Doctor of Philosophy
In Social Work

Student Handbook 2022-2023

Land Acknowledgement: Arizona State University acknowledges, with respect, that its physical locations are within the ancestral homelands of those Native American tribes that have sustained connections to its lands and waters since time immemorial, including the Akimel O’odham (Pima), Pee Posh (Maricopa), Quechan (Yuma), and Tohono O’odham peoples.
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Preparing Future Social Work Scholars

PhD-trained social work scholars improve the art and science of social work by generating, disseminating, and conserving the knowledge that informs and transforms professional practice. The domains of social work inquiry derive from social work’s mission and purpose: “to enhance human well-being and help meet the needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty” (NASW Code of Ethics). [Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work, 2013].

Purpose

The purpose of the doctoral program in social work is to train future social work scholars. A scholar in social work engages in research, teaching, and service. Graduates are prepared to enter careers in applied research that enhance human well-being, particularly among oppressed and vulnerable populations, and to educate the next generation of social workers.

Our doctoral program provides an individualized program of study that seeks to nurture and build students’ curiosity and creativity in pursuit of their intellectual passions. We offer an interdisciplinary curriculum that gives students a unique degree of intimacy and breadth of choice. Core doctoral courses are small and taught by School of Social Work faculty. Additionally, students select among a repertoire of courses across Arizona State University to customize their course of study according to their substantive interests.

Given the cultural and economic diversity of the Southwest, our program also strives to elaborate the human potential embedded in our region’s distinct experiences and perspectives. The University offers opportunities for scholarship integrating diverse cultural experiences. We hope that our graduates will play key roles in integrating diversity in their research and teaching activities.

Contacts for the PhD Program

David Androff, MSW, PhD
Associate Director for Doctoral Education
Associate Professor, School of Social Work
Email: David.Androff@asu.edu
Phone: 602-496-0800
Academic Load
PhD students must demonstrate scholarly competencies that are tailored to individual interests. These competencies include micro/macro theories and perspectives on critical issues in social work and social welfare, research methodologies (qualitative & quantitative), and professoriate/leadership training in research, teaching, and service.

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

Course Work
The 36 minimum hours of doctoral coursework include:

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

Note that with the exception of the one independent study, all other coursework taken to meet the minimum requirements must be letter graded as opposed to pass/fail.

Dissertation and Research Hours
Once the 36 minimum course credit hours are completed, students are also required to register
for 24 hours of dissertation research credit (12 hours of SWG 792 before defense of the prospectus and 12 hours of SWG 799 after).

With the permission of the Associate Director for Doctoral Education, however, students may be allowed to take up to 10 hours of SWG 792 during their second year in the program (concurrently with their 18 credit hours of coursework in their second year – i.e., nine credit hours of coursework and five credit hours of SWG 792 or 14 credit hours total per semester).

Students must be registered for at least one credit hour during the semester (including summer) when they defend their dissertation prospectus. At least one of the dissertation hours must be taken in the semester the student expects to defend his or her dissertation.

**Required Upper-Level Courses**

**Research and Statistic Courses**

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

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

The 12 required hours are typically the minimum hours necessary for such achievement. If more courses are necessary to attain these competencies, their credit hours cannot be used to satisfy the minimum requirements in other areas. However, a student may petition to take additional courses in this area if they can provide other than a "basic competency" rationale and their advisor/chair approves.

The courses listed below have been previously approved by members of the PhD Committee. Some of these courses are not taught on a regular basis, and each year new courses may be offered by other disciplines. Courses not listed may be petitioned for and added upon review by the PhD Committee. Petitioning for a course should be done prior to the semester the course is offered by submitting a copy of the course description and a syllabus to the Associate Director for Doctoral Education.

*Note: in the lists below, maroon font indicates courses typically taught in Fall and black font indicates courses typically taught in Spring.*
### Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COE 502</td>
<td>Introduction to Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM 608</td>
<td>Multivariate Statistical Analysis of Data in Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRD 502</td>
<td>Statistical and Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDP 552</td>
<td>Multiple Regression and Correlation Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDP 554</td>
<td>Analysis-of-Variance Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDP 652</td>
<td>Multivariate Procedures for Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDP 654</td>
<td>Structural Equation Modeling in Educational Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAS 505</td>
<td>Applied Regression Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUS 509</td>
<td>Statistical Problems in Justice Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUS 521</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUS 650</td>
<td>Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 612</td>
<td>Advanced Analysis of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUR 613</td>
<td>Principles of Regression and Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAF 502</td>
<td>Public Service Research II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAF 573</td>
<td>Advanced Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS 604</td>
<td>Polimetrics II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 531</td>
<td>Multiple Regression in Psychological Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 532</td>
<td>Analysis of Multivariate Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 533</td>
<td>Structural Equation Modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 505</td>
<td>Applied Regression Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 507</td>
<td>Social Statistics IIIA: Categorical Data Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 508</td>
<td>Social Statistics IIIB: Structural Equation Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 509</td>
<td>Social Statistics IIIC: Event History Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP 530</td>
<td>Applied Regression Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP 531</td>
<td>Applied Analysis of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP 533</td>
<td>Applied Multivariate Analysis</td>
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</tbody>
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### Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COM 501</td>
<td>Research Methods in Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM 507</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods in Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM 508</td>
<td>Quantitative Research Methods in Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM 609</td>
<td>Advanced Qualitative Research Methods in Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPY 702</td>
<td>Research Methods in Counseling Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRD 500</td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CRD 620  Community Research Methods
EDP 503  Introduction to Qualitative Research
FAS 500  Research Methods
FAS 579  Applied Research in Marriage and Family Therapy
JUS 500  Justice Research Methods
JUS 620  Justice Research Methodology
NUR 608  Qualitative Research Design Methods
NUR 609  Quantitative Research Design Methods
PAF 501  Public Service Research I
PAF 610  Advanced Qualitative Methods
POS 603  Polimetrics I
PSY 515  Quantitative Research I
PSY 555  Experimental/Quasi Designs for Research

**Required Social Service Theory Course**

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

*Note: maroon font indicates courses typically taught in Fall and black font indicates courses typically taught in Spring.*

ASB 540  Method and Theory of Sociocultural Anthropology and Archaeology
ASB 541  Method and Theory of Social and Cultural Anthropology
CDE 531  Theoretical Issues in Child Development
COM 504  Theories and Models in Communication
ECN 509  Macroeconomic Theory and Applications
ECN 510  Microeconomic Theory and Applications
EDP 530  Theoretical Issues and Research in Human Development
EDP 540  Theoretical Views of Learning
FAS 531  Family Theory Development
JUS 610  Law and the Social Sciences
JUS 640  Theoretical Perspectives on Justice
PAF 521  Organization Theory
POS 545  Themes in Political Thought
Directed Electives
The student, with the guidance of their advisor, must choose nine graduate hours that reflect deeper study in areas related to the student’s proposed research. These courses are typically taken in the second year of the doctoral program.

Required Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall: Year One</th>
<th>Spring: Year One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWG 719: Research Methods</td>
<td>SWG 722: Social Work Pedagogy or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWG 720: Philosophy of Science</td>
<td>SWG 731: Welfare State*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWG 721: Statistics</td>
<td>Statistics (from the approved list)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall: Year Two</th>
<th>Spring: Year Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory Course</td>
<td>SWG 722: Social Work Pedagogy or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directed Elective</td>
<td>SWG 723: Proposal Development Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directed Elective</td>
<td>SWG 731: Welfare State*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directed Elective</td>
<td>SWG 718: Qualitative Research Methods*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or Research Methods (from the approved list)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directed Elective
*SWG 718: Qualitative Research Methods is taught in the Spring semester of evenly numbered years

*SWG 722: Social Work Pedagogy is taught in the Spring semester of odd numbered years

*SWG 731: Welfare State is taught in the Spring semester of evenly numbered years

Note: All Readings and Conferences must be approved by the Associate Director for Doctoral Education.
Admissions

Admission Requirements
Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the ASU School of Social Work.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree in social work or a closely related field from a regionally accredited institution.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. Graduate admission application and application fee
2. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate (Note: If you are a graduate from ASU, there is no need to submit ASU transcripts)
3. Curriculum vitae or resume
4. A copy of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) results taken within five years of the application date
5. Personal statement
6. Names and email addresses of three to five references who can speak to your ability to succeed in the PhD program
7. Required writing sample: five-page essay on a social problem of your choice
8. Optional writing sample
9. Proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency, regardless of current residency.

Admission to the doctoral program in the School of Social Work is based on the following criteria:

- An MSW from an accredited school of social work, preferably with two or more years of post-degree employment in human services
- Experience in social work teaching or research and other scholarly activities
• Experience with diverse populations
• Goodness-of-fit with program goals
• Good professional standing
• Undergraduate and graduate GPA
• Quality and extensiveness of social work experience
• Research potential and creativity as demonstrated in requested essays and references

Though a Master of Social Work degree is preferred, exceptions may be made for students with a BSW from an accredited School of social work and a master's degree in a related field and for students from countries without accreditation.

Guidelines for writing the statement can be found at https://socialwork.asu.edu/content/application-and-admission under PhD Application and Admission Information.

Applicants have the option of submitting a sample of their written work. Examples include a referred journal article, a class paper and a professional report such as one might write in an agency setting. The writing sample should illustrate the applicant's ability to succeed in the doctoral program. Guidelines for writing the statement can be found at https://socialwork.asu.edu/content/application-and-admission.

All required admission materials are submitted directly to Graduate Admission Services at https://admission.asu.edu/graduate. Students should contact the School of Social Work at 602-496-0800 with any questions about the application process.

Students should see the program website for application deadlines.

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

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

Acceptance may be on a regular or provisional basis. In the latter case, the Committee defines the terms within which provisional admission is granted.

**Financial Aid**

Application for financial assistance is made to the Associate Director of Doctoral Education, who, in consultation with the PhD Committee, then submits the materials to the Office of the
Director, School of Social Work. Every effort is made to provide some support for all full-time doctoral students through some combination of tuition waivers and teaching/research assistantships for the first two years, contingent on the availability of resources. Support for ongoing years is provided through teaching positions, funded research with faculty members, and other resources that are identified by students, their chairs, and Associate Director for Doctoral Education. While there is no guarantee, every effort is made to help each student secure funding throughout their time in the doctoral program.

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

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

Doctoral students are encouraged to participate in one or two Teaching Assistantship positions, as approved by the Associate Director for Doctoral Education and after the first year of coursework. Once students have successfully completed a Teaching Assistantship and SWG 722 (Social Work Pedagogy), they are eligible to teach courses in the School of Social Work.

The Associate Director for Doctoral Education, in consultation with the Associate Director for Student Services and Programs, will place doctoral students in teaching positions. All doctoral students are strongly encouraged to teach their own course while in the doctoral program in preparation for taking an academic position. The Associate Director for Doctoral Education will make every effort to provide different teaching opportunities so each student can experience teaching at multiple levels or in multiple curriculum areas.

Awards of Graduate Assistantships
For new students, the priority criteria are academic and practice merit, research and teaching interests as presented in the admissions application, skills, and the School of Social Work’s needs in those areas. For continuing students, the Associate Director for Doctoral Education will evaluate the student’s performance in the program and the program’s needs and forward his or her recommendations to the Director.

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

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

First-year Advising
During the first year of the program (full residency) the Associate Director for Doctoral Education will be the advisor of all incoming students. The Associate Director for Doctoral Education will be responsible for:

• Advisement of all incoming students up to the time they complete coursework;
• meeting with all enrolled students once a semester;
• meeting with chairs of Graduate Supervisory Committees once a semester;
• updating the Student Handbook every year; and,
• reporting regularly to the PhD Committee on these tasks.

The role of the advisor is:

1. Educational planning for the Program of Study in light of student goals and interests as well as all other required paperwork by the School of Social Work and the Office of Graduate Education, and
2. referral to other faculty members who seem best qualified in the theoretical and substantive fields in which the student has interests.

The role of the student is to accept final responsibility for developing relationships with School of Social Work and ASU faculty who share their theoretical and applied research interests, and for formalizing such mentoring relationships into his or her Graduate Supervisory Committee. The student has final responsibility for locating such faculty and completing his or her dissertation under their supervision.

Registration
Prior to registration, the student must meet with the Associate Director for Doctoral Education to assure that degree requirements are being met. After securing necessary approval on the course registration plan, the student may register for courses through usual University channels (see Academic Services Office, UCENT 800).
All students must register and complete at least one School of Social Work required doctoral course each consecutive semester until such courses are completed. The only exception is for part-time students who have completed their residency year and who may then delay registration in the required courses if approved by their advisors or chairs.

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

**Residency**
Within the first year of matriculation, all students must complete the School of Social Work residency requirement [a minimum of nine credit hours in each semester of consecutive Fall/Spring or Spring/Fall semesters excluding summers]. Waivers may be requested from the Associate Director for Doctoral Education (petition forms to request a waiver are available in the Office of Academic Services, UCENT 800). Decisions on waivers will be made by the Associate Director for Doctoral Education, in consultation with the PhD Committee.

**Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence**
Graduate students planning to discontinue enrollment for a semester or more must request approval for a leave of absence; this request must be filed and approved before the anticipated absence. Students may petition the Office of Graduate Education for a leave of absence for a maximum of two semesters during their entire program. A petition for a leave of absence, endorsed by the members of the student’s Graduate Supervisory Committee and the head of the academic unit, must be approved by the Office of Graduate Education Dean prior to the semester of the leave request.

An approved leave of absence will enable students to re-enter their program without re-applying to the university. Students who do not enroll for a fall or spring semester without an approved leave of absence by the Office of Graduate Education are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program.

A student on leave is not required to pay fees, but in turn is not permitted to place any demands on university faculty or use any university resources.

**Graduate Supervisory Committee**
Students are held responsible for forming their Graduate Supervisory Committee. This involves several steps:

1. Formally establishing a mentor/mentee relationship with a faculty member who
agrees to work with the student on a research area of mutual interest and who agrees to chair his/her Graduate Supervisory Committee, and

2. discussing with the chair about other faculty who may potentially serve as members on the Graduate Supervisory Committee for the comprehensive exam and dissertation (please note that if a potential committee member is not in social work, or has not served on a social work committee before, the student should forward that individual’s CV to Erika Martinez, the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, along with a request that the individual be allowed to serve on the committee). If the student has difficulties in locating a chair by the end of the Fall term of the second year, they must write a letter to the Associate Director for Doctoral Education, specifying the problems encountered. The Associate Director for the Doctoral Program, with the PhD Committee, will develop a commitment plan for matching the student with a chair.

Program of Study
Students must complete and file a Program of Study (iPOS) after completing 18 credits of required course work and prior to scheduling their comprehensive examination. Filing a Program of Study officially declares the Graduate Supervisory Committee to the Office of Graduate Education. The Program of Study is filed electronically through My ASU. If for any reason a student must make changes to the Program of Study, a Course Change Form must be submitted for approval by the School of Social Work and the Office of Graduate Education. The Plan of Study should be completed with the consultation of the Associate Director for Doctoral Education or the student’s Graduate Supervisory Committee Chair, if that person has been identified.

Comprehensive Exam
Students must take their comprehensive exam within 12 months of course completion, and then complete a successful proposal defense within 18 months of course completion. Extensions for additional time must be done through a petition to the PhD Committee. Only one extension may be approved. Further requests for extensions will result in probation or termination from the program due to unsatisfactory progress.

Graduate Supervisory Committee

Graduate Supervisory Committee and Academic Benchmarks
The Graduate Supervisory Committee serves the student, the School, and the University in setting standards and promoting the highest level of excellence possible for the student. This is done as the committee and the student together plan for: a) the program of study, b) teaching and service activities, and c) research.
Each member of the committee will actively and fully participate throughout the student's program, from initial planning of the program through the defense of the dissertation. In addition to these functions, the committee may serve as a reference group to which the student and/or chairperson may go in case of misunderstandings or differences of opinion. Unsolved differences should be referred to the PhD Committee.

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

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

**Composition and Size of Graduate Supervisory Committee**

Each student's Graduate Supervisory Committee must have: a) an "odd number" (three or five) of total committee members who vote on committee decisions, b) a minimum of three faculty members, c) at least two, but no more than four, members must be School of Social Work faculty members inclusive of the chair, and c) other ASU, but non-School of Social Work faculty, may serve on the committee.

Subject to ASU policy, at least 50% of the committee members must be physically present at the dissertation defense. Thus, with a three-person committee, at least two people must be physically present. The chair must always be present and is included in the 50% calculation.

It is recommended that when original data from community sources are collected for the dissertation, a community representative from that organization be included as an additional but non-voting committee member.

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

**Criteria for Chairs of Social Work Supervisory Committees**

The faculty member must meet the School of Social Work criteria approved by the Office of Graduate Education listed below:

1. A tenure-track (Assistant Professor or above), full-time faculty member approved by the PhD Committee who holds a doctorate and who has expertise in a substantive area related to social work.
b) At least one member of the Graduate Supervisory Committee must have previously chaired a dissertation committee to completion.

c) Expressed willingness to undertake PhD committee chair responsibilities.

d) A record of publishing in peer-reviewed journals or publishing a scholarly book in a substantive area related to the dissertation topic.

e) A faculty member cannot chair more than three Graduate Supervisory Committees concurrently unless the faculty member wishes to write a brief rationale for PhD Committee review and approval.

Individuals who do not meet the above criteria may be recommended by the School, under specified circumstances, to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Education for service as dissertation chairs. Exceptions may be made, for example, when a faculty member serves in a major administrative role in the school/university or holds a major office in a major social work/welfare professional organization. The PhD Committee must approve on a case-by-case basis faculty endorsed as eligible to chair from outside the School of Social Work.

**Procedures for Initial and then Every Three Years Recertification**

The PhD Committee encourages faculty members, at any time, to submit the materials listed below to the Associate Director for Doctoral Education who will review these materials for eligibility with the PhD Committee:

a) vita

b) listed evidence for meeting eligibility criteria, a list of theses and dissertations chaired or member of during the past ten (10) years

Given evidence for eligibility, the Associate Director for Doctoral Education will recommend certification to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Education. The Dean of the Office of Graduate Education will review, determine eligibility, and then notify the faculty member and School of the decision.

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

**Appointments and Change of Appointment**

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

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

a) The student has discussed and received permission via a signature from his/her prior advisor,
b) the new chair/committee member agrees to serve and sends a memorandum about his/her decision to the Associate Director for Doctoral Education, and,

c) within three months, the student receives approval from the Office of Graduate Education for his/her revised Graduate Supervisory Committee Appointment.

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

**Comprehensive Exam**

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

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

After the reading list is agreed on, the student will schedule a date to begin the comprehensive exam. The exam can be scheduled fall and spring, and during the summer term if all members of the Graduate Supervisory Committee are available. The student must complete the **NOTIFICATION OF PhD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION FORM** available in School of Social Work Academic Services to have the exam officially scheduled (see Appendix I). The form must be submitted to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, via email at least two weeks prior to the start of the exam, and copied to the Associate Director for Doctoral Education.

The committee members will develop questions for the exam using the suggested outline of questions for the comprehensive exam (see below). The actual exam questions may be adapted to address the specific research area being examined by the student. The exam will be written at home using reference material. The Graduate Supervisory Committee chair will email the exam to the student (and cc the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez) on the agreed upon comprehensive exam start date. The student will have 30 days from the start date to complete the exam and will email it to the committee chair no later than by midnight on the due date. During the 30 days of the exam, the student must work independently. Committee
members will not look at or comment on drafts of the student’s work nor will they discuss the content of the exam during the 30-day exam period.

The exam is to be read and evaluated by members of the student’s Graduate Supervisory Committee. The method of grading is determined by the chair. Comprehensive exam grades (both the initial grade and the subsequent grade following a re-write/re-examination) must be submitted to the PhD Academic Services point of contact.

An example of a rubric for grading the exam is as follows: (1) each committee member is assigned 1-2 primary sections to review, consistent with his/ her expertise, (2) the committee member is responsible for grading his/ her primary section and providing feedback (both positive and negative) to the chair, (3) each committee member should also provide feedback on the exam as a whole, and (4) the chair compiles the feedback and returns it to the student.

Sample Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Rubric

Committee Member:

Primary Section:

Grade for Primary Section:

Specific Feedback for Primary Section:

1. What did the student do well? What are the strengths of this section?

2. What are areas for improvement?

Overall Assessment of the Exam:

3. Do you have any other feedback (e.g., positive or negative feedback on other sections or other comments on the primary section)? Please be clear to which section you are referring.

There are three possible outcomes for the exam:

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

2. A “partial rewrite” means the student passed most of the questions on the exam. The
student may be allowed to rewrite the parts of the exam that he or she did not pass within three months of receiving the results. The chair will develop with the student specific deadlines for the rewrite period. Once the specific rewrite period begins, committee members will not look at or comment on drafts of the student’s work, nor will they discuss the content of the exam. If the student does not satisfactorily complete the rewrite, the student will have failed the exam.

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

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

Sample Comprehensive Exam

Substantive Area

1. Provide an introduction and rationale by describing in general terms your substantive area of research.

2. Based on existing literature, provide an overview of the state of knowledge about the identified area of research.

3. Provide a summary of the existing knowledge. Identify possible gaps in the literature.

4. How will your proposed research contribute to furthering our understanding of the phenomenon? What is the research question or questions guiding your study? If applicable, state its corresponding hypotheses.

Theory

1. Describe and critique relevant theories that might inform research on the identified area of research or phenomenon.

2. Which theory or combination of theories have you chosen as a theoretical foundation to your proposed research?

3. Why did you choose this theory or combination of theories?

Methods

1. What type of theory-based methodology would be most conducive to address the research question you proposed?
2. Given this ideal methodology and the constraints facing you as a researcher, what research design will you use to conduct your proposed research?

3. Describe the key variables and/or constructs in your research design. How do these variables and/or constructs relate to each other?

4. Discuss procedures for sampling, data gathering, measurement issues, analysis, plans, and possible statistical models that would be appropriate for your proposed research methodology. Where relevant, address issues of reliability, validity and generalizability or trustworthiness and rigor.

5. What are the possible limitations of your proposed research design? How might you address or control for those limitations? Is this feasible?

6. Discuss applicable human subjects' issues, such as voluntary participation, research with children and other vulnerable populations, and other pertinent ethical aspects related to your research.

Interventions/Practice

1. Describe and critique interventions that have been designed to address the phenomenon you plan to study. Include information about 1) outcome evaluations (if any have been reported in the literature) and 2) populations that have been included in the interventions (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation (dis)ability status).

2. Discuss why your proposed research is significant to social work. What might be the social work implications of your study? How will your proposed research inform policy, practice, social work education and future research in this area?

The Dissertation Prospectus and Prospectus Defense

Students must be registered for at least one credit hour during the semester (including summer) when they defend their proposal. The proposal must be defended successfully within 18 months after completion of all required course work. It should contain a well-developed rationale and plan for the research. A substantial portion of the proposal should include the social work focus of the research, an analysis and presentation of a conceptual framework for the research, and a specific plan for completion of the research.

At minimum, the proposal should have:

a) a general statement of purpose,

b) a discussion of the significance of potential importance of the study for social work or social welfare,

c) a statement of the problem including an analytical review of the literature and theory in the area,
d) the hypotheses to be tested or research questions to be addressed,

e) a clearly operationalized research plan with definition of the major concepts, statement of assumptions, specification of sources and nature of data, methods and techniques to be used, and a suggested plan for analysis and interpretation of the data, and

f) the format of the dissertation.

**Dissertation Format**

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

a) A definition or statement of the problem.

b) The importance of the problem, i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field of social work.

c) The theoretical foundation(s) supporting the problem/issue.

d) An overview of the important literature (overview, because each article submitted for three-paper option will have its own unique literature review).

e) The research questions.

f) The methodology to be used to answer the research questions.

One of the manuscripts may be conceptual in nature, and at least two manuscripts must be focused on the student’s empirical research. Target journals must be identified in the prospectus and approved by the dissertation committee. The Graduate Supervisory Committee will help select journals that will challenge the student and offer a reasonable chance of publication success. The students must be the first author on all three manuscripts, and the sole author on at least one manuscript. Authorship must be negotiated and agreed upon in writing as part of the completed dissertation proposal. Any subsequent changes in co-authorship must be approved by all members of the student’s dissertation committee in writing. Manuscripts are submitted to journals following the style requirements of those particular journals. However, in the dissertation, the articles **must** follow the ASU Office of Graduate Education requirements. Manuscripts may not be submitted for publication prior to the dissertation defense.
The conclusion chapter will briefly summarize the dissertation’s major findings, discussion, and recommendations. The student will also present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences) between the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation, striving as much as possible to present the document as representative of a coherent body of work. For the dissertation defense, students will present a final document that includes all the elements required by the ASU Office of Graduate Education for a completed dissertation.

The three-paper option, and the traditional dissertation format, must represent work undertaken while the student is enrolled in the PhD program and must be approved at the time of the student’s defense of their proposal. Students seeking to pursue the three-paper option should contact their dissertation chairs to discuss the feasibility of this option. The dissertation format requires the prior approval of the student’s Graduate Supervisory Committee.

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

- Guidance as students prepares their first professional publications.
- The early establishment of a publishing record.
- A contribution to the professional literature.
- Increased competitiveness for the academic market upon graduation.

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

The proposal must be developed under the supervision of the student's chair and members of her or his Graduate Supervisory Committee. The student must complete the NOTIFICATION OF PhD PROPOSAL DEFENSE FORM available in School of Social Work Academic Services to have the exam officially scheduled (see Appendix I). The form must be submitted to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, via email at least two weeks prior to the start of the proposal defense.

The complete proposal must be given to all members of the student’s committee four weeks before the proposal defense. At the proposal defense, to be chaired by the committee chair, the committee decides by majority vote to accept the proposal as written, reject the proposal, or require major/minor changes in the proposal. Acceptance means the student should pursue candidacy. Rejection means the student must redo or substantially rework the proposal. Rewriting requires the committee decision of how to determine a satisfactory rewrite: by another formal meeting of the committee, individual member review and approval/rejection, or delegation of approval/rejection to the chair. Both the initial assessment and subsequent assessment following a revision/rewriting must be submitted to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, in writing or via email.
Candidacy
Candidacy is achieved after the student has satisfactorily fulfilled all doctoral course requirements, passed the comprehensive exams, and successfully defended his/her dissertation proposal. Students’ official candidacy letter from the Office of Graduate Education will be available through MyASU for a limited period of time. Students who have been advanced to candidacy are still required to maintain continuous enrollment.

Students must enroll for 12 hours of dissertation credit (SWG 799) following the semester in which they are advanced to candidacy and before degree completion. Once they have fulfilled the requirement of 12 credit hours of SWG 799, students who have not successfully defended their dissertation must enroll in at least one credit hour of SWG 795.

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

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

The oral exam is not to be scheduled until the dissertation is completely done and formatted according to the Office of Graduate Education standards and has been distributed to all committee members within 10 working days after the filing of all the necessary School and Office of Graduate Education forms (e.g., see the “scheduling your defense” page at the of Graduate Education).

For instance, students are responsible for scheduling their defense through MyASU (on the Defense tab). In addition, students must complete the NOTIFICATION OF PhD DISSERTATION DEFENSE FORM available in School of Social Work Academic Services (see Appendix I). The form must be submitted to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, in an email at least two weeks prior to the start of the dissertation defense.

The purpose of the dissertation oral defense is:

A. To test the candidate’s ability to:

   i. explain and justify the dissertation substantively and methodologically;

   ii. relate the research to literature in social work and to current events/publications.
B. To evaluate the quality of thought, analytical/scientific writing, and organization of the dissertation.

The Graduate Supervisory Committee, in closed session, will evaluate the candidate’s performance and will decide, by majority vote, to:

- **Pass** (only minor formatting corrections need to be made, such as correcting typographical errors, pagination, etc.),

- **Pass with minor revisions** (extensive formatting/editorial corrections and/or minor substantive changes need to be made, such as rewriting some text, correcting grammatical errors, etc.),

- **Pass with major revisions** (extensive substantive changes need to be made, such as a chapter rewrite), or

- **Fail** (the overall execution of the study is flawed or the candidate’s performance in the oral examination is seriously deficient).

A vote for modifications requires the committee to decide the manner of subsequent approval. Appropriate handling of minor modifications requires the approval of the chair. Revaluations of major modifications require the approval of the Committee. Both the initial assessment and subsequent assessment following the completion of any revisions must be submitted to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, in writing or via email.

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

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

**Student Progress, Performance Evaluation and Academic Standards**

**Oversight**
The Associate Director for Doctoral Education provides annual reviews of students to the PhD Committee regarding: formal appointment of Graduate Supervisory Committees; results of
comprehensive exams, proposal defenses, candidacy; and, results of dissertation defenses.

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

The PhD Committee establishes timelines for progress through the program. The timelines are defined through this Student Handbook for doctoral students.

**Satisfactory Progress**

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

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

**Probationary Status**

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

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

- b) GPA of less than 3.00 at the end of any semester.

Probationary status requires that the student complete a plan established by his/her advisor or chair. This plan must contain specific provisions for bringing performance up to acceptable standards within the next semester. Copies must be given to the chair, Associate Director for Doctoral Education, PhD Committee, and placed in the student file prior to the beginning of the following semester. Probationary students may be denied registration in the absence of such a plan.
Withdrawal
A student shall be recommended for withdrawal from the Doctoral Program under any one of the following circumstances:

a) If the absence of a probationary plan continues beyond two weeks after the beginning of the intended probationary semester,
b) Failure to carry out the probationary plan by the recommended timeline,
c) Probationary status for more than one semester, contiguous or noncontiguous,
d) GPA falls below 3.00 at the end of 18 credits of graded course work, or after the next period of 27 credits of graded course work,
e) Failure to pass the comprehensive exam reexamination.
f) Lack of adherence to professional expectations and standards as outlined by NASW, the School of Social Work, and Arizona State University.

Withdrawal appeals are to follow the policies and procedures of the School of Social Work and the rules and policies of the ASU’s Office of Graduate Education. Students have the right to appeal a request for withdrawal from the School of Social Work to the Dean’s Office in the College Public Service and Community Solutions. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 business days of the notification of request for withdrawal from the School of Social Work. Written appeals should be directed to the Office of the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service and Community Solutions. If students do not respond within 10 business days, or if a student indicates in writing that he or she does not wish to appeal the School’s decision, the recommendation of withdrawal from the PhD Program in Social Work will be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Education.

Voluntary Withdrawal
Students who no longer wish to continue in the program are encouraged to voluntarily withdraw. Paperwork for voluntary withdrawal may be found at the following link: https://students.asu.edu/voluntary-withdrawal-form

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

a) Any provisions for readmission outlined in the original termination decision have been met, and
b) At least one full semester but not more than two full semesters have elapsed since the date of disqualification and date of intended enrollment.
All applications for readmission are reviewed by the PhD Committee which then submits its recommendations to the Director of the School of Social Work. The Director forwards her/his recommendation and the PhD Committee’s recommendations to the Dean of the Office of Graduate Education.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement**
The School of Social Work upholds, values, and cherishes student, faculty and staff diversity, no matter the circumstance. As members of the ASU Community, we are charged with challenging injustices and social inequities of any kind through education. These values are an integral part of our standing as an institution, and must be upheld by all members of the ASU community including, but not limited to School of Social Work faculty, staff and students. Arizona State University welcomes all students, regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, disabilities, regional background, veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities.

**Social Media**
Social media is a part of communication between students in the ASU School of Social Work. These platforms are used as a way for students to actively engage. They also serve to keep the students up to date with the School of Social Work and the world around them.

Instagram: @asu_socialwork
Facebook: @ASUSocialWork
Linkedin: @ASU School of Social Work
Twitter: @ASUsocialwork

**Resources**

**Faculty & Staff Directory**
Contact information for School of Social Work administrators, faculty and staff may be accessed at [https://socialwork.asu.edu/content/people](https://socialwork.asu.edu/content/people)

**Additional University Policies**
University Student Code of Conduct
[Student Code of Conduct | Educational Outreach and Student Services](https://academicaffairs.asu.edu/student-life/education-outreach-support/student-life-and-activities/student-code-conduct)

University Academic Integrity Policy
[Student Policy | Office of the University Provost](https://academicaffairs.asu.edu/student-life/education-outreach-support/student-life-and-activities/student-ethics-policies/academic-integrity-policy)
University Resources
Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS)

University Resources | ASU Accessibility

IT Help Center

Contact the University Technology Office | University Technology Office

Pat Tillman’s Veteran’s Center

Veterans | Arizona State University

University Organizations
International Students Center

International Students and Scholar Center | ISSC | ASU

Graduate and Professional Student Association

GPSA | Educational Outreach and Student Services

School of Social Work Research Centers and Offices
School of Social Work Centers and Offices

Centers and Offices | School of Social Work
Appendix 1

In house forms available through the School of Social Work Academic Services
NOTIFICATION OF PhD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION FORM

This form must be completed by the student, signed by her/his Graduate Supervisory Committee Chair and forwarded to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, two weeks prior to taking the comprehensive examination.

________________________________________________________________________
Student’s Name                                             Student ID Number

Members of the Students’ Comprehensive Examination Committee:

________________________________________________________________________
Chair’s Name

________________________________________________________________________
Committee Member’s Name                                   Committee Member’s Name

________________________________________________________________________
Committee Member’s Name                                   Committee Member’s Name

________________________________________________________________________
Committee Member’s Name

Dates student is scheduled to take the comprehensive examination:

________________________________________________________________________
Dates                                             Location

________________________________________________________________________
Time

Chair’s Signature
NOTIFICATION OF PhD PROPOSAL DEFENSE FORM

This form must be completed by the student and signed by her/his Graduate Supervisory Committee Chair and forwarded to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, two weeks prior to the date of the proposal defense.

__________________________________________   __________________________________________
Student’s Name                             Student ID Number

Members of the Student’s Supervisory Committee:

__________________________________________
Chair’s Name

__________________________________________   __________________________________________
Committee Member’s Name                    Committee Member’s Name

__________________________________________   __________________________________________
Committee Member’s Name                    Committee Member’s Name

Proposal Defense Title

__________________________________________
Date of Proposal Defense                   Location

__________________________________________
Time

__________________________________________
Chair’s Signature
NOTIFICATION OF PhD DISSERTATION DEFENSE FORM

This form must be completed by the student and signed by her/his Graduate Supervisory Committee Chair and forwarded to the Graduate Academic Success Advisor, Erika Martinez, two weeks prior to the date of the dissertation defense.

Student’s Name ___________________________ Student ID Number ___________________________

Dissertation Title ___________________________

Members of the Student’s Supervisory Committee:

________________________
Chair’s Name

________________________
Committee Member’s Name ___________________________
Committee Member’s Name

________________________
Committee Member’s Name ___________________________
Committee Member’s Name

________________________
Date of Dissertation Defense ___________________________
Location ___________________________

________________________
Time ___________________________

________________________
Chair’s Signature