first semester requirements. Applicants for the Dual Degree Program are required to submit applications to both the MSW and the Ph.D. programs separately and pay the required application fee for each program. If admitted, acceptance into the Ph.D. Program is probationary and based on the successful completion of the required MSW foundation courses.

The MSW degree will be awarded when all the MSW degree requirements are met, which are either at the end of the 2nd year of full-time coursework or after their 3rd semester in the Ph.D. program. Students cannot be enrolled in practicum courses for their MSW and enroll in doctoral courses simultaneously.

Admissions Requirements for the Dual Degree Program

1. Completion of both MSW and Ph.D. admissions applications, and submission of both application fees.
2. Admission to the MSW Program.
3. Achievement of GPA of 3.5 or better (4.0 scale) in all previous undergraduate and graduate study. Applicants whose GPA is below 3.5, but who have demonstrated excellence in other areas of the application, may be considered. This GPA is calculated based on grades reported on applicants' official transcripts.
4. Virtual (i.e., Teams or Zoom) interview for admission into the Ph.D. program.
5. Evidence of a strong interest in social work research and social/behavioral sciences, which can be demonstrated through the application narrative and appendices (such as publications, research projects, research papers, etc.).
6. Strong undergraduate research background.
7. Admission to the Ph.D. Program.

Sample Plan of Study

The following sample plan of study outlines a suggested sequence of coursework for a student in the MSW/Ph.D. Dual Degree Program.

Note: MSW students take 12 semester credit hours (SCH) of Ph.D. coursework as part of their MSW degree plan. Below is the suggested sequence of coursework for a student in the MSW/Ph.D. Dual Degree Program:

1. Social Policy Analysis in place of SOCW 6351: SWPS.
2. Any 9 SCH Ph.D. courses for which the prerequisite requirement has been met may be taken in lieu of any 9 SCH MSW general electives.

MSW/PH.D. FULL-TIME CURRICULUM CLINICAL/MACRO CONCENTRATION

Year 1-MSW Program (Fall, 1 st Semester)		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 6201	Foundations of Social Work	2
SOCW 6307	Policy in Social Environment	3
SOCW 6308	Human Diversity & Development	3
SOCW 6305	Social Work Research	3
SOCW 6306	Social Work Practice Skills	3
SOCW 6193	Social Work Generalist Practicum 1	1
Total Semester SCHs		15
Year 1-MSW Program (Spring, 2 nd Semester)		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 7301	Skills for Social Justice and Social Impact	3
SOCW 7337/7334	Critical Clinical Case Formulation and Diagnostics / Social Work Leadership	3
SOCW 7325/7310	Individuals: Advanced Clinical Practice / Program Planning and Evaluation	3
SOCW 6194	Social Work Generalist Practicum 2	1
SOCW 73XX	Elective	3
Total Semester SCHs		13

Year 2-MSW/Ph.D. (Fall, 3 rd Semester)		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 7356/7319	Groups: Advanced Clinical Practice / Social Work Practice in Organizations	3
SOCW 7343/7335	Families: Advanced Clinical Practice / Social Work Practice in Communities	3
SOCW 8311	Research Methods I: Introduction to Research	3
SOCW 8424	Statistics and Data Analysis I	4.
Total Semester SCHs		13
Year 2-MSW/Ph.D. (Spring, 4 th Semester)		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 7342/7305	Clinical Social Work Praxis: Student-Directed Inquiries / Evaluation of SW Practice	3
SOCW 8322	Research Methods II: Quantitative Research	3
SOCW 8425	Statistics and Data Analysis II	4
SOCW 8334	Social Policy Analysis (Satisfied MSW Social Policy Analysis.)	3
Total Semester SCHs		13
Year 2-MSW/Ph.D. (Summer, 5 th Semester)		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 7184/7188	Social Work Clinical Practicum 1 / Social Work Macro Practicum 1	1
SOCW 7185/7189	Social Work Clinical Practicum 2/ Social Work Macro Practicum 2	1
Total Semester SCHs		2
Year 3-MSW/Ph.D. (Fall, 6 th Semester)		
Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8323	Research Methods III: Qualitative Research	3
SOCW 8335	Teaching in Higher Education	3
SOCW 8333	Social Science Theories	3
Total Semester SCHs		9
Year 3-MSW/Ph.D. (Spring, 7 th Semester)		

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8344	Research Methods IV: Grounded Theory	3
SOCW 83XX	Elective (outside GCSW)	3
SOCW 8327	Grant Writing	3
Total Semester SCHs		9

Year 3-MSW/Ph.D. (Summer, 8th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8336	Required Research Internship	3
SOCW 83XX	Elective (outside GCSW)	3
Total Semester SCHs		6

Year 4-MSW/Ph.D. (Fall, 9th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8395, 8695, 8995	Pre-Dissertation Research	3,6,9
SOCW 8345	Research Methods V: Community Engaged Research	3
Total Semester SCHs		9

Year 4-MSW/Ph.D. (Spring, 10th Semester)

Course #	Course Title	SCH
SOCW 8399, 8699, 8999	Doctoral Dissertation Research	3,6,9
Total Semester SCHs		9

Integrative Examination on Coursework

This integrative exam on coursework serves as a precursor to the dissertation. The purpose of the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work Integrative Examination is to assess the student's ability and skills to synthesize, apply, and critically connect knowledge across core domains (e.g., literature, theory, policy, methodology, etc.) in the student's substantive area of research. The goal of the Integrative Exam is to ensure that students are prepared to transition from coursework to independent scholarly research within the standards and expectations of social work doctoral education. Ultimately, the Integrative Exam is intended to show the student's critical thinking abilities in examining and synthesizing empirical evidence and contributing to knowledge building.

Students must pass a written integrative examination once the following courses have been taken:

- ▶ Research Methods I, II, and III
- ▶ Statistics and Data Analysis I and II
- ▶ Social Science Theories
- ▶ Social Welfare Policy Analysis

Exam Sections

The exam consists of five sections:

1. Substantive Area of Research (i.e., what is the specific issue you are addressing, critical review of relevant literature, gaps in the literature regarding the issue, what remains to be found, etc.)
2. Major Debates in the Field
3. Theoretical Foundations
4. Research Methodology
5. Implications and Impact

Exam Expectations

The expectation is that each student will be able to demonstrate mastery of their substantive area of research, major debates in the field, foundational theories, methodology, and implications while simultaneously integrating this knowledge into a coherent, well-supported argument. This Integrative Exam also requires each student to show readiness for independent research by applying their acquired knowledge to complex, discipline-specific research questions and clearly articulating how their work is going to address gaps identified and impact on the field.

Students' expectations:

- ▶ Engage deeply with seminal and contemporary scholarship.
- ▶ Cite all sources accurately and in accordance with current APA standards.
- ▶ Use their own wording; paraphrasing must reflect original synthesis.
- ▶ Avoid over-reliance on direct quotations.
- ▶ All responses are the original work written independently by the student.

Students' responses:

- ▶ Present well-developed arguments supported by scholarly evidence.
- ▶ Integrate theory, empirical findings, and methodological insights.
- ▶ Demonstrate critical analysis rather than a mere summary.
- ▶ Show coherence across sections and a clear scholarly voice.
- ▶ Use an academic writing style consistent with rigorous peer-reviewed social science literature.

Successful completion of this milestone is required to progress through the program. For full-time students, the exam will be administered at the end of their coursework, which is at the end of the Spring semester. Detailed information about the integrative exam will be provided to all full-time students at least 4 to 6 weeks prior to the integrative exam date. For part-time and dual degree students, the date will be determined via advising and review of course completion.



The Dissertation Process

The Dissertation Proposal

After a student has successfully passed the integrative examination, and all required coursework, they are responsible for:

- ▶ Organizing a dissertation committee.
- ▶ Developing and defending the dissertation proposal.
- ▶ Successfully completing the dissertation.

The Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee is the student's major advisor in formulating the dissertation proposal, conducting ongoing research, and preparing the final dissertation.

The dissertation proposal must provide a comprehensive overview of the proposed dissertation research study. The focus of the dissertation must be relevant to social work practice, policy or research. The proposed dissertation must also be feasible in terms of the candidate's qualifications to complete the study, the data available, the resources required for the study, and a reasonable timeline for completion.

Dissertation Chairperson

The Dissertation Chairperson must be a full-time, doctoral-degreed member of the GCSW faculty. The Dissertation Chairperson will be the student's major advisor in formulating the dissertation proposal, conducting ongoing research, and preparing the final dissertation. In addition, the Dissertation Chairperson will assist in informing the Dissertation Committee, monitor the student's progress toward the completion of the dissertation, provide guidance, convene the Dissertation Committee, and ensure that the dissertation is of sufficient quality to merit the award of a Ph.D. degree.

Detailed information about how to select a dissertation chairperson is in the policies and procedures section of this handbook.

Dissertation Committee

It is the student's responsibility to consult with their chairperson to identify additional faculty members to serve on their committee and to obtain their agreement to serve on the Dissertation Committee. To formalize the Dissertation Committee, the student must submit Form C: [Request to Form a Ph.D. Dissertation Committee](#) to the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean and PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services (see [Appendix B4](#)).

Detailed information about how to select a dissertation committee is in the policies and procedures section of this handbook.

Dissertation Member Qualifications

Additional guidelines for forming a Dissertation Committee include:

- The Dissertation Committee must include a minimum of three (3) doctoral-degreed members. Of the three, the Chairperson of the dissertation and at least one committee member must be tenure-track faculty from the GCSW.
- One or more external members may be selected who hold a doctoral degree. A vita of the external committee member is required and must be attached to Form C for evaluation and approval by the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean. The external member(s) must have an established record of scholarship that demonstrates the ability to guide and evaluate independent research, e.g., scholarly publications or funded research.
- The number of external committee members may not exceed the number of Dissertation Committee members who are tenure-track faculty from the GCSW. Faculty who has Emeritus status may chair or serve on the committee. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and Dissertation Chairperson must approve members of the Dissertation Committee.
- Members of the Dissertation Committee will review and approve the written dissertation proposal. They will also serve as the examining group at the oral defense of the dissertation proposal.

Dissertation Proposal Process Procedures

- The student works with the Dissertation Chairperson and the Committee to develop a comprehensive dissertation proposal. The proposal is sent to each committee member. After receiving feedback, the student meets with the Dissertation Chairperson to discuss required changes. The Chairperson decides whether the proposal needs to be resubmitted to the Committee for additional reviews.
- When the Dissertation Chairperson decides the proposal is ready, he/she notifies the Ph.D. Program Office that the student is ready to schedule the defense. After a date has been set, the student must present all Committee members with the final dissertation proposal at least 14 days before the scheduled defense.
- The student must give **Form D: Dissertation Proposal Defense/Application for Candidacy** to the Chairperson for completion on the day of the proposal defense (see Appendix B5).
- The Committee can vote to: (a) Approve the proposal with no revisions or minor revisions; (b) Defer approval pending major revisions and subsequent oral defense; (c) Reject the proposal as unacceptable. Note: In situations 'b' through 'c', the Committee must provide written feedback identifying the needed revisions, delineating the deficiencies and areas for improvement for a subsequent oral defense of the proposal.
- The Dissertation Chairperson must send written notification to the Ph.D. Program Office when revisions on the proposal are completed along with the completed Ph.D. Program **Form D: Dissertation Proposal Defense/Application to Candidacy**.

UH Institutional Review Board

Students must also apply for approval of their proposed dissertation research from the UH Institutional Review Board. Application forms are available on the [UH Human Subjects website](#).

Timeline

It is strongly recommended that students successfully complete their proposal defense within three semesters after completing their coursework.

Format

The format for the dissertation proposal should reflect the type of study being done (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, historical, policy, etc.). Students should discuss their particular format with their Dissertation Chair. There are two format options: (1) traditional five-chapter dissertation and (2) the three-paper dissertation format. Below are the broad structures for each of the formats. You may deviate from these in terms of order; however, these components must be included.

Traditional Dissertation Proposal Outline

Traditional Dissertation Proposal

The traditional five-chapter dissertation is designed to demonstrate a doctoral student's ability to conceive, design, conduct, and communicate an original and rigorous program of independent research. Through a comprehensive investigation grounded in theory and appropriate methodology, the dissertation should make a significant contribution to social work knowledge and inform research, policy, practice, education, and/or future scholarship.

Outline

I. Part One: Preliminary Pages

- a. Cover Page
- b. Table of Contents
- c. Abstract

II. Part Two: Main Text

Chapter 1: Introduction - Statement of the Problem Area

- a. Introduction to the overall problem area and major gaps in the area
- b. Importance, nature, and scope of the problem using empirical research
- c. Guiding framework for the proposed dissertation work across the three papers (if applicable)
- d. How will the three papers address important gaps in the literature and form a cohesive body of work

Chapter 2: Literature Review

- a. Review of the relevant research
 - b. Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Framework
 - c. Research Question/Aims
- **** this chapter maybe be multiple chapters based on your preference

Chapter 3: Methods

- a. Introduction
- b. Research design
- c. Research questions/hypotheses
- d. Population and sample
- e. Recruitment procedures
- f. Measures
- g. Data sources
- h. Data analysis plan
- i. Rigor and trustworthiness
- j. Ethical considerations

k. Researcher positionality (when appropriate)

III. Part Three: References

IV. Part Four: Appendices

Three Article Dissertation Proposal Outline

Three Article Dissertation Proposal

The three-article dissertation is designed to prepare doctoral students for research-intensive careers by producing a cohesive body of publishable scholarship that demonstrates independent, rigorous, and original research. Although each article should be suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal, the three articles must collectively represent an integrated program of research that advances research, policy, practice, education, and/or future scholarship.

The defense of the dissertation proposal is expected to parallel the proposal defense for a traditional dissertation. The three-article dissertation alters the format, but not the content expected in the dissertation research. Below is the suggested outline for a three-article dissertation.

Outline

I. Part One: Preliminary Pages

- a. Cover page
- b. Table of Contents
- c. Abstract

II. Part Two: Main Text

Chapter 1: Introduction - Statement of the Problem Area

- a. Introduction to the overall problem area and major gaps in the area
- b. Importance, nature, and scope of the problem using empirical research
- c. Guiding framework for the proposed dissertation work across the three papers (if applicable)
- d. How will the three papers address important gaps in the literature and form a cohesive body of work

Chapter 2: Article One: Title & Proposed Authorship/Co-Author

- a. Introduction: purpose of this article
- b. Literature Review & Research Question(s)/Aims
- c. Proposed Methodology
- d. Analysis Plan (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)
- e. Dissemination Plan [including timeline for completion and targeted journal(s)]
- f. References

Chapter 3: Article Two: Title & Proposed Authorship/Co-Authorship

- a. Introduction: purpose of this article
- b. Literature Review & Research Question(s)/Aims

- c. Proposed Methodology
- d. Analysis Plan (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)
- e. Dissemination Plan [including timeline for completion and targeted journal(s)]
- f. References

Chapter 4: Article Three: Title & Proposed Authorship/Co-Authorship

- a. Introduction: purpose of this article
- b. Literature Review & Research Question(s)/Aims
- c. Proposed Methodology
- d. Analysis Plan (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)
- e. Dissemination Plan [including timeline for completion and targeted journal(s)]
- f. References

III. Part Three: Summary (Brief, one to two paragraphs)

- a. Summarize plan and overall objectives
- b. Potential implications and contribution of overall work to social work

Advancing to Doctoral Candidacy

A doctoral student is advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, “All but Dissertation” (ABD) status, by successfully completing the required coursework, passing their integrative examination, and gaining approval of the dissertation proposal by their Dissertation Committee. To advance a student to candidacy, the Dissertation Chairperson must submit required paperwork (Form D, see Dissertation Proposal Process Procedures section on previous page) to the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean for approval.

Continuous Enrollment

Doctoral students must be continuously enrolled in coursework until the completion of the Ph.D. degree. Full-time (9+ SCHs) or part-time (3-6 SCHs) enrollment status may be determined by the student at this stage; however, it is the student’s responsibility to determine individual enrollment status requirements for the purposes of financial aid, loan deferments, scholarships or fellowships.

Once all required coursework has been completed, continuous enrollment may be met in numerous ways. For example, combinations of the following options: (1) enrollment in the pre-dissertation course until the dissertation proposal is successfully defended; (2) enrollment in the dissertation research course once the dissertation proposal is successfully defended; (3) enrollment in graduate level courses as electives to further develop substantive or methodological skills; and/or (4) enrollment in GCSW research/teaching internships or relevant independent study courses.

Note: Students are not permitted to register for doctoral Dissertation credits SOCW 8399/8699/8999 until after they have been advanced into candidacy.

Pre-Dissertation Research

Students who have completed the required and elective coursework but have not yet successfully completed their comprehensive examination or have not yet defended their dissertation proposal can enroll in SOCW 8395, 8695 or 8995: Pre-Dissertation Research in order to maintain continuous enrollment (this course is not a degree requirement). Students who take SOCW 8395 in preparation for their dissertation proposal defense must take it on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. Continuous enrollment may also be accomplished by taking other courses such as statistics, methods, or substantively focused courses within or outside of the GCSW.

SOCW 8395, 8695, 8995: Pre-Dissertation Research

Focuses refining of research skills, defining an appropriate dissertation topic, and developing a dissertation proposal. Students may repeat this course as they move toward an approved dissertation proposal.

Time Limits for Completion of Degree Requirements

Students who enroll as doctoral candidates must complete the degree requirements within ten (10) years of the date of first enrollment with a doctoral degree objective. Failure to comply will result in the candidate being ineligible for the doctoral degree. See “Academic Regulations and Degree Requirements” website. Additional detailed information about the time limits for enrollment is in the policies and procedures section of this handbook.

Leave of Absence

Students may request a leave of absence. The approval of a student Leave of Absence from the GCSW Ph.D. Program is not automatic. Please see the University of Houston Leave of Absence policy on the [UH graduate school website](#).

A student must inform the Ph.D. Program Office of their intent to take a leave by email to the PhD Program Director and the Associate Dean. Students must complete Ph.D. Program Form F: [Student Request to Take a Leave of Absence](#) (see Appendix B6) with the [Graduate and Professional Student Petition Form](#). After these forms are completed, they must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean and PhD Program Director for approval.

Other Considerations

- ▶ A Leave of Absence form must be filed and approved for each semester of leave with a maximum of two (2) semesters allowed.
- ▶ Per the Graduate School, leave of absences do not extend the timeline for completion of a graduate degree.
- ▶ A Leave of Absence due to personal medical reasons may require a doctor’s permission to be submitted to the Graduate School before being cleared to register.

Reinstatement

Students who fail to return (i.e., they do not register for classes or Pre-Dissertation/Dissertation credits) on time from a leave of absence will be dismissed from the GCSW Doctoral Program and the University of Houston.

Termination of Candidacy

Students who wish to withdraw from the Ph.D. Program should do so properly which must be a written statement submitted to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and the PhD Program Director.

The Dissertation

The dissertation represents the culminated demonstration of students' ability to incorporate theories and methods into the framing and execution of a problem or issue that attests to their originality and independence as a researcher-scholar applying knowledge to real-world situations.

Enrollment

Specific to the dissertation phase, students must enroll in at least 3 SCHs per semester of dissertation research or 9 SCHs if receiving GTF. Again, it is the student's responsibility to determine individual implications for the number of enrolled SCHs. Students must have 9 hours of Dissertation credits to graduate.

Required Dissertation Course Options

SOCW 8399 (3 Cr.); 8699 (6 Cr.); 8999 (9 Cr.): Doctoral Dissertation

Dissertation hours are taken only on satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis.

Final Dissertation Format Options and Guidelines

Because of changes in the academy, especially in scholarly publishing, doctoral students want greater flexibility in disseminating their ideas. Working with their dissertation chair and other committee members, students may view their dissertation as a product marking a milestone in their intellectual development or as part of a process in becoming an independent member of the community of scholars and researchers. This will also keep our Ph.D. Program competitive with other programs that are offering this format.

There are two (2) format options for the dissertation. Option I is the *traditional dissertation*, five (5) chapters with content determined by the Doctoral Dissertation Committee. Option II is the *three-article dissertation* which includes three (3) research-based articles along with an introduction and a conclusion section. Option II still adheres to chapter arrangement and bundles the following in a cohesive document: The first chapter(s) contain the introduction literature review and/or conceptual framework. The middle chapters contain three (3) or more articles related to the dissertation topic. The final chapter contains the conclusion and covers the breadth of the articles.

Outlines of the Three Article Dissertation Format for the final dissertation are provided below.

Traditional Final Dissertation Requirements and Outline

Requirements: Traditional Dissertation

The traditional five-chapter dissertation is designed to demonstrate a doctoral student's ability to conceive, design, conduct, and communicate an original and rigorous program of independent research. Through a comprehensive investigation grounded in theory and appropriate methodology, the dissertation should make a significant contribution to social work knowledge and inform research, policy, practice, education, and/or future scholarship.

Students should decide as early as possible, in concert with their dissertation chair, whether to pursue the traditional dissertation format. However, they may switch from one format to the other at any time provided their dissertation chair and committee approves the change.

Requirements

Students electing the traditional five-chapter dissertation must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Original Scholarly Contribution

The dissertation must represent an original and independent scholarly contribution that advances social work theory, research, policy, practice, education, or methodology. The completed dissertation should demonstrate doctoral-level scholarship and contribute new knowledge or understanding to the discipline.

2. Integrated Research Study

The dissertation must present one coherent and integrated research study organized within the traditional five-chapter format. Each chapter should build logically upon the previous chapter and collectively address the stated research problem, purpose, and research questions or hypotheses.

3. Methodological Rigor

The research design and methodology must be appropriate for addressing the research question(s) and consistent with accepted standards within the student's methodological tradition. Students are expected to demonstrate competence in study design, data collection, data management, data analysis, interpretation, and reporting.

4. Scholarly Writing

The dissertation should be written in accordance with the University's dissertation formatting requirements and the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* unless otherwise approved by the Graduate College of Social Work. Writing should reflect professional scholarly standards, including clarity, organization, accuracy, and appropriate citation of the literature.

5. Publication and Dissemination

Although the traditional dissertation is not organized as journal manuscripts, students are strongly encouraged to prepare one or more peer-reviewed publications based on the dissertation following successful completion of the final defense. Students should discuss publication plans with their dissertation chair throughout the dissertation process.

6. Human Subjects Protection

Research involving human participants may not begin until all required approvals have been obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or other appropriate oversight bodies. Students are responsible for maintaining compliance with all University policies governing research ethics and human subjects protections throughout the duration of the study.

7. Committee Approval

The dissertation chair and committee must approve the research topic, conceptual or theoretical framework, methodology, and dissertation proposal before the student begins data collection. Any substantive modifications to the approved proposal—including changes to the research questions, methodology, sampling strategy, data sources, or analytic approach—require prior approval from the dissertation chair and, when appropriate, the dissertation committee.

Outline: Traditional Final Dissertation

Below is the suggested outline for a traditional dissertation:

I. Cover Page

II. Table of Contents

III. Abstract

IV. Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduces the research study and establishes its significance. Students should clearly articulate the problem being investigated, establish the rationale for the study, describe its significance to social work, and introduce the conceptual or theoretical framework guiding the research.

- a. Background
- b. Statement of the problem
- c. Purpose of the study
- d. Significance of the study
- e. Research questions and/or hypotheses
- f. Conceptual and/or theoretical framework
- g. Definitions of key terms
- h. Assumptions
- i. Limitations
- j. Delimitations
- k. Organization of the dissertation

V. Chapter 2: Literature Review

Provides a comprehensive, critical analysis of the literature relevant to the research problem. For the literature review chapter, students should move beyond summarizing previous studies by critically evaluating the existing evidence, identifying limitations in the literature, and establishing the need for the proposed study. Although not required, this chapter includes the theoretical or conceptual framework. However, the theoretical or conceptual could also be a chapter on its own.

VI. Chapter 3: Methods

Describes the research design and methods in sufficient detail to permit replication of the study. In this chapter, students should justify all methodological decisions and demonstrate that the proposed methods are appropriate for addressing the research questions.

- a. Introduction
- b. Research design
- c. Research questions and/or hypotheses
- d. Population and sample
- e. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

- f. Recruitment procedures
- g. Data sources
- h. Data collection procedures
- i. Instruments and measures (when applicable)
- j. Researcher positionality and reflexivity statement (when appropriate)
- k. Data analysis plan
- l. Strategies to ensure rigor and trustworthiness
- m. Ethical considerations
- n. Human subjects protection
- o. Summary

VII. Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study in a clear, objective, and organized manner. For *qualitative* studies, findings should be organized by themes, categories, or theoretical constructs supported by representative participant quotations or other appropriate evidence. For *quantitative* studies, findings should include descriptive and inferential analyses consistent with the approved analytic plan. *Mixed methods* studies should clearly distinguish and integrate qualitative and quantitative findings where appropriate. Interpretation of the findings should be limited within this chapter.

- a. Introduction
- b. Description of the sample
- c. Findings
- d. Tables and figures (when needed)
- e. Summary

VIII. Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter synthesizes and interprets the findings in relation to the existing literature and conceptual or theoretical framework(s). The discussion chapter should clearly articulate the overall scholarly contribution of the dissertation and explain how the findings advance knowledge within the field of social work.

- a. Introduction
- b. Summary of findings
- c. Interpretation of findings
- d. Relationship to existing literature
- e. Contributions to theory
- f. Contributions to social work research
- g. Implications for Practice
- h. Implications for Policy
- i. Implications for social work education
- j. Methodological contributions (when appropriate)
- k. Strengths of the study
- l. Limitations of the study
- m. Recommendations for future research

- n. Conclusion

IX. References

The dissertation should include a complete reference list formatted according to the most current edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*.

X. Appendices Title Page

XI. Appendices

Appendices should include supporting materials that are essential to understanding or evaluating the research but would interrupt the flow of the main text. Examples include:

- a. IRB approval documents
- b. Consent forms
- c. Recruitment materials
- d. Interview protocols
- e. Survey instruments
- f. Observation protocols
- g. Codebooks
- h. Data dictionaries
- i. Statistical analysis plans
- j. Additional tables or figures
- k. Letters of permission
- l. Conceptual models
- m. Supplemental methodological materials

XII. About the Author (optional)

- a. Curriculum Vitae

Three Article Final Dissertation Guidelines and Outline

Guidelines: Three Article Dissertation

The three-article dissertation is designed to prepare doctoral students to produce a cohesive body of publishable scholarship while demonstrating mastery of independent research. Although each manuscript is intended to stand alone as a publishable article, all three papers must be conceptually linked through a common research agenda and collectively address the dissertation research questions.

Students should decide as early as possible, in concert with their dissertation chair, whether to pursue the 3-article dissertation format. However, they may switch from one format to the other at any time provided their dissertation chair and committee approves the change.

What Must Be Included

1. The dissertation must be comprised of a minimum of three articles. The articles should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in the introduction of the dissertation (Chapter 1). The need for three articles should be clear and approved by the dissertation committee and not merely represent minor tweaks of a work that would be more appropriately reported in just one or two articles or a traditional five-chapter dissertation.
2. The dissertation must include an abstract that synthesizes the articles, as well as an introduction (Chapter 1) and a conclusion (Chapter 5) that discusses the synthesis of what is learned from the three articles.
3. The introduction should function as the cord that weaves the various manuscripts together and describes, for the reader, their ‘collective meaning’ and ‘combined contribution’ to the field. It 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 will have its own unique literature review).
 - e. The research questions.
 - f. The methodology used to answer those questions.
4. The conclusion must:
 - a. Summarize the dissertation’s major findings, limitations, discussion, and recommendations.
 - b. 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.

- c. Tie everything together and help the reader see how the various manuscripts, taken together, contributes to the knowledge base regarding the problem within the field of social work.
- d. Must present/discuss research imperatives, or knowledge gaps, not visible when each manuscript is considered individually and should articulate how the findings from the three articles guide social work practice, policy, and education.
- e. Must set an agenda for future research on the issues addressed in the dissertation.

Authorship

Students must be first author on all articles. As first authors, students are responsible for development and articulation of a concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, conducting research and analysis, writing all portions of a manuscript, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), interpreting results., etc.

No other students can be co-authors on any of the articles. Co-authors must be identified prior to the student's proposal defense and approved by the dissertation committee chair. The article and the role of the co-authors must be presented to and approved by all members of the dissertation committee. The student's committee must approve any changes in co-authorship. In addition, the student must indicate the percentage of effort and description of the role played by each author in the introductory chapter to the dissertation.

Content

All articles must be based on data that are analyzed by the student. If the third article is conceptual in nature, or based on a systematic review of the literature, it must be connected to the theme or themes of the dissertation without overlapping heavily with the contents of either article. Whether the extent of any overlap is excessive will be determined by the student's dissertation committee.

A certain amount of overlap is acceptable. For example, portions of the literature review may need to be cited in the various articles because it delineates the entire historical background of the study's focal topic. Redundancy can be carefully reduced by citing one's own work. However, self-plagiarism—reusing one's own previously written work or data in a 'new' written product without letting the reader know that this material has appeared elsewhere—is prohibited.

Publication Requirements

It is expected that the three articles submitted for the defense be of publishable quality. It is acceptable for a student to include one previously published journal article in the three-article dissertation, as long as (a) all authorship requirements in our College's guidelines are adhered to, (b) the dissertation committee agrees to a published manuscript's inclusion as an integrated and substantial chapter of the dissertation and (c) the student receives continuous feedback and approval of that article from their dissertation supervisor and committee members during the publication process. That includes quality of the article, journal submission, response to reviews of the article,

and guidance on acceptance. The student must obtain copyright permission from the publishing journal to include the article in his/her dissertation. U.S law requires doing so. When asking for permission to include the article in the dissertation, students should notify the journal editor that the dissertation will be made available on-line.

Publication Guidelines

Journals to which articles are being submitted must be approved by the dissertation committee. Serving as an “editorial board” for the student, the committee will help select journals that will challenge the student and offer a reasonable chance of publication success.

A maximum of one article published or accepted for publication after the *proposal defense* may be included. This article must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the PhD program and be approved by the committee. This article must be connected to the theme or themes of the dissertation. If a published article is approved by the committee, the student will be responsible for securing necessary permissions from the copyright holder and other authors.

If an article is rejected by a journal during the dissertation process, the student may submit to another journal approved by the dissertation committee. In the case of a revise and resubmit during the dissertation process, any changes to the article must be approved by the dissertation committee. Co-authorship will not be changed for a revise and resubmit.

If an article is rejected by a journal after the successful completion and defense of the dissertation, co-authorship decisions that were made during the dissertation process will no longer be in effect. Submission to a new journal will be at the sole discretion of the PhD graduate. Also, after the successful dissertation defense, any new submission or re-submission, including changes in the authorship or article content, will be at the discretion of the PhD graduate.

If the journal reviewers suggest modifications to any of the three submitted manuscripts prior to the dissertation defense, a plan for addressing those suggestions should be shared with dissertation committee members and approved by all of them before the changes are enacted. Changes can be made to any of the three manuscripts if the dissertation committee members are aware of and agree to the changes being made and their rationale. Students may opt to defer changes requested by a journal to which they have submitted an article until their dissertation has been successfully defended.

Submission

As with any other dissertation, students must submit their manuscripts to their committee members at least 4 weeks prior to the defense for a preliminary review.

The Graduate School will defer to the judgment of the dissertation committee as long as there is cohesiveness of the three-article dissertation with sufficient explanation as needed regarding the student's contributions in the case of co-authorship on a given article.

Outline: Three Article Final Dissertation

Below is the suggested outline for a three-article dissertation:

Part One: Preliminary Pages

- I.** Cover page
- II.** Table of Contents
- III.** Abstract

Part Two: Main Text

Chapter 1: Integrative Introduction

This chapter provides the conceptual foundation for the dissertation as a whole.

- I.** Introduction
 - a. Introduction to the overall problem area and major gaps in the area
 - b. Importance, nature, and scope of the problem using empirical research
 - c. Guiding framework for the proposed dissertation work across the three papers (if applicable)
 - d. How will the three papers address important gaps in the literature and form a cohesive body of work
- II.** Problem Statement
 - a. Clearly articulate
 - i. What problem exists?
 - ii. Why does it matter?
 - iii. Who is affected?
 - iv. What gaps exist in current knowledge?
- III.** Purpose Statement
 - a. Describe the overall purpose of the dissertation
 - i. Overall research objective
 - ii. Population of interest
 - iii. Central phenomenon or variables
 - iv. Expected contribution
- IV.** Conceptual and/or Theoretical Framework
 - a. Describe
 - i. Guiding theory
 - ii. Conceptual model
 - iii. Relationship among constructs
 - iv. How the framework informs all three papers
 - v. Include a conceptual figure when appropriate
- V.** Overall Research Questions
- VI.** Dissertation Organization

- a. Briefly describe each manuscript
 - i. Manuscript 1
 - ii. Manuscript 2
 - iii. Manuscript 3

VII. Relationship Among Three Papers

Students should include a table illustrating how the manuscripts form one integrated program of research.

Example:

Paper	Purpose	Data Source	Primary Contribution
Paper 1	Establish current knowledge	Literature or Dataset A	Identifies gaps
Paper 2	Examine key relationships	Dataset B	Advances empirical evidence
Paper 3	Extend findings	Dataset C or qualitative interviews	Implications for policy/practice

Overall Contribution

Conclude the proposal with a brief section describing how the three manuscripts collectively:

- ▶ Address the overarching research questions
- ▶ Advance social work knowledge
- ▶ Inform policy
- ▶ Improve practice
- ▶ Contribute to theory
- ▶ Identify future research directions

Chapter 2: Article One: Title & Proposed Authorship/Co-Author(s)

(Typically, a systematic/scoping review, conceptual paper, secondary data analysis, qualitative study, or foundational empirical article.)

- I. Introduction: purpose of this article
- II. Literature Review & Research Question(s)/Aims
- III. Proposed Methodology
- IV. Analysis Plan (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)
- V. Dissemination Plan [including timeline for completion and targeted journal(s)]
- VI. References

Chapter 3: Article Two: Title & Proposed Authorship/Co-Authorship

- I. Introduction: purpose of this article
- II. Literature Review & Research Question(s)/Aims
- III. Proposed Methodology
- IV. Analysis Plan (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)
- V. Dissemination Plan [including timeline for completion and targeted journal(s)]

VI. References

Chapter 4: Article Three: Title & Proposed Authorship/Co-Authorship

- I. Introduction: purpose of this article
- II. Literature Review & Research Question(s)/Aims
- III. Proposed Methodology
- IV. Analysis Plan (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)
- V. Dissemination Plan [including timeline for completion and targeted journal(s)]
- VI. References

Part Three: Summary (Brief, one to two paragraphs)

- I. Summarize plan and overall objectives
- II. Potential implications and contribution of overall work to social work

Electronic Dissertation

Guidelines

In 2009 the University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Council approved a policy requiring that all dissertations be submitted electronically.

The procedure for uploading is through an online system called Vireo. The only authorization needed for upload or faculty chair approval is a current CougarNet account and password. [Please visit the Graduate School webpage for more information.](#)

Format

The following format is required for both Option I and Option II:

1. Copyright Page: If a dissertation is copyrighted (optional), the copyright symbol must appear on a single, unnumbered page on which it is centered vertically and horizontally. The name and year must match what appears on the title page (see example in Appendix C1).
2. Dissertation Title page: The heading on the dissertation title page should begin 2 1/4" from the top; "BY" should be 4" from the top; "DISSERTATION" should be 6 1/2" from the top; and "Houston, Texas" should be 9" from the top. The dissertation title page should have the student's name, previous degrees, the title of the degrees, and the year the degree was conferred. For spring graduates, May 20XX, for fall graduates, December 20XX, and for summer graduates, August 20XX. If you complete your dissertation after the deadline for graduation, the date on the title page must be listed as the next year. The dissertation title page should look exactly like the provided example, including spacing, and should not have a page number (see example in Appendix C2).
3. Acknowledgements. (Optional)
4. Abstract: The dissertation abstract should be 250 words or less (see example in Appendix C3).

Final Dissertation Defense

Procedures and Policies

- When the Chairperson determines that the final draft of the dissertation is ready for a defense, she/he will convene the dissertation committee. It is recommended that the student send a full draft to the Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the defense.
- In the event that a committee member is no longer able to serve, the Chairperson, in consultation with the student and the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean, may request that another member of the GCSW faculty (or an outside member) serve on the Committee. If the Chairperson is not able to serve, the student, in consultation with the Ph.D. The Ph.D. Program Associate Dean will request a new Chairperson. If the student is not able to find new members for the committee, she/he should request a meeting with the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean for further discussion. However, other rules regarding the makeup and constitution of the Dissertation Committee continue to apply.
- It is the student's responsibility to meet all GCSW and University deadlines for submission of the final completed dissertation. The oral defense should be held within 30 days from the date of filing for graduation. Please contact the Associate Dean if flexibility is required. The student must conduct the final dissertation defense during the semester of enrollment.
- The Dissertation Chairperson and Committee will conduct the final oral dissertation defense.
- The student must give the Ph.D. Program [the Written Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form](#) (See [Appendix C4](#)) to his/her Dissertation Committee Chairperson for completion on the day of the final dissertation defense.
- The Committee Chairperson and all committee members must be present.
- The oral defense will be scheduled to last for up to two hours, and it will be an open public meeting for which the time and place will be posted. Students should provide information about the scheduled date, time, location of the defense, the title of their dissertation, and their committee members to the doctoral advisor who will facilitate the public posting.

The Dissertation Evaluation

Following the formal presentation, the Dissertation Committee meets in closed session to vote. The Dissertation Committee may vote to:

- a) Approve dissertation in present form or with minor revisions
- b) Defer approval pending major revisions. The Committee must reconvene for a follow-up defense. Described revisions must be attached.
- c) Reject the quality of the dissertation and/or the student's performance in the oral defense. Provide specifications for next steps.

A unanimous vote is required to approve the dissertation, and all committee members must sign off. In the event of minor revisions, the Dissertation Chairperson will be responsible for ensuring that

the Committee's concerns are incorporated in the revised final dissertation. The Chairperson must ensure that the final revisions meet the approval of the committee. After the successful defense, the Chairperson and all committee members must sign off on [the Written Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form](#). After obtaining the required committee signatures, the form is to be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office.

Program Policies and Procedures

Academic Standing Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Academic Standing Policy is to establish the academic expectations and performance standards required for continued enrollment and successful progress in the PhD program. This policy outlines minimum grade point average requirements, expectations for satisfactory academic progress, and procedures related to course completion and incomplete grades. By defining standards for academic standing, the policy promotes student success, ensures timely completion of degree requirements, and upholds the academic rigor and integrity of doctoral education within the Graduate College of Social Work and the University.

Academic Standing

A satisfactory rate of progress toward the Ph.D. degree is required throughout a student's enrollment. Doctoral students must at all times maintain at least a 3.0 (B) grade point average in all coursework.

Incomplete (I) grades will be given only in accordance with the university policy. A grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within a maximum of 12 months following the date assigned or it will be automatically converted to an "F" or "U." While 12 months is the maximum allowable time to remove a grade of "I," shorter times are typically required in agreements with instructors. A student with an "I" is not eligible for graduation, and the student will not be awarded a degree until the "I" is removed.

If a student has completed all requirements for graduation but also took an extra elective course (beyond the required number of electives) and received a grade of "I" in that course, the "I" will be converted to an "F" in calculating the final GPA. Although grades of D+ and lower are included in the computed grade point average, the University awards no credit for courses in which the student receives a grade below C-.

Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Academic Probation and Dismissal Policy is to establish the academic performance standards required for continued enrollment and successful progression in the PhD program. This policy promotes academic excellence by defining minimum expectations for grade point average, course performance, and completion of key doctoral milestones. It also outlines the conditions under which students may be placed on academic probation, the requirements for returning to good academic standing, and the circumstances that may result in dismissal from the program. By providing clear and consistent standards, the policy supports student success while maintaining the academic integrity and rigor of doctoral education.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and will be allowed to continue their enrollment only with the written recommendation of the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean and approval from the Dean.

Permission to continue will be granted only if there is reasonable likelihood that the GPA will improve in the subsequent semester. Removal from academic probation is granted when the GPA is raised to 3.0 or above. Students whose GPS falls below 3.0 will be ineligible for GTF until their GPA increases.

Grounds for Automatic Academic Dismissal:

- 1) Receives a grade of C+ or lower or Unsatisfactory (U) in 6 semester credit hours of doctoral level course credit;
- 2) Fails to pass the integrative examination after 3 attempts, in accordance with the examination criteria/policy; or
- 3) Does not successfully defend and pass the dissertation within 10 years of first enrollment in the doctoral program according to the PhD Program and the Graduate School policies.

Advising Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Advising Policy is to provide a structured framework for academic, research, and professional guidance throughout the doctoral program. Grounded in a developmental advising model, the policy clarifies the roles of the PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, and the Dissertation Chairperson in supporting student success. The policy also encourages students to actively engage with faculty mentors, develop scholarly and professional networks, and assume increasing responsibility for their academic and research development as they progress toward independent scholarship and degree completion.

Advising

The Ph.D. Program employs a developmental advising model designed to support students' academic, research, and professional success throughout their doctoral education. Upon matriculation and until a Dissertation Chairperson has been formally appointed, students are advised by the PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services, who provides guidance on program requirements, academic policies, milestones, registration, and student success resources, and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, who provides faculty advising regarding research development, scholarly planning, professional socialization, and overall academic progress.

Students are expected to take an active role in developing mentoring relationships across the faculty. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with faculty whose scholarly expertise aligns with their research interests, participate in research and professional development opportunities, and seek diverse perspectives to inform their intellectual and professional growth. These interactions are intended to assist students in refining their research agenda, identifying potential dissertation mentors, and preparing for independent scholarship.

Following the formal appointment of a Dissertation Chairperson, the Chair assumes primary responsibility for directing the student's dissertation research and mentoring the student's scholarly and professional development. The PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education continue to provide guidance regarding program policies, degree requirements, and student support throughout the remainder of the doctoral program.

Academic Honesty Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Academic Honesty Policy is to promote a culture of integrity, ethical scholarship, and professional responsibility within the doctoral program. Consistent with the University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy and the values of the social work profession, this policy establishes expectations for honest academic work, responsible research conduct, and ethical behavior in all academic and professional activities. The policy also affirms the Graduate College of Social Work's commitment to maintaining high standards of academic and professional conduct and outlines the consequences of violations that may compromise the integrity of the educational environment or the professional standards of the College.

Academic Honesty

All members of, and participants in, the academic life of the University are governed by the University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy. For additional information, see [policy on the university website](#).

The nature of social work dictates that practitioners use sound professional judgment. The Graduate College of Social Work reserves the right to terminate enrollment of any student at any time for what the College faculty and administration may believe to be good and sufficient reason(s), such as cheating, plagiarism, misuse of University property, unprofessional conduct, etc. Explicit policies are found in the University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Bulletin online.

Student Standards Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Student Standards Policy is to establish the academic, professional, and ethical expectations required of doctoral students throughout their enrollment in the Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW). This policy promotes a learning environment grounded in integrity, professionalism, respect, and accountability, while ensuring that students demonstrate behaviors and competencies consistent with the values of the social work profession and doctoral education. The policy provides a framework for evaluating student conduct and professional performance from admission through graduation and supports fair and transparent review processes to uphold the standards of the College, University, and profession.

Standards

The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) faculty is responsible for determining whether students demonstrate the required level of achievement -- classroom, professional, and ethical behaviors -- appropriate to interact with colleagues, faculty, administrators, staff, and clients. The College is committed to the treatment of students with fairness and equity throughout the program. This policy is applied to students' enrollment in the MSW or Ph.D. program at any point in time, from admission to program entry, program entry to candidacy, and candidacy to graduation. Each admitted student is required to read the Student Standards Policy ([see Appendix D1](#)) and complete the [Student Standards Policy Contract](#) for the student's file ([see Appendix D2](#)).

Enrollment, Registration, and Enrollment Time Limits Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Enrollment, Registration, and Enrollment Time Limits Policy is to establish expectations and requirements for doctoral student enrollment, registration, continuous academic participation, and timely degree completion. This policy ensures students remain informed of university registration procedures, maintain continuous enrollment and good standing, comply with the Graduate School time-to-degree requirements, and make satisfactory progress toward completion of doctoral milestones. The policy also outlines procedures for leaves of absence, enrollment time-limit extensions, funding eligibility, and appeals to support student success while maintaining academic standards and compliance with university regulations.

Enrollment and Registration

Registration for classes is done online on assigned appointment dates and requires a pre-assigned UH PeopleSoft ID number. Appointment dates can be found by logging on to the PeopleSoft student account system, using the assigned ID number and password. If registration and/or fees are not paid on time, a student is dropped from classes, and a late fee will be assessed.

See the University website for additional information on course enrollment, how to obtain a PeopleSoft (PS) student account, and enrollment schedule. [A Course Registration Guide can be found here.](#)

Important updates about enrollment deadlines and other official notifications will be sent to each student via an assigned UH email address. It is important to keep your email destination current.

Enrollment Time Limits

Students admitted to the PhD Program must complete all degree requirements within ten (10) years of their first enrollment in the doctoral program. This university requirement applies regardless of enrollment status during a given semester. Students who exceed the ten-year time limit become ineligible to receive the doctoral degree unless an approved extension has been granted.

Continuous Enrollment

Doctoral students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment and remain in good standing throughout their program of study. Students who anticipate an interruption in enrollment must obtain an approved Leave of Absence or formally withdraw from the program in accordance with University and Graduate School policies.

Students who are not enrolled for thirteen (13) consecutive months may be discontinued from the University and may be required to petition for reinstatement or reapply to the program.

Dissertation Completion Timeline

Students who do not complete the dissertation within five (5) years of passing the comprehensive/integrative examination may be required to retake the examination in accordance with Graduate School policy.

Extensions to the Enrollment Time Limit

In rare circumstances, students may petition for a one-time extension of the ten-year enrollment limit. Extensions are granted only when supported by documented extenuating circumstances and approval by the Graduate College of Social Work and the Graduate School.

Examples of circumstances that may be considered include:

- Approved medical withdrawal(s)
- Approved administrative withdrawal(s)
- Approved leave(s) of absence
- Significant circumstances beyond the student's control that substantially delayed degree progress

Requests for an extension must be submitted before the student's final semester within the ten-year enrollment period and must include:

1. A written statement explaining the request;
2. Relevant supporting documentation;
3. A statement from the dissertation chair supporting the student's ability to complete the degree; and
4. A detailed completion timeline

Approved extensions may not exceed one academic year.

Failure to Meet Enrollment Time Limits

Students who exceed the enrollment time limit without an approved extension may be subject to enrollment holds, dismissal from the doctoral program, and termination of degree eligibility in accordance with University and Graduate School policies.

Students retain the right to appeal decisions through established University and Graduate School grievance procedures.

Eligibility for Doctoral Funding

Doctoral students are expected to make timely progress toward degree completion. Students who have not successfully defended and received approval of their dissertation proposal by the end of their fifth year in the doctoral program will be ineligible for consideration of Graduate College of Social Work doctoral funding beyond Year 5, including stipends, assistantships, fellowships, and other college-funded doctoral support.

Students who experience documented extenuating circumstances that significantly delay progress may submit a written request for consideration of an exception. Approval of an exception is not guaranteed and will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the

Associate Dean for Doctoral Education in consultation with the Dean and other relevant university offices, as appropriate.

Ineligibility for funding does not affect a student's ability to remain enrolled in the doctoral program provided the student continues to meet all University, Graduate School, and program requirements regarding satisfactory academic progress and enrollment time limits.

Individualized Development Plan (IDP) and Competency Matrix Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations and procedures for the completion of an annual Individualized Development Plan (IDP) and Competency Matrix by all doctoral students enrolled in the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work PhD Program. The IDP and Competency Matrix are designed to support intentional doctoral training, promote professional socialization, strengthen mentoring relationships, and facilitate students' progression toward scholarly, teaching, research, leadership, and career goals. This policy aligns with the Doctoral Program's commitment to preparing highly skilled scholar-practitioners, researchers, educators, and leaders in social work and related interdisciplinary fields.

Scope and Policy

This policy applies to all enrolled doctoral students in the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work PhD Program, regardless of funding status, enrollment status, or stage in the program.

Beginning in Fall 2026, All doctoral students are expected to complete:

1. An annual Individualized Development Plan (IDP) and
2. An annual Competency Matrix self-assessment.

These documents serve as developmental planning and progress-monitoring tools and are intended to:

- Assist students in identifying academic, research, teaching, leadership, and professional development goals;
- Facilitate structured mentoring conversations between students and faculty advisors;
- Promote accountability and intentional progression through the doctoral program;
- Identify areas of strength and areas requiring further development;
- Support individualized training opportunities and professional socialization; and
- Assist the doctoral program in monitoring student progress and ensuring readiness for academic and professional milestones.

Definitions

Individualized Development Plan (IDP)

The IDP is a structured professional development and goal-setting document that allows doctoral students to:

- Assess annual progress and accomplishments;
- Identify short-term and long-term professional goals;
- Develop strategies for competency growth;
- Clarify research, teaching, leadership, and career objectives; and
- Engage in intentional planning with their faculty advisor or mentor.

The IDP includes self-assessment, goal development, annual reflection, and planning components.

Competency Matrix

The Competency Matrix is a developmental self-assessment tool through which students evaluate their level of knowledge and proficiency across multiple domains relevant to doctoral education in social work. Competencies include, but are not limited to:

- Content knowledge;
- Research methods and data analysis;
- Writing and scholarly dissemination;
- Teaching and instructional development;
- Grant development;
- Community-engaged and research-practice partnership skills; and
- Career and professional development.

Students assess their competency levels using a developmental framework ranging from “Unfamiliar” to “Mastery – Prepared to Teach.”

Required Timeline

Annual Submission Requirement

All doctoral students must complete and submit the following annually:

- Updated Individualized Development Plan (IDP)
- Updated Competency Matrix

Documents must be submitted to the Office of Doctoral Education no later than October 31 of each academic year.

Incoming first-year students must complete both documents during their first semester in the program.

Roles and Responsibilities

Doctoral Students

Doctoral students are responsible for:

- Completing the IDP and Competency Matrix annually;
- Honestly assessing areas of competency development and growth needs;
- Establishing measurable academic and professional goals;
- Identifying training, mentoring, and professional development needs;
- Scheduling and participating in annual review meetings with their faculty advisor;
- Revising goals as appropriate throughout the academic year; and
- Submitting finalized documents by the designated deadline.

Students are expected to actively engage in professional development planning and use the IDP and Competency Matrix as living documents throughout their doctoral training.

Faculty Advisors/Research Assistantship Advisors

Faculty advisors are responsible for:

- Reviewing and discussing the student’s IDP and Competency Matrix annually;
- Providing constructive developmental feedback;
- Assisting students with goal-setting and professional planning;
- Supporting students in identifying appropriate training opportunities;

- Monitoring student progress toward academic and professional milestones; and
- Encouraging realistic, developmentally appropriate competency growth.

Faculty advisors should use these documents as mentoring tools to support individualized doctoral training and professional socialization.

PhD Program Office

The PhD Program Office is responsible for:

- Maintaining annual records of submitted documents;
- Monitoring compliance with this policy;
- Providing templates, guidance, and training related to the IDP and Competency Matrix;
- Reviewing patterns of student development and professional growth; and
- Using aggregate information to strengthen doctoral training infrastructure and student support systems.

Competency Domains

The Competency Matrix is intended to support development across five domains of doctoral education, including:

1. Content Knowledge
2. Research Skills
3. Writing Skills
4. Teaching Skills
5. Career Development

Annual Review Process

The annual review process should include:

1. Student completion of the IDP and Competency Matrix;
2. Independent faculty advisor review;
3. A formal developmental meeting between student and advisor;
4. Identification of progress, barriers, and support needs;
5. Establishment of goals for the upcoming academic year; and
6. Submission of finalized documents to the Office of Doctoral Education.

Students are encouraged to revisit their goals throughout the year and update plans as needed.

Continuous Improvement

The Doctoral Program reserves the right to revise the IDP and Competency Matrix processes to align with:

- Programmatic goals;
- Accreditation expectations;
- Best practices in doctoral education;
- Evolving professional competencies; and
- Student and faculty feedback.

Grades and Grading Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Grades and Grading Policy is to establish clear and consistent standards for evaluating academic performance, maintaining academic standing, and ensuring satisfactory progress toward completion of the PhD degree. This policy outlines grading expectations, minimum academic requirements, procedures related to incomplete grades and grade appeals, and the standards used to assess student progress throughout the doctoral program. The policy also defines processes for academic review, probation, remediation, and dismissal to support student success while upholding the rigor, integrity, and excellence of doctoral education in the Graduate College of Social Work.

Grades and Grading

The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) uses the following standard grading scale for all doctoral courses:

Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Below 60

Faculty assign final course grades based on each student's demonstrated achievement of the course learning objectives and evaluation criteria outlined in the course syllabus. Students are expected to maintain a level of academic performance consistent with the standards of doctoral education. Final grades are recorded in accordance with university policies and procedures.

Grade Appeals

Students who believe a final course grade has been assigned in error or in a manner inconsistent with the course syllabus or University policy should first discuss the concern with the course instructor as soon as possible after the grade is posted. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, students may pursue a formal grade appeal in accordance with University of Houston and Graduate College of Social Work policies. Grade appeals must follow established university procedures and deadlines. The burden of demonstrating that a grading error or procedural irregularity occurred rests with the student.

Incomplete (I) Grades

An Incomplete (I) grade is intended for exceptional circumstances in which a student, who is otherwise performing satisfactorily in a course, is unable to complete a limited portion of the required coursework due to documented, unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control.

An Incomplete grade may be assigned only at the instructor's discretion and must be accompanied by a written agreement specifying:

- the remaining course requirements;

- the timeline for completion; and
- the grade that will be assigned if the work is not completed by the agreed-upon deadline.

Failure to complete the required work within the approved timeframe will result in the grade being converted in accordance with University policy.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Doctoral students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout their enrollment in the program. Satisfactory progress includes:

- maintaining a cumulative grade point average (GPA) that meets University requirements for doctoral students;
- earning satisfactory grades in coursework;
- successfully completing program milestones within established timelines;
- demonstrating professional and ethical conduct consistent with the expectations of the social work profession; and
- making timely progress toward degree completion.

Students who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress may be subject to academic review and corrective action.

Academic Standing

Students are expected to remain in good academic standing throughout their doctoral studies. A student is considered to be in good academic standing when they:

- maintain the minimum cumulative GPA required by the University for doctoral students;
- successfully complete required coursework and program milestones;
- comply with University and Graduate College academic and professional standards; and
- make satisfactory progress toward the degree.

Students whose academic performance falls below these standards may be placed on academic probation or become subject to other academic actions as outlined by university policy and the Graduate College of Social Work.

Academic Dismissal

The PhD Program in the Graduate College of Social Work reserves the right to dismiss a student from the doctoral program when the student's academic performance, progress toward degree completion, or professional conduct fails to meet program or University standards.

Grounds for academic dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- failure to maintain the minimum cumulative GPA required by the University;
- failure to make satisfactory academic progress;
- repeated unsatisfactory academic performance;
- failure to meet program milestones within required timeframes;
- failure to comply with conditions of academic probation or remediation; or
- violations of university academic integrity or professional conduct policies.

Prior to dismissal, students may be provided written notice of academic deficiencies and, when appropriate, an opportunity to remediate. Decisions regarding academic dismissal will be made in accordance with University and Graduate School procedures. Students have the right to appeal dismissal decisions through the applicable University appeal process.

Minimum Grade Requirement for Doctoral Coursework

Doctoral students are expected to demonstrate a high level of academic achievement throughout their coursework. A minimum grade of B is required for all courses applied toward the PhD degree. Grades of C, D, and F do not satisfy doctoral degree requirements and will not count toward completion of the doctoral curriculum.

A student who earns a grade of C or below in any doctoral course may be required to repeat the course, if permitted, or complete an alternative course as approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and the student's faculty advisor. Earning a grade of C or below may also result in an academic progress review and may lead to academic probation or dismissal if academic performance does not improve.

Repeated low grades or a pattern of unsatisfactory academic performance may be considered evidence that the student is not making satisfactory academic progress toward the degree.

Academic Probation and Remediation Policy

Doctoral students whose academic performance falls below program or University expectations may be placed on Academic Probation. Academic probation is intended to provide students with a structured opportunity to address identified deficiencies while receiving appropriate faculty guidance and support.

Grounds for academic probation may include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to maintain the minimum cumulative GPA required by the University for doctoral students;
- Earning a grade of **C or below** in a doctoral course;
- Failure to make satisfactory academic progress toward required program milestones;
- Repeated unsatisfactory academic performance; or
- Failure to meet previously established academic expectations.

Students placed on academic probation will receive written notification outlining:

- the reason(s) for probation;
- the academic deficiencies requiring remediation;
- specific expectations and measurable outcomes for returning to good academic standing;
- the timeline for completing the remediation plan, which is typically one academic semester unless otherwise specified; and
- the consequences of failing to satisfy the conditions of probation.

The remediation plan will be developed collaboratively by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, the student's faculty advisor or dissertation chair (as applicable), and other appropriate faculty members. Remediation strategies may include repeating coursework, completing additional academic assignments,

participating in skill development activities, increasing meetings with faculty mentors, or other actions designed to promote academic success.

At the conclusion of the probationary period, the student's academic progress will be formally reviewed. Students who successfully complete all remediation requirements will be returned to good academic standing. Students who fail to satisfy the conditions of the remediation plan may be subject to additional academic action, including continued probation or dismissal from the doctoral program, in accordance with University and Graduate College policies.

Placement on academic probation does not guarantee continued enrollment in the doctoral program. The Graduate College of Social Work reserves the right to dismiss students whose academic performance or progress demonstrates that successful completion of the doctoral program is unlikely.

Review of Student Academic Progress

To promote student success and timely degree completion, the PhD program in the Graduate College of Social Work will conduct annual reviews of student academic progress for each doctoral student. The annual review is intended to ensure each student is making satisfactory progress toward degree completion, recognize accomplishments, and identify areas for growth.

The annual review includes an assessment of the students:

- Academic performance, including course grades and cumulative GPA;
- Progress toward program milestones (e.g., required coursework, integrative examination, dissertation proposal, dissertation research, and dissertation defense);
- Research and scholarly productivity, including presentations, publications, grant activity, and research engagement, as appropriate to the student's stage in the program;
- Professional development and participation in program, college, and professional activities; and
- Professional and ethical conduct consistent with University, Graduate College, and social work profession standards.

As part of the review process, students may be asked to submit an annual progress report and updated curriculum vitae (CV). Faculty will review the submitted materials and provide written feedback on an as needed basis regarding each student's progress.

The annual review of student academic progress is separate from course grades and milestone evaluations and serves as an ongoing mechanism to support student development, promote timely degree completion, and ensure students meet the academic and professional expectations of the doctoral program.

Deferral of Integrative Examination Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair, consistent, and compassionate process for doctoral students experiencing significant extenuating circumstances that may substantially impair their ability to complete the Integrative Examination during the scheduled examination period. This policy outlines the conditions under which a student may request a delayed or deferred Integrative Examination date. This policy is intended to balance student well-being with the academic rigor, integrity, and progression expectations of the doctoral program.

Expectation

Doctoral students are expected to complete the Integrative Examination during the examination period designated by the Graduate College of Social Work. However, in rare and exceptional circumstances, a student may request a postponement or deferral of the examination.

Approval of a deferred examination is not automatic and will only be granted when documented extenuating circumstances significantly interfere with the student's ability to adequately prepare for or complete the examination.

Eligible Extenuating Circumstances

Examples of circumstances that may warrant consideration for an examination deferral include, but are not limited to:

- Serious personal illness or injury
- Significant medical or mental health crisis
- Death or critical illness of an immediate family member or loved one
- Pregnancy, childbirth, or medically necessary recovery
- Caregiving responsibilities related to a serious family emergency
- Natural disasters or other catastrophic events
- Military deployment or mandatory service obligations
- Legal or immigration-related emergencies
- Other extraordinary circumstances deemed appropriate by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education

Students will be required to provide supporting documentation related to the circumstance described in their request.

Circumstances That Do Not Qualify as Extenuating Circumstances

Although this list is not exhaustive, the following circumstances do not constitute grounds for an Integrative Examination deferral:

- General work-related stress or workload demands
- Employment obligations or competing professional responsibilities
- Poor time management or lack of preparation
- Scheduling conflicts related to work meetings, conferences, or travel
- Routine academic stress or anxiety associated with doctoral education

- Voluntary extracurricular or organizational commitments

The doctoral program recognizes that many students balance significant professional and personal responsibilities while enrolled; however, routine occupational demands are considered part of the expected context of doctoral study.

Integrative Examination Deferral Request Procedures

Submission Timeline

Students requesting a deferral must submit a written request with supporting documentation to PhD Program Office as soon as reasonably possible and, whenever feasible, no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the start of the Integrative Examination period. In emergency situations that arise unexpectedly, requests submitted after this deadline **may still be** considered.

Required Documentation

Requests must include:

1. A written statement describing the extenuating circumstance.
2. The anticipated impact on examination preparation or completion.
3. The requested alternative examination timeframe.
4. Supporting documentation, when appropriate.

Examples of supporting documentation may include:

- Medical documentation.
- Obituary or funeral program.
- Documentation of hospitalization or emergency.
- Military orders.
- Legal or official documentation.

The program reserves the right to request additional documentation if necessary.

Review Process

Requests will be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education in consultation with the PhD committee.

Decisions will be based on:

- Severity and timing of the circumstance.
- Documentation provided.
- Student's academic standing and progression.
- Feasibility of arranging an alternative examination timeline.
- Equity and consistency across doctoral program policies.

Students will receive written notification regarding the decision within a reasonable timeframe following submission of all required materials.

Approved Deferrals

If approved, the PhD Program Office will establish:

- The revised Integrative Examination timeline.
- Any updated enrollment or milestone expectations.
- Conditions associated with the deferred examination period.
- Communication expectations with faculty and program leadership.

Deferrals are generally limited to one examination cycle unless additional extraordinary circumstances are demonstrated.

Academic Standing and Program Progression

An approved Integrative Examination deferral does not automatically extend:

- Funding timelines,
- Assistantship appointments,
- Degree completion deadlines, or
- Other university academic requirements.

Students remain responsible for complying with all university and doctoral program policies unless otherwise approved in writing.

Confidentiality

Information submitted as part of a deferral request will be treated with appropriate discretion and shared only with individuals who have a legitimate educational need to know consistent with university policy and applicable law.

Appeals

If a request for deferral is denied, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the decision. The appeal should include any additional supporting documentation or clarification relevant to the request.

Dissertation Committee Selection and Change Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear expectations and procedures for the selection, approval, and modification of dissertation committee membership, including the dissertation chair. Dissertation committees play a critical role in supporting doctoral students' scholarly development, ensuring methodological rigor, and guiding students through the successful completion of the dissertation.

Expectations

Students are responsible for assembling a dissertation committee that provides the expertise necessary to support their dissertation research. Committee membership should reflect the substantive, methodological, and theoretical needs of the proposed study. Students are expected to consult with their faculty advisor and prospective chair throughout the committee selection process.

Changes to committee membership may occur as students refine their research interests, require additional expertise, or experience faculty availability changes. All committee appointments and changes must be approved through the procedures outlined below.

Dissertation Committee Composition

A. Committee Chair

1. The dissertation chair serves as the primary mentor and advisor throughout the dissertation process.
2. The chair must:
 - a. Hold Graduate Faculty status as defined by university policy.
 - b. Be a member of the Graduate College of Social Work faculty unless otherwise approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.
 - c. Possess expertise relevant to the student's area of research.

B. Committee Members

1. The dissertation committee shall consist of a minimum of three members.
2. At least 2 members of the committee **must be** from the Graduate College of Social Work.
 - a. OPTION 1: One dissertation chair and two additional Graduate College of Social Work Faculty members
 - b. OPTION 2: One dissertation chair, one additional Graduate College of Social Work Faculty, and one external member (i.e., faculty from outside the Graduate College of Social Work).
3. Committee membership should collectively provide expertise in:
 - a. The substantive area of study;
 - b. Research methodology;
 - c. Relevant theory and/or practice domains.

4. Additional committee members may be added with approval from the Dissertation Chair.

C. Key Points to Note re: Assembling

1. Students shall consult with their chair regarding potential committee members.
2. Invitations to serve should be extended only after discussion with the chair.
3. Committee members must agree to serve before official appointment.
4. Final committee membership is subject to approval by the Dissertation Chair.

Selection of the Dissertation Chair

A. Timing

1. Students are encouraged to identify a dissertation chair no later than the completion of coursework and prior to beginning the dissertation proposal stage.

B. Process

1. Students should consult with faculty whose research interests align with the student's proposed area of inquiry.
2. Students must obtain the faculty member's agreement to serve as chair before submitting committee paperwork.
3. The appointment becomes official upon approval by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and completion of required university forms.

C. Faculty Considerations

1. Faculty members retain the right to:
 - a. Accept or decline requests to serve as chair.
 - b. Limit the number of dissertations chaired based on workload considerations.
 - c. Establish expectations regarding communication, timelines, and scholarly engagement.

Requesting Changes to Committee Membership

A. General Principles

1. Changes to committee membership should occur only when necessary and in a manner that minimizes disruption to the student's progress and dissertation timeline.
2. Acceptable reasons for requesting a change may include:
 - a. Changes in dissertation topic, methodology, or theoretical framework;
 - b. Need for additional content or methodological expertise;
 - c. Faculty retirement, resignation, leave, or unavailability;
 - d. Professional circumstances that substantially impede the working relationship;
 - e. Mutual agreement between the student and faculty member.
3. Changes should not be requested solely because of disagreements regarding scholarly feedback, academic standards, or dissertation quality expectations.

B. Student Initiated Requests

1. To request a change in committee membership, the student must:

- a. Consult with the Dissertation Chair (unless the requested change involves the chair).
- b. Submit a written request to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education that includes:
 - i. The requested change;
 - ii. The rationale for the request;
 - iii. The name of the proposed replacement member, if applicable;
 - iv. A plan for maintaining progress toward degree completion.
2. Obtain agreement from the proposed new committee member before submitting the request.

C. Faculty Initiated Requests

1. A faculty member may request withdrawal from a committee when circumstances prevent continued service. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.
2. When feasible, faculty members are expected to provide reasonable notice and assist in facilitating a smooth transition.

Changing the Dissertation Chair

A. Student Requests

1. Students seeking to change their dissertation chair must:
 - a. Meet with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education to discuss the request.
 - b. Identify a prospective replacement chair who has agreed to serve.
 - c. Submit a written request explaining the rationale for the change.

B. Review Process

1. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will review:
 - a. The student's progress toward degree completion;
 - b. The feasibility of the transition;
 - c. Potential impacts on dissertation continuity;
 - d. Input from relevant parties, as appropriate.

Approval is not automatic and will be based on the best interests of the student.

Transition Expectations

The outgoing chair is not obligated to continue supervising the dissertation after the transition becomes effective. Any prior feedback, approvals, or guidance remain part of the student's academic record.

Administrative Approval

All committee appointments and changes require formal approval by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and completion of any required university documentation before the changes become official.

Students should not assume committee changes have been approved until written confirmation has been received.

Dispute Resolution

- B.** Students who experience concerns related to dissertation committee functioning should first attempt to address the matter directly with the relevant faculty member(s) whenever appropriate.
- C.** If concerns remain unresolved, students may consult with:
 - 1. The Dissertation Chair;
 - 2. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education;
 - 3. Other university offices as appropriate under university policy.

The Graduate College of Social Work will seek to resolve concerns in a manner that supports student success, academic integrity, and professional conduct.

Changes to Dissertation Committee Membership Following Proposal Approval

A. Guiding Principle

- a. Following successful approval of the dissertation proposal, stability and continuity of committee membership are considered essential to supporting timely degree completion and maintaining the scholarly integrity of the dissertation process. Accordingly, changes to the dissertation chair or committee membership after proposal approval are expected to be rare and will be approved only under compelling circumstances.

B. Requests to Change Committee Members After Proposal Approval

- a. Students may request changes to committee membership after proposal approval when circumstances substantially affect the committee's ability to support completion of the dissertation. Examples may include:
 - i. Faculty retirement, resignation, extended leave, or departure from the university;
 - ii. Significant changes in the dissertation's methodological or substantive focus that require expertise not currently represented on the committee;
 - iii. Documented circumstances that prevent a committee member from fulfilling their responsibilities;
 - iv. Other exceptional circumstances deemed appropriate by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.
- b. Students requesting a committee change must submit a written request to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education describing:
 - i. The rationale for the requested change;
 - ii. The anticipated impact on dissertation progress;
 - iii. The qualifications of the proposed replacement member, if applicable; and
 - iv. Evidence that the proposed replacement has agreed to serve.

C. Requests to Change Dissertation Chair After Proposal Approval

- a. Because the dissertation chair provides continuity throughout the dissertation process, requests to change chairs after proposal approval will receive

heightened review and will be approved only under exceptional circumstances. Examples of circumstances that may warrant consideration include:

- i. Faculty retirement, resignation, or extended leave;
 - ii. Irreconcilable professional circumstances that significantly impede dissertation progress;
 - iii. Substantial changes to the dissertation requiring expertise beyond the chair's area of competence;
 - iv. Other extraordinary circumstances determined by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.
- b. Differences in scholarly opinion, disagreements regarding feedback, expectations for quality, pace of progress, or committee recommendations generally do not constitute sufficient grounds for a chair change.

D. Administrative Review

- a. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education may consult with the current chair, proposed chair, committee members, and other relevant parties when reviewing requests. In evaluating requests, consideration will be given to:
- i. The student's progress toward degree completion;
 - ii. Potential delays resulting from the proposed change;
 - iii. The feasibility of maintaining continuity in the dissertation process;
 - iv. The interests of the student, faculty, and doctoral program.

E. Effect of Approved Changes

- a. When a committee or chair change is approved after proposal approval:
- i. The newly appointed chair or committee member may require revisions to the approved proposal to ensure methodological, theoretical, or scholarly rigor.
 - ii. The new chair may request additional meetings, milestones, or documentation before authorizing progression to data collection, analysis, or defense.
 - iii. In exceptional circumstances, the student may be required to revisit aspects of the proposal review process if substantial changes to the study are proposed.
 - iv. Approval of a committee change does not guarantee that previously approved dissertation components will remain unchanged.

Timeline Expectations

Students are encouraged to carefully select committee members and a dissertation chair prior to proposal approval. Requests for committee changes submitted after proposal approval may extend dissertation timelines and should therefore be pursued only when necessary to support successful completion of the degree.

Students may not request a chair change within six months of a scheduled dissertation defense absent extraordinary circumstances.

Dissertation Defense Failure and Re-Examination Policy

Purpose

The dissertation defense is the final assessment of a doctoral student's ability to independently conduct, communicate, and defend original scholarly research. This policy outlines the procedures that apply when a doctoral student does not successfully pass the dissertation defense.

Outcomes of the Dissertation Defense

Following the dissertation defense, the Dissertation Committee shall determine one of the following outcomes:

1. **Pass:** The student successfully defends the dissertation and completes any required revisions.
2. **Pass with Revisions:** The student successfully defends the dissertation but must complete specified revisions before final approval.
3. **Fail:** The student does not demonstrate sufficient mastery of the dissertation research, methodology, findings, theoretical contributions, or scholarly significance to warrant approval of the dissertation.

A determination of failure requires a majority vote of the Dissertation Committee.

Re-Examination Policy (Second Attempt)

A student who fails the dissertation defense may be granted one opportunity to defend the dissertation a second time, subject to the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee and approval by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.

Eligibility for Re-Examination

To be eligible for a second defense, the Dissertation Committee must determine that:

- The identified deficiencies are remediable within a reasonable period of time;
- The student demonstrates the capacity to address the concerns raised during the defense; and
- The committee believes a successful defense is possible following substantial revision and additional preparation.

Requirements for Re-Examination

Students approved for a second defense must:

- Receive written feedback from the Dissertation Committee identifying the deficiencies that resulted in the failed defense;
- Develop a remediation plan in consultation with the Dissertation Chair;
- Complete all required revisions, analyses, or additional work specified by the committee; and
- Obtain written approval from the Dissertation Chair indicating readiness for re-examination.

Timeline

The second defense must occur no sooner than three (3) months and no later than twelve (12) months following the initial failed defense unless an alternative timeline is approved by the

Dissertation Chair and approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education due to documented extenuating circumstances.

Finality of the Second Defense

A student may attempt the dissertation defense no more than two times. The outcome of the second defense is final.

Dismissal Policy

A doctoral student shall be dismissed from the doctoral program under any of the following circumstances:

1. The student fails the dissertation defense on a second attempt.
2. The Dissertation Committee determines that the deficiencies identified during the first defense are so substantial that a second defense is not academically warranted.
3. The student fails to complete the required remediation plan or fails to schedule the second defense within the approved timeframe.
4. The student fails to maintain enrollment or satisfy doctoral program requirements while preparing for re-examination.

Dismissal decisions shall be communicated in writing by the Dissertation Chair and approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and will include information regarding appeal rights.

Alternative Options

In limited circumstances, and at the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee and approval of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, a student who fails the dissertation defense may be considered for alternative academic options when permitted by University policy.

Potential options may include:

- Substantial revision and resubmission of the dissertation prior to a second defense;
- Recommendation for a terminal master's degree when program and University requirements have been satisfied;
- Voluntary withdrawal from the doctoral program; or
- Other academic accommodations permitted under the Graduate School and University policies.

Alternative options are not guaranteed and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Appeals Process

A student may appeal a dismissal resulting from a failed dissertation defense only on procedural grounds. Grounds for appeal may include:

- Failure to follow established university, Graduate College, or doctoral program procedures;
- Evidence of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest that materially affected the outcome; or
- Significant procedural irregularities that compromised the fairness of the defense process.

Appeal Procedures

1. The student must follow the written appeal processes as outlined in the PhD program handbook.
2. Students must submit a written appeal to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.
3. The appeal must clearly identify the procedural concern and provide supporting documentation.
4. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will review the appeal and may consult with the Dissertation Committee, PhD Program Director, and Graduate College leadership as appropriate.
5. A written decision will be issued within thirty (30) business days whenever feasible.

An appeal may not be based solely on disagreement with the committee's academic judgment regarding the quality of the dissertation or defense performance.

Authority

The Graduate College of Social Work reserves the right to interpret and implement this policy in accordance with university graduate education policies and procedures. In the event of a conflict between this policy and university regulations, university policies shall prevail.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Sexual Harassment Policy is to promote and maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning, research, and work environment that is free from sexual harassment, discrimination, and misconduct. Consistent with University of Houston policies and applicable federal and state laws, this policy establishes expectations for professional conduct, affirms the University's commitment to preventing and addressing sexual harassment, and provides a framework for reporting, investigating, and resolving allegations. The policy also supports education and awareness efforts to ensure that all members of the academic community understand their rights, responsibilities, and role in fostering an environment characterized by dignity, respect, and equal opportunity. This Sexual Harassment Policy is subject to change based on review by the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, the Student Association and other appropriate officials.

Sexual Harassment

The University of Houston is committed to providing a professional working and learning environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is illegal. Sexual harassment on a university campus most often exploits a relationship between individuals of unequal power and authority (as, for example, between an employee and supervisor or between a student and teacher) but may also occur between student peers or employees of equal rank. At a university, sexual harassment also constitutes unprofessional conduct which compromises the University's commitment to the integrity of the learning process.

As such, the University of Houston will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment. Failure to investigate allegations of sexual harassment or failure to take timely corrective action is considered a violation of the University's sexual harassment policy and may also violate federal and state laws. Furthermore, this institution is committed to providing the training necessary to educate the staff, faculty, and students to understand and respect these policies and procedures. [More information can be found here.](#)

Statement of Non-Discrimination Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the Statement of Non-Discrimination Policy is to affirm the University of Houston's commitment to equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity for all students, faculty, staff, and members of the University community. This policy prohibits discrimination and harassment based on protected characteristics and ensures that all individuals have access to educational programs, services, activities, and employment opportunities in an environment that values dignity, respect, and fairness. The policy also informs students of their rights and the procedures available for addressing concerns or grievances related to alleged discrimination in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and University policies.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The University of Houston provides equal treatment and opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability. Additionally, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression."

The University of Houston provides a mechanism for students to address grievances that arise over alleged discrimination as prohibited by Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and all other federal and state regulations.

[More information can be found here.](#)

Student Grievance and Appeal Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of the Student Grievance and Appeal Policy is to provide doctoral students with a fair, transparent, and timely process for addressing concerns, grievances, and appeals related to academic, administrative, or professional matters within the Graduate College of Social Work. This policy ensures that students have the opportunity to seek resolution of disputes through established informal and formal procedures while promoting respectful communication, due process, and equitable treatment for all parties involved. The policy also outlines the mechanisms for review and appeal, safeguarding students' rights while maintaining the integrity and accountability of the doctoral program and the University.

Student Grievance and Appeal

Students have the right to appeal any action they feel is unfair or in error. It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with the various policies and regulations of the University and the GCSW in order to meet the imposed conditions.

A grievance is an actual incident, or issue, which can be substantiated, and is regarded by a student as a just cause for protest. Persons against whom a Grievance may be submitted include a classroom instructor, faculty advisor, administrator, or other faculty member of the Graduate College of Social Work.

Informal Grievance Procedure

- A [Notice of Intent](#) (see [Appendix F1](#)) to file a grievance must be submitted to the Office of the Dean, GCSW, within thirty (30) business days after the date of the incident giving rise to the grievance, or within thirty (30) business days of the time when the student became aware, or should have become aware, that a grievable incident has occurred, whichever occurs first.
- When the Notice of Intent is submitted, the student will receive a copy of this policy, together with a [Formal Grievance Cover Sheet](#) (See [Appendix F2](#)) from the Deans' Office. Written acknowledgement of receipt of these items is required.
- Upon completion and return to the Deans' Office, a copy of the Notice of Intent will be transmitted to the involved Faculty Member.
- After a Notice of Intent has been submitted, the student must attempt to resolve the issue informally before she or he may file a formal grievance.
- At a minimum, the student must meet with the respondent to discuss the matter in a good faith effort on both parts and to attempt a resolution.
- Additional attempts to resolve the issue informally may be demonstrated by, but are not limited to, the following:
 - A meeting between the student and their faculty advisor, with or without the respondent present.
 - A meeting between the student and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, with or without the respondent and the student's faculty advisor.
 - Participation in an alternative dispute resolution such as mediation.

Informal Grievance Outcomes

- If the issue is resolved informally, the Notice of Intent will be destroyed, and no record will be maintained.
- If the issue is not resolved informally, the student may (1) decide to terminate the process altogether, OR (2) proceed to file a formal grievance.
- If the student decides to terminate the process, this will be considered a final action that cannot be reversed later.

Filing a Formal Grievance

If the decision is to proceed with a Formal Grievance, a written statement, accompanied by a Grievance Cover Sheet, must be submitted to the Office of the Dean, GCSW, within sixty (60) business days from the date of submitting the Intent to File. The statement should include:

1. A one-page (maximum) description identifying the grievable issue or incident, including date and place (if applicable).
2. The name of the respondent (i.e., against whom the grievance is being filed).
3. The names of any witnesses to the incident (if applicable).
4. Evidence to support the grievance.
5. The outcome desired by the student.

Forming a Committee

- Upon receipt of the formal grievance statement and cover sheet, the Dean of the GCSW, or their designee, will--within 10 business days--appoint an ad hoc Student Grievance Committee ("the Committee").
- The Committee will consist of three (3) full-time GCSW faculty and two (2) GCSW students. Faculty who holds administrative appointments of Associate or Assistant Dean are not eligible to serve.
- The Committee will convene within 10 business days from the time of its composition in order to select a chair and the chair must be a faculty member.
- The Committee chair will identify potential hearing dates with the Committee and the student filing the grievance. Reasonable attempts to schedule the hearing will be made by all parties. However, the hearing must be held within 20 business days from the date the formal grievance was filed.
- The chair will inform all parties (including the Dean of the GCSW) of the date, time and location of the hearing.
- The student has the right to withdraw their grievance up to 72 hours prior to the scheduled hearing but must do so in writing to the Dean of the GCSW. In this case, the Dean will notify the Committee and the respondent, and no further action will be taken at the college level.

Hearing Procedure

- The hearing will be called to order by the chair who will explain the hearing procedures to the student, the Committee, and the respondent.
 - The hearing is closed; only the Committee, the student, and the respondent are present, unless witnesses have been identified and called in advance to provide additional information. The student may bring a support person (not an attorney) to the hearing, but this person is not permitted to participate in any part of the discussions.
 - The student will be given ten (10) minutes in which to make an opening statement and present their evidence.
 - The respondent is given ten (10) minutes to respond and to provide evidence refuting the allegation(s).
-

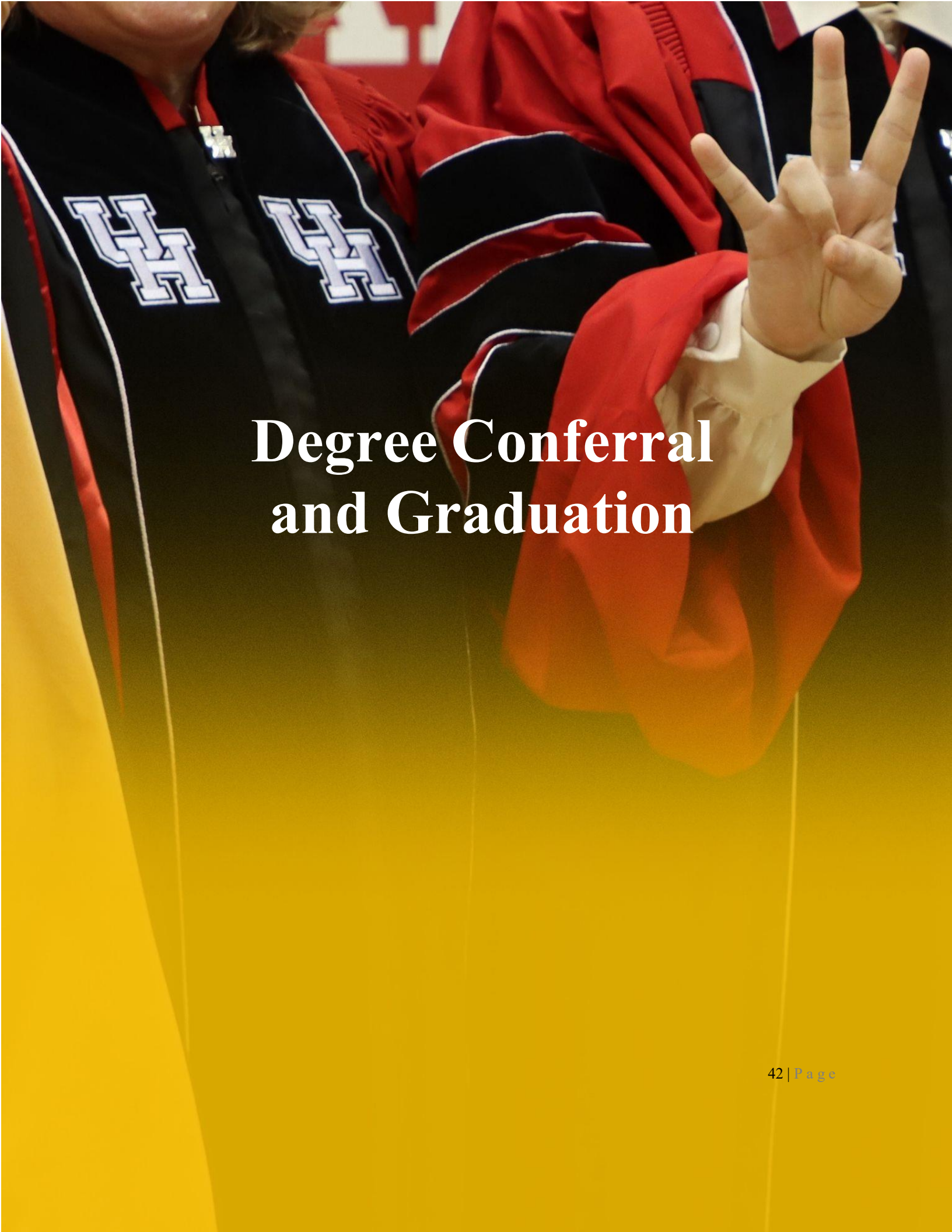
- The Committee is given the opportunity to question the parties or to request further evidence/testimony.
- Both the student and the respondent are given an opportunity to make brief closing statements.
- All parties, except Committee members, are dismissed.
- The Committee deliberates, with the Chair presiding.
- No tape or video recording of the hearing will be made without written permission from all parties and will only be permitted when the Committee feels it is necessary to do so.

Formal Grievance Outcomes

- The findings and directives of the Committee are final.
- Within 5 business days of the close of the hearing, the Committee chair will transmit a written report to the Dean of the GCSW. The report must include a summary of the grievance, the respondent's rebuttal, and the Committee's findings and directives.
- The Committee may find in favor of the student and direct the respondent to take appropriate corrective action.
- The Committee may find in favor of the respondent and recommend no corrective action.
- Within 5 business days of receipt of the Committee's report, the Dean transmits the report to the student and the respondent.
- Grievance Reports will be held in the Office of the Dean, GCSW, for a period corresponding to the UH Document Retention Policy, after which time they will be destroyed.

Appeal Process

- If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Committee, he or she may appeal in writing to the Dean of the GCSW. The Dean has the authority to reverse the Committee's decision only if there were serious errors in process or procedure that may have altered the final outcome.
- If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal to the Dean, he or she may petition for a university level review by the Graduate School which is under the purview of the Dean of the Graduate School. This petition for appeal must be made in writing and filed with the Dean of Graduate School within 30 calendar days of the final disposition in the GCSW.



Degree Conferral and Graduation

Degree Conferral and Graduation

Doctoral students who expect to graduate in a given semester must be enrolled in the university during that semester. There are several steps in this process, outlined below, that must be completed no later than the deadlines shown on the University's Academic Calendar

Graduation Application

- 1) Communicate with dissertation chair and the doctoral program office intention to graduate within the first three weeks of a long semester (fall or spring) or within the first week of the 1st session of summer school, by completing the [Intention to Graduate Form](#) (see Appendix E1).
- 2) Apply for graduation online
 - a. During the "regular filing period," there is a standard non-refundable application fee. There is an increased non-refundable application fee during the "late filing period." The deadlines for the filing periods are published on the University's Academic Calendar. If a student does not fulfill all requirements for graduation in the semester expected another application and fee for graduation in a future semester must be submitted.

Dissertation Completion

- 1) Schedule the oral defense date with dissertation chair and committee members. This defense date should take place in enough time prior to the commencement date for the student to make revisions and upload the final document to Vireo. Final dates to upload the dissertation is published on the University website. (A timeline should be developed with the dissertation chair to ensure that committee members have sufficient time to read the dissertation prior to the oral defense.)
- 2) Students should familiarize themselves with the process of submission of electronic dissertations using Vireo. Instructions are available on [the Graduate School webpage](#) or from the Ph.D. Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services.
- 3) Successfully conduct the dissertation oral defense. Only a committee recommendation of "Approved with no revisions or minor revisions is considered a successful defense, which is required to participate in the commencement ceremony.

Conferring of Degree/Degree Award

- 1) Degrees are conferred by the University of Houston for Spring, Summer and Fall graduates
- 2) All degree requirements must be met before the degree is conferred/mailed to the graduate. This includes the graduation application, a degree audit, financial clearance, successful defense of the dissertation and completion of the electronic dissertation submission process. There may also be some financial aid clearances; however, this differs on an individual basis.

Commencement Ceremony Participation

- 1) The GCSW Commencement Ceremony is held yearly at the end of the spring semester in May.
- 2) In order to participate in the GCSW Commencement Ceremony, candidates must have completed ALL steps indicated above in the Application to Graduate AND Dissertation Completion sections.
- 3) Students whose degrees are conferred during the Summer or Fall semesters many participate in the next/following commencement ceremony, the subsequent month of May. They must inform the PhD Program Director of their intention to participate in the ceremony.

Release and Disclosure of Student Records

Transcripts may be requested through the PeopleSoft student account or requested in person. (Note: There is a fee for this request.) The GCSW cannot issue or request transcripts.

A woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark jacket with a red 'CH' logo, is pointing her right index finger at a large, multi-panel digital map display. The map shows various colored regions, with some areas highlighted in red. The background is a solid red color. The text 'Graduate Assistantships' is overlaid in white serif font.

Graduate Assistantships

Assistantships Overview

Doctoral Research Assistantships

The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) is committed to supporting doctoral students' scholarly development through funded research assistantships that provide financial support, professional socialization, and intensive research training. Research assistantships are designed to complement students' academic coursework and individualized research training by providing hands-on experience in the conduct of externally funded and faculty-led research.

Eligibility and Appointment

Research assistantships are awarded to students admitted to the Ph.D. Program who maintain full-time enrollment and remain in good academic standing.

Students who receive a doctoral assistantship are guaranteed funding for up to three academic years, contingent upon:

- Satisfactory academic progress in the Ph.D. Program;
- Successful performance of assistantship responsibilities;
- Compliance with Graduate College and university policies; and
- Continued availability of funding.

Assistantship appointments begin on **September 1** and conclude on **May 31** of each academic year.

Enrollment Requirements

Students holding a doctoral assistantship must maintain full-time enrollment by registering for a minimum of **nine (9) credit hours during the fall and spring semesters** unless otherwise approved by the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean and/or the Graduate School.

Compensation

In exchange for assistantship responsibilities averaging **twenty (20) hours per week**, students receive a **nine-month stipend of \$1,826.21 per month before taxes**, paid in accordance with university payroll policies.

Students should understand that the assistantship is both a source of financial support and a professional training experience intended to develop advanced research competencies needed for academic, research, and leadership careers in social work.

Research Mentorship and Supervision

Each student is assigned to a faculty member who serves as the student's assistantship supervisor and research mentor. Assistantship assignments are based on faculty research needs, student interests, funding availability, and the educational goals of the doctoral program.

Research assistantship supervisors are responsible for:

- Providing clear expectations regarding assistantship responsibilities;
- Offering regular supervision and feedback;
- Supporting the development of research knowledge and skills;
- Evaluating assistantship performance annually or as needed; and
- Facilitating professional development opportunities when appropriate.

Students are expected to communicate regularly with their supervisor and maintain a professional and collaborative working relationship.

Assistantship Responsibilities

Research assistantship duties will vary depending on the faculty member's research agenda and funded projects. Typical responsibilities may include:

- Conducting literature reviews and evidence syntheses;
- Assisting with research design and methodology;
- Supporting data collection and management activities;
- Cleaning, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data;
- Preparing institutional review board (IRB) materials;
- Assisting with grant development and proposal preparation;
- Contributing to manuscripts, reports, conference presentations, and other scholarly products;
- Participating in research team meetings and project-related activities; and
- Performing other research-related duties that support the student's scholarly development.

Assistantship responsibilities should be educationally meaningful and aligned with developing competencies (see individual development plan and competency matrix in the policies and procedures section of this handbook for guidance) expected of future social work scholars and researchers.

Professional Expectations

Students receiving assistantship support are expected to:

- Devote an average of twenty (20) hours per week to assistantship duties;
- Fulfill assigned responsibilities in a timely and professional manner;
- Attend scheduled meetings and complete assigned tasks;
- Maintain confidentiality regarding research participants, research data, and project materials;
- Adhere to university policies governing research integrity and responsible conduct of research;
- Demonstrate professionalism, collegiality, and ethical behavior in all research activities; and
- Respond constructively to supervision and performance feedback.

As emerging scholars, doctoral students are expected to progressively assume greater responsibility and independence in research activities as their skills develop.

Performance Review and Continuation of Funding

Continuation of assistantship funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance in both academic and assistantship responsibilities. Concerns regarding performance will be addressed through consultation among the student, faculty supervisor, and Ph.D. Program leadership.

Assistantships may be modified, reassigned, reduced, or terminated if a student:

- Fails to maintain good academic standing;
- Does not make satisfactory progress toward degree completion;
- Fails to fulfill assistantship obligations;
- Violates university or research compliance policies; or
- Otherwise, does not meet the expectations of the appointment.

Professional Development

Doctoral research assistantships are intended to prepare students for careers as independent scholars. Consistent with the mission of an R1 research institution, students are encouraged to use the assistantship experience to develop expertise in research design, grant writing, scholarly publishing, interdisciplinary collaboration, and dissemination of research findings. Students should work with their supervisors to identify opportunities that advance their long-term research and career goals.



Fees, Financial Support, Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF)

Graduate Tuition, Fees, and Expenses

Social Work doctoral students are assessed “Graduate” academic fees. Fees are subject to change without notice, so be sure to check for the most current information.

Billing and Fee Payment

All bills are issued through the Student Business Services Department and reflect charges posted to the university’s centralized billing system by the various departments across campus. Enrolled students’ statement of account will only be posted electronically in myUH—making bills available online at all times.

Payment Plans

1. Installment Payment Plan: This plan is available to any student unable to pay the full amount due by the university due date.
2. Emergency Deferment Plan: This plan defers the payment of all the current semester’s tuition and mandatory fees.
3. Short-Term Deferment Plan: This plan defers the payment of all the current semester’s tuition and fees.
4. Book Loans: This plan, found on the optional fee page at myUH, provides students with a short-term book loan to assist in buying books.

Financial Support for Doctoral Students

UH GCSW makes every effort to assist students in obtaining financial support for their graduate education. We offer numerous scholarships, stipend programs, assistantships, and fellowships to students as funds are available. Any non-Texas resident who works 20 hours per week, receives a scholarship of \$1,000 or more, or receives GTF will receive in-state (resident) tuition rates.

A variety of grants and loans are available through the University of Houston Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. For additional information, go to <https://www.uh.edu/financial/> or call (713) 743-9051.

Financial Aid

A variety of grants and loans are available through the University of Houston Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid located in the Welcome Center, at the corner of University Avenue and Calhoun. For additional information, visit them <https://www.uh.edu/financial/>. To apply for federal student loans and grants, visit <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> or call 1-800- 433-3243. The UH school code for FAFSA is 003652. If needed, short term loans are also available.

Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF)

GTF is awarded competitively and based on the availability of funds yearly from the state.

The Graduate Tuition Fellowship (GTF) is a competitive award program that covers the costs of in-state tuition and mandatory university and college fees for qualified Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) students, up to **21 semester credit hours per academic year, pending funding**. Qualified Ph.D. students must be enrolled full time and in good academic standing according to the guidelines set by the GCSW and the University of Houston Graduate School.

Students will receive a resident tuition waiver for at least nine (9) credit hours. However, this waiver does not include the cost of differential designated tuition or mandatory fees charged by UH or the college. The student will be responsible for these costs. Non-residents benefit additionally by receiving in-state tuition rates. GTF students must enroll for a minimum of nine (9) hours each fall and spring semester. [Please see the GCSW GTF policy here.](#)

GTF Student Eligibility Requirements:

1. A student must have an undergraduate degree or its equivalent and be admitted into the Ph.D. Program. Students classified as post-baccalaureate (PB), pre-grad or non-degree objective (NDO) are not eligible.
2. Students entering a PhD, DMA, or MFA program directly from a baccalaureate program or with a Master's degree that is outside of the academic discipline to be pursued at the UH qualify for up to twelve (12) semesters of GTF funding.
 - a. Requests for an exception from this requirement must be requested through a Graduate & Professional Student Petition and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis
3. Students entering the University of Houston with a master's degree that is in the same academic field as the PhD, DMA, or MFA program qualify for up to eight (8) semesters of GTF funding.
 - a. Requests for an exception from this requirement must be requested through a Graduate & Professional Student Petition and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis
4. A student must be registered full-time, which is nine (9) semester credit hours per academic semester at a minimum (Fall and Spring). A reduced course load may be allowed as an exception in the last (graduating) semester of the program and must be discussed with the PhD program; however, eligibility of this exception must be requested with a General Petition to the Graduate School.
5. Minimum academic standing: Students qualifying for GTF must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0. In addition, GTF recipients must show satisfactory progress in course work and timely progress in completing degree requirements as defined by the GCSW.
6. A student who does not meet all the criteria for eligibility throughout the entire semester will have the fellowship revoked retroactively and will be billed for full tuition and fees.

Graduate Life at the GCSW and University Resources



Navigating Graduate Life at the GCSW

Campus Safety

The University of Houston Police Department (UHPD) strives to enable students, faculty, staff and visitors to be safe while pursuing their on-campus endeavors. The campus is situated in an urban environment and is not immune to crime. UHPD-recommended campus safety guidelines and information on reducing your vulnerability to crime are available at <https://uh.edu/cougarsafe/>. The Police Department's crime prevention guidelines provide additional information on staying safe.

UH offers a security escort service, which is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability, either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety, please call 832-842-2929. Arrangements may be made for special needs.

UH Emergency Alert Notification System

In the event of a campus emergency, The University of Houston will activate the UH Emergency Alert Notification System to provide critical information. The UH Emergency Alert Notification System utilizes the following methods to send UH Emergency Alerts:

- The UH Emergency Operations Center website: www.uh.edu/emergency
- Emergency Management Bureau Facebook page
- Emergency Management Bureau Twitter page (@TDEM)
- E-mail
- Phone
- SMS Text Messaging
- Alertus beacons
- Outdoor Warning Sirens (if shelter-in-place or lockdown action required)

Campus Student Systems

AccessUH

AccessUH is your gateway to the University of Houston's information and computing resources. Log into AccessUH with your CougarNet or myUH (PeopleSoft) UserID and password and you will get immediate access to other critical systems that you use on a daily basis.

Blackboard

Blackboard is a Web-based learning management system (LMS) designed to provide a space for face-to-face course supplementation. Blackboard provides many types of tools and features for enriching the learning experience by providing tools for displaying content, interacting with students, and assessing students' work.

Computer Accounts

All students are required to set up a university computer account. Moreover, doctoral students are expected to have an adequate level of computer literacy. Instructions for establishing this account are provided during New Student Orientation.

MyUH Self Service (PeopleSoft)

MyUH (PeopleSoft) will be your connection to managing a wide range of activities—checking admission status, managing and registering for courses, seeing grades, making payments, reserving parking, resetting passwords, viewing academic records and financial aid, and much more.

CougarOne Card

Students will need to obtain a CougarOne Card, the official picture identification card for the University of Houston. A fee is charged to all enrolled students each semester and is included on the tuition and fee bill. It is recommended that all students, faculty, and staff obtain a card and take advantage of university services. “Card Access Control” is required to enter some University of Houston campus buildings and rooms (i.e., Central Computing Site, Residential Life and Housing, Intramural Facilities, Scholars Community Program, GCSW Student Lounge, GCSW Computer Learning Center, etc.). To obtain a CougarOne Card, go to the Welcome Center (at the Parking Garage), Suite 101—a photo identification such as a driver's license, military ID, or Passport is required. Please call (832) 842-2273 for additional information about these services.

Mental Health, Health, and Wellness Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services

Students consistently visit the University of Houston's Counseling and Psychological Services department (CAPS). They come from very diverse backgrounds and seek our services when they are experiencing stress, hopelessness, loneliness, anxiety, depression, difficulty adjusting, relationship issues, identity questions, and a variety of other concerns.

CAPS staff members provide a safe, confidential atmosphere where you can talk about your current situation in the context of your personal history and life experiences. To ensure a safe environment for students to explore their personal concerns all counseling services are confidential.

A variety of services are offered including:

- Daytime and after-hours crisis intervention
- Individual & Couples Counseling
- Group Counseling
- Free weekly Food for Thought Workshops
- Consultation to the Campus Community

All currently enrolled students at the University of Houston are eligible for clinical services at CAPS. Initial Consultation (ICON) appointments are always free for currently enrolled UH students.

Health Center

The Health Center offers general medical services as well as several specialty clinics. The General Medicine Clinic is open to all currently enrolled UH students and faculty/staff. All Specialty Clinics services are exclusively for students, and include:

- General Medicine Clinic
- Men's Clinic
- Orthopedic Clinic
- Psychiatry Clinic
- Women's Clinic
- Travel Services

Student health insurance is also available through the university. More information can be found here: <http://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/insurance/>

Recreation Center

The Department of Campus Recreation is committed to enhancing the quality of life and learning for UH students through recreational/fitness programs, services and facilities in support of the mission and values of the University of Houston. A few of the activities offered include:

- Group fitness classes
- Personal training
- Intramural sports
- Swimming (indoor and outdoor)
- Climbing wall
- Adventure trips
- Equipment rentals

Membership to the Campus Recreation Center is included in your student fees.

Parking and Transportation Services

Parking and Transportation

Doctoral students are responsible for securing and maintaining appropriate parking and transportation arrangements throughout their enrollment in the Ph.D. Program. Because research assistantship responsibilities, coursework, teaching activities, research meetings, and University events may require regular campus attendance, students should ensure reliable transportation to and from campus.

Students who park on campus must obtain a valid parking permit through their **Parking Self-Service account** available via **AccessUH**. Parking permits are administered by the [University of Houston Parking and Transportation Services](#) and must be purchased, registered, and displayed in accordance with University regulations.

Students may transfer their parking permit to another vehicle, when necessary, provided the transfer is completed through the University's parking management system and complies with Parking and Transportation Services policies.

Parking availability, permit options, regulations, enforcement procedures, shuttle services, and transportation resources are subject to change. Students are responsible for reviewing current policies and maintaining updated vehicle information in their Parking Self-Service account. Failure to comply with university parking regulations may result in citations, fines, towing, or other administrative actions.

[A current campus parking map](#) and additional transportation information are available through University of Houston Parking and Transportation Services: <https://www.uh.edu/parking/parking-on-campus/maps/>

Assistantship-Related Travel

Students serving as research assistants may occasionally be required to attend meetings, research activities, community-based research sites, training opportunities, conferences, or other program-related events. Unless otherwise specified by the supervising faculty member or funded project, students are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from these locations. Reimbursement for approved research-related travel is subject to University and project-specific funding policies.

Student Parking Options

1. **Garage Permits:** Vehicles displaying a student garage permit must park in the student section of the specified garage weekdays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 5 p.m. and all day on weekends, this permit becomes valid in student and economy lots. Annual permits expire on August 15 of the academic year issued and semester permits expire as follows: Fall-December 31; Spring-May 31; Summer-August 15 of the academic year issued. Garage permits will be declared 'sold-out' once all available student spaces have been purchased.

2. Student Permits: Valid in student or economy parking lots. Not valid in restricted resident hall parking lots, or in faculty/staff parking lots before 7 p.m. Commuter permits expire as follows: Fall/Spring- May 31; Fall-December 31; Spring-May 31 of the academic year issued.
3. Economy Permits: Valid in economy parking lots only. The economy lots tend to be further out from the center of campus. Expires on August 31st of academic year issued.

More information about parking and permits can be found at <https://www.uh.edu/parking/>

Student Involvement and Student Support Services

Student Involvement

While there is no formal GCSW Doctoral Student Association, there is a GCSW Student Association which includes a Doctoral Student Representative position. This position is determined by nominating a doctoral student, and a voting process that the Student Association holds in late spring. In addition, two other school-wide committees exist that doctoral students can be elected to serve on. The first representative is a voting member of the GCSW Ph.D. Program Committee. The second representative is a member of the School Council, the governing body of the GCSW.

Student Support Services

Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (The Dart Center)

The University of Houston is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities, including students who have learning disabilities, health impairments, psychiatric disabilities, and/or other disabilities.

Students who have disabilities are encouraged to register with the Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center as early as possible in their academic careers. Specific documentation from qualified health care providers will be required. Documentation requirements for disability eligibility may be obtained by contacting the Center or by visiting the Center's website: <https://www.uh.edu/accessibility/index.php>

Students whose disabilities may require some type of accommodations, including course load modification, exam modification, or other accommodations, should contact the Center and discuss the availability of services such as readers, interpreters, or note-takers and the process for requesting accommodations. The Center for Students with Disabilities will recommend accommodations as early as possible each semester. Appropriate accommodations are determined on an individual basis through a team approach involving the Center, the student, the Academic Accommodations Evaluation Committee, and at times instructors, as appropriate. A student who believes that an instructor has unfairly denied an accommodation request may appeal to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and the PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services, the Dean of the College, and the Provost, in that order.

Services are provided to student athletes who have disabilities at the Athletics/Alumni Center, in addition to the main Center office. The staff may be reached at Athletics Department at (713) 743-9254.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) conducts psychological and learning disability assessments. There may be a waiting list and/or a charge for these services.

The University of Houston campus is accessible via ramps, curb-cuts, free inner-campus disabled parking, Braille signs, TTY's, etc. Attendant Care Services are available through the University Health Center by calling (713) 743- 5112. Students who identify barrier problems should bring those to the attention of the Section 504/ADA Coordinator at the Office of Affirmative Action at (713) 743-8835, and/or the Justin Dart Jr. Center for Students with Disabilities.

Women and Gender Resource Center

The mission of the Women and Gender Resource Center (WGRC) is to promote gender equity, gender justice, and student success at the University of Houston through advocacy, education, empowerment, and support services.

More information can be found at their website: <http://www.uh.edu/wgrc/>

Resources provided include:

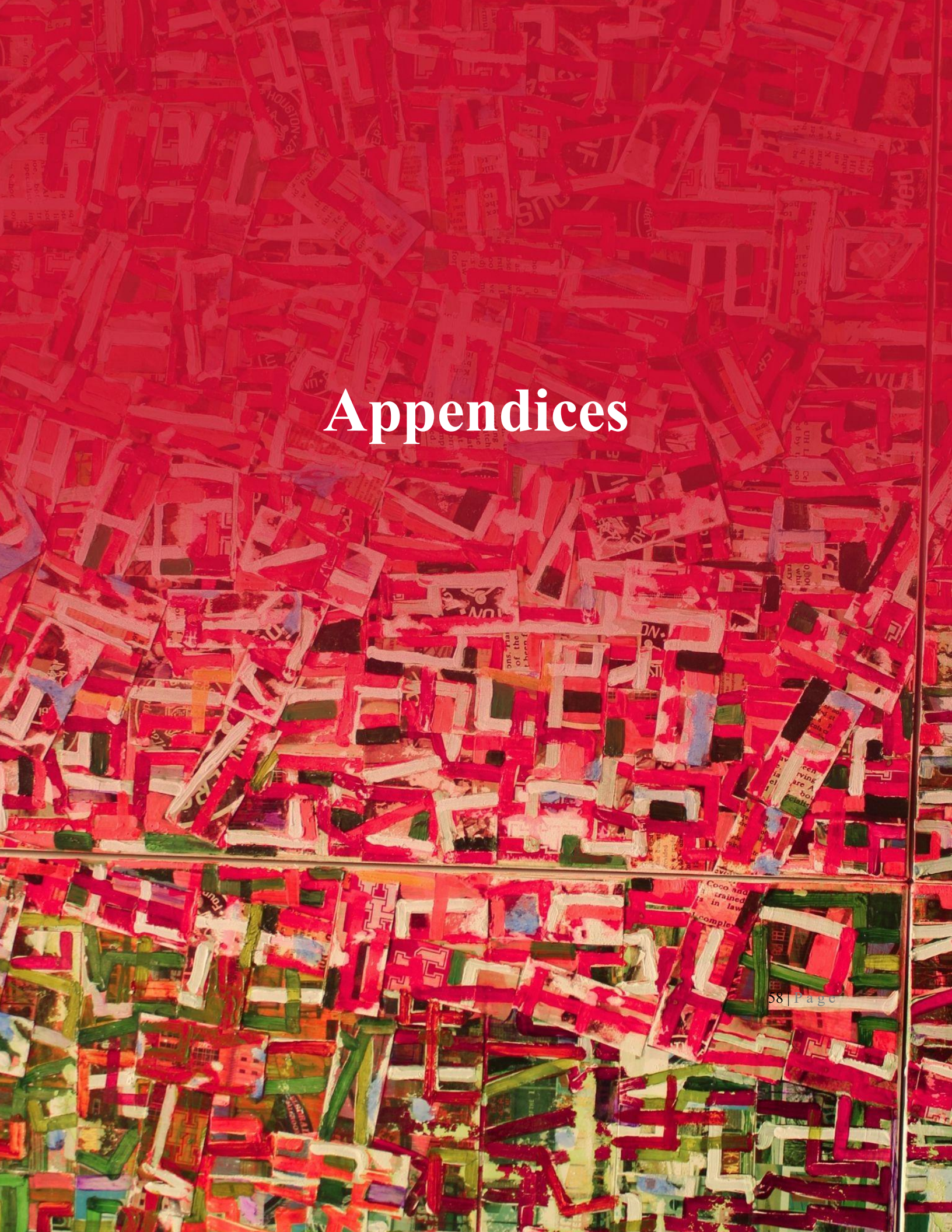
- Information and referral services
- Mother's Rooms and lactation information
- Free supplies
- Computers
- Library
- Dress for Success: member organization that provides business attire to women in need

Graduate Student Parent Resources

Graduate Student Parent Resources

Parenting and going to school simultaneously is difficult to juggle. Both can be full-time jobs, and this is often overwhelming, especially for single parents. Many college parents are forced to delegate their time between parenting, academics, employment, family commitments, and a host of other responsibilities. However, UH has resources in place to help you succeed:

- [Cougar Parent and Family Engagement Center](#)
 - The Cougar Parent and Family Engagement Center focuses on empowering parents, families, and student caregivers with resources, guidance, and meaningful connection as they navigate the university experience.
- [Children's Learning Center \(CLC\)](#)
 - The Children's Learning Center (CLC) provides a nationally accredited exemplary early childhood program that supports the student, staff, and faculty of the University of Houston. The Children's Learning Center has two convenient locations on campus with a combined capacity of 196 children.



Appendices

APPENDIX A1
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social
Work Ph.D. Program

DOCTORAL INDEPENDENT STUDY IN SOCIAL WORK PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Definition and Description: Independent Study (I.S.) provides the student with the opportunity to work with a faculty member on a specific topic or issue of interest that might not otherwise be available in a structured course. Independent study courses are typically not available to students until they have completed their first year of doctoral course work. Independent study courses count toward the degree as would any elective. Grading criteria for this course will either be a letter grade or S/U.

To plan an Independent Study, follow these steps:

1. Contact the faculty member you wish to work with on this course and present your idea(s) for an Independent Study. Discuss what you would like to study and how you propose to approach the learning process. If you and the faculty member are in agreement, you will need to develop a detailed 1–2-page, single-spaced proposal that includes the following:
 - a. Statement of Purpose – what do you plan to study and why?
 - b. Identify the specific learning objectives you will pursue.
 - c. List specific texts or other readings you will complete.
 - d. Identify the outcome or product – e.g., formal paper, research proposal, data analysis plan, annotated bibliography, program evaluation report, etc.
 - e. Identify the grading or evaluation criteria for the project (i.e., how will your grade be determined? What percentage will come from the final product, from meetings with the faculty, from other sources?)
 - f. Indicate how often you and the faculty member plan to meet over the course of the Independent Study.
2. After the supervising faculty has reviewed your proposal, you must obtain his/her signature on the form to indicate faculty approval. The form also requires the student's signature and PeopleSoft ID number.
3. **DEADLINE INFORMATION** – Proposals should be completed, signed and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office during the official pre-registration or registration period in a given semester. Completed applications for an Independent Study or petitions for courses as doctoral standing must be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office prior to course enrollment for the Ph.D. Associate Dean's approval. The Dean will also sign the final approval before the Ph.D. Program Office assigns a course and section number for the student's course registration.

APPENDIX B1
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

INDEPENDENT STUDY ENROLLMENT REQUEST FORM

Student Name: _____

PeopleSoft ID #: _____ Email Address: _____

Faculty Member Overseeing Course: _____

I would like to enroll in:

_____ Independent Study: SOCW 8398 (3 SCHs)

_____ Independent Study: SOCW 8298 (2 SCHs)

_____ Independent Study: SOCW 8198 (1 SCH)

Year/Semester Course to Be Taken: _____

NOTE: If requesting a summer course, discuss with the instructor the summer session for enrollment to complete the independent study (Summer I, II, III, or IV). Please indicate the summer session # and the year. Refer to the university calendar/summer course schedule for session dates. This information must be noted in order to process this request. **A complete proposal, including evaluation criteria, must be included.**

My Independent Study proposal is attached, and I have obtained the signature of the faculty member.

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

FACULTY SIGNATURE

DATE

APPROVAL:

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN SIGNATURE

DATE

ASSIGNED COURSE AND SECTION NUMBER:

Approved to enroll in the following course:

SOCW _____ Section # _____

ADMINISTRATOR (PRINT)

DATE

APPENDIX B2
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

RESEARCH INTERNSHIP ENROLLMENT REQUEST FORM

Student Name: _____

PeopleSoft ID #: _____ Email Address: _____

Faculty Member Overseeing Course: _____

I would like to enroll in Elective Research Internship: SOCW 8304 (3 SCHs)

Year/Semester Course to Be Taken: _____

NOTE: If requesting a summer course, discuss with the instructor the summer session for enrollment to complete the internship (Summer I, II, III, or IV). Please indicate the summer session # and the year. Refer to the university calendar/summer course schedule for session dates. This information must be noted in order to process this request.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR COURSE: By the end of the semester, the student will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: List specific products upon which grade will be based (examinations, papers, etc.):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

FACULTY SIGNATURE

DATE

APPROVAL:

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN SIGNATURE

DATE

ASSIGNED COURSE AND SECTION NUMBER:

Approved to enroll in the following course:

SOCW _____ Section # _____

ADMINISTRATOR (PRINT)

DATE

APPENDIX B3
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

TEACHING INTERNSHIP ENROLLMENT REQUEST FORM

Student Name: _____

PeopleSoft ID #: _____ Email Address: _____

Faculty Member Overseeing Course: _____

I would like to enroll in Teaching Internship I: SOCW 8303 (3 SCHs)

Year/Semester Course to Be Taken: _____

NOTE: If requesting a summer course, discuss with the instructor the summer session for enrollment to complete the internship (Summer I, II, III, or IV). Please indicate the summer session # and the year. Refer to the university calendar/summer course schedule for session dates. This information must be noted in order to process this request.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR COURSE: By the end of the semester, the student will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: List specific products upon which grade will be based (examinations, papers, etc.):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

FACULTY SIGNATURE

DATE

APPROVAL:

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN SIGNATURE

DATE

ASSIGNED COURSE AND SECTION NUMBER:

Approved to enroll in the following course:

SOCW _____ Section # _____

ADMINISTRATOR (PRINT)

DATE

APPENDIX B4
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

FORM C
STUDENT REQUEST TO FORM A PH.D. DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

TO: The Ph.D. Program Associate Dean

FROM: _____
STUDENT NAME (Please Print)

Proposed Dissertation Title: _____

This form requires the original signature & date of the Committee Chairperson and each Committee member.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

APPROVED BY: _____

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN	DATE
------------------------------	------

APPENDIX B5
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

FORM D
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE/APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

TO: The Ph.D. Program Associate Dean

FROM: _____
STUDENT NAME (Please Print)

Proposed Dissertation Title: _____

THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL IS: *(Please indicate)*

- ☐ Approved in its present form.
- ☐ Approved with minor revisions. [The Committee must provide written feedback identifying the needed revisions.]
- ☐ Deferred approval pending major revisions. [The Committee must provide written feedback identifying the needed revisions, delineating the deficiencies and whether a second defense is required.]
- ☐ Rejected as unacceptable.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

SIGNATURE & DATE	PRINT NAME
------------------	------------

APPENDIX B6
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

FORM F
STUDENT REQUEST TO TAKE A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

TO: The Ph.D. Program Associate Dean

FROM: _____
STUDENT NAME (Print)

DATE

I am formally requesting permission to take a leave of absence from the Doctoral Program for the following semester:

_____,
SEMESTER YEAR

I will return to the Doctoral Program:

_____,
SEMESTER YEAR

REASON FOR THIS LEAVE REQUEST:

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

FOR PH.D. PROGRAM OFFICE USE ONLY:

_____ Approved

_____ Not approved

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN

DATE

APPENDIX C1
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

DISSERTATION COPYRIGHT PAGE EXAMPLE

Copyright Page

(Place half-way down the page --- center the copyright information as noted below)

© Copyrighted by John Smith, 2010

APPENDIX C2
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

DISSERTATION TITLE PAGE EXAMPLE

THE EFFECT OF THE VERTICAL INTEGRATION OF THE BIOMEDICAL
INDUSTRY ON HOSPITAL SOCIAL WORKERS

BY

JOHN SMITH

B.A., University of Missouri, 2003
M.S.W., University of California-Berkeley, 2005

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work
in the Graduate College of Social Work of the
University of Houston, 2015

Houston, Texas
Spring 2015

APPENDIX C3
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

ABSTRACT TITLE PAGE EXAMPLE

THE EFFECT OF THE VERTICAL INTEGRATION OF THE BIOMEDICAL
INDUSTRY ON HOSPITAL SOCIAL WORKERS

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate College of Social Work

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work

By

John Smith

Month and Year of Graduation

APPENDIX C4
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

FORM E
FINAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE

TO: The Ph.D. Program Director

FROM: _____
STUDENT NAME (Print)

Dissertation Title: _____

THE FINAL DISSERTATION IS: (*Please indicate*)

- ☐ Approved in its present form.
- ☐ Approved with minor revisions. Copy of recommended revisions must be attached.
- ☐ Deferred approval pending major revisions. The Committee must be reconvened for a follow-up defense.
Described revisions must be attached.
- ☐ Reject the quality of the dissertation and/or the student's performance in the oral defense. Provide specifications.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

SIGNATURE & DATE PRINT NAME

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SIGNATURE & DATE PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE & DATE PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE & DATE PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE & DATE PRINT NAME

**WRITTEN THESIS/DISSERTATION
(DOCTORAL, MASTERS) APPROVAL FORM**

Student's Name:
(Name must match UH student records)
Student Email:

UH PeopleSoft ID:

Degree (*check one*):

- ☐ Doctoral
☐ Masters

Program:
Anticipated Date of Graduation (Month/Year):
Thesis/Dissertation Title:

Defense Date:

We, the undersigned committee members have read and examined this manuscript. We certify that it is adequate in scope and quality as a thesis/dissertation for this graduate degree and indicate our approval of the content of the document to be submitted to the college/department for processing and acceptance, OR we indicate our dissent below.

Approve Disapprove

Chair: _____	_____
Printed Name	Signature
Member: _____	_____
Printed Name	Signature
Member: _____	_____
Printed Name	Signature
Member: _____	_____
Printed Name	Signature
Member: _____	_____
Printed Name	Signature
Member: _____	_____
Printed Name	Signature

Collegiate Dean or Associate Dean (as required by program)

Once approval has been received from the college, students must submit the college-approved thesis or dissertation. Students will submit the work and faculty will approve it using Vireo, following the instructions found at the following link: <http://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/thesis/>. Students must submit their documents in Portable Document Format (PDF) per the guidelines on the web site, following all program, department, and/or college-specific requirements. This form should be submitted as "image only" to the Graduate School via IRIS by the Graduate Coordinator/Advisor.

APPENDIX D1
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social
Work Ph.D. Program

PH.D. STUDENT STANDARDS POLICY

Adopted May 5, 2000, revised 3/1/2002, 2/6/2004, 3/5/2004, 1/9/2012, 3/11/2014, 4/8/2014,
12/12/2014, Spring 2015

The Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) faculty and professional staff are responsible for determining whether students demonstrate the required level of classroom, professional, and ethical achievement appropriate for professional interactions with colleagues, faculty, research and teaching internship supervisors, students, research participants, administrators and staff.

The College is committed to the treatment of students with fairness and equity throughout the program. This policy is applied to students' enrollment in the Ph.D. program at any point in time, from admission to program entry, program entry to candidacy, and candidacy to graduation. Each admitted student is required to read, comprehend and complete the Student Standards Policy Contract. Students are required to adhere to Ph.D. program policies, as well as the GCSW, Graduate School and University of Houston (UH) policies.

1.1 STUDENT STANDARDS

The purpose of the Ph.D. in social work is to prepare students to be scholars who function as “stewards of the discipline.” In order for the GCSW to meet its responsibilities to provide quality professional social work education and ensure that its graduates are able to function in a broad array of professional activities related to in-depth knowledge of social work as a profession and discipline, research and scholarship, and teaching, GCSW faculty evaluate the academic performance of students in five general areas: professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and attendance and punctuality.

Meeting the criteria for scholastic performance is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure continued enrollment in the program. Demonstration of professional and ethical behavior, commitment, and readiness are also required. Below are the fundamental requirements for successful completion of a doctoral degree from the GCSW.

1.2 Professional Readiness

Students of the GCSW should demonstrate generally accepted standards of personal integrity, health and emotional stability, self-care, stress management, communication skills, interpersonal skills and self-awareness.

- a) Personal Integrity: Is open to learning and is honest with oneself and colleagues.
- b) Health & Emotional Stability: Uses thoughtful judgment in professional situations. Responsibly addresses one's own health and emotional challenges that may interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
- c) Self-Care & Stress Management: Seeks and effectively practices self-care, uses help, and demonstrates ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms or supports.

- d) **Communication Skills:** Communicates responsibly, sensitively and with respect toward colleagues, faculty, field instructors, administrators, staff, clients, and research participants.
- e) **Interpersonal Skills:** Expresses ideas and feelings which can be heard and understood by others. Demonstrates willingness and an ability to listen to others.
- f) **Self-Awareness:** Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice on an ongoing basis. Shows an intermediate to advanced level of self-awareness and insight regarding how one is perceived by others.
Reflects on one's own limitations as related to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with others.

1.3 Professional Commitment and Ethical Conduct

- a) Exhibits a strong commitment to the essential values of social work and the pursuit of promoting social, economic and political justice:
- b) Proactively and consistently demonstrates responsible and ethical conduct of research.
- c) Adheres to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- d) Appreciates the value of diversity. Works with and relates to others who are different from oneself, regardless of the student's own personal, religious, and/or cultural values.
- e) Comprehends other individuals' ways of life and differing values.
- f) Shows respect for the rights of others.
- g) Maintains the professional standard of confidentiality as it relates to classroom and research activities and research internships.
- h) Demonstrates consistent honesty and integrity by being truthful about one's own background, experiences, and qualifications.
- i) Demonstrates clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Refrains from sexually harassing others, making verbal or physical threats, being involved in sexual relationships with students who they teach, abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways, or participating in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.
- j) Refrains from imposing personal biases during interactions with others.

1.4 Professional Behavior

- a) Exhibits behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, and professional ethical standards in classroom, research internship, teaching internship, and community settings.
- b) Shows appearance and demeanor that are appropriate to the roles and settings encountered during the doctoral educational experiences.
- c) Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work ethics, research ethics, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, observing deadlines, completing tasks on time, and keeping appointments or making alternate arrangements.
- d) Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority or academic position.

- e) Advocates for oneself in a constructive manner and first uses established channels for conflict resolution.
- f) Shows a willingness to acknowledge constructive feedback or supervision, as well as uses such feedback to enhance professional development.
- g) Takes responsibility in following through with referrals to campus resources to enhance the probability of academic success, professional development and self-care.

1.5 Scholastic Performance

- a) Demonstrates and maintains a professional standard of writing in all courses, does one's own work, gives credit for the ideas of others, and provides proper citation of source materials.
 - a. Adheres to the UH "Academic Honesty Policy" detailed on the University website: <https://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=57&navoid=21828>
 - b. Adheres to the explicit Academic Honesty policies detailed on the College website:
- b) Maintains a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) and satisfactory performance in all courses, including internships and independent studies. Failure to meet this standard will result in academic probation. Written recommendation from the Ph.D. Program Associate Dean and approval from the GCSW Dean is required for continued enrollment.
- c) Understands that removal from academic probation is granted when the student's GPA is raised to B (3.0) or above. The student has 9 semester credit hours to raise the G.P.A. to a 3.0. Failure to meet the G.P.A. requirement at the end of the academic probationary period will result in dismissal from the doctoral program.
- d) Understands that any course in which a grade of less than C- or a U is received does not earn credit towards a degree and must be repeated.
- e) Automatic Academic Dismissal: Whether or not in repeated courses, a student is automatically dismissed from the program for the following reasons:
 - a. Receives a grade of C+ or lower or Unsatisfactory (U) in 6 semester credit hours of doctoral level course credit;
 - b. Fails to pass comprehensive examinations after 2 attempts, in accordance with the examination criteria/policy; or
 - c. Does not successfully defend and pass the dissertation within 10 years of first enrollment in the
 doctoral program according to the regulations and requirements of the University of Houston.
- f) Knows that the University of Houston will not award or honor a degree with a cumulative GPA below 3.0, despite completion of coursework.
- g) Understands that the grade of I (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are passing a course but, for reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination as scheduled. The grade of I must be changed by fulfilling the course requirements by the deadline set by the instructor, but no more than one year from the date awarded; or, in conformance with university policy, it will be changed automatically to F or U (in S-U graded courses).

1.6 Attendance and Punctuality

All courses will be attended, and students will be punctual.

- a) This expectation reflects the student's professional responsibility to the social work profession, their own training, fellow students, and professors, as well as to the seriousness with which they take as stewards-in-training of the profession.
- b) All doctoral students must adhere to the attendance/make up and participation policies stated in each course syllabus.

2.1 VIOLATIONS OF STUDENT STANDARDS

2.2 In-Person Meeting

When a faculty member or research supervisor has a concern regarding a doctoral student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance and/or attendance and punctuality, an in-person discussion should be held with the student and the faculty member or research supervisor expressing the concern. Faculty or research supervisors should inform the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and the PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services when there is a concern that needs monitoring but does not require an Action Plan.

2.3 GCSW Student Plan of Action

- a) When a faculty member has a serious concern in the classroom regarding a doctoral student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and/or attendance and punctuality, the faculty member must inform the Academic Advisor. The faculty member or Academic Advisor may initiate a Plan of Action in consultation with each other, if applicable.
- b) When a research supervisor has a serious concern about a doctoral student's professional readiness, professional commitment and ethical conduct, professional behavior, scholastic performance, and/or attendance and punctuality, the research supervisor must inform the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and the PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services. The research supervisor or Associate Dean for Doctoral Education or PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services may initiate a Plan of Action in consultation with each other, if applicable. The individual who initiates a Plan of Action is required to meet with the student to discuss and document the plan. All parties must sign the [Student Plan of Action Form](#) (see Appendix D3). This form must be filed in the Ph.D. Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services' office.
- c) A Plan of Action will establish formal conditions that must be met by the student. These may include but are not limited to: reduced course load; resource or support referrals; delayed enrollment; leave of absence, probation or suspension; or termination from the program.
- d) Student-Initiated Appeal: the student may appeal the written Plan of Action through the Student Grievance Policy as outlined in the GCSW Doctoral Student Handbook.
- e) Should the student fail to meet the specified outcomes identified and agreed to in the Plan of Action, the faculty member, research supervisor, Associate Dean for Doctoral Education or PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services will make a recommendation to the Dean to establish formal conditions for

the students' continuance or to dismiss the student. The Dean will notify the student, the faculty member, Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and PhD Program Director of Student Advising and Support Services of the decision in writing.

2.4 Direct Referral to the Dean

In some instances, a Student Standards violation may result in direct referral to the Dean. Situations which may result in direct referrals to the Dean include, but are not limited to, racial or sexual harassment, use of firearms or other weapons on University property or in a research internship/community setting, damage or destruction of University property, and behavior that threatens the health, safety, or well-being of any University student or employee, research participant, or internship agency staff or client.

- a) If a referral is made to the Dean, the student will be notified.
- b) The Dean may establish formal conditions for the student's continuance or dismiss the student.

2.5 Automatic Dismissal

As stated in section 1.5, students will be automatically dismissed from the program on academic grounds for receiving a grade of C+ or lower or Unsatisfactory (U) in 6 semester hours of graduate credit.

APPENDIX D2
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

STUDENT STANDARDS POLICY CONTRACT

I have received, read, and comprehend the University of Houston - Graduate College of Social Work Student Standards Policy, and agree to be bound by the provisions therein. I understand that my enrollment in the Ph.D. Program is contingent upon my signing and submitting this contract.

STUDENT NAME (PRINT):

STUDENT SIGNATURE:

DATE:

STUDENT ID NUMBER:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Each student must submit this signed contract to the GCSW Ph.D. Program Director's Office no later than the 12th class day of the student's first semester enrollment.

APPENDIX D3
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

STUDENT PLAN OF ACTION

STUDENT NAME (PRINT): _____

STUDENT ID NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

Identified Concern: _____

Plan of Action, Expected Outcomes and Target Dates:

Expected Date for Plan Completion: _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

FACULTY MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN

DATE

The above student has successfully completed the Plan of Action:

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

FACULTY MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN

DATE

APPENDIX E1
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

INTENTION TO GRADUATE FORM

TO: The Ph.D. Program Associate Dean

FROM: STUDENT NAME (PRINT)

CC: DISSERTATION CHAIRPERSON NAME (PRINT)

I intend to graduate:

_____ Fall Semester _____ (year)
_____ Spring Semester _____ (year)
_____ Summer Semester _____ (year)

The working title of my dissertation is:

My tentative oral defense date is: _____

Confirm with your initials that you have done the following:

_____ Submitted University Graduation Application and Fee

_____ Collected/secured data for my dissertation

_____ attached a semester timeline for the completion of and oral defense of my dissertation

_____ submitted a draft of the following to my dissertation chair (e.g. Chapters 1, 2 & 3; Article #1 of 2): _____

The Dissertation Chairperson's signature is required to validate this form which **does not** guarantee graduation. All graduation requirements set forth by the University of Houston, Graduate School, Graduate College of Social Work and the GCSW Doctoral Program must be met. Please refer to the Doctoral Program Handbook and Graduation Policy for specific guidelines.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

DISSERTATION CHAIRPERSON SIGNATURE

DATE

PH.D. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE DEAN

DATE

APPENDIX F1
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE A GRIEVANCE

This form is to be completed and submitted to the Office of the Dean, GCSW. When this form is submitted, you will be given a copy of the UH GCSW Student Grievance Policy and the Formal Grievance Cover Sheet. You will be asked to sign the bottom part of this Notice of Intent indicating you have received a copy of the policy and cover sheet.

The Grievance Policy should be reviewed carefully to determine the correct steps you need to take and the required time frames. A copy of this form, once you sign and date it, will be given to you and a copy will be given to the respondent(s).

STUDENT NAME (PRINT): _____

DATE: _____

RESPONDENT(S): This is the person (or persons) named in your grievance.

Date of the incident or issue you are grieving: _____

The incident or issue pertains to (provide a few words to identify the incident or issue):

By my signature below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the UH GCSW Student Grievance Policy and the Formal Grievance Cover Sheet.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

APPENDIX F2
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
Ph.D. Program

GRIEVANCE COVER SHEET

The UH GCSW Student Grievance Policy identifies mechanisms that students are strongly encouraged to pursue in an attempt to resolve grievances informally. Students must, at a minimum, show evidence of having met with the respondent in a good faith effort aimed toward an informal resolution. Use this cover sheet to document all efforts made to date and attach your formal grievance. Note that your grievance must include the information noted in the GCSW Student Grievance Policy. Grievances without complete information per the policy will be returned without action.

You will be given a written notice indicating receipt of these grievance materials. Your Grievance Cover Sheet and attached materials will be given to the Dean who will appoint an ad hoc Student Grievance Committee. The Committee Chair will contact you about scheduling the grievance hearing.

STUDENT NAME (PRINT):

DATE:

I made an attempt, as required, to resolve the matter informally.

I met with the person against whom I have the grievance on _____, but I remain dissatisfied with the outcome. DATE

I have made these additional attempts to resolve the issue informally (Check all that apply):

Met with my faculty advisor with/without the respondent present on _____
DATE

☐ Met with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs with/without the respondent present on _____
DATE

☐ Met with a mediator from outside the college with the respondent on _____
DATE

STUDENT SIGNATURE

DATE

Initial Review Date: _____

Filing Date: _____