



Ph.D. SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
ROBERT STEMPEL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL WORK
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

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PREFACE

The Handbook is a guide to the pursuing the Ph.D. in Social Welfare. It was developed for students, faculty, and administrators of the Doctoral Program in Social Welfare in the School of Social Work and contains the policies and procedures developed by the School. Students should note that there are other policies that apply to doctoral study at FIU. The most important are those of the Registrar under the division of Academic Affairs, and the those of the University Graduate School. Students are responsible for compliance with university wide policies as well as policies of the School of Social Work.

THE PH.D. PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WELFARE

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission

The mission of the Ph.D. Program in Social Welfare is to prepare students for careers in research, university teaching, and leadership in social work and social welfare. The overarching emphasis in the Ph.D. Program is on research that develops effective and culturally appropriate interventions (from direct practice to social policy) to meet the human needs of individuals, families, groups, and communities in urban settings.

The Ph.D. Program is not designed to increase or improve clinical or other practice skills. In courses, seminars, and supervised research, or individual study, students are expected to collaborate with faculty to strengthen their skills in the methods of scientific inquiry, to deepen their understanding and analysis of social problems and public issues, and to contribute to the knowledge base of social welfare.

Students pursue a course of study focused on social problems, intervention research, and research methodology. While in the Program, students are expected to disseminate the results of their study and research in appropriate forums. Students are also offered opportunities to teach, as their time and the needs of the School of Social Work allow.

Interdisciplinary Collaborations

Opportunities exist for interdisciplinary collaborations as a doctoral student. The School of Social Work is part of the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work. Moreover, the School of Social Work has longstanding collaborations with faculty in Mental Health Counseling, Clinical and Counseling Psychology, Criminal Justice, Psychology, and Public Administration, Nursing, Health Sciences, Journalism, Hospitality Management, Education, Medicine and others. Students are encouraged to look for collaborative experiences in these and other units in the university.

Full-Time Program

The Ph.D. Program is *full-time* requiring a significant investment of time from students. Most students complete the Program in about four years.

Summary Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

1. Completion of 60 credits, at least 36 of which must be completed after admission to the doctorate in social welfare program with a grade of “B” or higher in each course; completion of a minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours following advancement to candidacy; continuous registration for at least 3 credit hours of doctoral-level credits during each semester following advancement to candidacy; maintenance of an overall cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0

2. Filing, before the end of the sixth semester of study, two major papers, each having obtained a grade of at least B+ from each member of a three-member faculty Committee (Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee).
3. Successful defense of a Dissertation Proposal before a duly constituted Dissertation Committee.
4. Completion of a dissertation under the guidance of the Dissertation Committee.
5. Defense of the dissertation before the Dissertation Committee and the University community.
6. The Ph.D. degree must be obtained within seven years of admission into the Ph.D. Program.

Admission Deadline

Newly admitted students begin classes during the Fall Semester. Interested applicants are urged to consult the FIU Graduate School for differing deadlines for fellowship and assistantship applications (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/>). The deadline for admissions is **February 1st**. Applications submitted after that date may be considered as space permits.

Admission Requirements

The Ph.D. degree is a *research* degree, certifying that the holder has demonstrated advanced knowledge of theory and practice in social welfare and the social sciences, as well as the autonomous capacity to plan, conduct, and report on research. Thus, although social work experience is highly desirable, it is not the primary means to ascertain whether applicants will be successful as doctoral students and future researchers.

The following are admission requirements of the School of Social Work and/or the University Graduate School:

1. A Master's degree in social work (MSW) from an accredited School of Social Work or in a closely related field (e.g., Mental Health Counseling, Clinical or Counseling Psychology). Prior social work experience is highly desired.*
2. Evidence of superior academic achievement in undergraduate and previous graduate education, including at least a 3.00 (upper division) undergraduate GPA and at least a 3.5 graduate GPA.
3. Submission General Test scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
4. Documentation of successful completion (with a grade of "B" or better) of one or more graduate-level courses in research methodology or statistics.
5. Three letters of reference from academic and/or professional sources. At least one reference must be from an academic source.

* Note: Students who wish to teach in accredited social work programs should be aware that of the standards regarding practice experience for instructors teaching practice. At the time of this writing (2015 standards) baccalaureate programs require that practice and field instructors must have a bachelor or master in social work and two years practice experience post social work degree. Instructors and field instructors in master of social work programs must have a master in social work and at least two years post master practice experience. Degree and practice experience requirements do not apply to policy, research or human behavior and the social environment courses.

6. Two samples of writing (e.g., published articles, research reports, book reviews, manuscripts submitted for publication, or papers prepared specifically for admission to a Ph.D. Program).
7. A personal statement describing the applicant's reasons for wishing to pursue doctoral studies at this time and at FIU, his or her background and experience, and his or her career goals following receipt of their Ph.D. The statement should discuss, in at least one page, the applicant's specific research and specialization interests to provide the Admissions Committee with a clear understanding of the applicant's thoughts and knowledge on these interests.
8. Applicants who do not meet all admission requirements but demonstrate outstanding abilities or accomplishments may also be considered; however, exemption from particular requirements may need to be requested from the University Graduate School.
9. A pre-admission interview may be requested.

Applicants are responsible to ensure that required documents are received by FIU and by the School of Social Work by their stated deadlines.

Transfer of Credits from Previous Course Work

Students in the Ph.D. Program cannot substitute or obtain waivers for *required* courses. The Ph.D. Coordinator may consider the transfer of doctoral level courses (not part of a previously earned degree) toward the completion of a maximum of six elective (or supervised research or independent study) credit hours. Students must explain in writing how the previous course or courses are directly related to the current area of doctoral study. Acceptance of credits is contingent upon compliance with University Graduate School policies, and do not replace credits that must be earned at FIU per university policy.

Doctoral Policy Committee

The Doctoral Policy Committee has responsibility for the overall direction of the Doctoral Program. The Committee consists of the Doctoral Program Coordinator (appointed by the Director of the School of Social Work) and elected or appointed members of the faculty. In addition, up to two doctoral students may serve on the Committee.

II. FACULTY RESEARCH INTERESTS

Doctoral Program faculty are members of FIU's Graduate Faculty and actively engaged in research and scholarship. These faculty members review applications for the Ph.D. Program, make joint decisions to admit doctoral students, teach doctoral-level courses and seminars, supervise students' major papers, and implement the policies and procedures of the Program.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact faculty members directly to discuss their interests and possibilities of collaboration. A brief listing of the research interests of the doctoral faculty of the School of Social Work may be found on the School's website:

https://stempel.fiu.edu/faculty/?_sft_units=09-school-social-work

While all faculty in the school of social work can be helpful to doctoral students by virtue of their knowledge, research, connection to the local practice and client communities, two groups of faculty are of particular note. Faculty who have Graduate Faculty Status are eligible to serve on qualifying exam and dissertation committees. Faculty who have Dissertation Advisor Status may serve as chairs of dissertation committees. The University Graduate School maintains a list of faculty who have graduate and dissertation advisor status here:

<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-18>

III. FIRST THREE SEMESTERS OF STUDY

Initial Advisement

Upon entry in the Ph.D. Program, each student is assigned a faculty advisor with Dissertation Advisor Status (also called Major Advisor, or Advisor) by the Doctoral Program Coordinator. The Advisor assists the student to focus on areas of specialization and to constitute their Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee. The Advisor often becomes Chair of this Committee and may become Chair of the Dissertation Committee (also called Major Professor). Students may change their Advisor by agreement and by request to the Doctoral Program Coordinator.

First Three Semesters

For the first three semesters, students enroll in regular coursework. During these semesters, students are expected to make progress on three major papers in (a) a social problem/social issue/social theory; (b) an intervention area/practice model; and (c) a research methodology area (further detailed in the next chapter).

Program of Study

The program of study consists of 12 three-credit courses, seminars, and supervised study/research taken over three consecutive semesters, which total 36 credit hours. Following these courses and advancement to candidacy, a minimum of 24 credit hours of dissertation work must be completed. Table 1 includes the complete of study.

Table 1. Schedule for Program of Study

Fall Semester	Cr.
SOW 7216 Social Welfare Policy	3
SOW 7406 History & Systems of Social Work Research	3
SOW 7492 Theory Development & Research Methods in Social Welfare	3
PHC 6709 Quantitative Research Analysis I (or equivalent)	3
Total semester credits	12
Spring Semester	Cr.
SOW 7237 Micro-Practice Theory & Research	3
SOW 7238 Macro-Practice Theory & Research	3
PHC 6718 Quantitative Research Analysis II (or equivalent)	3
AAA xxxx Graduate Elective (or SOW 7916 Supervised Research)	3
Total semester credits	12
Summer Semester	Cr.
SOW 7936 Dissertation Seminar in Social Welfare	3
SOW 7493 Research Methods in Social Welfare II (or equivalent)	3
PHC 6500 – Foundations of Public Health Practice.*	3
SOW 7916 Supervised Research	3
Total semester credits	12
Total PhD Program course credits	36
Semesters 4 and Continuing (min 3 credits max 12 per semester)	
<i>If Doctoral Candidacy attained:</i>	
SOW 7980 Dissertation Credits (min 15 hours)	3

<i>If Doctoral Candidacy <u>Not</u> attained:</i>	
SOW 7916 Supervised Research or	3
SOW 6914 Independent Research	1
Total minimum PhD dissertation credits	15
Total Credits	75

* Note: This course is not required of students who have already taken it as a part of their MSW program or for students who already have a graduate degree in public health.

Grades

Doctoral students are required to maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA for all their courses. A grade of “A” indicates “excellent” performance. Grades of “A-” or “B+” indicate “very good” performance. A grade of “B” is considered a passing grade. Courses in which a student earns a grade of B- or lower must be retaken.

Annual Review and Semi Annual

After each academic year, students complete the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan, which is intended to help doctoral students and their Dissertation Committee with establishing goals and a plan of action towards timely degree completion. Deadlines are typically around May of each year. The form is available at the UGS website:

The annual review is completed on-line, and must be initiated by the student. For students without an approved D-1 form on file with UGS, only the student’s Major Advisor’s evaluation and signature are required. For those students with an approved D-1 form on file with UGS, all Committee Member signatures are required. Students must observe all deadlines keeping in mind the time needed for signatures from Committee Members, the Coordinator, and Dean’s office. If students do not submit the plans on time, there will be delay in registration.

The Dean’s office requires an additional progress review on every doctoral student to help track their progress. This review is typically completed by the coordinator and faculty, although students may be asked to assist. This review is generally due in November.

IV. THE DOCTORAL CANDIDACY EXAMINATION (TWO MAJOR PAPERS)

Each student is expected to specialize in *two* areas:

- (1) a social problem/social issue/social theory area,
- (2) an intervention area/practice model,

Specialization areas are expected to be provide a foundation for the dissertation develop the expertise of the student in a problem area and field of practice. For example, one might specialize in “health disparities in substance abuse among minority youths” as a social problem and in “prevention of adolescent substance use problems” as an intervention area/practice model related to this social problem. Other examples: “the influence of gender on depression among caregivers” (problem area), “self-care for caregivers” (intervention area/practice model); “child sexual abuse among foster care youth” (problem area), “trauma treatment for foster care youth in residential care” (intervention/practice model); institutional racism and discrimination in services access (problem area), community organization to promote service access (intervention area/practice model). The preceding examples are merely for illustration purposes.

Students work to produce two deliverables--(1) a major paper on their social problem/social issue/social theory area and (2) a major paper on an intervention area/practice model related to problem/issue/area identified in the first paper. Each paper represents a substantial, critical literature review and analysis demonstrating advanced analytical skills. Each paper should be *30-40 pages in length, plus references*. Both papers must be written with a view to eventual publication, and students must provide a list of at least three peer-reviewed journals to target for submission. Students use their various course assignments to progress on these papers in their first year of study. Faculty members teaching in the program generally tailor their course assignments to help students complete their qualifying examination papers.

Students pass their Doctoral Candidacy Examination by obtaining a grade of **B+** or higher on each paper from each of three faculty members. This allows students to advance to candidacy.

Students begin to formulate topics for their qualifying examination papers as soon as possible following admission to the Program. They meet and discuss mutual interests with several faculty members in the School and other departments — with a view to choosing three faculty members to supervise their work in each area. These three faculty members form the student’s Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee. The student and each supervising faculty member should agree on a topic early on and all members should be aware of the nature of the other papers the student is planning to prepare and with whom. Papers may be written in accordance with written questions/guidelines developed with the supervising faculty.

Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee is composed of three faculty members who are members of FIU’s Graduate Faculty. At least two are from the School of Social Work at FIU, and one may be from another academic unit at FIU *or another university* (It is advisable to pick

an outside member at this stage, to facilitate the future composition of the Dissertation Committee). The Chair of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee must be a faculty member from FIU's School of Social Work.

Typically *the chair or one of the committee members takes the lead in working* with the student *to develop each of the qualifying examination papers*. The student selects a Chair by the beginning of their second semester of study. The Chair and other Committee Members assist the student in any task relevant to a successful completion of the two papers. The Chair and the student keep other members abreast of ongoing work and progress, by means of copies of correspondence, evaluations, etc. Ideally, this Committee should meet once every semester to review the student's work, until the student advances to candidacy, and must meet at least once to review the student's work. Members of the committee must be reported to the doctoral program coordinator, and changes to the committee must be approved by the Doctoral Program Coordinator.

Social Problem/Issue/Theory Paper

The social problem/issues or theory area usually refers to a social problem that manifests in individual, familial, organizational, institutional, or broad societal dysfunction. It can also refer to a public issue that is of significant concern to one or more actors in social welfare. Examples of broad, multidimensional problem areas include child abuse or neglect, crime and delinquency, homelessness, human rights abuses, inadequate health care insurance, poverty, psychological distress or mental illness, health conditions, racism, sexism, substance abuse, unemployment, urban deterioration, youth violence, and many others. Some examples of public issues include acculturation, aging of the population, disaster relief, ethnic disparities in access to health care, family preservation, globalization and social policies, housing, social support, technology in human services, medicalization, multiculturalism, refugee resettlement, rights of people with disabilities, etc.

Students are encouraged to focus on *particular* aspects of a social problem or issue, for example, how specific groups are affected by or respond to it, or the merits or shortcomings of theories and research used to explain the problem or issue. This focus enables students to demonstrate their understanding of a reasonably-sized body of literature.

Students are expected to demonstrate an advanced understanding of how the problem or issue is defined and explained by various actors or stakeholders, and of the historical, policy, institutional, and other contexts within which the problem or concerns about the problem reside. This might include the history of varying definitions of the problem, the salient indicators of the problem as currently defined (e.g., characteristics of affected populations, prevalence and incidence rates, health indicators, evolution over time), the major social policies (e.g., laws, regulations, court decisions, dominant or normative ideologies) that pertain to the problem or issue, as well as the characteristics of key service delivery systems (e.g., major programs and their financing, their stated goals and structures and eligibility criteria) that attempt to respond formally or informally to the problem or issue. This might also include a critical understanding of major ideological, theoretical, and empirical perspectives which seek to explain the origin, development, and consequences of the problem or issue.

Students demonstrate their understanding by means of the breadth and depth of the coverage, by their reference to seminal, appropriate, and timely literature, by the quality of their logic and argumentation, by their ability to critically engage with (rather than merely summarize) relevant literature related to their topic, and by the clarity and accuracy of their language and presentation.

Intervention Area/Practice Model Paper

Intervention strategies, programs, and/or practice models and methods are employed by professionals in the field of social welfare — or by professionals in closely connected fields that influence or impact significantly on the activities and methods of social work professionals — in order to bring about change in individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, institutions, and society.

Recognizable modes of social intervention include, but are not limited to, administration, advocacy, case management, casework, client education, community organization, consciousness-raising, crisis intervention, early intervention, family treatment, group work, hospitalization, individual psychotherapy, organizational development and change, prevention, psychopharmacology, and supervision. Associated with many of these interventions are practice models such as the behavioral, biopsychosocial, biopsychiatric, cognitive-behavioral, ecological, empowerment, feminist, humanistic-existential, psychodynamic, recovery, strengths-based, systems, and task-centered. Students are expected to develop an understanding of the distinctions between interventions and the practice models employed to deliver them.

Students are expected to demonstrate an advanced understanding of the scientific methods appropriate for conducting rigorous investigation of the effectiveness of an intervention. Students also expected to demonstrate advanced understanding of the research issues involved in the development, application, and evaluation of the intervention, program, or method, especially as applied to a particular group or population. This might include knowledge of its origins and development over time as well as an understanding of how different practice models have affected the effectiveness of the intervention.

The intervention paper should include a clear description of the intervention and its basic principles, as well as a critical review of the empirical literature that has developed around efforts to determine the effectiveness of the intervention. Where theory and research in the intervention have been developed largely outside the field of social welfare or the profession of social work (e.g., behavior therapy, psychopharmacology), the student should demonstrate an understanding of factors within the field or profession (e.g., values and norms, skills and training, ideological, political or economic constraints, nature of clientele) that may affect how the intervention can be employed or adapted. The relative advantages or disadvantages of the intervention with respect to other interventions or methods should also be discussed, as well as its limits or adverse effects. Finally, gaps in knowledge and future research directions should be outlined.

Evaluation of the Qualifying Examination Papers

Although students will likely produce several drafts of each paper, only the final draft is graded for the purposes of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination. Committee members are expected to respond to written drafts within three weeks at most. The passing grade for a major paper in the Doctoral candidacy Examination is B+ or higher. When assigning a grade, each committee members evaluate each paper independently. The grade is justified by a written comment which covers the following criteria (and/or related criteria) and is sent to the Ph.D. Coordinator:

1. Ability to analyze, conceptualize, synthesize, and think critically.
2. Ability to present complex information in a readable form.
3. Demonstration of substantive knowledge of up-to-date information, social work/social science theories, and intervention practices related to the student's major topic of interest.
4. Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of research methodology pertinent to pursue a dissertation in the student's chosen area of study; potential to turn the research proposal (Paper 3) into a formal Dissertation Proposal.
5. Application of social work/social science knowledge to a significant social welfare problem/issue.
6. Potential to turn papers into publications in peer-reviewed outlets.

Advancement to Candidacy

To advance to candidacy, students must pass all their required coursework with a grade of "B" or higher (or an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher), and obtain a grade of "B+" or higher on each of their three major papers from each of their Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee members. Students should note that they and their Committee Chair must complete form *D-2 Program for Doctoral Degree Candidacy* with the University Graduate School.

Deadline for Advancement to Candidacy

Students are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their sixth semester of study. Students who fail to meet this deadline can apply to the Doctoral Program Coordinator for an extension. Applying for such an extension may bear on any subsequent financial assistance they receive. The extension is granted only on the basis of a well-justified plan for successful completion of the three papers. *Students who fail to meet this second deadline (i.e., who fail to advance to candidacy by the end of their eighth semester of study) may be terminated from the Ph.D. Program.*

Review of Steps Leading to Advancement to Candidacy

(The first three steps are simultaneous)

1. Complete each semester's courses satisfactorily
2. Meet and discuss interests with as many faculty members as possible
3. Identify topics for each of the two papers
4. Identify faculty members likely to work with you, especially a major professor who will serve as Chair of your Doctoral Candidacy Examination
5. Obtain the Doctoral Program Coordinator's approval for the composition of your Committee

6. Work on the papers under the supervision of the members of your Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee; submit drafts to each member for comments
7. Obtain a final grade and a final written evaluation for each paper from each member, and ensure that these are forwarded to the Doctoral Program Coordinator
8. The doctoral coordinator must receive grades from each of your three committee members for each paper.
9. As soon as you have your papers successfully graded file *Form D-2 (Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy)*
10. This is a good time to file *Form D-1 (Appointment of Dissertation Committee)* since once you have completed the candidacy requirements, all further milestones require a dissertation committee. In most cases this is just a matter of adding one more person to the qualifying exam committee and filing the D-1 form.

V. THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND COMMITTEE

Following advancement to candidacy, doctoral candidates must submit a dissertation, which embodies the results of scholarly research giving evidence of originality and is a contribution to social work/social welfare knowledge. A minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours are required, usually taken with the Chair of the Dissertation Committee while working on one's dissertation research.

Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee is responsible for approving the dissertation proposal, for supervising the candidate's dissertation, and for approving the dissertation in a public, oral dissertation defense. It is composed of four individuals with doctorates: three must be from a School of Social Work (of whom at least two must be from FIU's School of Social Work). The fourth member must come from a discipline or program outside of social work but within FIU. If additional expertise is needed, additional members may be added. Members who are not faculty at FIU must be approved by UGS (requirements are detailed on *Form D1 - Appointment of Dissertation Committee*, available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>). **All members of a Dissertation Committee must be members of the Graduate School Faculty or, if from other institutions, must hold equivalent appointments**. A Dissertation Committee is formally constituted by filing *Form D1*, noted above, and after a successful proposal defense, *Form D-3 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>) which attests that a Dissertation Proposal has been approved. The Dissertation Committee typically grows out of the candidate's Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee. All committee members must be physically or electronically present at the defense. Please note that FIU does not pay for travel or lodging expenses for any outside members to attend the defense. Please check with UGS for the current rules about committee member attendance at the defense whether physically or electronically present.

The Chair of a Dissertation Committee must be a member of the FIU School of Social Work and have Dissertation Advisor Status prior to being appointed as a chair (cf. <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/faculty-staff-grad-das-faculty.shtml>). Changes in the Dissertation Committee membership appointments require filing a *Form D-1r Appointment of a Revised Dissertation Committee* (available at the student form site above).

The Dissertation Committee assumes a great responsibility to help the candidate finish and successfully defend a quality dissertation. The candidate's open and frequent collaboration with all Committee Members is essential. The Chair provides direct oversight of the student's dissertation research, and serves as the coordinator and leader of all Committee activities. Each Committee Member is expected to actively contribute to student's dissertation research, and may elect to provide direct supervision of specific components of the dissertation related to the Committee Member's area(s) of expertise. The Chair and Committee Members are expected to provide sufficient guidance and support to allow the student to develop the highest quality dissertation research project of which they are capable; the ultimate goal is a successful dissertation defense.

Expectations of the Dissertation Committee

The Dissertation Committee is expected to meet with the candidate initially at the beginning stage when the Dissertation Proposal is submitted, annually to review and evaluate the candidate's progress through the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan review process (as required by UGS), and at the time of the defense. The Committee may also be asked to meet at other times at the candidate's and/or Chair's request.

Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation Proposal generally includes the problem definition, preliminary review of the literature and conceptual framework, research questions or hypotheses, design, sampling plan, measures, data collection strategies, data analysis methods, ethical issues, time frame. The proposal should include a timeline that includes the prospective graduation date, relevant university deadlines (D form submission, defense dates, etc) and tentative deadlines for submission of chapters/articles to committee members.

There are two options for the dissertation, a traditional and an article based dissertation. Proposals for both types of dissertation must cover the following. In addition to summarizing relevant background and theory (this may be drawn from the qualifying examination papers) the proposal should also provide a detailed description of the scientific methodology that will be employed in the dissertation research.

Research methodology generally refers to a clear problem definition, a critical review of scientific literature bearing on this problem, the formulation of research questions, hypotheses, or objectives, and the specification of an appropriate study design to collect and analyze information bearing upon the questions or hypotheses. The design itself involves a choice of a general approach to be used in the inquiry, including a description of the procedures to be used to select a sample for study, methods to select or create instruments to organize data or measure variables, methods to determine the reliability and validity of the observations or measurements made, methods for insuring rigor, generalizability or power, and a detailed description of the procedures and approaches to be used to analyze the data so as to answer the research questions, reach theoretical saturation, accept or reject a hypothesis, or meet stated research objectives. Research methodology also involves explicit consideration of ethical issues that bear on the protection of human subjects. It is expected that this dissertation proposal will constitute the foundation and plan for the student's dissertation. In the case of the article based dissertation, the proposal must also indicate how the elements above will be divided between the articles. The proposal is presented to the Dissertation Committee only after advancement to candidacy, and the proposal must be approved by the Dissertation Committee before dissertation research can commence. See the appendix for an outline of the Research Proposal. The Dissertation Committee *should have* the opportunity to raise questions, give input, request revisions, and evaluate these revisions before approving the dissertation proposal before the proposal goes to defense.

Proposal defense adheres to the following procedure:

- Defense of the proposal should not be held until all members have reviewed the dissertation proposal, and believe that the student is ready to defend (as per University Graduate School policy).
- Once the committee believes the student is ready for defense the committee meets with the candidate for an oral presentation of the dissertation proposal.
- When the proposal has been successfully defended, committee members indicate their approval by signing and completing Form D-3 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal.
 - The D3 form must be completed with requisite attachments:
 - A five page summary of the dissertation (see the D-3 Form)
 - an IRB/Human Subjects approval memorandum (if necessary)
- Forms must be forwarded for final approval or signatures to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the Dean of the College of Public Health and Social Work, and the Dean of the University Graduate School.

Deadline for Submitting a Dissertation Proposal

Candidates are expected to have a Dissertation Proposal approved at the latest by the end of the semester following the semester in which they have advanced to candidacy. If a candidate fails to meet this deadline, his or her Dissertation Chair must write a letter to the Doctoral Coordinator explaining the delay, and the candidate risks losing any financial support he or she may be receiving. The candidate is then granted one additional semester to file his or her Dissertation Proposal. *Candidates who fail to submit an approved Dissertation Proposal by this second deadline (that is, two semesters after their advancement to candidacy) may be terminated from the Ph.D. Program.*

Research Involving Human Subjects

All research projects involving human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see <http://research.fiu.edu/irb/>). To receive approval, candidates must submit an *Application for Research with Human Subjects* to the appropriate IRB subcommittee. Failure to apply for and receive IRB approval can have severe consequences. Instructions for completing the Application should be followed. Special attention should be given to the sections dealing with informed consent. These sections require the preparation of a statement concerning the protection of prospective research participants. The information required in an Informed Consent Form includes study dates, purpose, assurances that failure to participate will result in no penalties, right to withdraw, intended uses of the data, etc. Note that under FIU requirements students may fill out the IRB application, but the Chair of the dissertation committee must assume the role of principle investigator for the purposes of IRB.

VI. THE DISSERTATION

Evaluation of Doctoral Dissertations

The submitted dissertation must conform to the presentation rules described in the *Regulations for Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Manual* of the University Graduate School. The task of evaluating a doctoral dissertation falls upon the members of the candidate's Doctoral Dissertation Committee. The responsibilities of the Committee are as follows:

- In the three-paper model the student will send the committee each of the three papers at the point they are complete. The committee will endeavor to give feedback to the student within two weeks of receiving papers; or will provide a timeline for when they can provide feedback.
- *Committee members will endeavor to respond to written drafts within two weeks of receipt of the full dissertation.*
- *At the end of each year the Dissertation Committee must file a formal evaluation of a candidate's progress on the electronic Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan.*

The following criteria should normally be used to evaluate the dissertation:

1. Original and significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge
2. Demonstration of the candidate's ability to conduct autonomous research
3. Validity of design and methodology, quality of logic and reasoning, critical evaluation of sources used, quality of references
4. Clarity of written expression
5. Quality of abstract, pertinence and utility of title for indexing purposes

After the candidate has submitted a complete draft of the dissertation to the members of the Committee, each member evaluates the dissertation independently and determines whether in his or her opinion the candidate may proceed to the Dissertation Defense. This evaluation must be in writing and should normally cover the criteria listed above and/or other pertinent criteria. Upon approval, *Form D-5 Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense* is signed by each member of the Dissertation Committee and then forwarded by the Chair to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the School Director, the Dean of the College, and the Dean of the University Graduate School for final approval/signatures. Candidates and their Committee members are cautioned to follow the University Graduate School Deadlines for filing the various forms.

Traditional and Article Based Dissertations:

Candidates must select either a traditional or an article-based format for their dissertations. Traditional dissertations are generally a book length report on a completed research project using one or more social science methodologies. Traditional dissertations are broken into chapters which generally include at least the following chapters, although they may include more.

- Introduction
- Background/Problem
- Theory
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- References

Article-based dissertations allow students to develop a dissertation around three articles for publication on a related topic. The articles and supporting material are presented in book form using a similar format to the following:

- Introduction
- Background/Problem (focusing on common elements)
- Paper one (may be based on a literature review or empirical)
- Paper two (must be empirical)
- Paper three (must be empirical)
- Discussion (focusing on common elements)
- References

Additional requirements for article-based dissertations

- Authorship. Student must be 1st or sole author on all three papers,
 - Chair may be 2nd author if appropriate,
 - other contributors may be included.
 - AN ARTICLE USED IN ONE DISSERTATION CAN NOT BE USED IN ANY OTHER DISSERTATION.
- Committee must agree on order of authorship on all articles according to published standards of authorship (FIU Office of Research Integrity)
- Articles may or may not be submitted to journals for publication
- The committee must agree that articles are ready for submission for the purpose of the dissertation regardless of whether they have been submitted or not.

It is expected that *Form D-5* will be forwarded when all Committee members agree that the candidate is ready for the defense. Until such agreement is reached, it is the candidate's responsibility, with the help and direct oversight of his or her Dissertation Chair, to produce a final dissertation draft acceptable to the Committee.

Dissertation Defense

Before the final acceptance of the dissertation, the Dissertation Committee schedules an oral defense at which time the candidate must satisfactorily defend the dissertation. *The University Graduate School sets specific deadlines each semester for applying for graduation and for the holding of a defense. Candidates should verify these deadlines well in advance at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-calendar-deadlines.shtml>*

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee should ensure that Committee Members' comments and suggestions are incorporated into the defense copy of the dissertation (or should otherwise

be verbally acknowledged at the Defense). The Committee may ask a candidate to make changes in the dissertation and schedule another Defense. In this situation, which should be rare, (a) the meeting will be adjourned, (b) the student in consultation with the Chair and Committee Members will substantially revise their dissertation, and (c) with approval of the Chair and Committee Members, another defense will be scheduled for the revised dissertation.

Before any Defense, the candidate submits a review copy of the dissertation to the Chair of the Dissertation Committee and the other Committee Members. Review copies of the dissertation should be complete and well-edited final products: consult the *Regulations for Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Manual* (noted above under dissertation proposal) of the University Graduate School for format requirements.

Dissertation must be approved by the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the Director of the School (if Graduate Faculty) and the Dean of the College prior to submission for approval of the Dean of the University Graduate School. In order for this requirement to be met, additional time is required. Candidates are advised to see policies from UGS and the Dean's office to make sure that they comply with required deadlines for submission.

The University Graduate School requires that candidates file an abstract of the dissertation which is publicized for the defense announcement. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee notifies the Doctoral Program Coordinator of the date, time, and place of the dissertation defense. The Coordinator informs faculty members of the dissertation defense and encourages their presence as representatives of the School of Social Work.

The oral Dissertation Defense represents the last public opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the merit of his or her entire dissertation project. The spirit of the defense is expected to be one of debate and critical inquiry. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee serves as Chair of the Dissertation Defense.

Normally, the candidate first presents a brief PowerPoint-based overview of the major findings or implications, or of any point he or she wishes to emphasize or clarify, *for a maximum of 20 minutes*. The candidate is then questioned by each member of the Dissertation Committee, usually starting with the Chair and ending with the external member. Any aspect of the dissertation research (context, values, theory, method, analysis, conclusions, implications, applications, etc.) is open for question and debate among those present. Members of the audience are then invited to ask questions or offer any comments. After the question period is over, the Dissertation Committee meets in private to reach its decision.

A candidate may have revisions to make to the dissertation that arise prior to the defense or as the result of the defense. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that these revisions are made prior to the submission of the publishable copy of the dissertation. The Chairperson (Major Professor) attests to the completeness of the dissertation by initiating the *Final ETD Approval Form* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>).

Review of the Steps in the Dissertation Process

1. Complete Doctoral Candidacy Examination satisfactorily.
2. Complete selection of Doctoral Dissertation Committee membership (usually composed of former Doctoral Candidacy Committee plus another member)
3. Work with Chair and Committee members to revise and finalize the Dissertation Proposal (which usually grows out, with minor or necessary modifications, of the research proposal submitted for the candidacy examination).
4. Submit necessary materials to Institutional Review Board.
5. Submit signed *Form D-3* with all attachments. A first meeting of your Dissertation Committee should have been held.
6. Conduct the dissertation research.
7. Continue to work with Committee Members on dissertation drafts. Work closely with Chair and keep all Committee Members apprised of progress. Share drafts and solicit comments and suggestions. Use Committee Members as consultants and advisors. A second meeting of your Dissertation Committee should have been held.
8. Write and rewrite chapters.
9. Prepare for dissertation defense by keeping the Committee actively involved. File the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan each year.
10. Upon approval of the Chair and all Committee Members, schedule tentative date for a Dissertation Defense.
11. Upon completion of a dissertation, submit *Form D-5* signed by the Committee Chairperson and other Members of the Committee. The application must be filed in sufficient time to allow the Dean of University Graduate School to publish the notice in a monthly calendar of dissertation and thesis defenses for the University community.
12. Before Defense, distribute copies of dissertation to Chair and Committee Members. A third meeting of your Dissertation Committee should have been held.
13. Defend dissertation. Dissertation Committee approves (or not) the defense.
14. Revise dissertation on the basis of final comments from Committee Members received during defense.
15. Chair does final reading and signs *Final ETD form*. Chair delivers it to Doctoral Program Coordinator for review before forwarding to the Dean's office for final approval.
16. Submission of Dissertation to UGS.
17. Provide Doctoral Program Coordinator with a copy of dissertation for the School's files.

Publication of Dissertations

All FIU dissertations (and dissertation abstracts) are microfilmed by *University Microfilm International (UMI): Dissertation Abstracts International*. The style and format of the dissertation should conform to the *FIU Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual* as noted above.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS (FORMS)

Forms Required by the University Graduate School

As mentioned throughout, prior to filing for one's doctoral candidacy examination, and through to the completion of the doctoral dissertation, several forms need to be signed by the Committee Chair and Committee Members at appropriate times. Students are responsible to ensure that the forms are filled out by certain deadlines, signed, and sent to the Coordinator of the Ph.D. Program for proper distribution. Forms may be downloaded from the University Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>) where more details on each form may be obtained. The following is a list of the typical forms (click on each to download the respective form):

- Form D-1 Appointment of Dissertation Committee
- Form D-1r Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee
- Form D-2 Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy
- Form D-3 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal
- Form D-5 Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense
- Final ETD Approval Form Approval of defense, dissertation, and electronic submission of dissertation.

VIII. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Continuous Registration

Unless granted an official leave of absence, all doctoral students and candidates must maintain continuous registration from the starting semester of course work to the completion of all requirements for the degree. This can be done in several ways: (a) registering and paying normal tuition and fees for at least three credit hours per semester during the academic year, or (b) during any semester in which candidates are not otherwise enrolled, registering for three credit hours of Dissertation Research.

Time Limit for Completion of Ph.D. Degree

The time limit for completing the dissertation and award of the Ph.D. degree in Social Welfare is seven years from admission into the Ph.D. Program.

Conferral of the Doctoral Degree

The University will confer the doctoral degree when the following minimum conditions have been met:

1. Submission of the required application for graduation
2. Certification by the academic dean that all requirements of the degree being sought have been completed
3. Achievement of grade and other minimum requirements
4. Satisfactory completion and defense of a doctoral dissertation
5. Receipt by the library of two approved and final copies of the dissertation (and payment of micro-filming costs).

Doctoral students who have completed all requirements for their degree may participate in the Commencement ceremonies.

IX. FINANCIAL AID

Doctoral fellowships that cover tuition and provide additional stipends to help students focus on their studies without the burden of outside employment. Fellowships are available through the Dean's office in the Stempel College and through various programs operated by the University Graduate School, as well as by outside agencies. Most opportunities require the student to apply. Students who wish to receive fellowships or scholarships should inquire about them with the Doctoral Coordinator, and the Student Services Coordinator in the School of Social Work, as well as consulting the UGS website. Support is available on a limited basis for students applying to the Program, as well as for Current Students.

All students requesting financial aid or who may be interested in research or teaching assistantships must complete a Federal Application for Financial Aid (available from the Office of Financial Aid website). *Students are not eligible for any financial assistance if they are working full-time and if they register for less than nine credits per semester.*

Students Applying to the Program

Students applying well before the application deadline (February 1st) and whose applications are complete may compete within the university for competitive funding. The University Graduate School has a number of Fellowships for new students, such as the Presidential Fellowship and the Inclusions Fellowship. For more information click on the following link: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-graduate-funding.shtml>

In addition, there are competitive awards provided by the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work to the most meritorious applicants. These awards have provided full tuition waivers with a generous stipend. Students may inquire to the Doctoral Program Coordinator about these opportunities. In return for this financial support, students are expected to work for approximately 20 hours per week per semester with selected faculty members.

If you will need financial assistance to pursue you Ph.D., we urge you to investigate all means of support as soon as possible.

Current Students

For currently enrolled students, there are opportunities within the university, such as the Dissertation Evidence Acquisition (DEA) Fellowship. Click on the following link for more information about the DEA and other fellowships: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/fellowships.shtml>

There are competitive awards provided by the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work to ongoing students who are excelling in their studies and are meeting Program deadlines. Some of these awards provide full tuition waivers with a generous stipend. In return for this financial support, students are generally expected to work for approximately 20 hours per week per semester with selected faculty members or teach in the School's BSSW Program.

There are numerous opportunities for funding from sources outside the university for students currently enrolled. Students should request this information from the College Student Services Coordinator and from the UGS website.