



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL  
WORK**

**University of  
South Carolina**

# **PHD STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL 2018-2019**

**THIS MANUAL IS FOR PhD STUDENTS  
BEGINNING THE PROGRAM IN  
FALL 2018**

[www.sc.edu/CoSW](http://www.sc.edu/CoSW)

This manual covers the Fall, Spring, and Summer terms of the 2018-2019 academic year. This manual is intended only to provide information for the guidance of the University of South Carolina College of Social Work students. The information is subject to change and the College of Social Work reserves the right to depart without notice from any policy or procedures referred to in this manual. This manual is not intended to be and should not be regarded as a contract between the University of South Carolina College of Social Work and any student or other person.

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**Approved October 5, 2018**

# PhD Program Contact Information

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## College of Social Work

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## **PROGRAM MISSION, GOALS, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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### **PhD Program Mission**

The College of Social Work PhD Program prepares social work scholars to advance social well-being and social justice through leadership in trans-disciplinary community- engaged research and education.

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### **PhD Program Goals and Learning Outcomes**

Graduates of the USC CoSW PhD Program will:

- Possess a trans-disciplinary perspective on social work and social welfare that incorporates knowledge from social, behavioral and health sciences;
  - Possess the capacity for community-engaged leadership in research to promote social change through university-community partnerships of significance;
  - Possess the ability to provide educational leadership in disseminating knowledge relevant to social work and social welfare through teaching at the bachelor's, master's and/or doctoral level of education.
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### **Program Evaluation**

The PhD Program routinely collects and evaluates data to monitor progress and achievement of program goals. Students are included in this process through their involvement in instructor evaluations, course objective outcomes, and other means. Students are invited to provide additional feedback through PhD student membership on the PhD Program Committee.

## ADMISSIONS

The admission policy for the PhD Program applies to every applicant. An applicant for admission as a degree candidate in social work must fulfill the general admission requirements of the University of South Carolina's Graduate School.

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### Admission Requirements

Admission to the PhD program is selective; only a small number of applicants are admitted for each fall semester. Candidates are sought who possess attributes and career goals consistent with the focus of the program. Requirements for admission include:

- Master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited graduate program
- Grade point average of 3.5 or above for graduate level work;
- Evidence of scholarly potential as indicated by three letters of reference;
- A detailed personal statement that addresses:
  - your career goals,
  - how earning a PhD will help you achieve your career goals,
  - why you want to pursue a PhD at the USC CoSW,
  - what, if any, experience you have conducting research/evaluation (e.g., with a faculty member, for employment),
  - your major research interest/focus,
  - what personal and professional experiences have influenced your research interest/focus,
  - how, if at all, your research interest/focus fits with the program's emphases on community-engaged, trans-disciplinary research (i.e., team science) and leadership for social change;
- Graduate Record Examination (general) scores or Miller Analogy Test scores;
- Sample of the applicant's professional writing; and
- [Satisfactory score on TOEFL or IELTS](#) for international students for whom English is not their primary language

The individual strengths of each candidate will be considered. On a case-by-case basis, the Admissions Committee will consider other master's degrees in lieu of the MSW. An applicant's undergraduate and graduate academic records, scores on the GRE or MAT, post-MSW work experience, commitment to social work research and teaching, and indicated potential for success in scholarship at the doctoral level are among factors considered. Each class is selected to include individuals with high potential to learn from each other as well as from the faculty. PhD students are admitted in the spring to begin full-time study in the fall.

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Satisfactory completion of the following are required for the PhD in social work:

- Required courses listed in the program of study;
- Elective courses outlined in the student's individual Doctoral Program of Study;
- Qualifying examination (written and oral components);
- Comprehensive examination (written and oral components) in the form of a dissertation proposal that is approved by the student's dissertation committee;
- Completion and oral defense of dissertation approved by dissertation committee.

## THE CORE CURRICULUM

The PhD program in social work is designed so that course requirements can be completed in 2.5 years, followed by dissertation work. A student must enroll full-time during the first year in residence (see Graduate Bulletin for additional information about [residency requirements](#)). Students have ten years from the first term of enrollment in which to complete the degree. Please see the Graduate Bulletin for detailed information on options to extend this timeline through [family or medical leave exceptions](#).

It is assumed that all required courses will be taken at the University of South Carolina. Under some circumstances and with the approval of a student's advisor in consultation with the PhD Program Coordinator, coursework taken from an accredited doctoral program may be accepted in lieu of required or elective courses at USC. Courses must be taken in sequence unless the PhD Program Committee grants permission to take a course out of sequence.

Per the [USC Graduate Studies Bulletin](#), "Students are advised that there are no guarantees that a particular course or program of study can be delivered by the University at a time convenient for every student. Unforeseen circumstances may interfere with the scheduling of any given course or degree offering. Students must be prepared for such occurrences even if students experience delays in fulfilling academic goals or require modification of those goals. Academic units and The Graduate School will work closely with students to resolve academic issues."

Each course has a syllabus and course calendar developed by the instructor. The courses are intensive and focused, delivered in small group seminars. During the semester the instructor may exercise discretion in adapting expectations and assignments based on the learning needs of the students in the class. A **minimum** of 3 graded assignments are required for a three-credit course.

In the COSW, no grade below a **B** can be applied to a core course. Additionally, per USC policy, a student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 (B) on all approved coursework completed in the University of South Carolina doctoral program. Students whose cumulative GPA drops below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation. Please see the Graduate Bulletin for more information about [University academic standards](#) including policies regarding grades, course credits, transfer credits, revalidation of courses, exception petitions, and similar topics.

The course requirements described below constitute the minimum required of all PhD students. Dissertation chairs and committees may require students to take additional courses in order to prepare them to carry out their dissertation research, so students should work closely with their faculty advisors throughout their doctoral program to anticipate and plan for a program of study that efficiently meets the student's unique learning needs.

Typical Plan of Study

Year 1, Fall	Year 1, Spring
<p><b>SOWK 800:</b> Intellectual Foundations of Social Welfare and Social Work I: Historical Roots (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 850:</b> Social Work Doctoral Professional Seminar (1 credit)</p> <p><b>SOWK 890<sup>1</sup>:</b> Analysis of Social Work Data (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 892<sup>1</sup>:</b> Design and Critical Analysis of Social Work Research (3 credits)</p>	<p><b>SOWK 801<sup>2</sup>:</b> Intellectual Foundations of Social Welfare and Social Work II: Modern Developments (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 830:</b> Community-Engaged Research for Social Welfare and Social Change (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 850:</b> Social Work Doctoral Professional Seminar (1 credit)</p> <p><b>SOWK 891<sup>3</sup>:</b> Advanced Analysis of Social Work Data (3 credits)</p>
<p><b>SOWK 872:</b> Social Work Education Practicum and <b>SOWK 889:</b> Doctoral Social Work Practicum may be taken any time after the first year. They are not required prior to the Qualifying Examination.</p>	
Year 2, Fall	Year 2, Spring
<p><b>SOWK 802<sup>4</sup>:</b> Intellectual Foundations of Social Welfare and Social Work III: Conceptual Model Building (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 811:</b> Qualitative Methods of Inquiry for Social Work Research (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 831:</b> Leadership for Social Change (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 894:</b> Planning and Design of Dissertation Research (1 credit)</p>	<p><b>EDHE 738:</b> Principles of College Teaching (3 credits)</p> <p><b>Elective</b> (3 credits)</p> <p><b>Elective</b> (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 894:</b> Planning and Design of Dissertation Research (1 credit)</p>
Year 3, Fall	Year 3, Spring
<p>Elective (3 credits)</p> <p>Elective (3 credits)</p> <p>Elective (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOWK 899<sup>5</sup>:</b> Dissertation Research (1-12 credits)</p>	<p><b>SOWK 899:</b> Dissertation Research (1-12 credits)</p>

<sup>1</sup>Waiver examinations for research methods and statistics courses will be available to students who can demonstrate competency in these areas. Students who successfully waive one or both of these courses will substitute elective courses.

<sup>2</sup> Successful completion of SOWK 800 is prerequisite for enrolling in SOWK 801.

<sup>3</sup> Successful completion of SOWK 890 is prerequisite for enrolling in SOWK 891.

<sup>4</sup> Successful completion of SOWK 801 is prerequisite for enrolling in SOWK 802.

<sup>5</sup> Successful completion of SOWK 894 (2 credits) and passing the Qualifying Examination is prerequisite for enrolling in SOWK 899. After completion of core courses, students must be enrolled for at least 1 credit of SOWK 899 during any semester in which they make dissertation progress or use university resources such as the library, computer facilities, or faculty time. Students must complete a total of 12 credits of SOWK 899, including at least one credit during the semester of graduation.

## COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

- SOWK 764 Independent Study (3 credits)** For advanced graduate students.
- SOWK 800 Intellectual Foundations of Social Welfare and Social Work I: Historical Roots (3 credits)** Examines across disciplines the theoretical and empirical foundations for social welfare and social work in historical, economic, social, and political contexts prior to the 20th century.
- SOWK 801 Intellectual Foundations of Social Welfare and Social Work II: Modern Developments (3 credits) (Prereq: SOWK 800)** Examines across disciplines the theoretical and empirical foundations of social welfare and social work in historical, economic, social, and political contexts from the early 20th century to the present.
- SOWK 802 Intellectual Foundations of Social Welfare and Social Work III: Conceptual Model-Building (3 credits) (Prereq: SOWK 800, 801)** Examines the process of developing theory-based welfare and social work scholarship from a variety of research approaches, focusing on conceptual model-building.
- SOWK 811 Qualitative Methods of Inquiry for Social Work Research (3 credits)** Foundations of qualitative methods in social research with emphasis on intensive interviewing and grounded theory.
- SOWK 830 Community-engaged Research for Social Welfare and Social Change (3 credits)** Covers conceptual foundations and key processes and skills of community-engaged research for understanding and promoting social welfare and social change. Emphasis on engagement with community, collaboration, challenges, and ethics. Assignments include community-engaged experience.
- SOWK 831 Leadership for Social Change (3 credits)** Examines theoretical and practical foundations of providing leadership for social change through organizations, communities, public policies, and social norms.
- SOWK 850 Social Work Doctoral Professional Seminar (1 credit)** Examines issues related to making a successful transition from doctoral student to professional social work scholar. Repeatable: 2 credits required for the doctoral program.
- SOWK 872 Social Work Education Practicum (0 credits)** A wide range of supervised classroom, field, and other learning experiences designed to prepare the student for work as a social work educator.
- SOWK 889 Social Work Research Practicum (0 credits)** Students acquire practical research experience, based on an individualized learning contract, under the supervision of a faculty member.

- SOWK 890 Analysis of Social Work Data (3 credits)** Approaches to the organization, analysis, interpretation, and utilization of data sets available from social agency records or from existing empirical research.
- SOWK 891 Advanced Analysis of Social Work Data (3 credits) (Prereq: SOWK 891)** Analysis of complex data sets from social services agencies and other research sources.
- SOWK 892 Design and Critical Analysis of Social Work Research (3 credits)** Advanced study of research methods commonly employed in the development of knowledge for social work practice and education. Critique of published social work research using a standardized critique model.
- SOWK 894 Proposal Writing Seminar (1 credit)** A seminar designed to provide intensive faculty supervision and peer consultation to the doctoral student in professional writing for community and scholarly audiences. Repeatable: 2 credits required for the doctoral program.
- SOWK 899 Dissertation Preparation. (1-12 credits) (Prereq: SOWK 894)**

#### **Additional course information**

**SOWK 782 Social Work Education Practicum.** The purpose of the teaching practicum is to develop teaching skills at the university level under the direction of an experienced social work educator. Students may complete the practicum either as an additional set of activities to accompany a Teaching Assistant position, or as a stand-alone experience with a faculty member in the College of Social Work. In exceptional situations when a student begins the PhD program with extensive independent teaching experience, the student may request permission from the Program Coordinator to complete the teaching practicum while serving as an Instructor in the College. The particular structure and content of the practicum depends upon the experience and the learning objectives of the student. The guidelines for the teaching practicum are found on the syllabus for SOWK 872.

In preparation for the practicum, the student should consult with his or her Academic Advisor about individual learning needs to be addressed through the teaching experience and potential Faculty Instructors to supervise the practicum. The faculty member who supervises the practicum works with the student to develop a learning contract that defines the learning objectives, the activities designed to meet the objectives, learning outcomes and criteria for grading the student's performance. The final learning contract must be approved by the PhD Program Coordinator. The PhD Program Coordinator is the instructor of record and gives the final grade upon recommendation by the Supervising Faculty Instructor. Completion of the teaching practicum is a prerequisite for teaching classes at the College of Social Work.

**SOWK 889 Social Work Research Practicum.** Students are required to complete a research practicum. The purpose of the research practicum is to develop competence in conducting research under the direction of an experienced faculty researcher. Students may complete the requirement for the research practicum in a variety of ways, depending upon their level of experience, learning objectives, the availability of opportunities to participate in research with faculty and in the community. The guidelines for the research practicum are found on the syllabus

College of Social Work – University of South Carolina  
for SOWK 889. The practicum may be taken while working as a Research Assistant but the student must complete a learning contract for the practicum with a supervising faculty member (per course syllabus) and demonstrate mastery of new knowledge and skills for a grade. The supervising faculty member may be from the CoSW or another academic unit; in either case, the learning contract must be completed. The means for fulfilling the objectives of the research practicum should be agreed upon by the student, the student’s advisor and/or Dissertation Chair and the PhD Program Coordinator.

**Electives.** Students must complete five electives as part of their approved [Doctoral Program of Study](#). These five include:

- two substantive electives in departments outside of the College of Social Work,
- two electives in advanced research methods either inside or outside of the College of Social Work,
- and one other elective inside or outside the CoSW.

The two substantive electives must be doctoral level courses (level 500 or higher) selected to form a subject or cognate area based on the student’s individualized research interests. A student may also take electives at accredited colleges or universities with appropriate graduate level courses with the approval of the academic advisor or Dissertation Chair.

**Independent Study Courses.** Students complete the [Independent Study Form](#) with the instructor. The course summary must be delineated in detail, and the form signed by the student, the instructor, the student’s advisor, and the Program Coordinator. The form is returned to the Assistant Dean for Students for processing. Students cannot use Independent Studies in lieu of required courses that engage similar content. Students may take no more than two independent studies to count toward required elective courses; each must be with a different faculty member.

**Foreign Language and/or Research Methods Requirement.** The University of South Carolina Graduate School requires doctoral students to demonstrate mastery of a language or research methods. In the College of Social Work, the requirement is met through demonstrated competence in computer applications and statistics, determined by a student’s successful completion of SOWK890 and SOWK891.

## PROGRESSION TO CANDIDACY

**The Qualifying Examination.** The Qualifying Examination (hereinafter “the exam”) is designed to assess students’ readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of study and to provide students with a comprehensive, integrative educational experience. Success on the exam requires students to draw on knowledge and skills acquired in the core curriculum courses, but it is not a summative examination of what was learned in those courses. Rather, the exam asks students to extend, integrate, apply and critique what they have learned through coursework. So, while successful completion of the core curriculum is a prerequisite for taking the exam, it does not guarantee success on the exam.

The exam focuses on the core aspects of scholarship: discovery, integration, and application. Each students’ exam question will be unique, relating in some way to the student’s self-identified area of research interest. All exams will require students to demonstrate competency in the application of a) theory to a social problem, b) community engaged research principles, and c) qualitative and

College of Social Work – University of South Carolina  
quantitative research methodologies. The exam also requires students to attend to issues of diversity and social justice.

The exam is administered each spring, starting the Wednesday after classes end (i.e., the first day of final exam week). If a student has exams or final papers during finals week and wishes to start the exam after completing these class requirements, he/she can start the exam the day after final exams (i.e., final exams in the spring semester are Wednesday – Wednesday, the exam begins on Thursday, the day after finals are over). Students may request copies of previous exams and the exam scoring rubric from the PhD Program Coordinator. Please see the PhD program website for a detailed description of the timeline and procedures for the Qualifying Exam.

Students are required to take the exam at the end of the spring semester in their second year, following a successful second-year review OR upon successfully completing (with grade of B or higher) SOWK 800, 801, 802, 890, 891, 892, 811, 830, 831, 850 (2 hours) and 894 (2 hours) (or their equivalents as approved by official action), whichever is achieved first. In addition, to be eligible to take the exam, students must also have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and not be on Academic Probation as determined by the Graduate School or the CoSW faculty, or have more than 2 Incompletes in courses other than required courses.

Questions for the written exam are developed and graded by an examining committee composed of three CoSW faculty members including the students' academic or research advisor, at least one member of the PhD Program Committee, and one PhD Program faculty member or invited CoSW tenure-track faculty member.

The grading options for the written exam are: a) proceed to the oral exam or b) fail. The grade assigned by the members of the examining committee and relevant comments and feedback are submitted to the PhD Program Coordinator, who informs students of the results. If the student passes the written exam, s/he moves on to the oral exam. The examining committee that grades the student's written exam also conducts the oral exam, which will include following up on areas within the written exam that were unclear, incomplete, or otherwise of concern.

For students proceeding to the oral exam, grading options are: a) overall pass of the exam, or b) overall fail of the exam. If a student fails the oral exam, s/he is required to retake both the written and oral exams (see timeline and procedures for more details). Students who fail the exam may re-take it one time. Students who fail the re-take are not permitted to continue in the PhD Program in the College of Social Work. The exam must be passed before the start of the student's fourth academic year of study.

**The Doctoral Program of Study.** Each student will file an individual [Doctoral Program of Study](#) (DPOS) with the Graduate School, by no later than the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of coursework. The student and their Advisor develop the DPOS, which includes required courses, electives chosen to develop the student's substantive and methodological expertise directed toward completing the dissertation, and the required number of dissertation preparation (SOWK 899) credits.

The Program of Study is an agreement signed by the student, their Advisor, the PhD Program Coordinator, and Dean of the Graduate School. This formal agreement serves a number of purposes to benefit the student and the University. It causes the student and their faculty mentors to engage in planning early enough to allow thoughtful choices of electives, and it facilitates subsequent advisement and protects the student in the event of unexpected curriculum changes or faculty changes. Although formal programs are binding, they can be

College of Social Work – University of South Carolina  
modified or replaced by new programs as needed by submitting a [Program of Study Adjustment Form](#).

**Admission to Candidacy.** The USC Graduate School has three requirements for students to be considered candidates for their respective degrees: 1) full admission to the doctoral degree program; 2) passing a qualifying examination; and 3) submission of Program of Study to the Graduate School. Meeting these criteria qualify a student for admission to candidacy by the Graduate School and the College of Social Work.

## The Dissertation Stage of the Program

**Overview.** Following successful completion of the Qualifying Examination, the student must present a dissertation based on original research that has been approved by the student's dissertation committee, the Dean of the College of Social Work, and the Dean of the Graduate School. The doctoral dissertation should demonstrate the student's competence in research.

**Appointing the Dissertation Committee.** The USC Graduate School Bulletin states who is eligible to serve on [dissertation committees](#). The dissertation committee consists of four persons, including three eligible faculty members in the College of Social Work and one from outside the College of Social Work who are responsible for the approval of the dissertation proposal and final approval of the written dissertation and dissertation oral defense. The committee member from outside the College of Social Work may be from a college or university outside the University of South Carolina if the person is a full-time member of an accredited college or university and teaches graduate level courses.

Students typically form their Dissertation Committee immediately after passing the Qualifying Exam. Each student should consult with the PhD Program Coordinator prior to forming the Dissertation Committee. It is the student's responsibility to then seek the agreement from the chosen faculty member to serve as dissertation chair. If the faculty member agrees to chair the Dissertation Committee, other committee members should be identified in consultation with the chair. Student preferences will be given every consideration when dissertation committee appointment assignments are made; however, the Dean and the PhD Program Committee will also consider other factors such as faculty workload and balance of expertise on the committee when approving committee appointments. As required by the [Doctoral Committee Appointment Request](#) form, the committee members must be approved by both the PhD Program Coordinator and the USC Graduate School Dean.

Once the dissertation committee is approved, it is possible, though unusual, for its membership to change. A faculty member may be unable to carry out committee duties (because of illness or sabbatical leave, for example) or may ask to be removed from the committee; or the committee member may not be able to serve the student's best interests in completing the dissertation. A substitute member would then be obtained in keeping with the procedure for original selection of the committee.

If a dissertation study is changed substantially, the student may, with the approval of the Dean and the PhD Program Coordinator, ask for dissolution of the committee. Under these circumstances, a new committee would be formed and the entire process would resume,

College of Social Work – University of South Carolina  
beginning with the approval of a dissertation proposal. The student will still be subject to the time frame that started with date of first year enrollment.

### **The Dissertation Proposal, Proposal Defense, and Comprehensive Examination**

Overview: The dissertation project must be original research that contributes new knowledge and must be independently led by the doctoral student. The topics for doctoral students' dissertations must have relevance broadly to social work or social welfare. After all required coursework is completed and the Qualifying Exam passed, the student may write the Dissertation Proposal with the guidance of his or her dissertation committee. Doctoral candidates must perform their own data analysis for their dissertation. They may consult with faculty and with outside experts as needed, but they must perform and be able to defend the major analytic procedures themselves. So, the student must be able to establish in the proposal development and defense process that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct the study being proposed. All work on a doctoral dissertation must be completed while the student is enrolled in the USC PhD program.

### **Dissertation Proposal Guidelines**

Each student must submit a Dissertation Proposal that: states the problem for study; summarizes relevant theoretical and empirical literature; specifies the expected contribution of the study; provides detailed methodology of the study including plans for data analysis and states its relationship to social welfare. The proposal must also include an IRB (Institutional Review Board) proposal that is ready for submission to the IRB and should identify any expected difficulties and explicit plans for solving them in the course of carrying out the dissertation research. Students have two options for the format of their proposal, depending on whether they are proposing a Traditional Dissertation (single, multi-chapter document focusing holistically on the research project) or a Multiple Paper Dissertation (dissertation includes overall introduction and conclusion chapters, and 3 publishable-quality manuscripts, each focusing on a separate research or scholarly aim). See the PhD program website for detailed instructions on each format.

The Dissertation Chair is responsible for setting the date of the proposal defense. The Chair may set the date only after obtaining written confirmation from all Dissertation Committee members that the dissertation proposal is defensible – but this does not guarantee that the student will pass the defense. After the full Committee gives approval, the student must provide the Chair and all Committee members a complete proposal at least two weeks prior to the date of the proposal defense.

During the Dissertation Proposal Defense, the research question(s), conceptual rationale guiding those questions, and the proposed methodology for addressing the question(s) will be discussed. The committee will then decide whether the proposal will be approved as written or, if not, what action(s) should be taken. This should be documented on the Dissertation Proposal Action Form (see the PhD program website). A signed copy should be given to the PhD Program Coordinator.

Dissertation Committee approval of the Dissertation Proposal, contingent upon demonstration of mastery of the literature pertaining to the dissertation topic and methods appropriate for investigation of the dissertation questions, satisfies the University requirement for graduate students to pass a Comprehensive Exam. Following successful proposal defense, the [Comprehensive Exam Verification form](#) should be completed and submitted.

The Dissertation Committee should meet no later than two years after the proposal meeting to

College of Social Work – University of South Carolina  
review the progress of the student’s research. It is the student’s responsibility to see that the meeting is convened.

### **The Dissertation and Dissertation Defense**

Once the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended, the student may begin work on the dissertation project. The student is encouraged to seek ongoing mentorship from committee members, but ultimately the student must conduct the research themselves, including conducting statistical and/or qualitative analyses, interpreting results, and writing the text of the dissertation. The dissertation must conform to [Graduate School specifications](#) and be written in acceptable American Psychological Association (APA) style.

During the preparation of the dissertation, any student who wishes to use University facilities or to confer with faculty on dissertation work must be enrolled officially for dissertation credit. Registration for a minimum of twelve credits in Dissertation Research (SOWK 899) is required of all doctoral candidates.

The Dissertation Committee will conduct an Oral Dissertation Defense no less than thirty days before the date on which a candidate expects to receive the degree. The final draft of the dissertation must be distributed to the members of the dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to the Dissertation Defense. Dissertation Defenses are open to the general public. The PhD Program Coordinator will be responsible for disseminating notice of the time and location of the defense to the general college community and to the Graduate School. Students should consult the Graduate School website for relevant deadlines.

During the Defense, the candidate first makes a formal presentation of their dissertation project, after which comments and questions are invited from the general audience. Following this, the Dissertation Committee will have a closed discussion in which committee members examine the candidate. The candidate will then be excused from the room while the committee deliberates and votes. A positive vote by at least three members of the committee is required to pass the Dissertation Defense. If the final draft is not acceptable to the committee, the student must revise the draft in accordance with the recommendations of committee members and resubmit the revisions for final approval. Documentation of successful completion of the Dissertation Defense should be accomplished by completion of the [Dissertation Signature and Approval Form](#). The Chair of the student’s Dissertation Committee should give the signed copy of this form to the PhD Program Coordinator. The student is responsible for filing copies of the dissertation and abstract with the Dean of the Graduate School in accordance with USC requirements. One electronic copy of the final dissertation must be submitted to the Director of the Doctoral Program at the CoSW.

Candidates planning to graduate should pay close attention to the scheduled deadlines posted by the Graduate School. These deadlines will determine dates for dissertation defenses, submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School, and other important

### **Graduation**

In order to graduate, students must:

- Formally apply for graduation at the beginning of the semester during which they expect to defend the dissertation;

- Be enrolled in at least one credit hour of SOWK 899 (Dissertation Research) the semester during which they anticipate graduating.

Students should consult the Graduate School website for complete information and requirements for graduation, Student Supports, and Opportunities

## Supporting and Monitoring Student Progress

The College of Social Work is committed to supporting each doctoral student's development as an independent scholar and their timely progress through the PhD program. We accomplish this through 1) advisement and mentoring processes, 2) the development of an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that supports planning, monitors progress, and guides development to accomplish the student's individual scholarly and career goals, and 3) formal annual reviews. Throughout the program, the PhD student, as an emerging scholar, is also responsible for ongoing assessment of her or his own development, goals, strengths, and needs -- and for effectively using mentoring opportunities to support their development.

### Advisement and Mentoring Processes

Each incoming student is **assigned an Academic Advisor** at the beginning of the first academic year; and, during the first semester the PhD Program Committee, in conjunction with the Academic Advisor, serves as the student's Advisory Committee. Every effort is made to assign an Advisor who is a good match for the student's area of research interest.

By the end of second semester, the student will form a **three-member Doctoral Student Advisory Committee** comprised of the Academic Advisor (chair), two other CoSW faculty members. The student may choose to keep the Advisor who was assigned when they began the program, or may choose a different advisor at this time, who will then serve as chair of the Advisory Committee. The Doctoral Student Advisory Committee will support the student to develop their Doctoral Program of Study, select electives, and otherwise guide the student toward developmental goals in the coursework stage of the PhD program. The Advisory committee will serve in that capacity until the student completes the Qualifying Exam. The student should complete the Advisory Committee Appointment Form (see the PhD program website), and return the signed form to the PhD Program Coordinator.

Once a student is admitted to candidacy they choose a **Dissertation Chair, and Dissertation Committee**. This committee is formalized by completing the [Doctoral Committee Appointment Request form](#), and submitting the completed form to the Program Coordinator. Please see the Bulletin for additional information on [Dissertation Committee composition and requirements](#).

Students are expected to *take the initiative* to meet regularly with their advisors or chairs and to keep them informed about their progress in the program, including any barriers to expected progress (e.g. receiving a grade of less than a "B" in a required course; outstanding incompletes; situations that interfere with agreed upon task completion, work products; plans for leave status).

## **Individual Development Plan**

Each PhD student completes an Individual Development Plan (IDP) in which they identify developmental goals, document progress toward those goals, and plan for next steps to support their overall trajectory through the program and into the job market. The IDP is developed in collaboration with the student's Advisor and Research Supervisor (for those with a GRA assignment) during the fall of the first year, and is reviewed and updated at the end of each academic year and at any time when the student changes to a new Advisor or a new GRA assignment. The student is responsible for contacting their Advisor and Research Supervisor to review and get input on the IDP. The final IDP is signed by the student and both advisors, and then submitted to the Program Coordinator by April 15 of each year, and within 1 month of any change in Advisor. The IDP is part of the student file and subject to confidentiality as are all student records.

## **Annual Review**

Students must receive a satisfactory performance review by PhD Program instructors and the PhD Program Committee at the end of each academic year of study before proceeding to the next year. This review ensures that PhD students who continue are academically prepared to do so, and that students who are not performing at an expected level will be so advised formally.

If this review process identifies no serious concerns, the student will be notified via email that they have had a positive annual review and may proceed to the next year of the program. However, if serious concerns are identified, the PhD Program Coordinator will refer the student for a Faculty Committee Review as described in the next section.

**Faculty Committee Review.** A 3-member Faculty Review Committee will be appointed by the PhD Program Coordinator to review student performance any time when: 1) a student has received a grade of C+ or below in a course, 2) faculty identify serious concerns or patterns of concern related to the student's performance in courses, research, or teaching responsibilities, or 3) a student requests a review. As part of its review, the Faculty Review Committee will solicit information from the student and from faculty members or other supervisors involved in assessing the student's performance.

In those instances when, after considering of this information, the Review Committee concludes that there are serious deficiencies, the Committee may decide on: a) continuation in the program if specific conditions are met (to be outlined in an action plan with specific activities, outcomes, and timelines for completion); b) continuation in the program on probation with additional review at the completion of the probationary period; or, c) termination from the program. A decision to terminate a student from the program will be made only by the faculty members of the PhD Program Committee. All reviews are confidential.

A student who is required to meet specific conditions must submit evidence to the Faculty Review Committee when the conditions are met. Similarly, the student who is placed on probation must submit evidence at the end of the probationary period that identified deficiencies have been successfully addressed. If at the end of the review period, the student's performance has not been remediated or problems with performance have continued, the Faculty Review Committee may revise the remediation plan or decide that the performance is unacceptable. In those instances where the student's overall performance is unacceptable, the student may be permitted to continue for a defined probationary period or may be terminated from the PhD Program by decision of the PhD Program Committee.

## Non-Academic Suspension and Termination

The College of Social Work has a responsibility to ensure that its graduates will be prepared to meet the standards of professional social work practice, including the provision of competent service to client systems at all levels. All students will be provided access to and expected to understand the criteria and procedures for suspension and termination. These criteria and procedures are part of the student review policy located on the PhD program website.

## Additional Information

### University Student Associations

The University of South Carolina recognizes both the right to exist and the mutual benefit of existence of co-curricular activities. Membership in registered student organizations shall be limited to persons officially connected with the University of South Carolina. Students may participate in several University student organizations. Information about these organizations can be found via Garnet Gate.

### Student Participation on College of Social Work Committees

In addition to the opportunity for active participation through the student associations, several standing committees for the College of Social Work include student representation. Students selected by the student association attend these meetings as voting members representing the student body.

- **PhD Program Committee:** Each year, PhD students select two PhD students (one taking classes and one in candidacy) as their representatives on the PhD Program Committee. The primary function of the PhD Program Committee is to administer the implementation of course, curriculum, and college objectives for the PhD Program. In consultation with the Dean, the PhD Program Committee is responsible for all elements of the College's PhD program, including objectives, curriculum, admissions, procedures, policies, and evaluation.
- **Faculty Recruitment Committee:** The Committee is responsible for recruiting, screening, and coordinating campus visits for candidates; convening and facilitating a special faculty meeting to evaluate the candidates; and making recommendations to the Dean. Membership may include one PhD student.

### Funding Opportunities

The PhD Program provides information about a variety of funding opportunities for students. A list of external funding sources is posted on **MyPhD**. As they become available, grant and employment opportunities are announced on the PhD student listserv, [CoSWphd@listserv.sc.edu](mailto:CoSWphd@listserv.sc.edu). In addition, funding is available from several sources:

- **Graduate School Funding:** The University's Graduate School offers graduate student Travel Grants to assist terminal degree-seeking students with travel to conferences to make presentations on behalf of the University. Additional information can be found at: <http://gradschool.sc.edu/students/travgrant.asp?page=paying>

- **Conference Travel Support:** PhD students may apply for partial funding to attend professional conferences. Students who have presentation(s) accepted at regional, national, or international conferences may apply for travel support from the PhD Program. To be eligible, students will need to complete a Request for Financial Expense Authorization form, submit a brief proposal that explains how conference attendance will advance their scholarly development, and submit an abstract of the research they will be presenting. They will also be required to simultaneously apply for UofSC graduate student travel funding and any conference-specific student funding opportunities. A request for travel support should be submitted to the PhD Program Coordinator well ahead of planned travel. Requests will be considered based on merit, availability of funding, and with a goal of distributing opportunities equitably among doctoral students.
- Students may also apply to the Dean for additional support. A request for travel support should be submitted to the Dean with proof of acceptance along with a brief memo of support from a faculty member. The request needs to be submitted no later than one month before the conference. Conference travel support funding is limited and will be distributed as funding allows.

Additional information about graduate and research assistantships can be found on the [CoSW website](#).

### **Honors and Awards**

Each year the College of Social Work recognizes one of its PhD students who has exhibited excellence in scholarly, leadership, and service activities with the CoSW Doctoral Student Award. The intent of this award is to honor a PhD student who has not only been an active leader within the college but also has been engaged in research and scholarly activities that support the college's mission "to promote social well-being and social justice with vulnerable populations through dynamic teaching, research, and service conducted in collaboration with diverse people of South Carolina, the nation, and the international community".

The CoSW Doctoral Student Award consists of a \$500 award and a plaque of recognition. The recipient will be featured on the college website, will be presented to the student, by the PhD Program Coordinator, during the last faculty meeting of the spring semester, and will be added to the CoSW award wall.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of all students to be aware of the University of South Carolina's and the College of Social Work's standards regarding both academic and nonacademic expectations of students.

### **Equal Opportunity Statement**

The University of South Carolina does not discriminate in educational or employment opportunities or decisions for qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The University of South Carolina has designated as the ADA Title II, Section 504, and Title IX coordinator the Executive Assistant to the

College of Social Work – University of South Carolina  
President for Equal Opportunity Programs. The Office of the Executive Assistant to the President for Equal Opportunity Programs is located at 1600 Hampton Street, Suite 805, Columbia, SC; telephone 803.777.3854.

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## Student Rights and Protections at the University

Below are some key policies that address rights of protections of students at the University of South Carolina. This list is **not** an exhaustive list of all policies. More information can be under [Student Affairs and Academic Support](#) division of the USC Policies and Procedures Manual.

Academic Freedom: [www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf628.pdf](http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf628.pdf)

Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action: [www.sc.edu/policies/eop100.html](http://www.sc.edu/policies/eop100.html)

Non-discrimination Policy: [www.sc.edu/policies/eop104.html](http://www.sc.edu/policies/eop104.html)

Student Non-Discrimination and Non-Harassment Policy:  
[www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf624.pdf](http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf624.pdf)

Confidentiality of Student Records – Notification of Student Rights under FERPA:  
[www.sc.edu/policies/acaf303.pdf](http://www.sc.edu/policies/acaf303.pdf)

Student Grievance Policy—Non-Academic: <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf627.pdf>

Academic Grievance Policy: <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf630.pdf>

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## Professional and Academic Responsibility - Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

The [Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](#) empowers students to be responsible citizens and uphold the core values of our academic community.

Students are expected to adhere to the University's policy on [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Note that arrests by law enforcement agencies outside of USC's Division of Law Enforcement and Safety must be reported by the student to the Office of Student Conduct within 72 hours of arrest. Penalties for non-compliance to this mandate may include suspension or termination from the MSW Program and/or University.

Students are expected to adhere to the University's policy on [Academic Responsibility - The Honor Code](#).

Every student has a role in maintaining the academic reputation of the university. It is imperative that you refrain from engaging in plagiarism, cheating, falsifying your work and/or assisting other students in violating the Honor Code.

Two important components of the Honor Code:

- Faculty members are required to report potential violations of the Honor Code to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.
- When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate the Honor Code, it is their responsibility to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member.

College of Social Work – University of South Carolina

The [Carolinian Creed](#) is a complement to the University's conduct code and emphasizes openness and civility.

**As a Carolinian...**

- I will practice personal and academic integrity;
- I will respect the dignity of all persons;
- I will respect the rights and property of others;
- I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions;
- I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for conditions which support their work and development.

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## **College of Social Work Grievances, Petitions, and Appeals**

Please see the PhD program website for information about grievances, petitions, and appeals in the College of Social Work.