



**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**PHD PROGRAM MANUAL  
2021-2022**

# Welcome

## ***Welcome to the PhD Program in Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington!***

Social work is a profession that is committed to the service of others, to the enhanced well-being of society, and to the promotion of social justice. To achieve this mission, we must effectively educate practitioners and generate knowledge to support practices and policies that are effective and just. The PhD Program in Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) trains students to become skilled, dynamic, and creative educators and researchers.

The PhD is the highest degree awarded in the social work discipline and, as such, it is a journey that is challenging and consuming, yet rewarding and fulfilling. Our faculty and our coursework will build your skills and abilities, encourage your intellectual growth, and prepare you to address the most complex and pressing issues facing our world. You will work with world-class faculty at a Carnegie Research 1 university. You will hone your skills as researchers, educators, grant writers, and policymakers through classroom learning and hands-on experience. You will also form collegial, steadfast, and enduring relationships with faculty, staff, and fellow students.

In this program manual, you will find important information related to the curriculum, the policies, and the processes by which you will achieve your PhD. Please consult this manual if you have questions, but also follow up with your advisors for confirmation. In addition, the PhD Program Director and staff are always available to address questions and concerns.

Again, welcome to the PhD Program in Social Work at UTA. We invite you to join us as we engage in *“the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence”*.

### **Scott D. Ryan, MSW, MBA, PhD**

Dean & Professor  
Interim Director, Interdisciplinary Studies  
Director, Center for Clinical Social Work  
Faculty Affiliate, Center for African American Studies  
Editor, *Adoption Quarterly*

### **Katherine E. Sanchez, PhD, LCSW**

Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Affairs  
Associate Professor

### **Keith A. Anderson, PhD, MSW**

PhD Program Director  
Cheryl Milkes Moore Professor

**Please note that this manual is intended for student guidance and does not constitute a contractual agreement between the School of Social Work PhD program and students.**

# THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK AT UTA

## Mission Statement

*The University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work promotes the highest standards of integrity, and excellence in research, teaching and service, and creates collaborative scholarly and educational opportunities for students and the community, with the goal of achieving a just society.*

## History

In 1967, the Texas State Legislature enacted the establishment of the Graduate School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Arlington. The business and professional communities recognized the great need for social work programs and services due to the rapidly expanding urbanization of the north Texas region. The School admitted its first MSSW students in 1968 and received accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 1970. The Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) degree was founded in 1979 under the auspices of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work and accredited in 1982. The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Work degree program was initiated in 1983. Prior to 1983, the Graduate School of Social Work, the College of Business Administration, and the Institute of Urban Studies, were jointly involved in operating an interdisciplinary PhD in Administration degree program.

In 1991, the Graduate School of Social Work became the School of Social Work when the undergraduate program was brought under the administration of the Dean of Social Work. The School now has three-degree programs in Social Work - the Baccalaureate, the Masters and the Doctoral Programs. Enrollment in each program varies from year to year. There are approximately 800 students enrolled as pre-majors and majors in the BSW Program, approximately 900 students in the MSSW Program and approximately 40 students in the Doctoral Program. The programs are resourced by approximately 40 full-time faculty members.

# **PHD PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES**

The mission of the PhD program is to prepare competent scholars to advance knowledge and scholarships, pursue excellence, and provide leadership and service and to promote social and economic justice and cultural competence with diverse populations. The program builds on the premise that social welfare must be scientifically and theoretically based and continually responsive to changing local and global societal needs.

The primary goal of the program is to prepare scholars to advance knowledge development and dissemination for the profession of social work. The program seeks to provide students with an opportunity to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field and the profession in order to provide more effective and efficient services in social welfare and qualify for leadership positions in teaching, research, and administration. Graduates of the program are expected to make a significant contribution to the profession of social work through continued research, scholarship, teaching and service.

Upon completion of the PhD Program, students will display competency in:

- Theory and theory development;
- Knowledge and skills in research methods and data analysis;
- Theory, research, and policy as applied to a specialty practice area;
- Understanding and commitment to the underlying values, ethics, and social and economic justice perspectives in the scientific inquiry in social work;
- Research as applied to social work practice, policy and social work education.

## PHD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

**Keith A. Anderson, PhD**

*Cheryl Milkes Moore Professor*

*PhD Program Director*

Room A-201B, Social Work Complex, Building A

Email: keith.anderson2@uta.edu

Fax: (817) 272-3939

**Katherine Sanchez, PhD**

*Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs*

Room A-201E, Social Work Complex, Building A

Email: KSanchez@uta.edu

Phone: (817) 266-5249

Fax: (817) 272-3939

**Aaron Hagedorn, PhD**

*Assistant Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs*

Room 108, Social Work Complex, General Academic Classroom Building

Email: aaron.hagedorn@uta.edu

Phone: (817) 272-3543

Fax: (817) 272-3939

**Sherry Willis**

*Administrative Assistant*

Room 107, Social Work Complex, General Academic Classroom Building

E-mail: willis@uta.edu

Phone: (817) 272-3921

Fax: (817) 272-3939

### **PhD Program Committee**

The PhD Program Committee is a subcommittee of Committee of Graduate Studies and is made up of six faculty members, the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs, and the PhD Program Director. Two students are elected by the PhD students to serve on the PhD Committee (one represents the first-year students and one represents the continuing students). The PhD Committee advises the PhD Director on program policy and addresses curriculum issues for the PhD program.

## **PHD PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The PhD program emphasizes the learning of research methods and teaching. We have awarded over 150 doctoral degrees. Our graduates teach and conduct research in universities across the United States and other countries. The PhD program offers a full time and part time study option and both programs share admissions criteria, program objectives, and curriculum.

The full-time program aims to admit between six to eight qualified applicants each Fall term. Students come to UTA from around the world and study in a variety of Social Work areas including child welfare, mental health, health disparities, domestic violence, aging and international social work. Faculty members in the School of Social Work have a strong commitment to the education of doctoral students. The curriculum emphasizes a strong research and statistical background designed to develop successful graduates who will have the skills and ability to conduct cutting edge research.

During the first year of the full-time program, students complete foundation courses on research, statistics, theory and policy. In the second year of the full-time program, students develop an area of specialization and take additional classes including advanced research, advanced statistics, grant writing and elective courses inside and outside the School of Social Work.

Throughout the program, students have the opportunity to serve as graduate teaching assistants (GTA) and graduate research assistants (GRA) in order to gain hands-on experience in both areas. Depending on qualifications and practice experience, students are able to teach BSW or MSW classes in the School of Social Work across different platforms including online, face-to-face- and hybrid courses. Students working as GRAs work closely with faculty members on scholarly activities including conference presentations, journal publications and grant applications.

# PRIOR TO STARTING THE PHD PROGRAM

## The MSW Degree & Career Opportunities

Two years of post MSW experience is required to teach practice courses (micro and macro) in undergraduate and graduate programs accredited by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE). These requirements can be waived for individuals teaching policy, research, and human behavior and the social environment (HBSE).

***It is important to know that most universities give preference to job applicants that meet the aforementioned requirement. To be competitive and increase their marketability, PhD program participants are strongly encouraged to obtain the MSW and two years post MSW experience prior to seeking consideration or PhD Program admission.***

## Statistics Preparation

All students entering the program are required to take a short statistics preparation class prior to the start of the official program. ***The class is offered by the PhD Program will take place the week prior to the beginning of the fall semester.*** The purpose of this class is to assist incoming PhD students to be prepared for the first statistics course in the program. Most students find the preparation course to be useful and engaging.

## Time Considerations

Obtaining your PhD is a considerable time commitment and you will need to weigh and adjust your existing and anticipated obligations.

- Full-time students can expect a minimum of three years to complete the PhD degree.
- Many students take longer than three years to complete the PhD degree. Funding should be taken into consideration if you choose or need to enroll for more than three years.

# Overview of Degree Requirements

## The program leading to the PhD in Social Work covers:

- A minimum of six semesters (three years) of full-time study.
- The completion of 48 hours of graduate study.

## There are five primary components to the PhD degree:

- **Coursework**
  - 18 hours of core-coursework.
  - 12 hours of advanced courses.
  - 3 hours of electives selected from relevant graduate courses offered outside the School of Social Work.
  - 3 hours of electives from either inside or outside of the School of Social Work.
- **Initial Diagnostic Advisory Committee Evaluation**
  - Upon completion of the 18 hours of core-coursework, students' progress is evaluated by an Initial Diagnostic Advisory Committee.
- **Qualifying Examination**
  - Upon completion of the 18 hours of core-coursework, students must sit for and pass their qualifying exam.
- **Comprehensive Specialty Examination**
  - Upon completion of 36 hours of required and elective coursework, students must sit for and pass their comprehensive specialty examination.
  - The comprehensive specialty examination is taken prior to application for degree candidacy and registration for dissertation.
- **Dissertation**
  - 3 hours of dissertation tutorial taken upon successful completion of comprehensive specialty examination
  - 9 hours of dissertation must be taken for a student to graduate.
  - Students complete their dissertation with a formal, successful defense!



## PHD PROGRAM PROGRESSION & MILESTONES

In the tables below, we present the typical progression and milestones for students engaged in full-time doctoral studies in the PhD Program in Social Work. *Please note that some students require additional time to complete the requirements of this program, however, all students follow these course and milestone sequences.*

### 1<sup>ST</sup> Year

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Initial Diagnostic Advisory Committee Evaluation	Summer Semester
SOCW 6373 Theory & Model Building	SOCW 6341 Advanced Statistics		Core Qualifying Exam
SOCW 6340 Advanced Research	SOCW 6348 Qualitative Research		
SOCW 6347 Intermediate Statistics	SOCW 6396 Social Work Education		

### 2<sup>ND</sup> Year

Fall Semester	Diagnostic Advisory Committee Formation	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
SOCW 6367 Data Analysis		SOCW 6395 Psychometrics	Comprehensive Specialty Exam
SOCW 6328 Social Policy		Elective	
SOCW 6393 Grant Writing		Elective	

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
SOCW 6390 Dissertation Tutorial	SOCW 6399, 6699, 6999 Dissertation Hours	Dissertation Defense

# PHD PROGRAM CURRICULUM

## 1<sup>st</sup> Year (18 Course Hours)

- ***Fall – Required Courses***
  - SOCW 6373 Theory and Model Building in Social Work Research
  - SOCW 6340 Advanced Research Methods in Human Services
  - SOCW 6347 Intermediate Statistics
- ***Spring – Required Courses***
  - SOCW 6341 Advanced Statistical Methods in Human Services
  - SOCW 6348 Qualitative Research Methods
  - SOCW 6396 Social Work Education: Principles and Skills

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Year (18 Course Hours)

- ***Fall – Required Courses***
  - SOCW 6328 Social Policy Research and Analysis
  - SOCW 6367 Data Analysis and Application
  - SOCW 6393 Grant Writing
- ***Spring – Required and Elective Courses***
  - SOCW 6395 Psychometric and Measurement Methods in Human Services
  - Elective
  - Elective

## 3<sup>RD</sup> Year (12 Course Hours)

- ***Fall & Spring***
  - SOCW 6390 Dissertation Tutorial
  - SOCW 6399 Dissertation Hours
  - SOCW 6699 Dissertation Hours
  - SOCW 6999 Dissertation Hours

# Electives & Other Course Information

## Electives

All students in the doctoral program are required to take two elective courses. ***One of these electives must be taken outside the School of Social Work.*** These courses should be in the area of the student's focused research which will add depth or breadth to the student's knowledge level and expertise. These courses are intended to support the coursework in the student's domain of knowledge within social work. The following considerations should be noted:

- Students should consult with their Diagnostic Advisory Committees on outside elective course selection. The director of the program will review and approve outside course enrollments.
- When deemed appropriate, the PhD Program Director may permit students to take one of the outside elective courses at another university. Permission will only be granted for courses that are not offered by UTA. Please note that students must pay for course work taken outside of the UT system.

## Masters Level Courses as Electives

PhD students may enroll in master's level courses as planned and agreed by their Diagnostic Advisory Committee. A master's level course may be considered if in consultation with the instructor, additional depth and breadth of knowledge will be attained through additional assignment.

- PhD students should identify themselves to the course instructor since extra requirements for doctoral students may differ.
- Courses must be taught by a PHD level instructor.
- Master's level course must be in units outside of the School of Social Work

## Tutorials (Independent Studies)

A tutorial is an "individual-instruction" course. The student does not attend class on a formal basis, but instead works with an individual professor around a subject of interest. Tutorials may be for one, two, or three credit hours. A few other considerations to note:

- Tutorials may not be given in areas where an organized course is offered.
- A maximum of 6 credit hours of tutorials may be taken.
- A written Plan of Work must be submitted by the student and approved by the student's Graduate Advisor prior to enrolling in the course.
- Written evidence of approval from the Graduate Advisor or the dissertation chairperson must be presented during advisement prior to registration.

***Please note that the Dissertation Tutorial is different and is discussed separately.***

# GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS (GTAs)

Students who enter the program are eligible to independently teach a class in the BSW or MSW program. The SSW gives priority to doctoral students in the appointment of instructors for classes after all full-time faculty have been scheduled. The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs coordinates the appointment of GTA's and distributes notices for appointment applications. ***Please note that all students are expected to work 20 hours/week as a GTA and/or GRA during Fall and Spring Semesters as part of their funding package.***

## Criteria for GTA Appointment

- Be enrolled in a minimum of 9 hours in courses related to their program of work in both long semesters. Students who drop enrollment below 9 hours will not be renewed in subsequent semesters.
- Maintain a GPA of 3.20 or higher in order to retain their graduate assistantships and tuition waiver. GPA will be rounded to the nearest tenth.
- Master's Degree in Social Work (some courses require 2 years post MSW practice).
- Completed the core PhD courses (18 credit hours).
- If English was not your first language, you will be required to provide official exam results (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS).

## ***Supervision and Evaluation of GTAs***

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and/or a designated faculty member will provide direct supervision of GTAs. The Director of Field Education will provide direct supervision of GTAs serving as field liaisons. Supervision can involve the following activities:

- Regular meetings with student to plan course outlines and readings.
- Discussion of preparation and organization of course content.
- Review of teaching methods.
- Planning and discussing course assignments and grading.
- Discussing grievance (grade appeal) procedures and process.
- Reviewing student evaluations.
- Graduate Teaching Assistants are reviewed using the same standardized teaching evaluation form as used for all faculty members.
- The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs reviews teaching evaluations, provides feedback to the GTAs based on evaluations and places a copy of the summary evaluation in student's file in the PhD Office (which may serve as a reference for future teaching assignments).
- Re-assignment is subject to evaluations as well as other documentation about professional ethics, comporment, and the fulfillment of contractual duties.

# GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS (GRAs)

In GRA positions, students work closely with a faculty member on a research project. The research project will focus on the faculty member's area of interest, which may or may not align with the student's area of interest. Students will have the opportunity to learn from the faculty member and gain experience in the research process. Students will also have the opportunity to be included in scholarly activities including the submission of abstracts for conference presentations, co-authoring articles and book chapters for publication, and assisting with the development and submission of research grant proposals.

- Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs coordinates the appointment of GRA's and distributes notices for assignments.
- All GRAs assigned to externally funded projects are required to sign an offer letter and return to the Office of Research and Faculty Affairs.

***Please note that all students are expected to work 20 hours/week as a GTA and/or GRA during Fall and Spring Semesters as part of their funding package.***

## Criteria for GRA Appointment

- Be enrolled in a minimum of 9 hours in courses related to their program of work in both long semesters. Students who drop enrollment below 9 hours will not be renewed in subsequent semesters.
- Maintain a GPA of 3.20 or higher in order to retain their graduate assistantships and tuition waiver. GPA will be rounded to the nearest tenth.

## Supervision and Evaluation of GRAs

All GRAs are supervised by the assigned faculty member and are evaluated on the following criteria:

- Productivity
- Time commitment
- Dependability
- Initiative
- Relationships Skills/Behaviors
- Interest Level
- The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs reviews research evaluations and provides feedback to the GRAs based on evaluations.
- A copy of the evaluation is placed in the student's file in the PhD Office and may serve as a reference for future research assignments.

# Scholarships

## Scholarships

The School of Social Work has several scholarships available for students. An announcement describing the scholarships is available on the School of Social Work website at <http://www.uta.edu/ssw/student-resources/scholarships.php>. Students are encouraged to discuss available scholarships with the PhD Program Director. ***To be considered for a scholarship, students must be in good academic standing and/or admitted unconditionally or provisionally. Students under probationary status are not eligible for scholarships.***

# Academic Standards

The following academic standards are based upon internal policies of the PhD Program in the School of Social Work and the Grade and Grading Policies of the Graduate School at UTA. Please note that the following information is a summary of the more detailed policies provided by the Graduate School.

## *Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements*

- **Students are required to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing in the PhD program.**
  - Students who fail to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA will be placed on academic probation and will be required to raise their GPA to a 3.0 by the conclusion of the next semester. Students who fail to meet this standard by the conclusion of the next semester will be dismissed from the PhD Program.
- **Students are required to maintain an overall 3.2 GPA to be eligible for funding support and Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) and Teaching Assistantships (TA).**

## *Course Credit*

- Only courses completed with a grade of A, B, or C can satisfy PhD degree requirements.
- A student with a grade of D or F will be required to repeat the course in order to receive credit.
  - Both grades in the course will be counted toward the student's overall GPA.
- PhD courses are not eligible for the Pass/Fail (P/F) grading option.

## *Grades*

- In general, students in the PhD Program are expected to make A's and B's in all of their courses. While a C is a passing grade, it is not indicative of mastery and will have a negative impact on the overall GPA.
- Incomplete – The grade of "I" designates an Incomplete for a course.
  - A graduate student unable to complete all assigned work in a class in the term in which it was taken may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive an I grade.
  - ***This grade is not given automatically when a student does not complete all assigned work. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor to secure a grade of I before the term ends.***
  - The grade of I will remain as part of the student's academic record until the work is completed and a final grade awarded.
  - **All I grades must be resolved prior to the start of the next semester.**

## ***Grievance Procedures Related to Grades***

- It is the student's obligation first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the individual with whom the grievance originated.
- Individual course instructors retain primary responsibility for assigning grades. The instructor's judgment is final unless compelling evidence shows preferential treatment or procedural irregularities.
- If students wish to appeal, their request must be submitted in writing—on an appeal form available in departmental or program offices—to the PhD Program Director. The student has one calendar year from the date the grade is assigned to initiate the grievance.
- Before considering a grievance, the PhD Program Director will refer the issue to the PhD Program Committee.
- If the student does not find the committee's decision acceptable, the student may appeal to the academic Dean.
  - The decision of the Dean is final.
- Information specific to the procedures to be followed in each academic unit is available in the office of the academic Dean.



# PHD DIAGNOSTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEES

## Initial Diagnostic Advisory Committee

***Prior to or upon completion of first year core courses (18 credit hours)***, students are evaluated by an Initial PhD Diagnostic Advisory Committee. The Initial Diagnostic Advisory Committee is designed to ensure that students are on track and to assist them in charting their education. Below is an overview of the composition and roles:

- The Diagnostic Advisory Committee consists of at least 3 graduate faculty members within the School of Social Work.
- The PHD Program Director chairs the committee
- The Diagnostic Advisory Committee reviews each student's progress during the student's first year of doctoral program work.
- The Diagnostic Advisory Committee also assists students in selecting elective courses (6 credit hours) outside the School of Social Work.

There are four potential outcomes to the diagnostic evaluation.

- Approval to continue in the doctoral program.
- Approval to continue with specified remedial work.
- Failure with permission for assessment through a second diagnostic evaluation.
- Failure and termination in the program.

The result of the diagnostic evaluation must be filed in the Office of Graduate Studies through the PhD Graduate Advisor/Doctoral Program Director.

## PhD Diagnostic Advisory Committee

***Upon completion of first 1 ½ year of course work (27 hours)***, students develop their own PhD Diagnostic Advisory Committee. This Diagnostic Advisory Committee will assist the student in continuing on through the completion of the PhD program.

- In consultation with the PhD Program Director, students will select a Chair.
- In consultation with the Chair, students will then select at least three faculty members to serve on their PhD Diagnostic Committee.
- Members of the committee should reflect the student's primary area of concentration and the student's specialty area. One member may be “at-large” and not represent a specified area of concentration or specialty area.
- The PhD Diagnostic Advisory Committee will develop and evaluate the written Specialty Component of the Comprehensive Examination.
- Members of the diagnostic committee generally serve in that capacity until the student has passed the Comprehensive/Specialty examination.

# **CORE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION**

## **Purpose & Structure**

The core qualifying exam is intended to evaluate students' knowledge and application of the material covered in the first-year curriculum of the PhD program. This is a take-home, written exam based on an empirical journal article that is selected by the PhD Program Committee. Students are then asked to address questions regarding the article that are created by the faculty members teaching the relevant content-area courses.

## **Policies & Format**

There are a number of policies that govern the format of the Core Qualifying Exam.

- All students receive the same article two weeks prior to the questions.
- Students may discuss the article prior to the distribution of the questions.
- A series of questions related to the article and to the core coursework will be distributed two weeks after the article is distributed.
- Students will not be allowed to consult with any others during the writing phase.
- Students have access to books, internet sources, and other informational sources.
- The exam will be completed in 72 hours.
- There is an overall 20-page limit, but there is not a page limit per question.
- Any exams received after the due date time will not be graded. Please plan accordingly!
- Graduate Faculty will grade the exam.
- Students will only receive notification as to which sections of the exam they passed or failed.

## **Re-Sitting for the Core Qualifying Examination**

There is an opportunity to re-sit for the Core Qualifying Examination in those cases where students do not pass any or all sections.

- Re-sitting for the Core Qualifying Exam will take place in August.
- The same process as outlined above will be used in the re-sitting of the Core Qualifying Exam.
- Students will only need to address the sections of the Core Qualifying Exam that they did not successfully pass on their initial attempt.
- Any student who fails a section of the Qualifying Exam for a second time will not be permitted to continue in the program.

# COMPREHENSIVE SPECIALTY EXAM

## Purpose

The purpose of the Comprehensive Specialty Exam is to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate expertise, integrate social work knowledge, and independently conceptualize in an area specific to their academic interests. The final product from this exam will be a paper that contributes substantially to the dissertation, such as a literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, or testing of an instrument or measure.

## Process

- Students and PhD Diagnostic Committee members will meet to discuss and agree upon the research content/question that will be addressed in the exam.
- Students will complete a paper (minimum length of 20 pages, excluding references) regarding the research content/question.
- The PhD Diagnostic Committee members will grade the paper on the following Likert scale.
  - 1 (poor, low competence) to 5 (exceptional, high competency).
  - A grade of at least 3 (proficient, acceptable competency) indicates a passing grade. A grade below 3 indicates a failing grade.
  - All committee members provide feedback on the Comprehensive Specialty Exam to the committee chair.
  - All committee members must approve the paper in its entirety for a passing grade.
- Should the paper not pass, students have an additional 30 days to revise and resubmit the paper to all committee members to be graded.
  - The 30 days to revise and resubmit the paper begins the day that the student receives the official feedback from the committee chair.
  - The faculty specialty committee has two weeks to provide feedback to the student after the re-submission.
  - Students may rewrite the Comprehensive Specialty Exam no more than two times.

***Please note that students must submit a request form for the Comprehensive Specialty Examination to the PhD Program Director no later than two weeks before the proposed examination date.***

# THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation represents the capstone of the PhD journey and serves as a springboard to the rest of your career in academia. While challenging and exhausting, the dissertation is one of the few moments in your career during which you can fully immerse yourself in a topic of interest. Most people holding PhD degrees look back on their “dissertation days” with fondness and realize that it was such an honor to have the time and space to commit oneself to such a creative and productive singular pursuit.

Formats for dissertations differ considerably among PhD programs. At the UTA School of Social Work, we have chosen to use the “three articles” format in which the body of the dissertation consists of three articles that are suitable for publication. This format gives students experience in writing for publication, ensures that they have manuscripts under review when they enter the job market, and prevents dissertations from ending up as doorstops!

## Dissertation Committee

Upon completion and passing of the Comprehensive Specialty Examination, students will select a Dissertation Chair in consultation with their Graduate Advisor. Students and their Chair will then select a Dissertation Committee consisting of members from the student's primary area of research and with expertise in the proposed research methodological approaches.

### *Composition of the Dissertation Committee*

- The Chair of the Dissertation Committee must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty at UTA. The use of Co-Chairs is permitted
- The Dissertation Committee will be comprised of five to six full time faculty members.
- One member of the committee must be outside the School of Social Work. The outside committee member must have an affiliation with a university. Exceptions may be considered by the Program Director on a case by case basis.
- Faculty members serving on a dissertation committee who leave the UTA SSSW by retirement or separation may remain serving as member of the committee for two years but cannot be considered as the “outside” committee member.
- While at times the case, it is not required or expected that members of students’ Diagnostic Advisory Committee serve on the Dissertation Committee.

## **Dissertation Tutorial (SOCW 6390)**

Students must enroll in the Dissertation Tutorial course (SOOCW 6390) upon completion of the Comprehensive Specialty Examination. The tutorial is individual-level work with the Dissertation Chair that focuses on the development of and preparation for the dissertation proposal and defense.

## **Dissertation Proposal & Proposal Defense**

The dissertation proposal is essentially the first step in the writing of your dissertation. Students are encouraged to be in contact and to work closely with their dissertation chair and all members of their dissertation committee in preparation of their dissertation proposal. The proposal consists of the following components:

- The introductory chapter to your dissertation.
- A draft of the conceptual or systematic review article (if applicable).
- An outline of any articles in progress.
- A list of proposed journals.
- A timeline for completion of the work.

The dissertation proposal defense helps students to articulate their planned approach to the dissertation and identifies any issues that students may encounter as they move forward. The process for the dissertation proposal defense is as follows:

- In consultation with the student, the chair of the dissertation committee schedules a meeting with the dissertation committee for the proposal defense.
- Copies of the proposal are submitted to each member of the dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to the proposal defense date.
- All members must approve the proposal for the student to engage in the research process.
- The dissertation committee may convene additional meetings until it is satisfied with the dissertation proposal.
- A signed copy of the dissertation proposal approval form must be signed and filed with the PhD Program Office.

## **IRB Approval**

Upon approval of the dissertation proposal, the student must submit an application to the UTA Office of Research for approval of the proposed research activities by the Institutional Review Board. We can't stress the following enough:

***Under no circumstances may data be collected for the proposed study prior to the defense and approval of the research proposal and receipt of approval by the IRB.***

## **Admission to Candidacy**

Students are admitted to “candidacy” upon successful defense and approval of the dissertation proposal. Student must have completed at least 39 approved credit hours to be considered for candidacy.

## **Dissertation Hours**

Students are expected to enroll for a minimum of 3 hours per semester while working on their dissertation during the Fall and Spring semesters. Students must complete a total of 9 hours of dissertation study. It is important to note the following:

- Students must be enrolled in at least 3 hours of dissertation in the semester in which they graduate.
- Once enrolled in dissertation hours, continuous enrollment is required.
- Dissertation hours are graded as an “R” (Research in Progress) and do not count towards the accumulation of hours.

## **Organization of the Dissertation**

### ***Introduction (Chapter 1)***

Introduction (Chapter 1) should include the following components and content:

- A definition or statement of the problem.
- A rationale for the dissertation as a whole; including how the research is innovative.
- The importance of the problem, i.e., why it is worth researching, why it matters to the field of social work.
- The theoretical foundation(s) supporting the problem/issue.
- An overview of the important literature (overview, because each article submitted for the 3-article format will have its own unique literature review).
- The research questions and how they will address important gaps in the literature and form a cohesive body of work.
- The methodology to be used to answer those questions.

### ***Article Chapters (Chapters 2, 3, and 4).***

- One article should be a systematic review of existing research on the substantive topic or an article based on a theoretical or policy approach to the substantive topic.
- The other two articles should be empirical research based on data analyzed by the student as part of the dissertation process.

### ***Conclusion (Chapter 5)***

The conclusion will summarize the dissertation’s major findings, discussion, and recommendations. Specifically, the conclusion should include content on:

- Synthesis of the main findings of the full dissertation, including the findings reported in the manuscripts.
- Linkages (i.e., similarities and differences, themes or patterns) among 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.
- Strengths and limitations of the dissertation are provided.
- General conclusions and implications for practice and future research are provided.

***Please note that exceptions to policies about dissertation chapters can be approved by the PhD Program Director and the PhD Program Committee.***

## **Dissertation Articles**

### ***Number and Nature of Articles***

- Student will write a ***minimum of three articles*** under the Research Publication Dissertation format. Each article is treated as a separate chapter and typically comprise Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the dissertations.
- The articles should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in the introduction to the dissertation (Chapter 1).
- The articles should be submitted to journals following the style requirements of those particular journals. This may result in slightly different citation and reference formats between chapters in some cases.
- ***It is important to note that acceptance of a manuscript for publication by a journal does not constitute acceptance or approval of the manuscript as part of the dissertation by the advisory committee. It is the responsibility of the examining committee to determine if a manuscript fully meets degree requirements for the dissertation.***

### ***Journals & Article Submission***

Students will submit the manuscripts to academic journals based upon the following instructions:

- Journals must be approved by the dissertation committee. Serving as an “editorial board” for the student, the committee will help select journals that will challenge the student and offer a reasonable chance of publication success.
- For an article previously submitted and/or published, the journal outlet must be approved by the student’s dissertation committee. Only articles submitted and/or published in peer-reviewed journals can be approved.
- Articles must be ready for submission prior to the dissertation defense and should be submitted as soon as possible following the defense, once any changes suggested by the committee at the defense are made.
- One article may be submitted following the completion of the successful proposal defense and prior to the dissertation defense.

## **Authorship**

- Students must be sole author or first author on all articles.
- One article may be co-authored with the committee chair and/or committee members.
- 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.
- To avoid conflicts of interest, any co-authors who are members of the student's dissertation committee must recuse themselves from judging articles carrying their name. In these cases, one additional faculty members chosen by the Ph.D. Program Director will determine the suitability of the article(s) in question.

## **Dissertation Defense**

The dissertation defense is a formal meeting between the student and dissertation committee. During the defense, the dissertation committee is responsible for challenging the student to defend their choices and conclusions, testing the student's knowledge about the topic, and confirming that the student is well-positioned to meet the stated research goals.

The following steps should be taken in preparation for the dissertation defense:

- The student and the Dissertation Committee should set a date for the defense. Note that the latest date to hold a defense is usually 3-4 weeks before the end of semester deadline. Please be sure to consult a current graduate catalog for dates.
- In consultation with the Chair, students distribute a copy of the completed dissertation to each committee member **one month before the projected defense date**. Please note that dissertation defenses will not be held if can be held if the committee members do not receive copy of the dissertation **at least 3 weeks in advance** of the final date to request a dissertation defense.
- Student must include a **Readiness for Defense Form** with the completed dissertation for each committee member. All committee members must approve and sign the form and return it to the Chair.
- Every committee member should make every attempt to attend the dissertation defense in person. Under certain circumstances, committee members may attend the dissertation defense remotely via the use of technology.
- **All dissertation defenses are open to the public per UTA policy.** Notifications of dissertation defenses are sent to students and faculty of the SSW and public notice of all defenses is posted at the SSW. **PhD students are invited and encouraged to attend the dissertation defenses of their colleagues.**



## ***Dissertation Defense Results***

The dissertation defense may result in one of the four following conditions:

- Pass unconditionally.
- Pass conditionally with specified remedial work.
- Failed with permission to be re-examined after a specified period.
- Fail with dismissal from the program.

If the candidate successfully defends the dissertation, he or she must complete all additional administrative requirements and obtain the necessary signatures in accordance with the Catalog and the School of Social Work. For details on preparation of final copies of the dissertation, see the most current Graduate Catalog.

## **Format & Submission of Final Dissertation**

### ***Final Dissertation Outline***

- I. Cover Page
- II. Table of Contents
- III. Abstract
- IV. Chapter 1: Introduction - Statement of the Problem
  - a. Statement of the problem; significance of the problem Using Empirical Research
  - b. Rationale for the dissertation; include an innovation Statements (how your work moves the field forward)
  - c. Overview of important literature addressing the problem/issue
  - d. Theoretical foundation supporting the problem/issue
  - e. End with research questions/aims and method of each study and how they will address important gaps in the literature and form a cohesive body of work
- V. Chapter 2: Literature Review/Systematic Review or an Article based on a Theoretical or Policy Approach to the Substantive Topic Framework
  - a. This article can have been submitted for publication; Committee will determine if it meets requirements for dissertation
  - b. If article not submitted; Targeted journal identified
  - c. Article in format of targeted journal

- VI. Chapter 3: Empirical Article
  - a. Article in Final Submission Format to be published after dissertation defense
  - b. Targeted journal identified
  - c. Article in format of targeted journal
  
- VII. Chapter 4: Empirical Article
  - a. Article in Final Submission Format to be published after dissertation defense
  - b. Targeted journal identified
  - c. Article in format of targeted journal
  
- VIII. Chapter 5: Conclusion/Discussion
  - a. Discuss the scholarly work completed and the Implications for the Field More Broadly; this should include a discussion about how the papers go together, how they form a cohesive contribution to the literature.
  - b. Discuss Limitations of the Scholarly Work Completed
  - c. Discuss Recommendations for Social Work Research, Practice and Policy (and/or Related Fields)

### ***Format & Submission Details***

- Each dissertation chapter will also have its own reference list. There will be no final cumulative reference list.
- Article-based dissertations require the student procure permissions from the publisher if they have not already done so in a publishing contract. The article-based dissertation manual from the Office of Graduate Studies prescribes how students should cite the original publication of the article. Also, publishers sometimes request a certain citation for published articles, typically lead back to the publisher's website. Usually in this case, the publisher provides verbiage the student can add to their article-based dissertation.
- In the event that a publisher will not allow an article to be published in a dissertation, a link to the article URL, or citation, can be provided in the document. This is after the student verify this is acceptable to their committee chair. I have yet to see one like this at UTA, but this is how other universities handle such a situation, when the publisher will not allow a re-print.
- Please review the publishing contract and if there is no language about re-printing, the student should email the publisher requesting permission to use the article in their dissertation.
- The dissertation will be formatted and bound consistent with School of Social Work guidelines.
- ***The library has more information about deadlines, templates, forms, and a place to submit questions about formatting and final submission at: <https://library.uta.edu/etd>***

# FORMS AND TIME FRAMES

## Required Forms

There are a number of important forms that need to be completed throughout the course of the PhD Program. Please see the PhD Program website and/or stop by the PhD Program Office to access these forms and ask any questions that might arise.

- **University Honor Code**
  - Signed at orientation.
- **NASW Code of Ethics**
  - Reviewed at orientation upon entering program.
- **Diagnostic Worksheet**
  - Completed before end of first year.
- **Diagnostic Evaluation Report**
  - Completed and presented at Diagnostic Committee Meeting.
- **Registration Advising Forms**
  - Completed, signed by adviser, and turned into PhD Program Office prior to the start of each semester.
- **Milestone Agreements**
  - Completed at Orientation and the first week of each new academic year.
- **Degree Plan**
  - Completed during the first week of each new academic year.
- **Comprehensive/Specialty Exam Report**
  - Completed after student has passed Comprehensive/Specialty Exam.
- **Dissertation Readiness Form**
  - Use for committee reviews during dissertation preparation.
- **Dissertation Defense Report**
  - To be completed and presented at Dissertation Defense.
- **Graduation Forms**
  - Any and all forms required by the University's Graduation Desk

## Other Important Forms as Needed

- **Dissertation Consultation Form**
  - Use as needed for committee reviews during dissertation preparation.
- **Petition to the Office of Graduate Studies**
  - Use this form any time there is a request to make changes on Dissertation Committee members change in program requirements or any other requests that involve the Office of Graduate Studies in changing records/policies.

- **Leave of Absence**

- Use this form when a student must take a medical or otherwise approved leave of absence from the program. This form must be approved by the PhD Director and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies.

***Please be aware that required forms and paperwork tend to change over time and even during the course of an academic year. The PhD Program Office will keep students updated on changes and update the PhD Program Manual as needed. It is always best practice to ask the PhD Program Office about your status regarding forms and paperwork.***

# SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK POLICIES

## Student Rights and Responsibilities

The UTA SSW explicitly identifies the following policies, procedures and guidelines which are considered to represent the conviction that students' rights and responsibilities form a cornerstone for graduate social work education.

- The School recognizes and supports the right of students to organize in their own interests as students.
- The School provides for student membership on all standing committees (except for the Committee on Retention, Tenure and Promotion and the Academic Hearing and Professional Standards Committee). University regulations preclude students having voting rights on the Committee on Graduate Studies but on all other committees, full and meaningful participation is expected. Representation on committees currently is authorized for two student members.
- Students' appropriate efforts to gain knowledge will be guarded as a fundamental right. Students will not be prohibited from exercising their Constitutional and lawful activity guaranteed by the United States. These activities expressly include freedom of speech and dissent.

## Student Files

A student may review all material in his/her file except for medical reports, which are confidential, and references if the student has waived the right to access to confidential letters and statements of recommendation. The School may confirm that a student (or graduate) is enrolled in school (or has graduated), but requests for additional information will be honored only at the request of the student (or graduate) unless the inquiring agency has provided a stipend, with this stipulation, for the student.

## Standards for Academic Performance

In addition to the requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies listed elsewhere, each graduate student in the social work program must:

- Maintain at least a B (3.0) overall GPA in all course work.
- Demonstrate suitability for professional social work practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and adherence to the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers and the Code of Ethics as currently propounded by the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners.

***Students are required to sign a written statement indicating that they are aware of and will adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics.***

## Standards for Behavior & Conduct

In addition to behaviors affecting current or future clients, students' behaviors on or off campus involving family members, other students, faculty, or university staff that constitute a violation of social work academic standards may result in dismissal or restriction based on academic procedures.

The following are examples of behaviors that may result in dismissal on academic grounds:

- Forced or coerced sexual behavior.
- Sexual activity with clients including, but not limited to kissing, fondling, or sexual intercourse.
- Physical actions directed at clients, students, faculty, or staff, such as hitting, spanking, or slapping. Also, violence directed toward the student's family members or other vulnerable persons is considered a violation.
- Physical or emotional threats directed toward clients, students, faculty, or staff.
- Taking or accepting gifts or money from clients that are not considered standard payment for services received on behalf of the agency. Students shall neither ask for nor expect gifts from clients.
- Illegal or unethical behavior that limits or takes away clients' rights and/or results in financial, material, or emotional loss for clients or gain for social work students.

When questions are raised by Social Work faculty regarding any of the above:

- Students will be notified and will be provided the opportunity to respond to the Academic Review and Professional Standards Committee.
- The Committee will review the student's performance and make a recommendation to the Dean concerning the student's eligibility to continue in the program.
- The Dean will notify the student in writing of her/his decision to support or not support the recommendation of the Academic Review and Professional Standards Committee.

When legal or illegal behavior does not affect current or potential clients, University students, faculty, or staff, but the behavior violates the mission, process, or function of the School of Social Work or the University, nonacademic proceedings will follow the University's procedures for misconduct.

Information about the rules of conduct and due process for disciplinary procedures is published in the ***Rules and Regulations of The Board of Regents of The University of Texas System and the Handbook of Operating Procedures of the University of Texas at Arlington***, copies of which are in the Offices of the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the School of Social Work. Information is also published in the ***University of Texas at Arlington Student Handbook***.

# ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

## PhD Listserv

There is an internet mailing list available for faculty and students to share information or announcements. You will be automatically enrolled in the listserv.

## Change of Address or Name

Important information is often mailed to students and it is required that the student see that their name and address on record are current. Students who change their residence, mailing address or name should notify the list below:

- MyMav student account
- The Registrar's Office - Davis Hall
- The School of Social Work - PhD Office

## Use of School Stationery

All communications using school letterhead are to be approved by the PhD Program Director. Written request is to be submitted to the Director by the faculty person supervising the work of the student. All stationery and mailing costs for student research are the responsibility of the student.

## Business Cards

Students may obtain business cards after passing the qualifying exam.

## Travel

The SSW will do everything we can to support students who travel to professional conferences. The following policy governs student travel but is subject to change depending on availability of funding:

- All students (BSW, MSW and PhD) in the School of Social Work are eligible to apply for travel funds up to \$500 per academic year.
- Funds are distributed by academic year. Receiving travel funds is based on the following criteria:
  - Attending either the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). If additional travel funds are available, the PhD Program Director may authorize funding presentations at other professional conferences.
  - Notification of the acceptance of a poster or oral presentation.
  - Within the five-year limit in the PhD program.
  - One travel award per student per academic year.
  - Students receiving travel awards are expected to volunteer at the UTA booth in conference exhibit hall.

## **Lost and Found Items**

The receptionist in Room 211 (Dean's Suite) maintains a file of lost and found items left in classrooms or other areas of the Social Work Complex. Please check with the receptionist if you have misplaced something or if you want to turn in an item you have found.

## **Mailboxes and Messages**

### ***Student Mailboxes***

PhD student mailboxes are in the PhD Study Room, GACB 104. Each local residential student is assigned a mailbox which is identified by the student's name above his or her mailbox. Students are advised to check their mailboxes each time they are in the building. Important information and correspondence from administrative personnel and faculty, telephone messages and returned graded class papers, etc. are put in students' boxes.

### ***Faculty Mailboxes***

Students may leave messages and other materials for faculty with the SSW Receptionist in Suite 211 for placement in faculty mailboxes. There is a mail drop in Suite 201 in which materials for faculty may be placed after hours. Items left in this drop box are distributed to faculty mailboxes each morning. Important papers, books, etc. should be given directly to faculty members rather than left in their mailboxes. All mail received that is addressed to you will be put in the PhD Program's Administrative Assistant's box in GACB 107. She or he will deliver it to your mailbox in GACB 104. If the item is too large or is visibly in need of "security", it will be held in the PhD program office.

## **Libraries**

### ***UTA Library Hours***

All library hours can be obtained by visiting <http://www.uta.edu/library/hours/> or by calling the Central Library at 817- 272-3000

### ***UTA Social Work Contact***

Brooke Troutman - Social Work Librarian, Central Library, office 410, 817-272-7518, [brooke.troutman@uta.edu](mailto:brooke.troutman@uta.edu)

### ***UTA Central Library Carrels***

Carrel applications are available in the Information Support Services Office, Room 101-E, on the first floor of the Central Library. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.



# STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

## The Graduate Student Council

Graduate Students are represented at the University of Texas at Arlington by the Graduate Student Council. Doctoral Students in Social Work elect one representative in September. The web site for the Graduate Student Council is: <http://www.uta.edu/student-orgs/sg/gsc>.

## The PhD Program Committee

Two PhD students are elected by the PhD student body in September to serve on the PhD Committee and represent student interests.

## Doctoral Student Association (DSA)

The DSA is comprised of all doctoral students in the School of Social Work at UT Arlington. The primary goal of the program is to facilitate communication among students across cohorts as well as host events to promote interaction between doctoral students and faculty members. The DSA has two faculty advisors. The student administrators serve yearly terms and elections are held in the spring of each year.

The DSA program includes:

- ***Mentoring Program*** – First year doctoral students are assigned a doctoral student mentor. These mentors act as an additional support system for incoming students and act as a buffer against the rigor of the first year of doctoral study.
- ***Lunch & Learns*** – Monthly speakers/panels on topics of interest and importance to doctoral students.
- ***Faculty- Student Gatherings*** – The DSA periodically organizes gatherings for doctoral students and faculty members. These gatherings are an opportunity for doctoral students to interact and get to know faculty members outside of the university setting.

## Office of Advising and Student Success

The Office of Advising and Student Success assists and supports students regarding:

- Student retention and student success plans.
- Services for students struggling with academic or personal difficulties.
- Referrals/links students to other resources which may be appropriate.
- Helping students to get involved in UTA and SSW activities.
- Career exploration & connection to UTA Career Services.
- Crisis management of student issues.
- Scholarship application processes.
- Faculty advisor for the Social Work Constituency Council.

- Faculty advisor for Phi Alpha Honor Society.
- Assistance with Professional Standards, Policies, and Procedures
- Assistance for Grade Grievance Procedures

Point of contact for the Office of Advising and Student Success is Patrice Green, 817-272-2423, [patrice.green@uta.edu](mailto:patrice.green@uta.edu)

## **Student Lounge**

The student lounge is for the use of all students in the School of Social Work and is located in the middle section Bldg. B, Room 104. The lounge contains tables/chairs, booths, vending machines, microwave oven, hardware charging sites. It is usually unlocked and available from 8am 5pm Monday through Friday.

## **Doctoral Student Study Room**

Located in GACB room 104 has been designated as a study room for doctoral students. It is equipped with computers. Some doctoral classes may be held in this room.