



School of Social Work

Ph.D. Program Student Handbook

School of Social Work College of Behavior & Community Sciences University of South Florida

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This Student Handbook is provided to Ph.D. students in social work as a supplement to the University of South Florida (USF) Graduate Catalog. The purpose is to provide details about the School of Social Work's Ph.D. Program, including requirements that may exceed the minimum standards identified in the USF Graduate Catalog. The USF Graduate Catalog provides the principal authority for all policies affecting students; however, some policies set forth in the Graduate Catalog represent minimum requirements of the State of Florida or the University. The faculty and staff of the School of Social Work provide education, leadership, mentoring, and guidance to assist students in obtaining the maximum possible benefit from graduate education. Students, however, are ultimately responsible for their graduate education and assuring that they are in compliance with the requirements designated in the Graduate Catalog and the Student Handbook.

In order to graduate, students must meet at a minimum, all requirements specified in the USF Catalog, as well as any additional requirements set forth by the School of Social Work and/or the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences (BCS). Information regarding designation of a Catalog and requirements for compliance with specific Graduate Catalog and University policies and procedures is located in the USF Graduate Catalog available at: <http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.asp>

Mission of the School of Social Work

The mission of the University of South Florida, School of Social Work is to prepare graduates to achieve excellence as professionals and leaders in social work practice, research, and education. Our focus is to develop generalist social workers at the bachelor's level, clinical social workers at the master's level and social work scholars at the doctoral level and to encourage students to embrace social work knowledge, ethics, skills, and values. Beginning in our own diverse region, and extending nationally and globally, we are committed to graduating students who reflect the School's commitment to promoting social and economic justice, human rights, human dignity, scientific inquiry, and sustainable human and community well-being for all.

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THE Ph.D. IN SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work program prepares scholars who are expected to generate new knowledge in the discipline, to pursue academic and research careers, to provide leadership in research and education committed to excellence in social work direct practice / clinical practice, and to provide leadership in the development of programs and clinical services to diverse, vulnerable, and underserved populations.

The Ph.D. in Social Work program extends the overall educational mission of the University of South Florida, School of Social Work. This will further enhance the practical / clinical practice education because it provides the knowledge and skill base necessary to generate new knowledge, conduct research, engage in teaching, and develop much-needed clinical services and programs.

Goals and Objectives

This program is designed to provide advanced knowledge and skills in research methods, theory-building, and evaluation of social work policies and practice. The ultimate goal is to promote commitment to continuous critical inquiry leading to the development of knowledge for the social work profession. The program requires sixty hours of study beyond the Master's degree in Social Work (120 hours beyond the baccalaureate degree). Students must complete the M.S.W. program prior to admission into the Ph.D. program. Upon completion of the Ph.D. program in Social Work, graduates should be able to accomplish the following objectives:

Engage in scholarly research to enhance empirically based direct / clinical social work practice.

Assume leadership positions in organizations and communities to resolve complex human and social problems.

Assume leadership roles in social work education as faculty and administrators in graduate and undergraduate social work programs.

I. PROGRAM MODEL DESCRIPTION

The Ph.D. program is delivered in a non-traditional, innovative alternative model that offers coursework in a combination of intensive weekend sessions and three-week concentrated summer sessions. This unique model of delivery is designed so that students can complete the course of study while maintaining full-time employment commitments, and so they will not have to undergo major disruption or encounter financial limitations that are common for traditional students.

A. Admissions Requirements

1. Bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college with an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 in the last two years of undergraduate work
2. Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW) from a school accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) with a GPA of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale
3. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores of at least 153 verbal; 144 quantitative

B. Other Admission Requirements & Application Materials

1. Three letters of recommendation addressing applicant's academic and professional capabilities
2. Applicant's statement that describes reasons for seeking admission to the Ph.D. in Social Work program, career goals, and research interests
3. Professional writing sample providing evidence of scholarly abilities, such as single-authored journal article, book chapter, technical report, thesis, grant application or other comparable work
4. The admissions committee may request a personal or telephone interview with an applicant to clarify materials submitted.

C. Program Timeline and Application Deadline

1. Student cohorts are admitted to the Ph.D. program every three years and begin their course of study at the start of the regular academic year in Fall semester (August).
2. Applications for admission to the Ph.D. program in Social Work must be received by January 15th for fall admission. Applications received after this date may not be considered for fall admission.

II. Academic Requirements

A. Curriculum Organization

1. The Ph.D. in Social Work curriculum is organized so that courses are provided in sequence. Any exceptions to taking courses in sequence must be approved by the Ph.D. Committee. Failure to take courses as prescribed may jeopardize student progress and continuation in the program.

B. Time Limitations

All requirements for the Ph.D. program must be completed within seven (7) years from a student's date of admission for doctoral study. All required coursework, successful completion of the Qualifying Examination and admission to Candidacy must be completed within four (7) years from the date of student admission.

For information about time limit extensions including leave of absence, see USF Graduate Catalog.

C. Grade Point Average System

1. Grades for all course work are assigned quality points based on the University grading system effective Fall 2000 and outlined in the USF Graduate Catalog.

Note: In order to be admitted to Candidacy, “attainment of an overall and degree program GPA of 3.00 at USF at the time of candidacy is required”. (All “I”, “M”, “IF” and “MF” grades must be cleared before Candidacy can be finalized.

D. Academic Status

1. To remain in good academic standing, Ph.D. students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 in all courses taken as a graduate student.
2. Only grades of “C” or better count toward the Ph.D. degree requirements, though all grades, not just those that count toward the degree, are included in calculation of the GPA. Students must receive a “B” or better for required Ph.D. courses.
3. “S” and “U” grades are not permitted for courses taken in the major, unless designated as “S”/”U” in the catalog. Independent Study, Directed Research, Directed Reading, and Dissertation course are graded on an “S”/”U” basis.
4. All grades received in graduate classes at the University of South Florida are included when calculating a Ph.D. student’s GPA. Grades of “S” and “U,” however, are not included in calculating the GPA.
5. Note that when a graduate student repeats a course, either by choice or to replace an unacceptable grade, both grades count toward calculation of the GPA.

E. Academic Probation

1. A Ph.D. candidate is placed on academic probation when:
 - a) His/her cumulative GPA falls below 3.0;
 - b) (S)he receives a total of two "C" grades.
2. Students placed on academic probation have two semesters to raise their GPA above 3.0. Students who fail to do so shall be dismissed from the doctoral program. In addition, students on academic probation shall not be eligible to receive departmental fellowships or scholarships. A student's fellowship or scholarship shall be revoked when s/he is placed on academic probation.

III. CURRICULUM OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The curriculum consists of 60 hours of study including 36 credit hours of coursework and 24 credit hours of dissertation study. Students take the Qualifying Examination at the end of semester six (6).

Year 1	Semester 1	SOW 7491	Theoretical Perspectives in Social Work Research	3 Credit Hours
Year 1	Semester 2	SOW 7490	Foundations of Social Work Research Methods	3 Credit Hours
Year 1	Semester 3	SOW 7496	Qualitative Research Methods in Social Work	3 Credit Hours
		SOW7497	Quantitative Research Methods in Social Work	3 Credit Hours
Year 2	Semester 4	SOW 7417	Advanced Statistics in Social Work Research	3 Credit Hours
Year 2	Semester 5	SOW 7616	Advanced Clinical Practice with Complex Problems	3 Credit Hours
Year 2	Semester 6	SOW 7446	Evaluation of SW Practice and Programs	3 Credit Hours
		SOW 7776	Social Work Educator in the University	3 Credit Hours
Year 3	Semester 7	SOW 7932	Critical Issues in Social Work	3 Credit Hours
Year 3	Semester 8	SOW 7919	Directed Studies in Social Work Research	3 Credit Hours
Year 3	Semester 9	SOW 7981	Proposal Writing I	3 Credit Hours
		SOW 7982	Proposal Writing II	3 Credit Hours
Years 4-5	Semesters 10-15	SOW 7980	Dissertation Hours (4hrs per semester)	24 Credit Hours

A. Description of Courses

Theoretical Perspectives in Social Work Research (SOW 7491)

This course prepares students for understanding the theoretical base for developing testable hypotheses to produce empirical knowledge for the social work profession. Students will demonstrate the ability to conceptualize research topics in terms of existing theory.

Foundations of Social Work Research Methods (SOW 7490)

This course is designed to prepare students for the role of research in the social work profession. This course will focus primarily on understanding and applying basic research methods within a social work context. Particular emphasis will be placed on the logic of research, the major strategies and techniques for conducting research in social work settings, and preparation of a research proposal. The course will assist the doctoral student in applying research knowledge to formulate social problems for empirical study, construct and test hypotheses, and select appropriate pre-experimental, quasi-experimental and experimental research designs. Ethical considerations in planning and conducting research will also be examined.

Qualitative Research Methods in Social Work (SOW 7496)

This seminar is meant to further critical thinking about social work qualitative research. The course will assist the doctoral student to better understand and become equipped to fulfill a role as social work researcher. The course will consider the theoretical, scientific, and political issues related to qualitative research, and will provide classroom instruction and field application of qualitative methods to study social work problems. There have been numerous debates within social work about the merits of qualitative vs. quantitative research. This course will examine this debate and students will learn how to critically analyze this issue. Students will learn the kinds of research problems for which qualitative methods are appropriate, and to critically examine qualitative social work research in terms of design, technique, analysis, and interpretation. The seminar format will include lectures, discussion of readings, student presentations, field assignments, and a final paper.

Quantitative Research Methods in Social Work (SOW 7497)

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a broad overview of Quantitative Methods of use to those during research in Social Work. It also serves as a review of basic quantitative methods in order to prepare the doctoral student for the Advanced Statistics course offered later in the program. Areas of focus will include issues related to variable selection, variable measurement, construction of measures when appropriate, issues of validity and reliability of measures, descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency, measures of correlation and association, and a discussion of causality, an introduction to multivariable models.

Advanced Statistics in Social Work Research (SOW 7417)

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a detailed and practical understanding of advanced statistical techniques that are of use to social work academicians, administrators and researchers as they conduct critical research into policy, practice and the social issues of concern in the 21st century. This course builds on Quantitative Methods and develops more completely the subject matter covered in that class. During this intensive course which will meet five times in full day sessions, students will be provided with the needed knowledge and practical skills to determine the appropriate multivariate technique to use in their research. Areas of focus will include underlying principles of Multivariable models, an introduction to these models and issues related to modeling including concepts such as dummy variables, and polynomials as a means of controlling variability. Areas of focus will include issues related to variable selection, ANOVA, Multivariable, regression and its relation to linear regression, Multiple Analysis of Variance, Discriminate Function Analysis, Factor Analysis, Logistic Analysis, Survival Analysis, Hierarchical Analysis and Structural equations. Lastly the course will touch briefly and non-linear models.

Advanced Clinical Practice with Complex Problems (SOW 7616)

This seminar challenges students to access and utilize the most advanced evidence based knowledge and theories to understand and recommend preventions/ intervention for current complex problems such as homelessness, kinship care, gay adoptions, bioethics, natural disasters and global instability.

Evaluation of Social Work Practice & Programs (SOW 7446)

This is a doctoral level course designed to prepare students in the development of research skills to conduct social work practice and program evaluation. The main emphasis will be to teach students the skills involved to design and conduct practice and program evaluation and to be able to critically read, analyze and synthesize evaluation studies conducted by others. Furthermore, students will learn how to write, present, and defend evaluation studies. Particular emphasis will be placed on the integration of knowledge from previous research courses to understand the logic and major strategies and techniques for conducting evaluation research in social work settings. Ethical considerations in planning and conducting evaluation research will also be examined.

Social Work Educator in the University (SOW 7776)

This course is a doctoral level seminar meant to develop the teaching skills necessary to prepare students for education in higher education. The main emphasis of the course will be to teach students the skills to design and deliver a course suitable for Social work students. Students will learn about philosophies of teaching, adult learning styles, accreditation standards, research supported teaching strategies, technology- assisted learning, and current evaluation methods of teaching and learning.

Critical Issues in Social Work (SOW 7932)

This course focuses on the critical issues facing contemporary Social Work in the areas of research, practice, administration, leadership, and education. Participants will be exposed to national experts in each of these areas for debate and discussion.

Directed Studies in Social Work Research (SOW 7919)

This course prepares students to identify a research topic, review existing literature and formulate a research question or hypothesis as the basis of the dissertation. Students will learn to prepare a scholarly manuscript to submit for publication.

Proposal Writing I (SOW 7981)

The purpose of this course is to guide doctoral students in preparing a dissertation proposal. The goal of the class is to begin to develop detailed research plan in the form of a dissertation proposal that includes: the Introduction, specific research questions or hypotheses, completed literature review, and tentative methodology. Special attention will be given to the organization of the writing process.

Proposal Writing II (SOW 7982)

The purpose of this course is to guide doctoral students in preparing a dissertation proposal. The goal of the class is to complete a detailed research plan in the form of a dissertation proposal which includes: Table of Contents (outline), Introduction, specific research questions or hypotheses, literature review, methodology, and tentative statistical analyses. In addition, students will prepare a formal research proposal defense and deliver the presentation to peers and Instructor for feedback. Special attention will be given to the organization of the writing process.

Dissertation Hours (SOW 7980)

B. Other Courses

Directed Readings Course

Students may elect to take directed readings of material related to the student's specialized research area. Directed Readings Courses do not substitute for courses required for the Ph.D. in Social Work degree.

C. Transfer Credits

1. USF will accept credits only from those institutions accredited by one of the accrediting agencies/commissions recognized by USF. However, USF reserves the right to deny credit for specific courses. The receipt and evaluation of total transfer credit are the responsibility of the Office of Admissions.
2. The School of Social Work will determine which courses are applicable for transfer toward the Ph.D. in Social Work degree and will determine course equivalency.

D. Continuous Enrollment

1. All graduate students must be continuously enrolled. Continuous enrollment is defined as completing a minimum of 6 hours of graduate credit with grades assigned, for every three continuous semesters.
2. In the Social Work Ph.D. program, students must take course work in the semester sequence outlined in the Curriculum description (page 7). Failure to take courses as

prescribed may jeopardize student progress, eligibility to take Qualifying Examination, and continuation in the program. The Chair of the Ph.D. Program must approve all exceptions.

3. All requirements for the Ph.D. program must be completed within eight (8) years from a student's date of admission for doctoral study. All required coursework, successful completion of the Qualifying Examination and admission to Candidacy must be completed within four (4) years after admission into the program. Students have four (4) years from the date of doctoral Candidacy to complete degree requirements.

E. Dissertation Hours

1. The Graduate School requires that students working on a dissertation must register for dissertation hours every semester, starting with the semester following Admission to Doctoral Candidacy, up to and including the semester the dissertation is submitted to and approved by the Graduate School.
2. The School of Social Work Ph.D. Program requires 24 credits of dissertation hours. Students are expected to enroll in 4 hours of dissertation credit per semester every semester (Fall, Spring, Summer) for 2 years following admission to Candidacy.
3. Students continuing to work on a dissertation beyond the required 24 hours of dissertation credit may enroll for a minimum of two (2) hours of dissertation every semester continuing through the semester the dissertation is submitted and approved by the Graduate School.

II. PROGRAM PROCEDURES

A. Doctoral Supervisory Committee/Student Advising

1. The Chair of the Ph.D. Program or designee shall serve as advisor to all doctoral students until appointment of Major Professor.

B. Major Professor

1. The role of the Major Professor is to serve as the student's advisor, academic mentor, and advocate within the university. As Chair of the student's Doctoral Supervisory Committee, the Major Professor is responsible and has the authority to make decisions on academic, logistical, technical, and interpersonal issues that may surface during the life of the committee.
 - a) Duties of the Major Professor include the following:
 - (1) Assisting in the organization of the Doctoral Committee
 - (2) Convening and chairing Doctoral Committee meetings
 - (3) Supervising the preparation of the proposal and the dissertation
 - (4) Conducting the affairs of the Doctoral Committee consistent with College and University policies.
 - b) To qualify as a Major Professor, a faculty member must:
 - (1) Hold a faculty appointment in the School of Social Work
 - (2) Be regular graduate faculty as defined by the University (see Graduate catalog)
 - (3) Be active in scholarly pursuits as evidenced by at least one referred publication in the last three years

C. Guidelines for Selection of Major Professor

1. During Semester 4, each student will identify an area of research interest and submit a statement regarding this area of interest to the Ph.D. Committee.

- a) It is the student's responsibility to identify a Major Professor, schedule an appointment to discuss the proposed area of research interest, obtain faculty member consent for the appointment, and submit the faculty member's name to the chair of the Ph.D. program.
- b) The Ph.D. Committee will review requests submitted by students, and will consult with the School of Social Work Program Director for approval and appointment. The Graduate School requires all Major Professors to submit a current CV as part of the appointment process.

D. Doctoral Committee

1. Doctoral Committee Responsibilities

- a) The Doctoral Committee is responsible to guide the student throughout the dissertation process, including the defense of the dissertation proposal. Specifically the Doctoral Committee is charged with:
 - (1) Approval of the written dissertation proposal through a formal oral process
 - (2) Providing guidance and support during dissertation process
 - (3) Evaluation and approval of the dissertation through a formal dissertation defense process.

2. Doctoral Committee Composition

- a) A doctoral dissertation committee consists of a minimum of four members. The Major Professor and at least two other members of the committee must be drawn from the School of Social Work faculty. The Major Professor and members from the Social Work faculty must have a Ph.D. and must be approved by the department and college as graduate faculty. The fourth member of the Committee may be drawn from any discipline relevant to the student's proposed area of research. Any Committee member not recognized as graduate faculty must submit a current curriculum vitae (CV) and be approved to serve by the Department, College and Graduate School. Doctoral committees may have more than four members.

3. Doctoral Committee Appointment Process

- a) With the Major Professor's consultation, students select a Doctoral Committee. With the approval of the Major Professor and consent of proposed Committee members, students are required to file a Supervisory Committee Appointment Form, including original signatures from Committee members. The completed Appointment Form is then submitted to the Chair of the Ph.D. Program where it is reviewed with the Director of the School of Social Work for approval, and forwarded to the Dean of the College of

Behavioral & Community Sciences for approval. In some cases, the Dean of the Graduate School may also need to approve the composition of the committee. The student's doctoral committee will be selected by mid-semester 7.

4. Changes in Committee Membership
 - a) The Doctoral Committee membership can be changed at any time at the student's discretion. Students must notify the Major Professor of any proposed changes and obtain agreement from the Major Professor and new proposed committee member(s). The student then informs the Chair of the Ph.D. Program and submits a Change of Committee Form, including original signatures from new Committee members. The Ph.D. Chair then forwards the Change of Committee form to the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences. It is a professional courtesy for the student to notify any member of the committee that is being removed from service.

III. REVIEW OF STUDENT PROGRESS

A. To ensure each student makes adequate academic progress in the Ph.D. program, regular reviews will take place.

1. Near the end of *each* semester, each student completes a *Doctoral Program Progress Form*. The form is submitted to the Ph.D. program Chair. Together with reports from course instructors, this information provides the basis for assessing student progress in the program and planning for the next semester of course work.
2. Once students have completed all required courses in the Ph.D. curriculum, the Review of Student Progress is conducted every spring semester until the student enters Candidacy. Doctoral candidates will then have their progress monitored by the Major Professor to ensure timely completion of the Ph.D. degree.

IV. QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS; DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE

A. Advancement to Candidacy

1. Successful completion of the Qualifying Examination at the end of semester 7,
2. Completion of remaining coursework in semesters 8 and 9, and
3. Successful defense of the dissertation proposal admits the student to Candidacy.

B. Qualifying Examination Procedures

1. Before being admitted to Candidacy, students must successfully complete the doctoral Qualifying Examination.

a) Purpose of Examination: The Qualifying Examination is an assessment tool that allows the faculty to evaluate the Ph.D. student's independent thinking and theoretical and methodological readiness to formulate research that meets the field's scholarly requirements. The examination is employed to test the student's general knowledge as well as his/her preparation for engaging in the kind of independent scholarship required to complete a doctoral dissertation.

1. Students should be aware that the Qualifying Examination requires them to obtain knowledge of social work issues independently of direct classroom instruction.

b) Preparing for the Examination: All faculty are encouraged to aid students in independent research and study efforts related to preparation for the Qualifying Examination, offering direction as needed. It should be noted that School of Social Work faculty do not condone providing students with "practice" exam questions. To allow adequate time for preparation, students should contact faculty and begin their study preparations one year prior to their expected Qualifying Examination date.

c) Requirements of the Qualifying Examination: All doctoral students are required to successfully complete the Qualifying Examination before they can be admitted into candidacy. The process, described below, consists of a Written Examination administered in a controlled testing environment.

d) Written Examination: The examination period extends over one-day and is divided into 2 three-hour periods for written responses. The exam is administered in a classroom setting where students have access to computers to type their responses to essay questions related to social work theory and research.

e) Examination Questions: The Ph.D. Chair, members of the Ph.D. Program Committee, along with faculty who have taught doctoral courses will prepare the questions for the Qualifying Examination. Questions will require the student to integrate material from coursework, suggested supplemental reading, and other academic experiences (e.g. independent study, directed research). The examination is designed to test the student's ability to discuss Theory, Research, Policy, and Practice issues pertinent to social work. Four major questions will be included in the exam. In some instances, the student may be asked to select and respond to a question when more than one choice is offered.

1. In responding to examination questions, Ph.D. students are expected to demonstrate a strong grasp of points salient to the questions. Normally, this will involve demonstration of knowledge of research findings and methodological considerations in various contexts. Answers should show that the student knows the literature well and should reflect the student's ability to critically summarize the important issues and conclusions in the literature. Also, the student should demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast methodologies and defend a rationale for selecting one approach over another. Further, the student should show evidence of the ability to integrate this knowledge and to resolve, insofar as possible, the problems in the issues under discussion.

2. Answers should be well written. The clarity, specificity, relevance, integration, and application of knowledge demonstrated in the student's response are more important than the length of the response. The student must demonstrate mastery of the relevant material with clearly reasoned, well informed responses that bear specifically on the point of the question. "Mastery" means, among other things, that the student has command over the information and can use it to resolve issues and solve professional problems. The qualifying examination is an important part of the educational experience and a high standard of performance is expected.

f) Grading and Assigning Grades for Doctoral Qualifying Examination: Those faculty members involved in developing the examination questions will also be responsible to create grading rubrics that will be used to score student written responses. The Ph.D. Program Chair will assign two faculty members to independently read and score a question. The Ph.D. Chair may be called in to consult if the two readers are unable to reach a similar outcome (i.e. pass, marginal, fail). A masked process is used so readers do not know which student's exam they are scoring at any given time. Grades are assigned as follows: 1= Pass with honors; 2= Pass; 3= Marginal; or 4= Fail.

1. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Ph.D. Program to distribute the grades to the students, and to have the results placed in the students' records.

g) Marginal Grade: Students who receive a grade of "marginal" on more than one exam question will have one opportunity to re-take that portion of the Written Examination in an attempt to achieve a passing grade on the examination. This action should only be used in cases where the student's work shows promise of meeting the criteria laid out in Purpose of Qualifying Examination. The student's re-take examination will then be re-graded by the same readers. At this point, the student will either receive a "pass" if the remedial work is adequate, a "marginal" if no improvement is detected, or a "fail" if the remedial work proves inadequate.

h) Failing Grade. Students who receive a failing grade on the examination will be allowed one opportunity to re-take that portion of the Written Examination in an attempt to achieve a passing grade on the examination. Two consecutive failures on the same exam question will result in the student's dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

i) Passing the Qualifying Exam: To pass the Qualifying Exam, a student must achieve a score of “Pass” on at least three (3) sections and a score of “Marginal” on not more than one (1) section. A score of “Marginal” on more than one section or a score of “Fail” on any section after the one-time re-take of the exam, will result in automatic failure of the Written Exam and dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

j) Re-take of the Written Exam: Any student who receives a score of “Marginal” on more than 1 section, or a score of “Fail” on one or more sections of the examination, will be given one opportunity to re-take the written examination under the same testing conditions. Results of the re-take written exam will be final. A second failure of the Qualifying Examination will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program, and the Graduate School will be notified of this decision.

V. Dissertation and Dissertation Defense:

A. In order to achieve the Ph.D. degree all students must successfully complete an original research project and defend the dissertation.

1. The dissertation is considered the most important requirement for the doctoral degree. It should reflect originality in research and display the student's independent thinking, scholarly ability, and technical mastery. The topic of study should focus on problems or issues of general concern to social work so that findings will have the broadest possible implications. The conclusions must be logical, the literary form must be of high quality, and the contribution to knowledge should merit publication. The dissertation should reflect the use of appropriate methodologies that advance the research beyond a descriptive level.
2. The dissertation should represent the beginning of one's scholarly work, not its culmination. Dissertation research should provide students with hands-on, directed experience in the primary research methods of the discipline, and should prepare students for the type of research expected after they receive the Ph.D. degree.
3. Students should familiarize themselves with all the rules and requirements stated in the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation Handbook. (online at: www.grad.usf.edu)
4. When the dissertation is completed, the student must complete a Request for the Dissertation Defense form, including original signatures from Committee members, with the Dean of the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences.

B. Dissertation Defense

1. The Major Professor will nominate a faculty member from another department to serve as chair of the defense.
2. Having met the other requirements for the degree, students who successfully defend their dissertations and submit it to the Graduate School are granted the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Students who are required to submit revisions shall be granted their degree upon completion of those revisions. Students who fail to successfully defend their dissertation will be dismissed from the program.

VI. ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

A. Please see Graduate Catalog for information about student responsibilities for requirements and adherence to policies and regulations including Student Conduct and Academic Dishonesty and Disruption of the Academic Process.

B. Problem-Solving Process for Ph.D. Program: These guidelines are designed to provide for fair and equitable resolution of problems for students and faculty. This process does not address formal student grievances.

1. Student Raised Concerns: If a student experiences a problem in any area of academic performance, the following process should be used to resolve the problem. These steps must be followed in order:

a) The student is expected to take responsible action by talking directly to the faculty member involved in student's concern.

b) If the student is unable to satisfactorily resolve the concern after talking directly to the faculty member, then he/she may proceed through the following steps until the concern is satisfactorily resolved. The student must follow the order as specified.

c) Discuss with the Chair of the Ph.D Program

d) Discuss with Director of the School of Social Work. The discussion must occur in person.

e) Follow the University guidelines (see Graduate Catalog) for pursuing a formal grievance.

f) The above must be initiated within the semester in which the concern arises. The procedure may be invoked up to 30 calendar days beyond the final day of classes in any given semester.

g) Faculty have sole authority to assign grades. A student may appeal a grade by going to the Director of the School only after first discussing the concern with the course instructor and the Ph.D. program Chair. The Dean of the College of Behavioral & Community Sciences may be contacted in writing about a grade grievance only after all avenues have been exhausted within the School, and the student has been notified of this by the Director of the School.

C. Faculty Based concerns

1. Any School of Social Work faculty member having questions about the capacity, performance, or the continuation of a student in the program, having discussed these concerns with the student and giving the student an opportunity to address/correct the concerns can bring these concerns to the appropriate person.
 - a) Contact the Ph.D. program Chair
 - b) Contact the Director of the School of Social Work
 - c) If further consultation is needed, a meeting will be requested with the Ph.D. Program Committee or its designated representatives, and/or any faculty member(s) involved in the educational concerns being reviewed.
 - d) When the committee determines that there are serious questions about the student's continuation in the program, the following procedure is utilized:
 - (1) The student is contacted and a meeting is scheduled with the student, Ph. D program Chair, and/or any additional faculty involved in the specific concern(s).
 - (2) A plan, including the option of immediate dismissal, is negotiated to address the specific concerns and a time line assigned for completion/review of the plan.
 - (3) The plan is put into written form and signed by all parties. A copy of the plan is given to all participants, placed in the student's record, and given to the School Director.
 - (4) The plan is monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis, and assessed for progress and completion per the time line by the program Chair and the student in an effort to help the student bring about the necessary changes.
 - (5) In the event that the student does not successfully meet the requirements specified in the plan, student will be dismissed from the program. The student will be notified of this dismissal in writing.
 - (6) This procedure does not apply to automatic dismissals for failure to maintain sufficient academic progress as required by the University.

D. Possible Reasons for Dismissal

This list is provided only as partial listing representing possible situations which could result in not being able to complete the program and is provided as an illustration for student understanding. Any student having additional questions should contact the Ph.D. program Chair.

1. Behavior that is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers;
2. Behavior or performance, or lack thereof, that raises questions from the faculty about the student's suitability for professional social work;
3. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty or disruption;
4. Failure of student to maintain a 3.0 GPA beyond one semester of academic probation (University policy);
5. Failure of student to achieve a grade of "B" or better in all courses required for graduation;
6. Failure of student to follow course sequencing as scheduled, unless other arrangements have been made and approved by the Ph.D. committee.

E. Student Responsibilities for Withdrawal from Classes and Program

1. Students are expected to make any necessary arrangements for responsible withdrawal from classes and the program. It is the student's responsibility to contact the School to determine the specific steps necessary to address the needs of all parties (i.e. termination of research, paperwork, etc.). In addition to the specific steps indicated by the School at the time of withdrawal, students must also complete the following 4 steps
 - a) Notify class instructors in a timely manner
 - b) Notify Ph.D. program Chair in writing
 - c) Notify the Director of the School in writing
 - d) File official withdrawal notice with the registrar

F. Individual Course Withdrawal

1. Because the Ph.D. program is heavily sequenced, withdrawal from a class effectively results in a withdrawal from the program unless special provisions have been made with the Chair of the Ph.D Program.

G. Request for Incomplete ("I") Grade

1. The University policy for "I" grades is found in the USF Graduate Catalog. These policies will be followed by the School of Social Work. If the student determines he/she has met the University guidelines to request an "I" grade, the student will contact the individual course instructor to make the request. If the instructor agrees to assign an "I" grade, a signed contract will be negotiated between the student and instructor outlining a formal plan and time line for course completion.

VII. Student Academic Grievance Procedure

A. These guidelines are to provide a fair and equitable opportunity to objectively review facts and events pertinent to the cause of an academic grievance.

1. Definition of Academic Grievance: In accordance with the Graduate School, an "academic grievance" is a claim that a specific academic decision or action that affects a student's academic record or status has violated published policies and procedures, or has been applied to the grievant in a manner different from that used for other students. Grievances may relate to such decisions as the assignment of a grade seen by the student as incorrect or the dismissal or failure of a student for his or her action(s). Academic grievances will not deal with general student complaints.
2. Academic Grievance Procedure: The School of Social Work Ph.D. program adheres to the procedures established by the USF Graduate School. Students should refer to the Graduate Catalog for the detailed procedure (www.grad.usf.edu)

3. Expectations for Professional Behavior

A. The School of Social Work strongly supports the University's policy on Academic Honesty and Integrity. Members of the University community support high standards of individual conduct and human relations. Responsibility for one's own conduct and respect for the rights of others are essential conditions for academic and personal freedom within the University. USF reserves the right to deny admission or refuse enrollment to students whose actions are contrary to the purposes of the University or impair the welfare or freedom of other members of the University community. Disciplinary procedures are followed when a student fails to exercise responsibility in an acceptable manner or commits an offense as outlined in the Student Conduct Code. Refer to the USF 6.0021, Student Code of Conduct at <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/usfgc/ogc%20web/currentreg.htm>.

1. Academic integrity is the foundation of the University of South Florida's (University/USF) commitment to the academic honesty and personal integrity of its University Community. Academic integrity is grounded in certain fundamental

values, which include honesty, respect and fairness. Broadly defined, academic honesty is the completion of all academic endeavors and claims of scholarly knowledge as representative of one's own efforts. Knowledge and maintenance of the academic standards of honesty and integrity as set forth by the University are the responsibility of the entire academic community, including the instructional faculty, staff and students.

2. In addition, the School of Social Work supports the following standards, adapted from the NASW Code of Ethics:
3. **Accountability:** Attend class, arrive on time and return from break in a timely manner. Participate in group activities and assignments and complete assignments on time. Read and follow directions.
4. **Respect:** Treat all your peers, your instructors, and those you come in contact with, with dignity and respect at all times. Listen when others are speaking, offer feedback in a constructive manner, approach conflict in a cooperative manner and use positive non-judgmental language.
5. **Confidentiality:** Treat any personal information you hear about a peer or instructor as confidential. Use good judgment in self-disclosing in the classroom. Never disclose identifying information about clients in the classroom.
6. **Competence:** Apply yourself to your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, meeting deadlines as given by your instructors. Take responsibility for the quality of your completed work. Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal issues that may affect your work with clients.
7. **Integrity:** Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Do your own work and take credit only for your own work. Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed.
8. **Diversity:** Embrace diversity. Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and beliefs with which you are not familiar.