



DODGE FAMILY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
**ANNE AND HENRY ZARROW
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA



Doctor of Philosophy, Social Work
Program Handbook

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Document Revision History

This Handbook is reviewed and updated periodically. The table below tracks the most recent editions; it is not a complete history of every prior revision. Whoever updates this Handbook next should add a new row here describing what changed, rather than overwriting this table.

Date	Summary of Changes
5/19/2026	Prior edition of this Handbook.
8/14/2026	Corrected several internal inconsistencies (course code references, a credit hour subtotal, and a broken policy link); restructured Appendix IV into an eleven section contract template with two fully worked illustrative examples; gave the Advisory Conference section proper heading structure within the Ph.D. Curriculum chapter and reordered the Comprehensive General Examination chapter into chronological order; added cross references between the early Retention/Graduation Standards and the later Continuance, Probation, and Dismissal policies; added Program Contacts, Counseling and Wellness Resources, a note on responsible conduct of research training, this revision history, and a new Advising Calendar and Glossary of Acronyms appendix; and cleared decorative image alt text for accessibility.

Overview: Doctor of Philosophy, Social Work

This section of our Ph.D. program handbook offers a comprehensive introduction to the mission, vision, and goals of our program. This section is crafted to provide prospective and current students, faculty, and stakeholders with a clear understanding of the foundational elements that guide and define the direction and purpose of our Ph.D. in Social Work.

Program Background

The Ph.D. program in Social Work at the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, University of Oklahoma, is a distinguished and comprehensive program designed to train aspiring scholars and researchers in social work. With a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, the program equips students with the knowledge and skills to address complex social issues and contribute



to the profession's advancement. The program offers a supportive and collaborative learning environment where students engage in cutting-edge research, participate in national and international conferences, and work closely with renowned faculty members who are experts in various areas of social work. Students can access state-of-the-art research facilities, resources, and funding opportunities that facilitate their academic and professional development. Graduates of the program emerge as competent and innovative researchers, educators, and leaders, poised to make significant contributions to social work theory, policy, and practice.

The profession of social work is devoted to the enhancement of human well-being and to the alleviation of poverty and oppression. These goals are accomplished through promoting, restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the social functioning of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The expansion of human service programs and areas of practice that utilize social work knowledge and skills create a demand for professionally educated social workers. Social Work offers a challenging and exciting career for the individual motivated to help others and committed to advancing social justice.

Social work education has been a part of the curriculum at the University of Oklahoma since 1917. A separate School of Social Work was established in 1935. The graduate program was fully accredited in 1957 and has maintained continuous accreditation. The school became the Anne and Henry School of Social Work in 2009 and moved into its state-of-the-art facility Anne and Henry Zarrow Hall, in the fall of 2011. The Ph.D. program welcomed its inaugural class in 2025, with expectations to graduate its first group of social work Ph.D. students in 2029.

Program Mission

The mission of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Social Work at the University of Oklahoma's Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work is to develop scholars who are dedicated to advancing social, political, economic and environmental justice. The program emphasizes the creation and dissemination of knowledge about effective social work practices, programs, and policies that enhance

the quality of life for vulnerable populations. Through rigorous scholarship, leadership, and community engagement, our graduates are prepared to lead social change and address pressing social issues, thus aligning with the University of Oklahoma's mission of serving our state and society.

Program Objectives

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of various theoretical frameworks and concepts relevant to social work practice and research.
2. Acquire advanced skills in quantitative research methods, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
3. Develop advanced proficiency in qualitative research methods, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
4. Cultivate the ability to critically analyze and apply social work andragogy and methods in academic and practice settings.
5. Gain expertise in advanced quantitative data analysis techniques and statistical methods.
6. Develop advanced skills in qualitative data analysis techniques, such as thematic analysis, narrative analysis, and grounded theory.
7. Engage in professional development and scholarly dialogue by participating in a Professional Social Work Seminars series.
8. Pursue specialization in specific social work research or practice areas by selecting elective courses.
9. Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and competence in an advanced statistics or methods elective.
10. Successfully propose, develop, and defend a Comprehensive General Exam proposal that integrates knowledge in the field of social work.
11. Successfully propose, develop, and defend a dissertation proposal that advances social work knowledge and practice.
12. Conduct in-depth research and complete a dissertation that presents a significant contribution to the field of social work.

Program alignment with University Mission

The Social Work Ph.D. program described above aligns with the institutional approved functions and mission of the University of Oklahoma in several ways:

- **Excellence in Teaching:** The program emphasizes the development of advanced knowledge and skills through a rigorous curriculum that includes specialized courses in social work theories, research methods, data analysis, and pedagogy. By offering a blend of online and in-person instruction, the program ensures accessibility and flexibility for students, accommodating their working schedules while providing high-quality education.
- **Research and Creative Activity:** The program strongly emphasizes research, as evidenced by the inclusion of advanced quantitative and qualitative research methods courses, specialization electives, and dissertation work. Students are encouraged to engage in translational research, intervention design, and evaluation, contributing to the body of knowledge in social work and addressing critical social issues in communities of high need.
- **Service to the State and Society:** The program aims to produce graduates equipped to positively impact their communities through leadership, scholarship, and practice. The program aligns with the mission of serving the state and society by immersing Ph.D. students in social issues as they manifest in real-world settings and fostering linkages with practice communities within Oklahoma. Furthermore, the program's focus on community leadership and engagement positions graduates to address serious social issues and promote positive community change.

Program Goals

Our Ph.D. program in Social Work is dedicated to cultivating a transformative educational experience that equips students to become leaders across various sectors of society. Here's what we aim to achieve through our program:

- **Empower with Knowledge:** The program aims to ground students deeply in diverse theoretical frameworks, enabling them to apply this comprehensive knowledge to complex social issues across different contexts.
- **Advance Research Skills:** The program's goal is to develop exemplary researchers skilled in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, capable of conducting research that influences practice and policy in social work.
- **Cultivate Teaching Excellence:** The program prepares future academicians who will advance the field of social work through effective teaching and curriculum development, inspiring the next generation of social workers.
- **Enhance Professional Growth:** The program serves as a platform for continuous professional development, facilitating scholarly dialogue, networking with experts, and presenting research, which collectively refine students' expertise and professional identities.
- **Specialize with Confidence:** The program supports students in becoming specialists in areas that align with their interests, providing the tools to become thought leaders in specific fields of social work.
- **Set Benchmarks of Academic Excellence:** Through comprehensive exams and dissertation defenses, students demonstrate their mastery and readiness to contribute significantly to the field, setting high standards for academic achievement.
- **Promote Flexible and Accessible Learning:** By blending online and in-person instruction, the program is accessible to a diverse student body, accommodating different learning styles and life situations.
- **Drive Impactful Research:** The program encourages students to engage in meaningful research that impacts both academia and practice, especially research focused on underserved and marginalized communities.
- **Develop Leadership in Diverse Sectors:** The program is committed to producing graduates who are prepared to lead in academia, the private sector, and governmental agencies, and it emphasizes building skills in policy development, organizational management, and community leadership so graduates can navigate and influence various institutional structures.
- **Serve and Lead in Community Engagement:** The program prepares graduates to be civic leaders and public servants, advocating for policy changes and leading organizations that significantly impact society through community engagement and social justice initiatives.

By realizing these goals, the program aims to enhance the field of social work by producing leaders equipped to address the most pressing challenges of our time. The Ph.D. program goes beyond academic pursuit; it advances social justice and improves lives through sustained education, research, and leadership in various sectors.

Program Format

The program format offers a flexible learning structure. Required courses are delivered synchronously via Zoom, providing a real-time, interactive experience akin to traditional classroom settings. This method facilitates live discussions and immediate feedback from instructors and peers.

For elective courses, students have the option to engage in various formats, including synchronous Zoom classes, asynchronous online courses, or traditional face-to-face courses available at the Tulsa, Norman, or Health Sciences Center campuses. Additionally, with special permission from

the Graduate College, students may transfer a limited number of graduate credits from other accredited institutions, provided these credits have not been applied towards another degree. This flexibility supports students in customizing their educational pathways while managing personal and professional commitments, making the program a robust option for advancing careers in social work research and scholarship.

Program Administration

At the University of Oklahoma (OU), the administrative oversight of the Ph.D. Program in Social Work is managed by the Doctoral Committee. This committee consists of faculty members appointed by the Graduate College and includes two student representatives, one from each of the first- and second-year cohorts, serving as ex-officio members. While meetings of the committee are open to all students and faculty, non-committee members must receive approval from the committee to participate in discussions. Student members are actively involved in discussions but do not have voting rights on program policy.

The Ph.D. Program Director is responsible for the development and oversight of the Ph.D. Program, which includes managing admissions, programs of work, degree program modifications, and graduation requirements. The Director also chairs the Doctoral Committee and addresses requests, petitions, and grievances related to Ph.D. program policies, procedures, and curriculum issues. Additionally, the Ph.D. Program Director evaluates all requests for transferring course credits from other programs.

Program Contacts

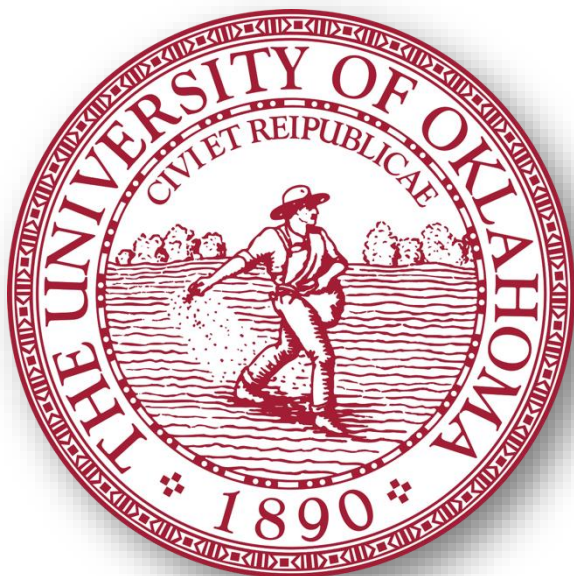
Because staffing and contact information can change from year to year, this Handbook identifies contacts by role rather than by name. Current names, office locations, and email addresses for each role are maintained on the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work website and through OU's faculty and staff directory, and are also shared with students at orientation.

Role	When to Contact
Ph.D. Program Director	Admissions questions, program of work approval, degree requirement questions, petitions and grievances related to Ph.D. program policy, and directed reading or independent study approvals.
Assigned Academic Advisor	Course selection, research planning, and general guidance during the phase of the program the student is currently in, as described under Advising.
Social Work Admissions Specialist	Processing enrollment paperwork for directed readings, independent studies, and other program forms.
Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work Doctoral Office	General program administration questions that do not require the Program Director specifically.
OU Graduate College	University-level policies, the Advisory Conference Report, candidacy, dissertation enrollment, and Graduate College forms and deadlines.

Students who are unsure who to contact for a given question are encouraged to start with their assigned advisor or the Ph.D. Program Director, who can direct the request appropriately.

Program Requirements and Standards

The section is designed to provide prospective and current students with clear, comprehensive guidelines on the processes and standards essential for progressing through and successfully completing the program. This section outlines the criteria for admission into the program, the expectations for maintaining good academic standing, and the requirements necessary for graduation. Here, students will find detailed information about the application procedures, the benchmarks for academic performance, and the milestones that must be achieved to earn a Ph.D. degree. Our goal is to ensure transparency and support students' academic journeys by providing all necessary details to help them plan effectively and meet all set requirements.



Admission Requirements

- A completed application for admission to the Ph.D. program in Social Work, including all required documents and supporting materials.
- A master's degree in social work (MSW)

from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited institution.

- Two years of full-time supervised post-MSW practice experience.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in previous graduate coursework.
- Submission of official transcripts from all previous institutions attended.
- Submission of a comprehensive statement of purpose outlining the applicant's research interests, career goals, and reasons for pursuing a doctoral degree in social work.
- Submission of a current curriculum vitae (CV) or resume demonstrating relevant academic and professional experience.
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the applicant's academic or professional abilities.
- A writing sample that demonstrates the applicant's scholarly writing and critical thinking abilities.
- Completion of any additional program-specific requirements or assessments as determined by the admissions committee.
- Completion of a statistics course with a minimum grade of B prior to applying (see Scoring of Candidates below for additional detail).

International Student Admission Requirements

International applicants interested in applying to the University of Oklahoma should start by reviewing the resources available through International Student Services, which can be accessed at [International Student Services](#). This service helps with issues related to immigration status and the requirements for international students regarding work and study.

All international graduate applicants must use the standard University of Oklahoma graduate application. Additional required credentials and detailed admissions information for international

students are available on the [Graduate College website](#), which covers all necessary documentation and procedures for international students.

English Proficiency Requirements

All applicants for whom English is a second language must demonstrate English language proficiency in one of the following ways (see [OU Graduate College](#)):

1. **TOEFL Internet-Based Test (iBT):** A minimum score of 79 is required. Applicants must generally have a minimum score of 20 in each section (Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing). Scores must not be more than two years old by the start of the term unless the applicant has been attending school in the U.S. since the test date.
2. **IELTS:** A score of 6.5 is required. As with the TOEFL, consistency across subsections is necessary for demonstrating English proficiency. Scores older than two years at the start of the term are not acceptable unless the applicant has been enrolled in a U.S. school since the test date.
3. **Duolingo English Test (DET):** A minimum score of 100 is required for undergraduate applicants.
4. **Pearson Test of English (PTE Academic):** A score of 53 is necessary for undergraduate applicants.
5. **Secondary School Credentials:**
 - Completion of secondary school in the United States, meeting the high school curricular requirements for freshman admission, or
 - Attainment of a recognized certificate of completion for university entrance from a country where English is the native language and the language of instruction in high school.
6. **Higher Education Coursework:**
 - Satisfactory completion of 24 or more semester hours of college-level coursework at a regionally or nationally accredited university in the U.S. or in a country where English is the native language. Note that coursework taught in English, or completion of a degree from a country where English is the official but not native language, does not meet this requirement. Refer to the list of [OU Approved Native English Speaking Countries](#).
7. **Advanced Degrees:**
 - Completion of a Bachelor's degree or higher at an accredited university in the U.S. or in a country where English is the native language.
8. **University of Oklahoma CESL Program:**
 - Successful completion of the OU CESL program.

Retention Standards

- Maintenance of a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 throughout the program.
- Satisfactory progress in completing coursework, research requirements, and other program milestones as specified by the program.
- Active participation in research activities, including attending seminars, presenting research findings, and engaging in scholarly dialogue.
- Compliance with all ethical guidelines and professional standards of conduct relevant to social work research and practice.
- Regular meetings with the academic advisor to review progress, address concerns, and plan for future milestones and coursework.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively within a diverse and collaborative academic community.

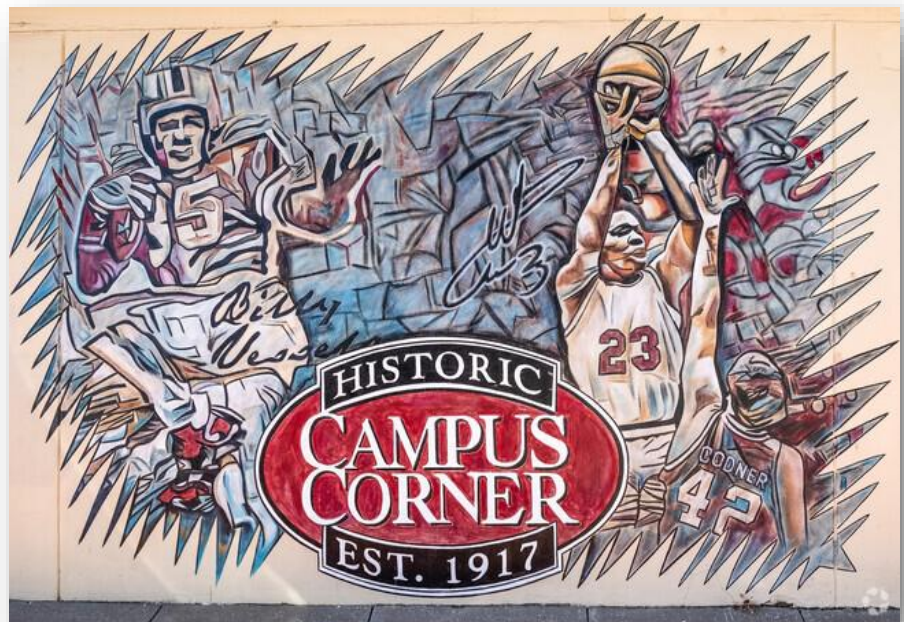
Graduation Standards

- Completion of all required coursework, including core courses, specialization electives, and research methods courses, as specified by the program.
- Completing comprehensive exams, including a written proposal and an oral defense.
- Successful proposal, development, and defense of a doctoral dissertation that significantly contributes to the field of social work.
- Compliance with all university and program policies, including ethical guidelines and academic integrity standards.
- Maintenance of a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher at graduation.
- Completion of any additional program-specific requirements, such as teaching or research assistantships, as determined by the program.
- Adherence to all Oklahoma State Regents' policy requirements and any additional accreditation standards relevant to the program.
- These admission, retention, and graduation standards are designed to align with or exceed the requirements set forth by the Oklahoma State Regents' policy. They ensure that students admitted to the Ph.D. program in Social Work possess the necessary academic preparation, research potential, and commitment to high-quality scholarship and professional practice. Additionally, these standards aim to support students in their progress toward successful program completion while maintaining the integrity and rigor expected of a doctoral-level program in social work.

The procedures that apply if a student falls below these standards, including continuance review, academic probation, and academic dismissal, are described under Continuance in Program Policy, Academic Probation Policy, and Academic Dismissal Policy in Academic Policies and Procedures, later in this Handbook.

Program Application

To apply to the University of Oklahoma Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, applicants must complete the University of Oklahoma [Graduate College application](#). As part of the application process, all applicants are required to submit the social work supplemental materials, which are described below. For detailed information on the complete application process, please visit the [Ph.D. program Webpage](#).



Application Timeline

- October 1: Applications for the Ph.D. program begin to be accepted.
 - February 1: The application window closes, and no further applications are accepted. Applications are reviewed and assessed on a rolling basis throughout the application window as materials are received, and interviews are scheduled during this period.
 - April 25: Applicants selected for admission are asked to notify the program of their enrollment decision by this date.
-

Application Components

Graduate School Online Application

- Submit the online application along with a \$60.00 application fee paid at the time of submission

Official Transcripts

- Upload scanned versions of official transcripts from all previous undergraduate and graduate coursework with your online application. Alternatively, have your official transcripts mailed directly from the institution(s) to the Graduate Admissions office to avoid processing delays.

Employment History

- Submit a resume or curriculum vitae detailing your employment history.

Professional Statement

Upload a well-edited 7 to 10 page document introducing yourself to the Ph.D. committee. Answer all of the following questions within the application using the headings provided below to differentiate your answers:

- **Describe Your Motivation:** Detail why you are drawn to pursue a Ph.D. in Social Work at the University of Oklahoma. Discuss the specific research questions you aim to explore using advanced research skills.
- **Describe Your Professional Qualifications:** Discuss how your professional strengths and experiences have prepared you for success in a research-based Ph.D. program. Explain how your aptitude in research and related areas will contribute to your achievements within the program.
- **Discuss Past Research Experiences:** Reflect on your previous research experiences. Describe the projects you have worked on, the methodologies you utilized, and what you learned from these experiences.
- **Detail Current Research Interests:** Explain your current research interests and discuss the journey that led you to these topics. What specific aspects of these areas are you looking to explore further through your Ph.D. studies?
- **Research Impact:** Detail how you envision your research contributing to the advancement of the values outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. Discuss how your work will promote service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.
- **Career Plan Alignment:** Describe how obtaining a Ph.D. in Social Work aligns with your five-year career plan. Discuss how this degree will facilitate your professional objectives and prepare you for the roles you aspire to in the future.

- **Discuss Career Aspirations:** Discuss your career goals and explain how obtaining a Ph.D. in Social Work will help you achieve these goals.
- **Career Path Preferences:** Describe the type of job you envision obtaining after completing your Ph.D.. Include any geographical preferences you have for your post-graduation career and whether you are leaning towards academia or a different career path.

Writing Sample

- Upload a writing sample that demonstrates your abilities (e.g., papers from your master's program, professional reports, literature reviews, co-authored papers, case summaries). If submitting a co-authored work, include a document explaining your specific contribution.

References

- Provide the names and email addresses of three references.
- Ensure letters of recommendation are received before your application can be reviewed.
- Strong recommendations typically come from faculty or professionals with higher-level graduate degrees who have supervised your work. Refrain from obtaining letters that can not attest to your academic or professional performance.

Interviews

- Zoom interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes will be scheduled with final candidates.

Scoring of Candidates

The University of Oklahoma Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work adopts a comprehensive evaluation process to select candidates for our Ph.D. program. Our approach considers multiple criteria to assess each applicant's potential:

- **Personal and Professional Statements:** We examine the depth and clarity of the applicant's statements, focusing on their specific area of interest within social work. We look for a well-articulated research focus that aligns with our faculty's expertise and demonstrates the applicant's potential for successful collaboration and scholarly contribution.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** We thoroughly review letters of recommendation to gauge the applicant's academic capabilities, research potential, and ability to work independently. These references provide critical insights into the applicant's qualifications and readiness for advanced study.
- **Writing Skills:** The applicant's ability to communicate effectively in writing is crucial. We assess this through writing samples such as an MSW paper, sole-authored manuscripts, or publications. Our evaluation focuses on clarity, coherence, and scholarly rigor, which are indicative of the applicant's research and academic writing skills.
- **Academic Performance (GPA):** We consider the applicant's graduate GPA as a measure of their academic performance, providing insight into their ability to excel in graduate-level studies.

Additional considerations include:

- **Academic and Professional Background:** The applicant's academic history and professional experiences are considered to evaluate their potential contributions to the field of social work.

- **Research Competence:** Applicants are expected to demonstrate the capacity for rigorous academic work and potential for meaningful scholarship, particularly the competence to design and conduct research studies relevant to social work.
- **Educational Requirements:** A master's degree in social work from an accredited institution is typically required. However, exceptions may be made for applicants with master's degrees in other fields, particularly if they are from countries without an accreditation system or possess strong, relevant professional experiences.
- **Analytical and Research Skills:** Demonstrated through the admissions application, these skills are crucial for success in the Ph.D. program.
- **Statistics Proficiency:** Applicants must have completed a statistics course with a minimum grade of "B" prior to applying.

Financial Information and Opportunities

Fees, Tuition Costs, and Financial Supports

This section is designed to ensure that all prospective and current students are fully informed about the costs associated with their education, as well as the variety of funding opportunities available to support their academic journey. Dollar amounts cited in this section are current as of publication; the linked source page for each program is the authoritative and current figure.

Fees and Tuition Costs

Information about fees and tuition costs is detailed by the [University of Oklahoma Bursars office](#). Graduate assistants with a 50% Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) appointment or higher are eligible for a tuition waiver. The Ph.D. program typically provides financial support for up to four years; however, funding is reviewed on an annual basis and is not guaranteed beyond each academic year. To maintain eligibility for the assistantship and associated benefits, graduate research assistants (GRAs) with a 0.50 FTE appointment or greater must be enrolled in a minimum of 5 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters.

Graduate students seeking additional financial aid may consult the [OU Student Financial Center](#). Opportunities for financial support include Graduate School Fellowships, assistantships, and student loans.

Travel Support

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) attached to Centers and Institutes at the University of Oklahoma often include travel support as part of the assistantship duties. This support is aimed at facilitating the completion of specific research-related tasks that may require travel.

Additionally, the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences offers travel assistance through the Travel Assistance Program (TAP), which supports both undergraduate and graduate students pursuing academic travel related to their studies.

Eligibility & Guidelines:

- **Eligibility:** Open to students who have declared a major within the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences and are in good academic standing.



- **Funding Limits:** Undergraduates may request up to \$500, while graduate students may request up to \$750 for academic travel.
- **Application Restrictions:** Each student is eligible for one TAP award per academic year, and the funds cannot be used for study abroad programs.
- **Enrollment Requirements:** Applicants must be enrolled during the term of travel (summer enrollment exception applies if enrolled in the previous spring and upcoming fall).

Application Deadlines:

- **Fall Semester:** Applications for travel from August to December open on July 19 and close once funds are exhausted.
- **Spring Semester:** Applications for January to May open on December 2 and close upon fund depletion.
- **Summer Semester:** Opens May 1, closing as funds run out.

Application Procedure:

Complete the DFCAS Travel Assistance Program Application. Notification of decisions is done monthly via email, with no need for support letters or matching funds from other sources.

Additional Details:

- Retroactive funding requests are not accepted.
- Funds are disbursed through Bursar accounts and may be applied first to any outstanding balances. Remaining funds are refunded via eRefund or check within approximately two weeks of approval.

Additional Notes

The level of support for student travel can vary based on the college's budget each year. Students are encouraged to plan their travel expenses carefully and stay informed about current funding levels provided at the start of each academic year. Students not covered by a GRA, such as those on self-pay or external sponsorship, are responsible for their own travel expenses, but are eligible to apply for student travel assistance from the University.

Graduate Research Assistantship

Assistantship Package

At the University of Oklahoma, all students admitted to the doctoral program who are not sponsored will be offered a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) package. This assistantship is typically a 50% time appointment, translating to about 20 hours per week across 12 months each year. The GRA package includes an annual stipend, student health insurance, and tuition remission, which also covers the summer semester. Students are responsible for fees, including late registration and textbooks.

Vacation and Sick Leave Policy

Per [OU Policy](#), GRA's are considered student employees who do not accrue paid leave and are therefore ineligible for vacation or sick leave.

Employment Status and Contract Renewal

GRA students are considered contract employees of the university and the state. Contracts are awarded annually, and renewal is contingent upon satisfactory academic progress and performance in the GRA role.

Work Expectations

GRAs are expected to fulfill their roles even when classes are not in session, including over fall and spring breaks, unless otherwise arranged with their supervisors. They are not expected to work when the university is officially closed.

Maximum Work Hours

Students on a GRA are not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week at the university. Requests for temporary exceptions for additional hours must be approved by the Graduate School, and such exceptions are typically reserved for students who have completed their coursework and are making significant progress towards their degrees. Graduate College practice prohibits students who are employed full-time outside of the university from holding a 20 hour a week GRA position.

Assignment Duration and Enrollment Requirements

GRA assignments run from August 1 to July 31 each year. Students in coursework with a 50% GRA must enroll as full-time students (at least 9 credit hours in Fall and Spring semesters). Those who have completed coursework must enroll in at least 2 hours of dissertation research every semester to meet the OU Graduate College continuous enrollment requirement.

Financial Administration

Queries about GRA paychecks, contracts, health insurance, tuition coverage, and other financial aspects should be directed to the appropriate administrative office within the School of Social Work.

End of Funding

GRA funding concludes on the last day of the student's graduation month or at the end of four years of funding, whichever comes first. Students who do not graduate within four years may appeal for temporary support, but continuation is not guaranteed. (Funding is reviewed annually and not guaranteed beyond each year).

Supervision and Performance Evaluations

GRA students work under the supervision of designated faculty members, who help set schedules and expectations. Performance evaluations are encouraged semi-annually to assess the student's progress and contribution to research projects. The evaluations help ensure that the GRA experience is beneficial for both the student's professional growth and the faculty's research objectives.

GRA Supervisor Responsibilities

- **Annual Work Plan:** Supervisors initiate each academic year by collaborating with GRA students to establish a detailed work plan, outlining:
 - Expectations for regular meetings and communication.
 - Research activities and key project deadlines.
 - Professional behavior standards and scheduled time-off.
- **Weekly Engagement:** Supervisors ensure that GRA students engage in 20 hours per week of supervised research-related activities, which may involve:
 - Working with one faculty member for all 20 hours, or
 - Collaborating with two faculty members for 10 hours each.

- **Development Opportunities:**
 - Guide students in developing their research agendas and academic profiles.
 - Actively involve students in conference presentations, peer-reviewed publications, data collection and analysis, and grant writing.
 - Align these activities with the students' academic and career objectives.
- **Flexibility and Support:**
 - Accommodate students' academic schedules to allow participation in conferences and professional development activities.
 - Maintain regular communication about work expectations and provide frequent feedback.
 - Address issues promptly in collaboration with the student and the Ph.D. program director, ensuring timely resolution.

In Case of Insufficient Support

- **Alternative Arrangements:** If a supervisor cannot provide appropriate opportunities or support, they must inform the Ph.D. program director to arrange alternative supervision, ensuring that all students receive the necessary support to excel in their roles.

GRA Student Responsibilities



- **Adherence to Work Plan:** Students are responsible for following the comprehensive work plan established in collaboration with their GRA supervisor at the start of each academic year. This includes meeting the expectations set for:
 - Regular and timely meetings and communications.
 - Completion of research activities and adherence to deadlines.
 - Professional behavior and observance of scheduled time-off as agreed.
- **Engagement in Research Activities:**

Students must actively engage in the 20 hours per week of supervised research-related activities. This involves:

- Preparing for and participating fully in the tasks assigned by the supervisor, whether working with one or multiple faculty members.
 - Ensuring quality and timely completion of research duties as assigned.
- **Professional and Scholarly Development:** Students should take initiative in their professional growth by:
 - Participating in conference presentations, peer-reviewed publications, and other scholarly activities.

- Seeking opportunities for data collection, analysis, and grant writing that align with their academic and professional goals.
- **Proactive Communication:** Maintaining open lines of communication with the GRA supervisor is essential. Students should:
 - Regularly update the supervisor on progress and any challenges faced.
 - Seek feedback and respond constructively to guidance and critiques.
 - Inform the supervisor well in advance of any need for schedule adjustments or conflicts related to academic commitments.
- **Participation in Professional Development:** Students are encouraged to actively participate in professional development activities supported by the Ph.D. program, such as:
 - Attending relevant workshops and seminars.
 - Engaging in networking events and academic conferences, utilizing opportunities for growth and visibility in their field.

Collaborative Responsibilities

- **Feedback and Evaluations:** It is crucial for students to engage in the evaluation process, providing feedback on their experiences and receiving feedback on their performance.
- **Issue Resolution:** In instances of issues or conflicts, students are expected to promptly communicate with their supervisor and, if needed, the Ph.D. program director, to facilitate a resolution that supports their continued success in the program.

Professional Conduct and Development

Students are expected to behave professionally and communicate effectively with their supervisors and peers. They should inform their supervisors promptly of any inability to meet deadlines or attend scheduled meetings due to illness or other reasons. Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in professional development activities and conferences whenever possible.

End of Assignment

Situations necessitating an early exit from the GRA, such as graduation or acceptance of a full-time position, must be discussed with the program director to ensure a smooth transition.

Early Exit from the GRA

Circumstances may occasionally necessitate an early termination of a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA). Such situations include completing the Ph.D. program ahead of schedule, securing a full-time faculty position outside the University, receiving another GRA, assistantship, or funded fellowship at OU but outside the student's home college, or gaining full-time employment either within or outside the University. Students facing these or similar circumstances should promptly consult with the Ph.D. program director to discuss and plan an appropriate exit strategy from the GRA. For those uncertain about the need for early exit, it is advisable to seek guidance from the Ph.D. program director to evaluate the best course of action.

Dismissal from the GRA

Students are expected to meet the professional standards of their GRA positions. If a student fails to meet these expectations, the GRA supervisor will provide initial feedback aimed at addressing any deficiencies. Should the student fail to improve after receiving this feedback, the supervisor must report the ongoing issues to the Ph.D. program director in writing. Persistent failure to meet performance expectations may place the student's GRA position and their continuation in the Ph.D. program at risk. Common performance issues might include failing to adhere to deadlines, not responding to feedback, incomplete tasks, habitual tardiness, unprofessional behavior, or ineffective communication. If performance does not improve, the student may be reassigned or dismissed from their GRA role.

Additionally, students requiring accommodations to fulfill their GRA duties should engage with the [OU Accessibility and Disability Resource Center](#) to secure necessary support within an employment context.

Teaching Opportunities

Ph.D. students who meet specific academic and professional criteria are offered the opportunity to serve as paid adjunct instructors, enriching their academic and professional experience while contributing to the education of BSW and MSW students.

Eligibility Criteria

- **Completion of Coursework:** Candidates are strongly encouraged to have successfully completed the "Social Work Andragogy and Methods" course first, with exceptions made for previous instructors.
- **Professional Experience:** Applicants are required to have at least two years of post-MSW experience to qualify for teaching positions.

Application Process

1. **Notification:** Interested students should first notify the Ph.D. Program Director of their intent to apply for a teaching position. This initial step ensures that their eligibility is confirmed based on academic and professional qualifications.
2. **Approval:** Upon confirmation of eligibility, students must also seek approval from the School Director, who will assess their readiness and suitability for teaching responsibilities.
3. **Registration:** Approved candidates are then registered with the Center for Faculty Excellence. This registration is crucial as it connects them with resources and support systems critical for their development as instructors.

Teaching Professional Development

- **Center for Faculty Excellence:** The [Center for Faculty Excellence](#). Engaging with this center is highly encouraged as it provides essential teaching resources, workshops, and seminars that enhance instructional skills.
- **Symposium on Learning Assessment and Teaching Excellence (SLATE):** The [University Office of Academic Assessment](#) hosts the conference, with participation recommended. It offers workshops and sessions focused on pedagogical strategies, learning assessment techniques, and classroom innovations to ensure high-quality educational delivery.

Teaching Assignments

- **Course Formats:** Eligible Ph.D. students can teach in both face-to-face and online formats, depending on the needs of the School of Social Work and the availability of courses.
- **Support and Oversight:** Throughout their teaching assignment, adjunct instructors will receive ongoing support and oversight from both the Ph.D. Program Director and the School Director to ensure that they are effectively meeting the educational needs of their students.

Fellowships

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Minority Fellowship Program (MFP)

The [CSWE Minority Fellowship Program \(MFP\)](#) is designed to enhance the training of full-time, minority doctoral students who are dedicated to addressing the needs of underserved and underrepresented populations. The MFP aims to promote the development of competent and skilled

social work professionals who are committed to research, practice, and policy activities in health and mental health areas. The fellowship offers financial support, training opportunities, mentorship, and professional development to selected fellows. This program is an excellent opportunity for students who are committed to developing a service career that integrates research and direct practice with vulnerable communities.

OU Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Completion Fellowship

The Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences offers up to 10 Dissertation Completion Fellowships each academic year to support doctoral students in their final study year. The number of awards and eligibility terms are reviewed annually; the linked page below reflects the current cycle. Eligible candidates must be in good standing, currently hold a TA position, and have either defended their dissertation proposals or completed equivalent departmental processes. Special consideration is given to students with grant-funded GRA positions if there's a temporary funding gap. The fellowship replaces a semester's stipend, allowing recipients to focus solely on their dissertation without financial worry. Application requirements include a CV, a dissertation abstract, a bibliography, a completion plan, a reference letter from the major professor, and an endorsement letter from a graduate liaison or department chair. For more details and application guidelines, visit [Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences Fellowships](#).



OU Mergler and Bullard Dissertation Completion Fellowships

The University offers two notable dissertation completion fellowships: the Nancy L. Mergler and the Bullard Dissertation Completion Fellowships. These awards are designed to support doctoral students in the final stages of their dissertation work.

- **Nancy L. Mergler Dissertation Completion Fellowship** provides up to four doctoral candidates with a \$25,000 stipend for two semesters at a 0.50 FTE GRA appointment. Recipients also receive tuition waivers and health insurance, allowing them to focus solely on their dissertation.
- **Bullard Dissertation Completion Fellowship** offers a stipend of \$12,500, which can be used for one semester at a 0.50 FTE or two semesters at a 0.25 FTE GRA appointment, along with similar benefits as the Mergler fellowship.

Eligibility for these fellowships requires that applicants have passed their general exam and hold a 0.50 FTE GTA or GRA appointment. Students can apply directly without needing a nomination from

their academic unit. The selection criteria focus on the dissertation's scholarly significance, innovation, and potential impact, especially in underrepresented areas or towards underserved communities. Applicants' academic records and potential to complete their dissertation within the fellowship period are also evaluated.

For more details or to apply, visit the [Mergler and Bullard Fellowships page](#).

Advising, Professional Development, and Career Coaching

Advising

Students receive rigorous academic guidance and support throughout their doctoral journey in addition to the professional development seminar courses.

For a semester by semester view of advising touchpoints, form deadlines, and the recurring annual requirements described throughout this section, see the Advising Calendar in Appendix V.

Initial Advisement

- **Initial Advisor:** Upon entering the program, all students are assigned the Ph.D. Program Director as their initial advisor. This arrangement lasts through the first year for full-time students and extends through the first two years for part-time students.

Selection of a Permanent Advisor

- **Timing:** Full-time students must identify and approach a faculty member to serve as their permanent advisor by April 1 of their first year in the program. Part-time students must do so by April 1 of their second year in the program.
- **Process:** Students should engage with faculty members who share similar academic interests and potential for guiding the student's research and professional development. Establishing early contact with these faculty members is encouraged to facilitate the selection process.
- **Mutual Agreement:** The selection of a new advisor requires mutual consent between the student and the faculty member. Faculty members have the right to decline the advisory role for various reasons, including capacity or alignment of research interests.
- **Alternative Options:** Students must be prepared to seek alternative advisors if their initial choice declines to take on the role.

Role of the Advisor

The advisor's role shifts as the student moves through the program, from coursework and early professional development to the Comprehensive General Examination and dissertation.

During Coursework Phase: Coursework and Professional Development

- **Course Selection and Academic Planning:** Advisors help students select courses that align with their research interests and meet program requirements.
- **Initial Research Agenda Setting:** Advisors assist in shaping the student's early research agenda, which sets the foundation for future comprehensive exams and dissertation work.
- **Professional Networking:** Advisors introduce students to professional networks, helping them connect with scholars and practitioners in their field, which is crucial for collaboration and future job opportunities.

- **Development for Publication:** Advisors support students in identifying opportunities for publications, guiding them through the process of writing and submitting academic articles, and presenting at conferences, which are critical for their professional profile.

Post-Coursework Phase: General Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation

- **Chair of General Comprehensive Exam Committee:** As chair, the advisor guides the student through the preparation of their comprehensive exams, ensuring a thorough understanding of their discipline's core concepts and methodologies.
- **Dissertation Guidance:** The advisor continues in the pivotal role of Dissertation Committee Chair, overseeing the research, providing feedback on drafts, and ensuring that the work meets academic standards.
- **Mentorship in Dissertation Writing:** Advisors mentor students in crafting their dissertation, focusing on structuring arguments, enhancing coherence, and adhering to scholarly standards.
- **Support in Professional Development:** The advisor aids in further professional development by recommending students for speaking engagements, prestigious fellowships, and significant academic conferences, enhancing their visibility and career prospects.

Changing an Advisor

- **Procedure:** If a need arises to change an advisor, students should first discuss their reasons with their current advisor, if possible, to seek amicable agreement on the change. Following this, the student should consult with the Ph.D. Program Director to facilitate the selection of a new advisor.
- **Documentation:** Any changes in advisory arrangements need to be formally documented and approved by the Ph.D. Program Director to ensure continuity and support for the student's academic progress.

Role of the Student Advisee

- **Proactive Course Selection:** Advisees are responsible for selecting courses in consultation with their advisor, ensuring alignment with their research interests and academic requirements.
- **Initiating Research Agenda:** Advisees must actively participate in shaping their research agenda under the guidance of their advisor, setting a clear direction for their doctoral research.
- **Building Professional Networks:** Advisees should seek opportunities to network within their academic community, facilitated by their advisor, to establish valuable connections and collaborations.
- **Pursuing Publication Opportunities:** Advisees are expected to work towards publishing their research and presenting at academic conferences, enhancing their scholarly profile with the support of their advisor.

Post-Coursework: Navigating General Comprehensive Exams and Dissertation

- **Preparation for Comprehensive Exams:** Advisees must thoroughly prepare for their comprehensive exams, utilizing study guides, attending review sessions, and seeking clarifications from their advisor.
- **Dissertation Development:** As the primary author, the advisee is responsible for conducting research, drafting, and revising their dissertation, adhering to the guidance and feedback provided by their dissertation committee.
- **Engagement in Dissertation Process:** Advisees should maintain regular communication with their Dissertation Committee Chair (advisor) and committee members, scheduling meetings and submitting drafts as required.

- **Professional Growth and Visibility:** Advisees should continue to engage in professional development activities, such as applying for fellowships, attending workshops, and speaking at events to build their professional stature and readiness for the job market.

Professional Development

Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to actively participate in professional development events organized by the program. These events, including workshops, faculty and alumni spotlights, professional development trainings, and job talks by faculty candidates, are crucial for scholarly growth, networking, and socialization into the academic community. To facilitate attendance, most of these events are offered virtually, making them accessible to students at all stages of the program.

Students should coordinate with their Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) supervisors to attend these events, planning their schedules to allow for participation. While participation in these professional development activities is strongly encouraged and supported by arrangements with GRA supervisors, it is not mandatory. However, students are advised that attending these events can significantly enhance their academic and professional development.

Social and leisure activities, such as Ph.D. luncheons or outings organized by the Ph.D. student group, are also encouraged but remain optional.

Career Coaching

The Ph.D. program introduces career coaching during the Professional Development Seminar courses, an integral part of the curriculum. This initial coaching lays the foundation for effective job search strategies, including the preparation of job application materials. Beyond the seminar, the program offers additional support opportunities such as mock job interviews and teaching demonstration tutorials, available through arrangements with the students' advisors. These supports are designed to refine students' interviewing and presentation skills, crucial for academic and professional success. Students are encouraged to take full advantage of these resources to maximize their career prospects.

Ph.D. Curriculum

Students who are fully dedicated to the doctoral program are typically able to complete all coursework and comprehensive examinations by the summer following their second academic year. It is recommended that students begin considering their dissertation research topics as early as possible, with formal work on the dissertation proposal generally starting by the end of the second year.

Subsequent semesters are focused on conducting dissertation research, culminating in a final oral examination to defend the dissertation. The outlined course load is designed to support students in fulfilling all candidacy requirements within two academic years. According to University policy, students must meet the requirements for candidacy within six years; however, the goal is for all Ph.D. students in the School of Social Work to advance to candidacy by the spring semester of their third academic year.

The standard course load may vary, especially for students who are engaged as teaching assistants or research assistants. Such roles require full-time enrollment, which may adjust the pace and sequence of completing program requirements. This structure ensures that students balance their academic responsibilities with professional development opportunities effectively.

The Ph.D. of Social Work degree is offered through the OU-Norman and Tulsa campuses. The program

consists of 45 credit hours:

- 22 credit hours in the core curriculum and professional development seminars
- 18 credit hours in specialization and methods electives
- 5 dissertation hours

Curriculum

Components

The program curriculum is organized into distinct groupings to provide a structured and comprehensive academic path. Here's how the courses are grouped based on the provided list:

- **Core Theoretical and Methodological Courses:**
 - **SWK 6003:** Theories for Social Work (3 credits)
 - **SWK 6013:** Applied Quantitative Research Methods (3 credits)
 - **SWK 6023:** Applied Qualitative Research Methods (3 credits)
 - **SWK 6033:** Social Work Andragogy and Methods (3 credits)
 - **SWK 6053:** Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis (3 credits)
 - **SWK 6043:** Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis (3 credits)
- **Professional Development Seminars:**
 - **SWK 6011:** Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar I (1 credit)
 - **SWK 6021:** Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar II (1 credit)
 - **SWK 6031:** Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar III (1 credit)
 - **SWK 6041:** Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar IV (1 credit)
- **Specialization and Elective Courses:**
 - **Specialization Elective (3)** [Four courses totaling 12 credits]
 - **Advanced Statistics or Methods Elective (3)** [Two courses totaling 6 credits]
- **Dissertation and Comprehensive Exams:**
 - **Dissertation Hours (5 credits)**



- Comprehensive General Exam Proposal and Oral Defense
- Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense

Program Coursework Timeline Full and Part-Time

Year and Semester	Part Time (4-7 hrs)	Full Time (10 hrs)
Fall Year 1	• 6 credits through individualized plan with PhD Director • S WK 6011 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar I (1)	• S WK 6003 Theories for Social Work (3) • S WK 6013 Applied Quantitative Research Methods (3) • S WK 6023 Applied Qualitative Research Methods (3) • S WK 6011 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar I (1)
Spring Year 1	• 6 credits through individualized plan with PhD Director • S WK 6021 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar II (1)	• S WK 6033 Social Work Andragogy and Methods (3) • S WK 6053 Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis (3) • S WK 6043 Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis (3) • S WK 6021 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar II (1)
Summer Year 1	• Specialization Elective (3)	•
Fall Year 2	• 6 credits through individualized plan with PhD Director • S WK 6031 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar III (1)	• Advanced Statistics or Methods elective (3) • Specialization Elective (3) • Specialization Elective (3) • S WK 6031 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar III (1)
Spring Year 2	• 6 credits through individualized plan with PhD Director • S WK 6041 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar IV (1)	• Advanced Statistics or Methods elective (3) • Specialization Elective (3) • Specialization Elective (3) • S WK 6041 Doctoral Professional Social Work Seminar IV (1)
Summer Year 2	• Specialization Elective (3)	•
Fall Year 3	• Advanced Statistics or Methods elective (3) • Specialization Elective (3)	• Dissertation Hours (3) • <i>Comprehensive General Exam Proposal and Oral Defense</i>

Spring Year 3	- Advanced Statistics or Methods elective (3) - Specialization Elective (3)	- Dissertation Hours (2) - Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense
Summer Year 3		
Fall Year 4	- Dissertation Hours (3) <i>Comprehensive General Exam Proposal and Oral Defense</i>	
Spring Year 4	- Dissertation Hours (2) - Dissertation Proposal and Oral Defense	<i>Defend Dissertation</i>
Summer Year 4		
Fall Year 5	<i>Defend Dissertation</i>	<i>Defend Dissertation</i>
Spring Year 5	<i>Defend Dissertation</i>	<i>Defend Dissertation</i>
Summer Year 5		
Additional up to 7	<i>Defend Dissertation</i>	<i>Defend Dissertation</i>

Program Completion Timetable

Full-Time Program Completion Timeline

Milestone	Target Completion	Final Deadline
Coursework Completion	2 years	None specified
Comprehensive General Exam Passed	3 years	None specified
Application to Candidacy Approved	3 years	6 years
Dissertation Proposal Approved	3.5 years	None specified
Dissertation Defended	4 years	7 years

Part-Time Program Completion Timeline

Milestone	Target Completion	Final Deadline
Coursework Completion	3 years	None specified
Comprehensive General Exam Passed	4 years	None specified
Application to Candidacy Approved	4 years	6 years
Dissertation Proposal Approved	5 years	None specified
Dissertation Defended	6 years	7 years

Review and Continuation Conditions:

- **Candidacy:** All doctoral students must achieve candidacy by the end of their third year (full-time) or fourth year (part-time), which includes completing all required coursework and passing comprehensive examinations.
- **Dissertation Proposal:** Following candidacy approval, students have up to six months to get their dissertation proposal approved.
- **Dissertation Completion:** Students must defend their dissertation by the end of their seventh year in the program.
- **Annual Review:** The Ph.D. program Committee will review the student's progress annually. The committee may recommend additional courses, impose other requirements, extend candidacy for up to two semesters, or terminate candidacy. Recommendations are forwarded to the Graduate Dean for final decisions.

Course Identification, Planning, and Registration

Course Identification

Students are expected to thoughtfully select coursework that aligns with their academic interests, research agenda, and long-term professional goals. Course planning should occur in consultation with the student's advisor or the Ph.D. Program Director.

- Full-time students should generally follow the recommended course sequence outlined in the Ph.D. Program Handbook. Part-time students are required to meet with the Ph.D. Program Director to develop an individualized plan of study and identify appropriate courses for each semester.
- Students should consult Appendix I, Appendix II, and Appendix III of the Ph.D. Program Handbook to determine whether a course fulfills a required course, research methods and data analysis elective, or specialization elective requirement.
- Students should discuss proposed coursework with their advisor or the Ph.D. Program Director to ensure alignment with their program of work, dissertation interests, and professional development goals.
- Students enrolling in courses outside the School of Social Work may need instructor or departmental permission before enrollment.
- Students enrolling in courses outside the doctoral program, particularly 5000-level master's courses, should identify themselves to the instructor as a Ph.D. student to ensure that coursework and expectations are appropriate for doctoral-level study.
- Instructors of 5000-level courses may require additional readings, assignments, or scholarly work to ensure doctoral-level rigor.
- Students must obtain approval from the Ph.D. Program Director before enrolling in:
 - Research methods electives
 - Specialization electives
 - Directed readings
 - Independent studies
 - Transfer courses from another institution
- Students are encouraged to maintain documentation of approved electives, substitutions, transfer approvals, directed readings, and independent studies for future program planning and degree audits.

Searching for Elective Courses

Students should use the University of Oklahoma Class Search system to identify courses each semester. The system allows students to review current course offerings, instructional formats, meeting schedules, and course details.

1. Open the OU Class Search system at:
<https://classnav.ou.edu/>
2. Select the appropriate academic term for which you plan to enroll.
3. Choose the “Graduate” student level to ensure you are viewing graduate-level coursework applicable to doctoral study.
4. Use search filters to narrow course options, including:
 - Subject area
 - Campus location
 - Days and times
 - Instructional format
5. Students seeking online coursework should use the “Asynchronous” filter to identify courses without scheduled meeting times.
6. Common instructional formats include:
 - Asynchronous Online: Fully online with no scheduled class meetings
 - Synchronous Video Conference/Remote: Online courses with required live meetings
 - Traditional In-Person: Courses meeting on campus at scheduled times
 - Blended In-Person Asynchronous: Combination of in-person and asynchronous online coursework
 - Blended In-Person Synchronous: Combination of in-person and scheduled live instruction
 - Correspondence Web: Typically self-paced or largely asynchronous online coursework
7. Before selecting a course, students should carefully review:
 - Instructional format
 - Meeting schedule
 - Credit hours
 - Prerequisites or enrollment restrictions
 - Instructor information, when available

Course Registration

Students register for courses electronically through ONE.OU and the University registration system.

1. Activate your OU account at:
<https://one.ou.edu/activate>
2. Log in to ONE.OU at:
<https://one.ou.edu/>
3. Review your registration status and complete any required pre-registration steps through the registration portal at:
<https://sis.ou.edu/StudentRegistrationSsb/ssb/registration>
4. From ONE.OU, select “Enroll in Courses.” Students already enrolled in coursework may navigate through “Academics” and then “Enrollment.”



5. Search for approved courses and select the appropriate:
 - Academic term
 - Campus
 - Section
 - Credit hours
6. Add selected courses to your registration plan and submit your enrollment.
7. Confirm that all courses appear correctly on your schedule after registration is submitted.
8. Review tuition and fee charges and submit payment through the Bursar's Office by the published deadline.
9. During the designated add/drop period, students may modify enrollment through ONE.OU. After the online add/drop period closes, students must contact Enrollment Services for assistance.

Independent Study and Directed Readings

At the University of Oklahoma, scholarship beyond the standard curriculum may engage in directed readings or independent study courses. These courses provide opportunities to explore specialized topics, theories, research methods, or emerging areas of practice under the guidance of a faculty member. Directed readings and independent studies may count toward elective requirements within the Ph.D. program with approval from the Ph.D. Program Director. Here's how the process is structured:

- **Credit Hours and Limitations:** Students typically enroll in three credit hours for a directed reading or independent study course. To maintain alignment with the program's elective structure, only a limited number of these courses may count toward elective requirements in the Ph.D. curriculum. Students seeking additional directed readings or independent studies beyond the approved limit, including those supporting certificates or interdisciplinary specialization areas, must obtain approval from the Ph.D. Program Director.
 - **Directed Readings:** Directed readings are designed to provide students with a structured and intensive examination of a focused body of literature or scholarship related to their academic and research interests. These courses emphasize critical reading, synthesis of scholarship, theoretical exploration, and scholarly discussion under faculty supervision.
 - **Independent Studies:** Independent studies allow students to pursue individualized scholarly or research projects that extend beyond traditional coursework. These courses may include the development of pilot studies, research manuscripts, grant proposals, program evaluations, or other advanced scholarly activities aligned with the student's professional and academic goals.
- **Approval Process:** Prior to enrolling in a directed reading or independent study, students must:
 1. Complete the appropriate Directed Reading or Independent Study Approval Form outlining the proposed topic, learning objectives, assignments, and preliminary reading or project plan.
 2. Obtain approval from the supervising faculty member and the Ph.D. Program Director prior to enrollment.
 3. Communicate the following information to the Social Work Admissions Specialist: student's full name, student identification number, semester of enrollment, type of course (directed reading or independent study), supervising instructor, and number of credit hours requested.

A blank Directed Reading/Independent Study Contract, together with two completed sample contracts, appears in Appendix IV.

Advisory Conference

The [Advisory Conference](#) for doctoral students at the University of Oklahoma consists of the student's selected members, including a chair and a Graduate College representative. This committee plays a crucial role in guiding the student through their academic plan and coursework. Following the advisory conference, where these plans are discussed and refined, the student is required to complete the [Advisory Conference Report](#) (ACR). This report, which needs approval from all committee members and the graduate liaison, outlines the agreed-upon coursework and is submitted to the Graduate College at least one semester before the general examination. The ACR is essential for documenting and monitoring the student's progress, ensuring adherence to academic standards.

Membership

- **Selection:** Students select committee members in consultation with their academic unit.
- **Composition:** Must include a committee chair, a Graduate College representative, and at least two other graduate faculty members.
- **Majority Requirement:** A majority of the committee must have specific graduate faculty appointments (M2, M3, RM3, or RM4) through the student's academic unit.

Code	Full Title	Roles and Privileges
M2	Member Level 2	• Can serve on master's and doctoral committees • Cannot chair a doctoral committee
M3	Member Level 3	• Can serve on and chair doctoral committees • Typically tenured or tenure-track faculty • Strong research record and graduate supervision experience
RM3	Retired Member Level 3	• Retired faculty previously holding M3 status • May serve on or chair doctoral committees with permission or under conditions (e.g., time-limited)
RM4	Retired Member Level 4	• Highest level of retired faculty appointment • Can chair doctoral committees under specific conditions, often with ongoing scholarly engagement

- **Chair Requirements:** The chair must hold an M3 or RM4 appointment and is responsible for guiding the student through doctoral program coursework and dissertation standards.
- **Graduate College Representative:** Must hold an appropriate faculty appointment outside the student's academic unit and ensures adherence to Graduate College standards and policies.

Special Faculty Members

- **Eligibility:** Can be appointed with special privileges but cannot serve as the Graduate College representative.
- **Approval:** Must be recommended by an academic unit and approved by the dean of the Graduate College.
- **Limitations:** Special members cannot make up most of the committee and have specific terms and privileges.

Advisory Conference Report (ACR)

- **Responsibility:** The student must complete and submit the ACR, detailing coursework and committee membership.
- **Deadline:** Must be submitted at least one semester before the general examination.
- **Changes:** Any modifications to the ACR post-approval require a new submission and approval by the dean of the Graduate College.

Comprehensive General Examination

The Comprehensive General Exam section of our Ph.D. program handbook is designed to provide doctoral candidates with all the necessary information to prepare for and successfully complete their comprehensive exams. This critical milestone in the Ph.D. journey is intended to assess your breadth of knowledge in the field, your ability to integrate this knowledge, and your readiness to undertake independent research.

Overview of the General Examination Process

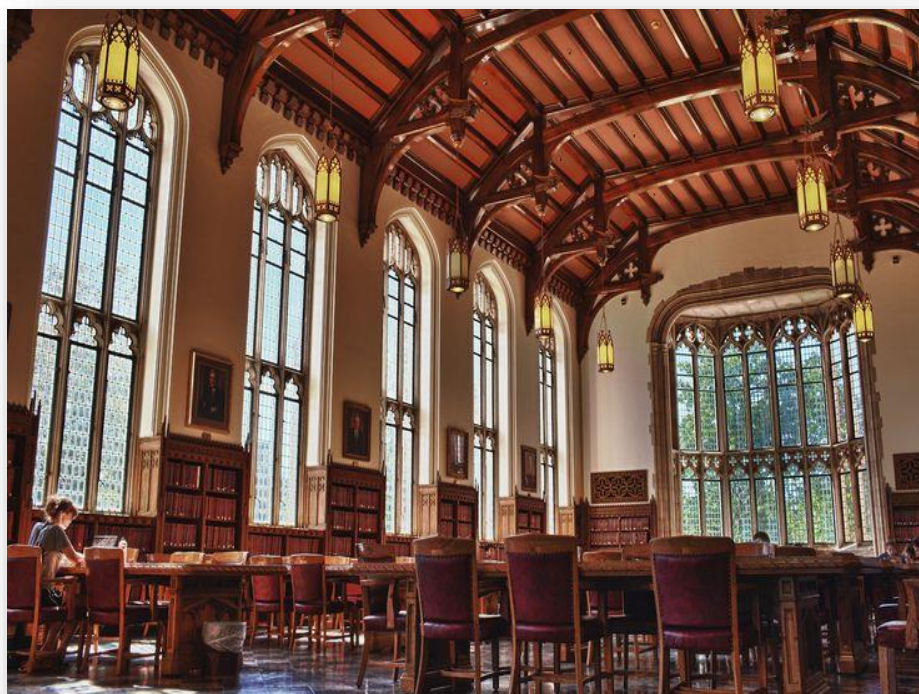
For an in-depth explanation of the general examination policies for doctoral students, please review the [Graduate College Bulletin](#).

Eligibility

Students must be enrolled in or have completed their final semester of coursework to qualify for the general examination. This exam is designed to evaluate the student's mastery over several related academic fields, their ability to synthesize complex information, generalize soundly, and exhibit critical thinking skills.

Structure

The exam is split into two parts: a written section followed by an oral section. Success in the written part is mandatory before proceeding to the oral examination, which must involve the full committee.



Topic Selection and Research

Upon completion of coursework, students are required to select a research topic for their comprehensive examination. This topic must be approved by both the student's chair and the PhD program director. The selected topic should demonstrate the student's mastery of relevant theories and research methodologies within their chosen area of specialization.

The chair assists the student in refining the topic and ensuring that the research is comprehensive, grounded in significant academic literature, including social work theory, research methods, and social justice and policy frameworks relevant to their specialization (e.g., child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty).

Chair and Committee Selection

The Comprehensive General Exam committee consists of a minimum of one chair and two additional members. The student's advisor, serving as the chair, collaborates closely with the Ph.D. program director to recommend suitable committee members. The chair is responsible for overseeing the student's preparation and conducting the exam. All committee members must be qualified with a Ph.D. or equivalent degree, ensuring a high standard of evaluation.

Committee Composition and Responsibilities

- The chair (advisor) oversees the preparation for the exam and the actual examination process.
- The two additional members are chosen for their specific expertise and contributions to the breadth and depth of the evaluation process. These members can be any Ph.D. or DSW faculty involved in teaching within the school of social work.

Proposal Development

Written Proposal

The process begins with the committee chair approving the chosen topic, who may also suggest relevant readings to enrich the student's research. Other faculty members whose expertise aligns with the topic may provide guidance. The student then drafts a proposal, which serves as an outline for the Comprehensive General Exam paper. This proposal must be approved by the committee chair and may undergo revisions before it is reviewed by the rest of the committee members for final approval.

Role of the Guidance Committee Chair and Other Faculty Members

- The student collaborates with the guidance committee chair to prepare their proposal, define the topic, and find relevant literature.
- The chair assists in organizing the research material coverage to be broad yet manageable.
- Other faculty members may be consulted during proposal preparation, with the chair responsible for ensuring the exam's achievable scope.
- Not all faculty members are available for summer consultation.

Independence and Originality

Students are required to complete the exam independently, refraining from contacting faculty members during the process. The work submitted must be original, created specifically for the exam, and not derived from previous writing assignments. All submissions must adhere to APA formatting guidelines and exhibit a high level of doctoral scholarly articulation.

Research Depth and Committee Interaction

Once the topic is approved, students are expected to extend their research beyond the scope of their coursework. The success of the exam heavily relies on the depth and breadth of this research. While the topic may be related to themes from prior papers, the content of the Comprehensive General Exam must be entirely new.

Preparation and Scheduling

- **Advisory Conference Report (ACR):** The student's ACR must be approved by the Graduate College before the exam can be scheduled. Any updates or changes to the ACR require prior approval.
- **Application:** Students must formally apply to take the general examination, obtaining authorization from the Graduate College before beginning the written exam. The authorization ensures that the exam is recognized as valid.
- **Scheduling Details:** Students coordinate with their committee to set dates for both the written and oral parts of the exam, ensuring compliance with the academic calendar and avoiding conflict with the university's final exams or closure periods.

Execution and Committee Involvement

- **Committee Participation:** All committee members must be present for the duration of the oral exam, whether in-person or remotely. Should any member lose connection during a remote session, the examination must be paused until the issue is resolved.
- **Technology Requirements:** For remote participation, it is critical to ensure all members can access the meeting platform without issues. Pre-event testing of the technology setup is recommended to prevent disruptions. The environment should be professional, with minimal distractions, and visual aids should be clearly visible to all participants.

Comprehensive General Examination Defense

Oral Defense

The oral defense involves a presentation by the student, followed by a question-and-answer session addressing the theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of their specialization area. The defense is designed to probe the student's understanding of the field and their ability to apply research knowledge practically.

Evaluation and Outcome

Upon completion of the oral exam, the Comprehensive General Exam committee at the University of Oklahoma convenes privately, without the student present, to rigorously evaluate the student's performance. This deliberation is critical as it determines whether the student has demonstrated sufficient mastery over their area of study and the related research methodologies.

If the committee finds the student's performance on the oral defense or the written paper to be lacking in key areas, the student is provided a singular additional opportunity to address these deficiencies. Specifically, the student must revise the Comprehensive General Exam paper to better reflect the depth and rigor expected of doctoral-level scholarship. Following these revisions, the student will be required to undergo another oral defense. Questions in a repeated oral defense are not limited to questions and issues raised in the initial defense.

For the student to successfully pass the comprehensive examination, approval from the committee is required for both the revised written paper and the subsequent oral defense. This two-fold approval process ensures that the student has adequately met the high academic and research standards set forth by the Ph.D. program in Social Work, confirming their readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of their doctoral studies. This rigorous evaluation and re-evaluation process underscores the program's commitment to producing scholars who are well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to the field of social work.

Examination Outcomes

- **Immediate Results:** The outcome of the written exam dictates whether the oral exam will proceed. If the written result is satisfactory, the oral exam takes place as scheduled.
- **Authority and Validity:** The authority to conduct the exam is contingent upon timely submission of the necessary forms by the student, as outlined by the Graduate College. The Authority Report Form issued by the Graduate College specifies the period during which the exam must be completed.
- **Retake Options:** If a student fails the general examination, they may be allowed one additional attempt, contingent upon committee approval. The second failure results in dismissal from the doctoral program.

Handling of Exam Results

- **Reporting Results:** The results of both the written and oral portions must be reported on the Authority Report Form and submitted to the Graduate College within three working days post-exam.
- **Marginal or Unsatisfactory Outcomes:** In cases of marginal results, the committee may request a hold, allowing the student time to address deficiencies. Unsatisfactory results must be reported, and if confirmed, may lead to a second exam attempt or program dismissal.

Examination Process

Exam Approval and Revisions

- The committee deems the exam acceptable or unacceptable.
- Approved exams allow the student to advance to the dissertation proposal.
- If the exam is not approved, the student may have the opportunity for one re-write within 60 days.
- Extensive revisions may require two re-writes in rare cases, at the discretion of the chair and Ph.D. Program Director.
- No more than two revisions are allowed under any circumstances.
- Detailed feedback and explanations are provided for requested revisions.
- If the committee cannot reach a decision, an additional reader may be assigned by the Ph.D. Program Director.

Credit Enrollment and Unsatisfactory Exams

- Students must be registered for a minimum of two credit hours during the Comprehensive General Exam semesters.
- In cases of an unsatisfactory exam, students may be granted one additional attempt as described above under Retake Options; a second unsatisfactory result results in dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

Graduate College Academic Appeals for Failed Exam

Per the [Graduate College Bulletin](#), the Graduate College Academic Appeals Board is authorized to hear appeals related to qualifying examinations, non-thesis examinations, general examinations, theses and dissertations, and other matters as deemed appropriate by the Dean of the Graduate College. The scope of the Board's review is limited to cases involving claims of prejudiced or capricious evaluation or alleged inadequate English proficiency that impairs an instructor's ability to effectively teach.

Comprehensive information regarding academic appeals may be obtained directly from the Graduate College.

Academic Appeals Process

Students must first notify the instructor of any dispute that meets the above criteria and make a good-faith effort to resolve the issue. If resolution is not achieved, the student must immediately contact the Graduate College to schedule an appointment and initiate the formal academic appeal process.

Time Limits

For end-of-term evaluations:

- Disputes regarding evaluations from the fall semester or intersession must be raised with the instructor no later than February 15.
- Disputes from the spring semester, spring intersession, or summer session must be raised no later than September 15.

For evaluations communicated during the term:

- The student must notify the instructor and attempt resolution within 15 calendar days (excluding weekends and university holidays) from the date the evaluation was communicated.

Failure to adhere to these deadlines will result in dismissal of the appeal unless the Board determines that extraordinary circumstances (e.g., military service) prevented timely action.

Filing a Formal Appeal

Once the Graduate College has been notified:

- An initial attempt will be made to resolve the issue at the academic unit level.
- If unresolved, the student will be briefed on the formal appeal procedures.
- A written appeal must be submitted to the Graduate College and must include:
 - The action being appealed
 - The individual(s) responsible for the action
 - The basis for the appeal
 - The remedy sought by the student



Written appeals must be submitted no later than 10 calendar days (excluding weekends and university holidays) following the conclusion of informal resolution efforts. Appeals submitted beyond this deadline will be dismissed unless the Board finds compelling justification for the delay.

Documentation and Administration

Documentation and Approval

Following a successful defense, the chair will sign the Comprehensive General Exam Completion Form, which is then submitted to the doctoral office. This formality confirms the student's readiness to proceed to dissertation research and apply for candidacy.

Approval

- The chair and committee faculty members must approve the final proposal for the student to begin the comprehensive exam.
- Failure to write an approved proposal may lead to dismissal from the Ph.D. program.
- The Comprehensive General Exam requires advanced skills, and some students may require assistance.

Changes to exam topics, chairs, or committee members can have significant impacts on the examination process. Therefore, such changes are governed by the following policy to ensure smooth transitions and maintain the quality of the student's academic experience.

Changing the Exam Topic Procedure

- **Initiation:** The student initiates the request by submitting a written rationale for the change to their current chair.
- **Approval:** The change in topic must be approved by the chair of the Comprehensive General Exam committee. If the chair supports the change, the request is then forwarded to the Ph.D. program director for final approval.
- **Documentation:** Upon approval, the student must submit a revised proposal reflecting the new topic to the Comprehensive General Exam committee for review.

Guidelines:

- Changes should be based on substantive academic reasons and not convenience.
- The new topic should align with the student's area of expertise and the committee's competencies.

Changing the Committee Chair Procedure

- **Notification:** The student must formally notify the current chair and the Ph.D. program director in writing.
- **Justification:** The request must include a justification for the change and the proposed new chair's agreement to serve in this role.
- **Approval:** The Ph.D. program director must approve any change in the committee chair.
- **Transition:** Upon approval, the Ph.D. program director will facilitate a transition meeting involving the student, the outgoing chair, and the incoming chair to ensure a smooth transfer of responsibilities.

Guidelines:

- Chair changes may be considered in cases of significant academic disagreement, changes in faculty availability, or other substantial reasons that impact the student's progress.

Changing Committee Members Procedure



- **Proposal:** The student proposes the change by submitting a written request to the committee chair detailing the reasons for the change and the qualifications of the proposed new member.
- **Consent:** The proposed new member must agree to serve if the change is approved.
- **Approval:** Changes must be approved by the committee chair and then reviewed by the Ph.D. program director.
- **Notification:** Once approved, the student must notify all committee members of the change.

Guidelines:

- Changes to committee members should be made to enhance the academic quality or relevance of the guidance committee to the student's research area.
- Frequent changes to committee composition are discouraged to maintain continuity and stability in the student's guidance and evaluation process.

Comprehensive General Examination Outline

General Format

- The final Comprehensive General Exam should be a critical analysis, a minimum of 50-60 pages (excluding references).
- It must adhere to APA standards, be double-spaced with 1" margins and size 12 font.
- It should demonstrate doctoral-level writing and content.
- The exam must be based on the approved proposal and completed independently without committee feedback.

General Evaluation Standards

- The exam is evaluated based on the student's comprehensive coverage and synthesis of material, literature review, and critical analysis.
- Writing style, clarity, and adherence to APA standards are also assessed.
- Students are expected to identify gaps in the literature, explain theoretical, policy, and practice implications, and integrate social work and social science knowledge.

The outline provided below is intended to serve as the major headings and subheadings for the Comprehensive General Exam document. This structured framework is designed to guide the development of the exam content, facilitating a clear and organized presentation that showcases the student's depth of knowledge and analytical capabilities.

Definition of Social Problems

- Overview of what constitutes a social problem within the context of social work.

Importance of Studying Social Problems

- Discussion on the impact of these problems on various populations.

Social Problem Historical Review

- Background information on the social problem.
- Examination of the incidence and prevalence over time.
- Review of key milestones, events, or policies related to the social problem.

Significance and Reasoning for Topic Selection

- Explanation of the relevance and significance of the social problem.
- Identification of the population(s) affected by the social problem.
- Justification for choosing the topic area.
- Personal interests or experiences influencing the choice.
- Scholarly or research gaps identified in the field.
- Potential for impact or change derived from studying this problem.

Theoretical Considerations

- Introduction to theoretical perspectives relevant to social problems.
- Definition and purpose of these perspectives in understanding social issues.
- Detailed exploration of two specific theoretical perspectives, including:
 - Overview and application to the social problem.
 - Key concepts, principles, or theories associated with each perspective.
 - Comparative analysis of the perspectives' approaches to understanding the social problem.
 - Integration and synthesis of insights from the perspectives to enhance understanding and address the social problem.

Social Welfare Policy Analysis

- Introduction and importance of policy analysis in addressing social problems.
- Background and context of the social problem and related policies.
- Selection and explanation of a policy analysis framework.
- Detailed policy analysis process including:
 - Examination of relevant policies.
 - Assessment of policy strengths and weaknesses.
 - Evaluation of policy outcomes.
- Policy recommendations based on analysis findings.

Literature Review

- Review of current and past empirical research on the topic.
- Overview of key findings from empirical studies.
- Identification of gaps in the current literature.
- Discussion on potential explanations for these gaps.

Quantitative Research Proposal

- Introduction, research question, and objectives.
- Literature review relevant to the research.
- Theoretical framework guiding the study.
- Detailed research design and methodology.
- Sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis.
- Ethical considerations, timeline, and resources.

Qualitative Research Proposal

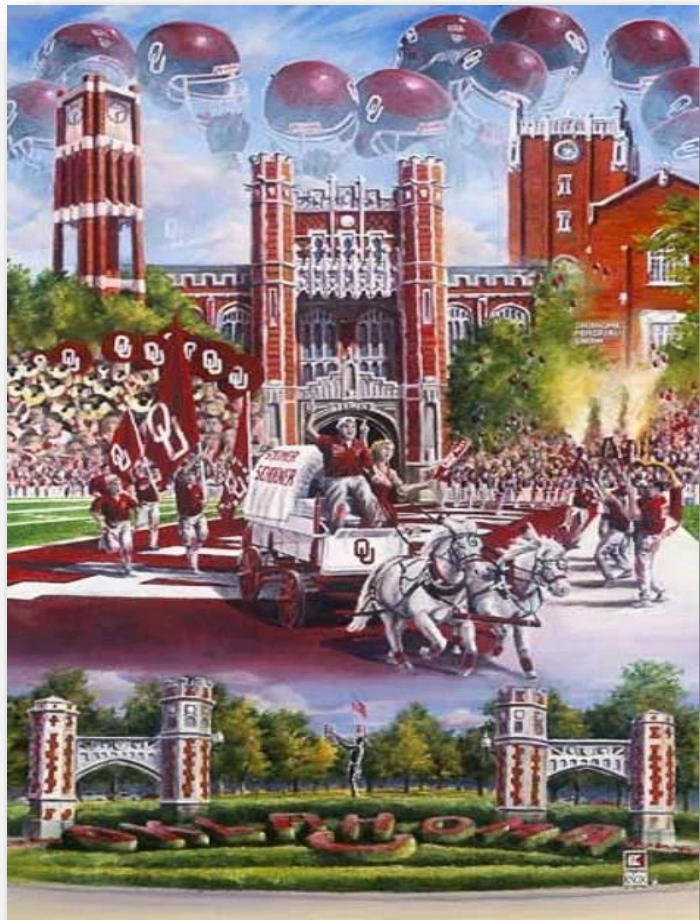
- Introduction, research question, and objectives.
- Literature review relevant to the research.
- Theoretical framework guiding the study.
- Detailed research design identifying qualitative tradition and methodology.
- Sampling strategy, data collection, and analysis.
- Ethical considerations, timeline, and resources.

Comprehensive General Exam

Timeline

This schedule outlines a typical workflow for the exam, providing students with a clear understanding of each stage from proposal development to the final oral defense. While this timeline represents an ideal sequence of events, variations may occur depending on individual circumstances and specific academic needs.

- **August - September (Months 1-2): Proposal Development** Students commence the academic year by selecting a research topic and initiating the drafting of the Comprehensive General Exam proposal under their committee chair's guidance. This early phase includes conducting preliminary research and crafting the initial proposal draft.
- **October (Month 3): Proposal Submission and Initial Review** The initial Comprehensive General Exam proposal is submitted for review. This stage involves gathering and incorporating feedback to refine and enhance the proposal.
- **November (Month 4): Proposal Approval** Revisions are made based on the feedback received, and the enhanced proposal is resubmitted for final approval. Approval at this stage allows students to advance to the more intensive research and writing phase.
- **December - February (Months 5-7): Research and Writing** Students engage in deep research and write the Comprehensive General Exam paper throughout the winter and early spring months, integrating and analyzing the key literature pertinent to their chosen topic.



- **March (Month 8): Submission and Review** The Comprehensive General Exam paper is submitted at the beginning of March. The committee reviews the submission and provides critical feedback later in the month.
 - **April (Month 9): Oral Defense and Completion** Early April focuses on preparing for the oral defense based on the committee's feedback. The defense, typically scheduled for mid-April, involves presenting the research findings and responding to the committee's questions. The outcome is determined immediately after the defense. Successful completion concludes the process, but deficiencies identified may necessitate further revisions.
-

Admission to Candidacy and Candidacy

The pathway to candidacy involves more than just passing the Comprehensive General Exam and completing coursework; it requires a series of additional steps to ensure that students are thoroughly prepared to undertake their dissertation research.

Admission to Candidacy Requirements

Comprehensive Examination

The student must have successfully passed the comprehensive examination.

Completion of Program of Work

The student must have completed all coursework as outlined and approved by the Ph.D. program Director.

Doctoral Committee Approval

The following must be submitted to and approved by the Doctoral Committee:

- **Statement of Preparation:** A statement of up to 500 words explaining how the student's completed program of work prepares them for their dissertation research. This statement should illustrate the relevance of the electives chosen and how they contribute to the student's readiness to conduct their research. It should be distinct from the rationales provided for individual electives.
- **Rationale for Dissertation Committee Membership:** A brief rationale for the selection of each dissertation committee member, including confirmation that each member has agreed to serve. This rationale should clearly articulate the expertise each member brings to the committee.

Candidacy Recommendation and Application

Once the above materials are approved and all other candidacy requirements are met, the Doctoral Committee will vote to recommend the student for candidacy. The student then submits the Application for Doctoral Candidacy electronically to the Graduate School. This application includes:

- **Dissertation Committee:** The proposed chair and all other proposed members of the Dissertation Committee.
- **Dissertation Overview:** The title and a brief description of the proposed dissertation, outlining the research focus and objectives.

Committee Official Appointment

Following the submission, the Graduate School takes official action to appoint the Dissertation Committee, finalizing the student's candidacy status.

After Admission to Candidacy

All doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy are required by the Graduate School at the University of Oklahoma to maintain continuous registration during the regular academic year. To fulfill this requirement:



Enrollment in Dissertation Courses

Candidates must enroll in a minimum of 5 credit hours of dissertation coursework prior to defending their dissertation. Registration in dissertation courses is contingent upon official admission to candidacy.

Credit/No Credit Grading

All dissertation hours are graded on a credit/no credit basis. The Graduate School does not impose penalties for receiving "no credit" in these courses. However, students must be registered during the semester they intend to defend

their dissertation.

Eligibility for TA, GRA, or AI Appointments

Students who accumulate more than two grades of X (temporary incompletes), I (permanent incompletes), No Credit, or F may not be appointed as Teaching Assistants (TAs), Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs), or Academic Instructors (AIs).

Assessment of Progress

Receiving a No Credit in dissertation hours will trigger a review of the student's academic progress by the Ph.D. director in the School of Social Work. This review may lead to a recommendation for termination from the Ph.D. program if progress is deemed insufficient.

Dissertation

This segment of the handbook is essential for helping you navigate the complex process of planning, executing, and completing your dissertation, which represents a significant contribution to your field of study.

Dissertation Proposal Process and Roles

Collaboration and Preparation: Students are required to collaborate with the chair of their dissertation committee to prepare their dissertation proposal. This includes defining the dissertation topic and identifying relevant literature.

Chair's Role

The chair of a doctoral committee at the University of Oklahoma plays a critical leadership role,



ensuring adherence to academic and administrative processes set by the OU Graduate College. The chair coordinates committee activities, facilitates communication, sets meeting agendas, and monitors the doctoral candidate's progress. As the primary mentor, the chair offers substantial feedback on the dissertation, guiding the candidate through research designs, methodology, and data analysis. The chair also ensures the dissertation meets high academic standards and manages logistical aspects of the process and defense. Ultimately, the chair provides final approval of the dissertation, verifying its readiness for submission and compliance with graduation requirements.

Committee Members' Role

Members of the doctoral committee support the chair in providing comprehensive feedback and guidance throughout the doctoral process. They bring specialized expertise to enhance the candidate's research and writing quality. Members actively participate in meetings, review progress reports, and critically assess the dissertation proposal, drafts, and final submission. They play a crucial role during the dissertation defense by evaluating the candidate's understanding and presentation of their research. The committee ensures that the candidate addresses all feedback and that the research upholds the highest academic standards. Approval from all committee members is required for the dissertation to be deemed complete.

Committee Composition and Candidacy

Before attaining candidacy, the Doctoral Committee at OU, under authority from the OU Graduate College, approves the student's program of work. The committee reviewing the candidacy application must include at least three members, including the chair, who possess a doctorate in social work, ensuring expertise and relevance to the field. This committee also needs to include at least one member from outside the student's graduate program to provide diverse academic perspectives, in accordance with OU Graduate College policy. This outside member must not be from the student's Graduate College-approved committee. The recommendation for the committee composition, once endorsed, along with the names of the committee members, is forwarded to the OU Graduate College for final approval. Requests to include faculty without a Ph.D. as the chair are considered only if they have a substantial record of scholarly activity relevant to the student's area of study.

Proposal Approval Process

- **Committee Approval:** The final dissertation proposal must be approved by the chair and committee members before the student may begin the dissertation research.
- **Consequences of Non-Approval:** Failure to secure approval for the dissertation proposal can lead to dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

Human Subjects Review

For students at the University of Oklahoma conducting research involving human subjects, obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a mandatory step before the research can commence. This applies to all types of research involving human subjects, including dissertations, research practicums, and class projects. The approval process is detailed and requires careful attention to ensure compliance with IRB guidelines.

The process involves several steps:

1. **Proposal Submission:** You must log into the iRIS system to submit your research proposal. This includes responding to specific questions and selecting the appropriate review type for your study.
2. **Documentation:** Depending on the nature of your study, you may need to upload various supporting documents along with your application.
3. **Review Process:** After submission, the IRB reviews your application. You must address any questions or concerns they raise to move forward.

Faculty members supervising Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) are responsible for securing IRB approval for projects conducted by their assistants. For class projects, a faculty supervisor must oversee the submission of IRB materials.

Furthermore, OU requires that anyone involved in research complete specific training related to the protection of human subjects. This training is available through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and can be accessed online. Students should confirm the current required training platform with the OU IRB office, as approved providers may change over time. It's typically completed during orientation but can be undertaken at any convenient time before starting the research. Completion of this training is necessary before a GRA appointment can be finalized.

Beyond the human subjects protection training described above, students are also expected to complete responsible conduct of research (RCR) training before beginning dissertation data collection. RCR training covers topics such as authorship, data management, mentoring responsibilities, and conflicts of interest, and is typically completed through the same training platform used for human subjects protection. Students should confirm the current RCR training requirement and provider with their advisor, the Ph.D. Program Director, or the OU IRB office, since specific platforms and requirements may change over time.

For detailed guidance and to begin the submission process, visit the OU IRB's official [IRB How to Start a Study page](#).

Dissertation Enrollment Requirements

The [Graduate College Bulletin](#) details the policies and procedures for graduate students. Students should always access the Bulletin first for the latest policy.

- Students must enroll in at least two credit hours of course 6980 during each regular semester while working on their dissertation.
- Credit hours for each enrollment in 6980 are determined by the committee chair, based on the required faculty and university resources.
- Enrollment in 6980 is mandatory during the summer session if the dissertation defense or degree conferral is scheduled for that time.
- If using university facilities during the summer without enrollment, students must have been enrolled in the previous spring and must enroll for the upcoming fall semester, with permission from the academic unit.
- After the initial enrollment in 6980, students must maintain continuous enrollment in at least two hours of 6980 every fall and spring semester until meeting all degree requirements.

- The continuous enrollment requirement is waived for students not working on the dissertation but enrolled in at least nine graduate credit hours during a regular semester.
- Students who lapse in continuous enrollment must retroactively enroll in 6980 for each missed semester and pay applicable late fees. These fees are calculated at current rates and are collected by the Office of the Registrar and Bursar Services.

Dissertation Proposal

In consultation with their dissertation supervisor, students must schedule a meeting with their dissertation committee to present their dissertation proposal. This meeting allows the committee to review and comment on the proposal before the formal oral defense. The dissertation proposal typically includes five key components: a review of relevant literature, a rationale and significance for the chosen research topic, specific goals for the proposed research, a research plan, and a description of external resources required.

Additional chapters may be included, such as a detailed theoretical framework or other relevant sections, forming the initial chapters of the dissertation.

Review of Relevant Literature

- Conduct a comprehensive literature search to support all three manuscripts.
- Summarize key findings, focusing on areas critical to understanding the state of the science in your field.
- Identify gaps in current research that each manuscript will address, with specific attention to empirical gaps and practical applications in social work.

Rationale and Significance of the Chosen Research Topic

- Clearly articulate the importance of the research topic across the fields of academia and practice.
- Discuss the potential impact of each manuscript on theoretical advancements, practical applications, and policy implications.
- Justify the need for a State of the Science report, an empirical study, and a practitioner-focused article within the context of your research.

Specific Goals for the Proposed Research

- Define distinct research questions and hypotheses for each manuscript:
 - **State of the Science Report:** Outline key themes and questions addressing the current knowledge landscape.
 - **Empirical Article:** Formulate hypotheses based on gaps identified in the State of the Science report.
 - **Practitioner Article:** Set goals to translate research findings into practical recommendations for social work practice.

- Clearly delineate the objectives for each manuscript, ensuring they contribute cohesively to the overarching research theme.

Research Plan

- Describe the methodology for each manuscript separately:
 - **State of the Science Report:** Discuss the approach for synthesizing existing literature and data.
 - **Empirical Article:** Detail the experimental or observational methods for data collection and analysis.
 - **Practitioner Article:** Explain how the empirical findings will be adapted for practical application in social work.
- Provide a timeline that outlines phases for research, writing, and revision for each manuscript.

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External Resources Required

- Identify funding and resources specific to the needs of each manuscript.
- Describe collaborations, data access, and any fieldwork necessary for the empirical study.
- Outline additional support needed for disseminating the practitioner article to appropriate audiences.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

- **Objective:** The primary goal of the proposal defense is to confirm that the proposal outlines a rigorous and feasible plan that will advance professional knowledge.
- **Feedback:** The defense provides an opportunity for the committee to discuss the proposal in detail and offer constructive feedback. If the committee does not reach consensus on the readiness of the proposal, they are responsible for providing clear guidance on necessary revisions or additional work required.
- **Approval:** Once the proposal is accepted, a Dissertation Proposal Defense Approval Form must be completed by the dissertation supervisor and signed by all committee members.
- **Meeting Conduct:** The dissertation proposal defense meeting is private, attended only by the candidate and committee members.

Dissertation Structure and Format

Cover Page and Table of Contents

Format the cover page and table of contents according to the OU Graduate College's current Dissertation Format Booklet.

Abstract

- Summarize the objectives, methods, and key findings from each of the three manuscripts, highlighting how they collectively address the overarching research questions.

Introduction (Chapter 1)

- **Problem Statement:** Clearly define the issue being addressed, emphasizing its relevance in the field of social work.
- **Rationale:** Justify the need for this research and its expected contributions to academic and practical knowledge.
- **Importance:** Discuss the significance of the problem, particularly in current social work practice.
- **Theoretical Foundations:** Outline the theoretical frameworks that support the investigation.
- **Literature Overview:** Provide an overview of the existing literature that sets the stage for more detailed reviews in the subsequent articles.
- **Research Questions:** List the research questions guiding the overall study.
- **Methodology Overview:** Describe the general methodological approach, linking to the detailed methods used in each specific manuscript.

Article Chapters

- **Chapter 2: State of the Science Report**
 - Discuss the methodology for synthesizing current literature and data. Explain the criteria for selecting sources, the approach to integrating findings, and the process for identifying gaps in knowledge that your research aims to fill.
- **Chapter 3: Empirical Article**
 - Detail the experimental or observational research methods used. Include descriptions of the study design, sampling, data collection techniques, and analytical procedures, explaining how these methods address the research questions posed.
- **Chapter 4: Practitioner Article**
 - Describe how the empirical findings from Chapter 3 are translated into practical applications for social work. Discuss the implications for practice, policy, and training in the field, highlighting actionable recommendations.

Conclusion (Chapter 5)

- **Summary of Findings:** Provide a comprehensive summary of the findings from each manuscript, emphasizing their contributions to the field of social work.
- **Discussion:** Analyze the implications of these findings, considering the interconnectedness of the articles to present a cohesive narrative.
- **Strengths and Limitations:** Critically assess the strengths of the research and acknowledge its limitations, suggesting areas for future investigation.
- **Conclusions and Implications for Practice and Research:** Draw final conclusions and discuss the broader implications of your research for both practice and future academic studies in social work.

Additional Dissertation Guidelines

- The dissertation should adhere to the formatting and binding guidelines set by the School of Social Work.
- Copyright permissions should be obtained before finalizing the proposal and dissertation.
- Exceptions to dissertation chapter policies can be approved by the Ph.D. Program Director and Committee.

Dissertation Timeline

Year 1

- **August - September (Months 1-2): Proposal Development**
 - Students begin the academic year by selecting a dissertation topic and initiating the drafting of the dissertation proposal under their committee chair's guidance. This includes conducting preliminary research and drafting the initial proposal.
- **October (Month 3): Proposal Submission and Initial Review**
 - The dissertation proposal is submitted for initial review. Students then gather feedback from their committee to refine and enhance the proposal.
- **November (Month 4): Proposal Approval**
 - After incorporating the necessary revisions based on committee feedback, the proposal is resubmitted for final approval. Approval at this stage allows students to progress to the research and data collection phase.
- **December - February (Months 5-7): Research and Data Collection**
 - Students dedicate this period to conducting detailed research and collecting data relevant to their dissertation topic.
- **March - May (Months 8-10): Data Analysis and Writing**
 - This period is focused on analyzing the collected data and writing the main chapters of the dissertation, integrating key findings and synthesizing the research.

Year 2

- **August - October (Months 11-14): Completing the Draft and Initial Submission**
 - Students finalize their dissertation draft and submit it to their committee for review. This includes completing all chapters and ensuring that the discussion and findings are clearly articulated.
- **November (Month 15): Revisions Based on Feedback**
 - Based on feedback from the committee, necessary revisions are made to the dissertation. This may involve refining arguments, clarifying key points, and expanding certain sections.
- **December - February (Months 16-18): Final Submission and Pre-Defense Preparation**
 - The final version of the dissertation is submitted. Students prepare for the oral defense by thoroughly reviewing their work and anticipating potential questions from the committee.
- **March (Month 19): Oral Defense**
 - The oral defense is conducted where students present their research findings and respond to the committee's questions. This session is critical for defending their research methodology and conclusions.
- **April - May (Month 20-21): Completion and Final Approval**
 - Depending on the outcome of the defense, additional revisions may be required. Once these revisions are completed and approved, the dissertation process is formally concluded.

Evaluation of Dissertation

Upon completion of the dissertation defense, the doctoral committee at the University of Oklahoma convenes privately, without the student present, to rigorously evaluate the student's performance. This deliberation is crucial as it determines whether the student has demonstrated a comprehensive mastery over their specific area of study and the related research methodologies.

If the committee finds the student's performance in the oral defense or the dissertation itself lacking in critical areas, the student is given a specific opportunity to address these deficiencies. This typically involves revising the dissertation to better reflect the depth and rigor expected of doctoral-level scholarship. After these revisions, the student may be required to undergo a second oral defense.



For the student to successfully pass the dissertation defense, approval from the committee is necessary for both the revised dissertation and any subsequent defense. This two-stage approval process ensures that the student meets the high academic and research standards set forth by the Ph.D. program, confirming their readiness to proceed to the next stages of their academic or professional career. This rigorous evaluation process underscores the university's commitment to upholding high standards and producing well-prepared scholars ready to contribute meaningfully to the field of social work.

Outcome of Dissertation Defense

A satisfactory final oral examination is required for the approval of a dissertation at the University of Oklahoma. To schedule the examination, a formal request must be submitted through the Graduate College at least two weeks before the defense date. This timeframe allows the Graduate College to publicly announce the examination and gives committee members ample time to review the dissertation documents thoroughly.

The dissertation defense must be scheduled at least two weeks prior to the Graduate College's final submission deadline. The following documents must accompany the signed Request for Final Oral Examination form:

- Dissertation abstract
- Title page
- Dissertation committee membership page
- Table of contents
- Lists of figures and tables
- Statement on Research with Human Participants form, including IRB materials
- Copyright Tutorial grade report from Canvas showing 100%

The Request for Final Oral Examination form must be typewritten or word-processed and signed by the Graduate Advisor. Exceptions to the two-week scheduling rule are rarely approved, ensuring that

each committee member has sufficient time to review the dissertation. Digital signatures are accepted to facilitate processing.

Examination Scope and Procedure

The final oral examination covers the dissertation content, the general field of the dissertation, and other related areas as determined by the committee. This comprehensive examination serves to assess the depth of the student's knowledge and the quality of their research.

Examination Outcomes

1. **Pass:** If the committee unanimously agrees that both the dissertation and the defense are satisfactory, the student may pass. Occasionally, minor revisions to the dissertation may be required. These revisions must be completed to the satisfaction of the committee, or specifically the supervising professor, before the final sign-off.
2. **Redo (Re-defend):** If the committee finds the dissertation or the defense lacking but believes that improvements could render it acceptable, the decision to redo the defense may be issued. The student will be asked to revise substantial portions of the dissertation and/or improve upon their defense presentation. A new defense date will be scheduled following these revisions, requiring a new examination form and process.
3. **Fail:** If one or more committee members find the dissertation fundamentally deficient and believe it cannot be salvaged through reasonable revisions, the decision to fail the student may be made. This outcome generally results in termination from the doctoral program, as the dissertation is deemed unsatisfactory. Each committee member must document their reasons on individual REPORT ON DOCTORAL DISSERTATION forms, detailing their specific concerns.

Post-Defense Procedures

Following the defense, if revisions are required, the committee will agree upon a timeframe for resubmission of the revised dissertation. The final approval of the dissertation involves a sign-off from the Graduate College, confirming that all academic requirements have been met and the dissertation meets the university's standards for doctoral research.

Final Copy

The final copy of the dissertation should adhere to OU's specific guidelines for formatting and binding a three-article dissertation. Consistency in appearance throughout the dissertation is essential, meaning any previously published material must match the same font and format as the rest of the dissertation. For OU-specific formatting rules, students should refer to the OU Graduate College's website.

Submitting the Dissertation

Graduating students at the University of Oklahoma are required to publish their dissertations digitally. The final version of the dissertation must be submitted as a single PDF file to the University's digital repository. For technical support and detailed instructions on electronic submission, students can refer to the OU Libraries' website [OU Dissertation and Thesis Submission Instructions](#).

Students may consider placing an embargo on their dissertation to protect their copyright and proprietary research findings. An embargo can delay the public release of the dissertation for a period ranging from one year to a maximum of seven years, allowing the author time to publish articles or secure patents derived from their research. The decision on the embargo length should be made in consultation with the dissertation supervisory committee.

A request to delay publication must be endorsed by the dissertation supervisor and submitted alongside the final graduation paperwork. The graduate dean at OU ultimately approves the duration of the embargo. Students can find the necessary forms and further details on the procedure at OU Graduate College Forms.

The University of Oklahoma provides a Dissertation Format Booklet, which specifies the requirements for the final version of the dissertation. This booklet is essential for ensuring that all dissertations meet the university's formatting and submission standards.

Authorship

Students must be the first author on all articles included in the dissertation. As first authors, students are responsible for the development and articulation of a research concept or idea, proposal development, research design creation, conducting research and analysis, writing significant portions of the manuscript, designing interventions or assessments (if relevant), and interpreting results. Other students may not be co-authors on any of the articles. Co-authors must be identified during the student's proposal defense, and their roles must be presented and approved by all members of the dissertation committee. Any changes in co-authorship require committee approval. Additionally, students must describe each co-author's contribution and the percentage of their effort in the introductory chapter of the dissertation.

Content

At least one of the articles should be empirical and based on data analyzed by the student. If the third article is conceptual or based on a systematic literature review, it must relate to the dissertation's overarching theme without significant overlap with the other articles. The dissertation committee will determine if any overlap is excessive. A reasonable amount of overlap is permissible. For instance, sections of the literature review may need to be referenced across various articles to provide comprehensive historical context for the study's main topic. Redundancy should be minimized by appropriately citing previous work. However, self-plagiarism, which involves reusing one's own previously written work or data in a new written product without proper acknowledgment, is strictly prohibited.

Copyright

Students must obtain all necessary copyright permissions before finalizing their dissertation proposal and format. Consider copyright complexities of including certain articles early in the process to ensure compliance with OU dissertation guidelines. For previously published materials, students are required to secure permission to use copyrighted content, including obtaining releases from co-authors if needed. Always verify compliance with OU's dissertation guidelines and copyright regulations.

Publication Requirements

Each of the three articles submitted for the dissertation defense must be of publishable quality. Previously published articles may be included if they meet all authorship requirements, are approved by the dissertation committee as integral parts of the dissertation, and have undergone continuous review and feedback from the committee throughout the publication process. Students must obtain copyright permission from journals to include published articles in their dissertation, noting that the dissertation will be accessible online.

The dissertation committee serves as an editorial board to approve journals for article submission, ensuring they offer a reasonable chance of publication success.

Up to one article published or accepted post-proposal defense may be included, provided it relates to the dissertation theme and is approved by the committee. Students are responsible for securing the necessary permissions for its inclusion.

If an article is rejected or requires resubmission, any changes or new submissions must be approved by the committee. Post-defense, control over submissions, including authorship and content changes, shifts entirely to the graduate.

Submission

Students must submit their manuscripts to committee members at least four weeks before the defense for preliminary review. The OU Graduate School defers to the committee's judgment regarding the dissertation's cohesiveness and the clarity of the student's contributions, particularly in cases of co-authorship.



Academic Policies and Procedures

University Policies

University of Oklahoma Institutional Equity Policies

The University of Oklahoma's Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) provides comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure a fair, inclusive, and nondiscriminatory environment across all university activities. The page [EOO Policies and Procedures](#) outlines various regulations and guidelines, which include:

- **Non-Discrimination Policies:** These policies affirm the university's commitment to prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, age, religion, disability, political beliefs, or status as a veteran.
- **Affirmative Action Plan:** Details the measures the university takes to ensure equal opportunity in hiring, promotions, and university operations.

- **Procedures for Handling Allegations of Discrimination:** This section explains the steps the university takes to investigate and resolve complaints of discrimination or harassment. It includes how to report incidents, what the investigative process entails, and the potential outcomes or remedies.
- **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, and Harassment Policy:** Specific guidelines on handling cases involving sexual misconduct, offering clear definitions of prohibited behaviors, and describing the support and resources available to those affected.
- **ADA Compliance:** Outlines the university's adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring accessibility and accommodations in university programs, activities, and facilities.

University of Oklahoma Consensual Sexual Relations Policy

The University of [Oklahoma's Consensual Sexual Relationship Policy](#) sets guidelines on relationships where there may be a power differential, such as between faculty and students or supervisors and their employees. This policy aims to maintain professional integrity and fairness across the university community.

Key Points of the Policy:

- **Scope:** Applies to all faculty, staff, and students, defining the relationships and roles that fall under this policy.
- **Risk Awareness:** Highlights the risks associated with consensual relationships in positions of unequal power, emphasizing the potential for conflicts of interest and perceived favoritism.
- **Prohibitions:** Directly prohibits relationships where one party has evaluative or supervisory authority over the other, unless mitigating actions are taken to remove professional responsibility.
- **Disclosure Requirements:** Parties involved in such relationships must disclose them to facilitate appropriate measures to eliminate any conflict of interest. Non-compliance can result in disciplinary actions.
- **Handling Violations:** Describes the procedure for addressing breaches of the policy, detailing how complaints can be filed and outlining the disciplinary consequences.

University of Oklahoma Student Rights and Responsibilities Code of Conduct

For students at the University of Oklahoma, understanding the guidelines that govern campus life is crucial. The [Student Code](#) is a detailed document that outlines the expectations for student behavior, the disciplinary process, and the rights and responsibilities of students within the university community. This code ensures that all students can engage in a safe, respectful, and equitable academic environment. Familiarizing yourself with these regulations will help you navigate your time at OU successfully and responsibly.

University of Oklahoma Policy on Employee Education

The University of Oklahoma offers [tuition benefits](#) for its full-time employees who wish to pursue courses at the university:

- **Tuition Waiver:** Full-time employees are eligible for a tuition waiver that covers half of the tuition and several fees for up to six credit hours per regular semester and up to three credit hours per summer session.
- **Course Enrollment During Work Hours:** Employees may enroll in one course of up to five hours per semester during their regular working hours. However, taking more courses outside of working hours is allowed, subject to the general enrollment limits set by individual colleges. It's important that any coursework does not conflict with the employee's work responsibilities.

- **Permission Requirement:** Employees must obtain approval from their supervisor and department head to utilize the tuition benefits. This process is outlined in Section 4.5 of the Staff Handbook.
- **Work Make-Up Arrangements:** Employees might need to arrange to make up for the time spent attending classes during working hours. This should be coordinated with the employee's supervisor.

Grievance and Student Rights

Equal Opportunity Grievance

At the University of Oklahoma, students have the right to file grievances against faculty or staff members when they believe that their rights as students have been violated. This process is intended to address concerns such as unfair treatment, discrimination, harassment, or any actions that may infringe on a student's academic or personal rights within the university setting.

Key Aspects of the Grievances Process

- **Formal Written Complaint:** Students are required to submit their grievances formally using the [Equal Opportunity \(EO\) Grievance Form](#). This form ensures that all necessary details are documented, and that the grievance is processed systematically.
- **Procedure:** The grievance form asks for specific details about the complaint, including the description of the incident(s), the name(s) of the faculty or staff member(s) involved, and any witnesses. The form also requires the student to outline the desired outcome or resolution they seek, helping to guide the process toward a fair conclusion.
- **Processing and Investigation:** Once submitted, the grievance is reviewed by the appropriate university office, which may involve an initial assessment and a more detailed investigation if required. The process is designed to be transparent and thorough to ensure that all parties involved are heard and that a fair evaluation is made based on the facts presented.

University of Oklahoma Graduate School Policies

University of Oklahoma Graduate Bulletin

The University of [Oklahoma Graduate College Bulletin](#) is an essential resource for doctoral students, providing a comprehensive guide to the policies, procedures, and academic requirements necessary for successful progression and completion of doctoral programs. This bulletin includes detailed sections on degree requirements, the roles and expectations for both students and faculty, and key academic processes such as examinations, dissertation requirements, and graduation. The bulletin is designed to ensure that students and faculty have a clear understanding of all academic obligations and administrative processes at the University of Oklahoma. Policies and procedures covered in the bulletin include:

- **Requirements for the Doctoral Degree:** This section details the Graduate College requirements, including residence requirements, responsibilities of the academic unit, and course credit requirements. It also covers policies regarding enrollment in coursework at another institution, transfer credits, and the limitations on certain types of course credits.
- **The Advisory Conference:** Information on the formation and responsibilities of the Advisory Conference Committee, including committee membership and guidelines for making changes to the Advisory Conference Report.
- **The Doctoral Committee:** Outlines the composition of the doctoral committee and the procedures for changes to the committee, especially if a member leaves the university.

- **The General Examination:** Discusses the scheduling, participation, authority, and potential outcomes of the general examination, including what happens if the results are marginal or unsatisfactory.
- **The Dissertation:** Includes enrollment requirements for dissertation research, specific stipulations for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree, and comprehensive details about the dissertation defense process.
- **Degree Completion and Graduation:** Provides a checklist for doctoral students to ensure all requirements are met for degree completion and graduation.

Policy on Graduate Student Minimum and Maximum Credits

The OU Graduate College defines minimum and maximum credits loads accordingly:

General Full-Time Enrollment:

- During the Fall and Spring semesters, graduate students need to enroll in at least nine credit hours to be considered full-time.
- In the Summer semester, the requirement drops to six credit hours.

Graduate Assistants:

- For qualifying graduate assistants, the full-time enrollment requirement is reduced to five credit hours in the Fall/Spring and three credit hours in the Summer.
- If it's their declared final term, only two credit hours are needed for full-time status, provided they have a minimum of a .50FTE (full-time equivalent) appointment.

Credit Hour Limits:

- Ph.D. students are typically capped at sixteen credit hours in Fall/Spring and nine in the Summer without special permission from their dean.

Special Considerations:

- Students using Veterans' Benefits should consult with Veteran Student Services, as not all enrolled hours may count towards VA benefits.
- Students seeking financial aid should be aware that there might be additional enrollment regulations impacting their eligibility. It's advised to consult the Student Financial Center for detailed information.

For Ph.D. students, meeting these enrollment requirements is important not only for maintaining their student status but also for ensuring access to financial and other benefits that can support their studies. More detailed information on graduate assistantships and enrollment policies can be found on the [Graduate College website](#).

Annual Review of Progress Policy

An annual review of doctoral students is conducted to ensure they are making satisfactory progress towards the completion of their coursework and overall degree requirements. Each year, students are encouraged to actively engage in reviewing their program of work at the beginning of each semester. Adjustments or revisions to their program should be discussed and submitted to the Ph.D. Program Director.

Furthermore, the Graduate College mandates that all doctoral and master's programs conduct an annual review of the progress of their students. The results of these evaluations are communicated to each student in writing, ensuring transparency and clear feedback on their academic progress.

If there are concerns regarding a student's progress, particularly for those who have not yet completed their coursework, a meeting will be scheduled with the Ph.D. Program Director. For students who have advanced to candidacy, the chair of their dissertation committee will also be invited to this meeting. The primary goal of this meeting is to assess whether the student is on track to successfully complete their degree and to strategize any necessary interventions or adjustments to their study plan.

Additionally, each doctoral student is required to engage in an annual assessment of core competencies and expectations alongside their mentor(s) or dissertation supervisor/chair every April. This evaluation is part of a broader effort to support Ph.D. students in developing the skills and knowledge essential for their academic and professional success. This process involves a variety of activities that may be undertaken with the guidance of their mentors or through independent research initiatives. The structured feedback from this evaluation helps tailor the doctoral education to the individual needs and goals of the student, fostering a focused and effective path to degree completion.

Continuance in Program Policy

These procedures build on the Retention Standards and Graduation Standards introduced earlier in this Handbook, under Program Requirements and Standards.

Meeting scholastic performance criteria is essential but not solely sufficient for continuance in the Doctoral Program. Academic standards within the program encompass both professional behavior and scholastic performance. To continue in the Doctoral Program, students must not only pass the comprehensive examination and meet scholastic performance standards but also adhere to all criteria for scholastic and professional behavior as outlined in the document, [Student Performance Policy](#)

This important document covers criteria related to students' communication and interpersonal skills, emotional and mental health, and compliance with standards of professional commitment, behavior, and ethical obligations. It also details the grounds and processes for dismissal from the program, which may include failing to meet scholastic performance criteria, scholastic dishonesty, behavior that violates the current NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics, any threat or attempt to harm oneself or others, and consistent patterns of unprofessional behavior.



The current Student Performance Policy is linked above and is the authoritative version. Students are strongly encouraged to review this document thoroughly to fully understand the additional criteria and details that are crucial for maintaining good standing in the doctoral program. This comprehensive approach ensures that all students not only achieve academic success but also uphold the high standards of professional conduct expected at the University of Oklahoma.

Credit/No Credit Courses

Policy

At the University of Oklahoma, the Graduate School policy allows students to take up to sixteen (16) credit hours on a credit/no credit (CR/NC) basis.

Leave of Absence Policy

Students who encounter extenuating circumstances may request a leave of absence (LOA) from their Ph.D. program. To initiate this process, students must submit a request that includes the reason for

the leave and confirm that they will not utilize University facilities during the leave period. This request must be submitted to and approved by the Ph.D. program director.

Upon approval by the Ph.D. program director, the request is then submitted electronically to the Dean of the Graduate School, who also needs to approve the leave. It's essential that supporting documentation accompanies the LOA form, and an email supporting the request from the Ph.D. program director may be included if necessary.

Leaves of absence are granted on a case-by-case basis; they are neither automatic nor guaranteed.

Requests should ideally be made well in advance of the intended start date of the leave.

Policy Details:

- **Duration:** A LOA may be granted for up to two (2) years for medical reasons or other serious circumstances, such as active military duty or other documented unavoidable situations.
- **Facility Use:** Students on an approved LOA are not permitted to use University facilities or faculty time. Should a student need to access these resources, they must terminate their leave by registering for a minimum of three dissertation hours for that semester.
- **Health Insurance and GRA Status:** Students on a LOA will not retain their Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) status and must arrange for their own health insurance during the leave period.
- **Reinstatement:** If a student cannot return to the program within the two-year limit, they will be withdrawn from the program. Students who were in good academic standing at the time of their withdrawal have the option to reapply for admission into the program.

Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work Policies

Student Performance Policy

For students in the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work at the University of Oklahoma, maintaining high standards of academic and professional behavior is paramount. The [Student Performance Policy](#) provides detailed guidelines on academic performance, professional conduct, and the evaluation processes in place to support student development and accountability. This document is essential for students to understand the criteria for their assessments, the support systems available, and the expectations the school holds for its community. To ensure you are fully aware of these policies and how they may affect your academic journey, you are encouraged to review the document early in your academic career.

Student Records Policy

Students who wish to access their academic records can submit a request through the program assistant, ensuring to copy the Ph.D. program director on the request. It is important to note that there are certain exceptions to this access right, such as reference letters for which the student has waived their right to review.

Grade Appeal Policy

At the University of Oklahoma, the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, housed within the Dodge Family College of Arts and Sciences, adheres to a structured Academic Appeals process. This framework ensures fairness in resolving academic disputes related to evaluations or concerns about instructional effectiveness due to language proficiency.

Important Links for More Information:

- For detailed guidelines on the appeals process, visit the [Academic Appeals page](#).
- To access the appeals form directly, please see the [Academic Appeal Form](#).

Process Overview:

- **Initial Steps:** Students should first discuss any academic disputes directly with the involved instructor. If unresolved, the next step is to consult the department chair. Specific deadlines are February 15 for the fall semester, September 15 for the spring or summer terms, and within 15 calendar days for issues identified during the semester.
 - **Filing for a Hearing:** If initial resolution attempts are unsuccessful, students must file a written request for a hearing with the Academic Appeals Board within 10 calendar days.
 - **Board Function:** The Academic Appeals Board's role is to mediate or adjudicate unresolved disputes. It establishes its own rules of procedure to ensure fairness.
 - **Final Decisions:** Decisions by the Board are final unless an appeal is filed with the Executive Committee within 10 days. A subsequent appeal may be made to the college faculty, whose decision is conclusive.
 - **Privacy:** Board meetings may be closed to the public to ensure confidentiality.
-

Grading and Academic Standing Policies

Grading Policies

At the University of Oklahoma, nearly all courses, excluding dissertation hours, are assessed using a letter grading system. This grading policy ensures clarity and consistency in evaluating student performance across most academic activities within the graduate programs.

Grade Requirements and Participation

All Ph.D. students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. While individual grades below "B" in elective courses are tolerated, maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0 is essential to avoid jeopardizing any Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) or Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA). Students are also expected to attend and actively participate in their courses, as well as engage in additional learning opportunities such as seminars and colloquia offered by the College.

Incomplete Grades

The designation of "I" (incomplete) is reserved for extraordinary circumstances and should not be used to improve course grades. An incomplete grade does not affect the GPA immediately but must be resolved within one calendar year. If not resolved, it will automatically convert to an "F" and be calculated into the GPA. It is the student's responsibility to complete the coursework within this timeframe.

Post Facto Credit Policy

At the University of Oklahoma, the Graduate School allows upper-division undergraduates, non-degree undergraduates, or transient summer students to enroll in graduate-level courses if they meet the prerequisites for those courses. While credits earned in this manner do not automatically count towards a graduate degree, students who later gain admission to the Graduate College and a specific degree program may petition to have these credits applied to their graduate degree requirements. It is important to note that these credits cannot be used towards any other degree. This policy ensures that credits are specifically allocated to the appropriate academic trajectory.

Academic Probation Policy

The University's policy on academic probation is as follows: A graduate student will be placed on academic probation if their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 upon completion of 3 hours of graduate coursework. To continue in the program, the student must achieve a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher in each subsequent semester. Once a student's cumulative GPA reaches 3.0, they will be removed from probationary status.

Academic Termination

Academic Dismissal Policy

Regarding dismissal, if a student on academic probation fails to secure a semester GPA of 3.0 in a subsequent semester, their graduate study status will be terminated by the Dean of the Graduate School, unless the academic unit justifies continuation, which the Dean must approve. A written notice will be provided for dismissal by the department or program, with a copy sent to the Graduate School. If departmental requirements are more stringent than the University's standards, the Dean will review the student's record to determine eligibility for registration in another study area.

Ph.D. Student Responsibilities

Ph.D. students at the University of Oklahoma have a responsibility to remain well-informed about university policies and program requirements that govern their studies. Here's what this involves:

Receiving Communications

Ph.D. students should expect to receive regular emails and announcements from the Ph.D. program, College, Graduate School, and University. These communications are essential for staying informed about program requirements and updates.

Valuing Communication:

All electronic communications are important and contain information critical to the student's academic progress. Students should view each piece of communication as valuable, even if it does not seem immediately relevant.

Active Engagement

Students are required to engage actively with these communications by reading, considering, and responding promptly. Responses are expected typically within 24 hours to address any requirements or actions needed.

Resource Utilization and Compliance

Students should frequently consult the Ph.D. student handbook and the Graduate College website not only for guidance but also to ensure compliance with all regulations and deadlines. This includes accessing necessary forms and understanding procedural requirements.

Responsibility for Compliance and Deadlines

It is the student's responsibility to comply with all program regulations and meet stipulated deadlines. This encompasses submitting required forms for academic processes like GRA matching, dissertation committee formation, and defense scheduling in a timely manner, without needing repeated reminders.

Information Mastery

Students must ensure they fully understand and can effectively apply the information necessary to meet all the program expectations and requirements.

Ethical Behavior

The School of Social Work at the University of Oklahoma adheres to the [NASW Code of Ethics](#), which outlines the ethical standards and expectations for behavior and professionalism in social work. Students in the social work program are required to exhibit conduct that reflects these ethical standards. Any behavior or statements that contradict these principles, including derogatory remarks about race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability, may lead to a review of a student's eligibility to continue in the program. For detailed information on what constitutes professional behavior and the consequences of ethical violations, please refer to the [School of Social Work's Student Performance Policy](#).

Stay Up to Date on Policy

- **University of Oklahoma Student Code:** Adherence to the standards of conduct as outlined in the [University of Oklahoma Student Code](#) is crucial for maintaining a respectful and ethical academic environment.
- **Graduate College Bulletin:** Students must stay current with university policies and procedures as detailed in the [OU Graduate College Bulletin](#), along with other official communications from the Graduate College and the Ph.D. program office.
- **School of Social Work Student Conduct Code:** Similarly, compliance with the [School of Social Work Student Performance Policy](#). It is essential for fostering a professional and ethical learning atmosphere.

Student Resources

This section provides an extensive overview of the support services and resources available to students. This section aims to enhance the academic, personal, and professional development of our doctoral candidates, ensuring they have access to all necessary tools to succeed in their studies and future careers.

University of Oklahoma Accessibility and Disability Resources Center

For a comprehensive exploration of the resources available to students with disabilities at the University of Oklahoma, visit the [Accessibility and Disability Resource Center's Student Resources page](#). This page is meticulously designed to ensure that all students, particularly those with disabilities, receive the support and tools necessary for a successful educational journey.

Detailed Overview of OU ADRC Student Resources



- **Personalized Accommodation Plans:** The center offers personalized accommodation services, including but not limited to extended test time, note-taking assistance, and specialized seating arrangements. These accommodations are tailored to meet the specific needs of each student, ensuring equitable access to educational content and assessments.
- **Advanced Assistive Technologies:** Students have access to state-of-the-art assistive technologies. This includes screen reading software, text-to-speech programs, and Braille printers, which facilitate access to educational materials and enhance learning experiences.
- **Advocacy and Liaison Services:** The ADRC actively advocates for students by collaborating with faculty and staff across campus. This ensures that all university facilities, programs, and events are accessible. They also act as a liaison to address and resolve any issues related to disability inclusion.
- **Educational and Awareness Workshops:** Regular workshops are conducted to educate both the student body and university staff on disability rights, accessibility best practices, and ways to support an inclusive campus culture.
- **Individual Consultations for Accessibility Issues:** The center provides one-on-one consultations to discuss and address specific accessibility concerns, whether they are related to physical campus navigation, digital accessibility, or classroom accommodations.
- **Referral to Campus and Community Resources:** The ADRC serves as a hub for connecting students with additional support services both within the university and in the wider community. This includes academic support services, mental health resources, and professional organizations specializing in support for individuals with disabilities.
- **Networking and Support Groups:** Opportunities for students to connect with peers who share similar experiences are available, fostering a supportive community environment. These groups can be instrumental in sharing resources, offering mutual support, and enhancing the social aspects of university life.

University of Oklahoma Student Health Plan

The University of Oklahoma offers a comprehensive Student Health Plan designed to provide necessary medical coverage for its students, ensuring they are protected against the high costs of medical care in the United States. This plan is especially beneficial for Graduate Assistants, who are automatically enrolled as part of their employment benefits. By providing health insurance through the university system, OU helps safeguard the educational pursuits and financial stability of its students and their families. For detailed information about the benefits and enrollment process, students can visit the [University of Oklahoma Student Health Plan resource page](#).

University of Oklahoma Counseling and Wellness Resources

In addition to the Student Health Plan, the University of Oklahoma offers counseling and wellness services intended for the ordinary pressures of graduate study as well as more significant concerns. Current students can find information on individual counseling, group sessions, crisis support, and wellness programming through University Counseling Services and the Goddard Health Center. Because service names, hours, and referral procedures can change, students should confirm current offerings and how to make an appointment directly with University Counseling Services rather than relying solely on this Handbook.

Graduate Research Assistants and other students who are also employees of the University may have access to additional confidential support through the university's Employee Assistance Program; eligibility and enrollment details are available through OU Human Resources.

University of Oklahoma Graduate College Resources

For detailed information about the resources available to graduate students at the University of Oklahoma, you can visit the [OU Graduate College resources page](#). This page provides a comprehensive guide to the support services designed to enhance the educational, personal, and professional development of its graduate students.

Overview of OU Graduate College Resources:

- **Academic Support:** The Graduate College offers a variety of academic support services, including workshops, seminars, and mentoring programs to enhance research skills and academic performance.
- **Health and Wellness:** There are resources focused on maintaining mental and physical health, including access to mental health services and wellness programs, acknowledging the pressures faced by graduate students.
- **Career Services:** These services prepare students for the workforce with career counseling, resume workshops, networking events, and job fairs, aligning educational achievements with career objectives.
- **Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Guidance on obtaining financial support through fellowships, grants, scholarships, and assistantships is available, helping to ease the financial challenges of graduate studies.
- **International Student Services:** Specialized support for international students includes visa assistance, cultural adjustment resources, language support, and orientation programs.
- **Housing and Living Assistance:** Assistance in finding suitable living arrangements, with resources that help students explore housing options both on and off-campus.

Appendices

Appendix I - Social Work Ph.D. Required Courses

The Social Work Ph.D. program at the University of Oklahoma features a series of required courses designed to establish a robust foundation in both the theoretical and practical aspects of social work. These courses are essential for cultivating a deep understanding of advanced research methodologies, social work theories, and the application of these concepts in professional practice. Enrollment in these courses is mandatory for all students admitted to the Ph.D. program, and they must adhere to a prescribed sequence to facilitate a coherent educational progression. Each course is structured to meet the program's high academic standards, ensuring students are well-prepared for their comprehensive exams and subsequent dissertation research. Students are encouraged to consult the program catalog and the university's registration system for detailed listings and descriptions of these courses.

Required Courses

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
SWK 6003	3	Theories for Social Work	Fall	To delve into social work theories, exploring their philosophical, theoretical, and empirical foundations.
SWK 6011	1	Doctoral Professional Seminar I	Fall	Focuses on career opportunities in academia, research, policy, and more, including job search processes.

SWK 6013	3	Applied Quantitative Research Methods	Fall	Covers quantitative research designs and methods for data analysis in social work research.
SWK 6021	1	Doctoral Professional Seminar II	Spring	Aims at professional development planning and self-care strategies for doctoral students.
SWK 6023	3	Applied Qualitative Research Methods	Spring	Focuses on qualitative research methodologies and data collection techniques in social work.
SWK 6031	1	Doctoral Professional Seminar III	Fall	Concentrates on effective teaching, mentoring, and ethical considerations in academia.
SWK 6033	3	Social Work Andragogy and Methods	Fall	Explores effective teaching methods and adult learning principles in social work education.
SWK 6041	1	Doctoral Professional Seminar IV	Spring	Discusses navigating diverse career paths in research, policy, and international work.
SWK 6043	3	Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis	Spring	Advanced methodologies for analyzing qualitative data, emphasizing coding techniques and thematic analysis.
SWK 6053	3	Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis	Spring	Advanced statistical techniques for practical application in research analysis.
SWK 6980	5	Dissertation Hours	Fall, Spring	Required enrollment in two credit hours per semester (except summer) to maintain continuous enrollment.

Appendix II - Research Methods and Data Analysis Electives

Research methods and data analysis electives offer our Social Work Ph.D. students the opportunity to deepen their research capabilities by engaging with graduate-level courses outside of the School of Social Work, within other programs at the University of Oklahoma. These electives are designed to enhance students' proficiency in advanced research methodologies and data analysis techniques that complement their social work studies and individual research projects.

Eligibility Criteria for Research Methods and Data Analysis Electives:

1. **Graduate-Level Courses:** All electives must be graduate-level courses focused on research methods or data analysis.
2. **Permission of Instructor:** Students must obtain permission from the course instructor to enroll.
3. **Identification as a Ph.D. Student:** Students should identify themselves as Ph.D. students to ensure course content and assignments meet doctoral-level expectations.
4. **Inquiry for Additional Assessment:** If courses are primarily designed for Master's level students, Ph.D. students should inquire about additional assignments or assessments to align with doctoral standards.
5. **Permission of Ph.D. Director:** Enrollment in these electives requires approval from the Ph.D. program director to ensure alignment with the student's research goals.

Course Listings: Below is an incomplete listing of potential courses available as research methods and data analysis electives. Offered across various departments and faculties at the University of Oklahoma, these courses reflect the interdisciplinary and analytical emphasis of our doctoral program. This list is not exhaustive; students are encouraged to explore additional opportunities each semester by consulting the full list of available courses through the University Registration System.

Courses represent disciplines such as Anthropology, Human Relations, Political Science, Sociology, and Psychology, focusing particularly on methodologies and analytical techniques.

For more detailed information about each course, including prerequisites and semester offerings, students should consult the respective departmental course catalogs or contact the Ph.D. program director.

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
ANTH 5543	3	Research Design	Irreg.	Studies ethnographic research methods and design, focusing on current practices and theoretical disputes.
ANTH 6223	3	Community Engaged Anthropology	Irreg.	Examines community-engaged research from historical, methodological, and practical perspectives.
ANTH 6810	1-4	Research in Ethnology	F, Sp, Su	Permits independent fieldwork to study problems in ethnology.
ANTH 5083	3	Quantitative Methods in Anthropology	Irreg.	Introduces basics of quantitative analysis in anthropology, covering various statistical techniques.

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
ANTH 5213	3	Ethnographic Methods	Irreg.	Surveys ethnographic methods in anthropological research, including hands-on research components.
ANTH 5433	3	Ethnographic Writing	Irreg.	Focuses on creative ethnographic writing, teaching students to translate ethnographic findings into insightful studies.
H R 5023	3	Research in Human Relations	Sp	Focuses on designing and implementing research projects related to students' area of concentration in human relations.
H R 5122	2	Research in Human Relations II: Qualitative	F, Sp	Introduces qualitative research methods in human relations, emphasizing multiple epistemological approaches.
H R 5203	3	Graduate Research and Writing for Human Relations	Irreg.	Prepares students to produce clear, effective graduate-level academic writing and to conduct thorough online research.
P SC 5143	3	Program Evaluation and Applied Policy Analysis	F	Focuses on the methodology of planning and evaluating government policies and programs.
P SC 5923	3	Introduction to Analysis of Political Data	F	Introduces research methods and statistical analysis for political science, focusing on developing a basic research project.
P SC 5933	3	Intermediate Analysis of Political Data	Sp	Continues the study of quantitative methods in political science, covering advanced topics such as regression and ANOVA.
P SC 5940	1-3	Advanced Research Methods: Special Topics	Irreg.	Introduces advanced qualitative or quantitative analytical methods for research-focused students.
P SC 5950	2-5	Research Problems	F, Sp, Su	Allows students to undertake independent research projects across various areas of political science.
P SC 5953	3	Qualitative Research Methods	Irreg.	Provides training in qualitative research methods, preparing students for dissertation research.
SOC 5283	3	Fundamentals of Sociological Statistics	Irreg.	Covers advanced statistical concepts and analysis, focusing on variance and regression analysis using computers.
SOC 5293	3	Advanced Methods of Social Research	Irreg.	Focuses on advanced research methodology with an emphasis on concept measurement and index formation.
SOC 5313	3	Qualitative Research Methods	Sp	Surveys different qualitative methodological strategies used in social sciences.

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
SOC 5323	3	Advanced Qualitative Research	F	Designed to immerse students in conducting qualitative research in the field, focusing on participatory observation and ethnography.
SOC 5483	3	Advanced Regression Analysis	Irreg.	Introduces linear regression analysis at the graduate level, focusing on model specification and interpretation.
SOC 5683	3	Categorical, Panel, and Advanced Statistical Analyses	Irreg.	Focuses on categorical outcome regression models and advanced statistical models used in social sciences.

Appendix III - Specialization Electives

Specialization electives provide our Social Work Ph.D. students with an opportunity to enhance their academic experience by taking graduate-level courses outside of the School of Social Work, within other programs at the University of Oklahoma. These electives allow students to develop additional expertise in areas that complement their social work studies and support their individual research interests.

Eligibility Criteria for Specialization Electives:

1. **Graduate-Level Courses:** All electives must be graduate-level courses.
2. **Permission of Instructor:** Students must obtain permission from the course instructor to enroll.
3. **Identification as a Ph.D. Student:** Students should identify themselves as Ph.D. students when seeking permission to ensure that course content and assignments are appropriate for their level of study.
4. **Inquiry for Additional Assessment:** For courses primarily designed for Master's level students, Ph.D. students should inquire if additional assignments or assessments are required to ensure the coursework meets doctoral standards.
5. **Permission of Ph.D. Director:** Enrollment in specialization electives requires approval from the Ph.D. program director to ensure the chosen courses align with the student's academic and research goals.

Course Listings:

Below is an incomplete listing of potential courses available to Ph.D. students as specialization electives. These courses are offered across various departments and faculties at the University of Oklahoma, reflecting the interdisciplinary approach of our doctoral program. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and students are encouraged to explore additional elective opportunities that meet their academic needs and interests each semester by viewing the complete list of available courses through the [University Registration System](#).

Courses listed here represent a range of disciplines including Anthropology, Human Relations, Political Science, Sociology, and Psychology, among others.

For more detailed information about each course, including prerequisites and semester offerings, students should refer to the respective departmental course catalogs or contact the Ph.D. program director.

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
ANTH 5643	3	Psychiatric Anthropology	Irreg.	Explores historical and contemporary thinking about culture and mental illness.
ANTH 5843	3	Cross-Cultural Study of Sex, Gender and Sexuality	Irreg.	Examines ethnographic material challenging traditional understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality.

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
H R 5053	3	Diversity and Justice in Organizations	Irreg.	Focuses on justice concepts and organizational diversity amidst changing demographics.
H R 5233	3	Strategic Leadership for Intercultural Awareness	F, Sp, Su	Enhances leadership skills with a focus on intercultural awareness and effective management.
H R 5243	3	Developing Inclusive Leaders in a Diverse World	F, Sp, Su	Prepares leaders to promote inclusivity in diverse organizational settings.
H R 5373	3	Grant Writing	Irreg.	Teaches skills necessary for writing and managing grants.
H R 5403	3	Psycho-Social Development	F, Sp	Discusses human psycho-social development across different social contexts.
H R 5473	3	Women and Mental Health	Irreg.	Focuses on psychological theories and practices relevant to women.
H R 5583	3	Social Justice Counseling	Irreg.	Integrates social justice theories into counseling practices.
H R 5593	3	Multicultural Counseling	Irreg.	Increases understanding and skills for counseling culturally diverse groups.
H R 5603	3	Play Therapy with Children	Irreg.	Covers theories and practices of play therapy for children.
H R 5623	3	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	Irreg.	Focuses on the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD.
H R 5653	3	Grief, Death and Dying	Irreg.	Explores grief counseling, particularly focusing on death and dying.
H R 5683	3	Working with Divorcing Families	Irreg.	Prepares students for counseling with families experiencing divorce.
H R 5693	3	Issues in Aging	Irreg.	Provides insights into gerontology and contemporary issues affecting the elderly.
H R 5713	3	Women, Work, and the Family	Irreg.	Explores dynamics related to women in family and workplace contexts.
H R 5723	3	Sexism and Homophobia	Irreg.	Addresses the intersection of sexism, homophobia, and related social dynamics.
H R 5743	3	Violence Against Women and Children	Irreg.	Examines the impacts of violence on women and children and discusses intervention strategies.
H R 5753	3	Advanced Theories: Diversity and Justice	F, Sp, Su	Examines diversity and justice from a sociological perspective.
H R 5763	3	Human Sexuality	Irreg.	Discusses contemporary research and debates on human sexuality.
H R 5773	3	Policy, Program, and Practice	F, Sp, Su	Explores the interplay between policy, programs, and practice in addressing equity and inclusion.

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
H R 5783	3	Advanced Theories: Strategies of Social Change	F, Sp, Su	Discusses strategies of social and political change and their impacts.
H R 5793	3	Social Change and the Law	F, Sp, Su	Examines social justice within various areas of law.
H R 5893	3	Psychopharmacology	F, Sp, Su	Introduces psychopharmacology, focusing on the use of psychotropic medications in mental health.
P SC 5033	3	Foundations of Nonprofit Management	Irreg.	Introduces theories and practices in nonprofit management, focusing on organizational challenges and strategic responses.
P SC 5063	3	Nonprofits and the Public Sector Relations	Irreg.	Explores collaborative dynamics between nonprofit and public sectors in service delivery.
P SC 5093	3	Grants and Contracts	Irreg.	Discusses strategies for writing effective grant and contract proposals and managing projects within public and nonprofit sectors.
P SC 5103	3	Organizations: Design, Structure and Process	F	Analyzes organizational design and structural theories, focusing on decision-making and technological processes in public agencies.
P SC 5143	3	Program Evaluation and Applied Policy Analysis	F	Focuses on the methodologies for planning and evaluating public policies and programs.
P SC 5243	3	Managing Public Programs	Irreg.	Covers management principles applicable to public sector organizations.
P SC 5343	3	Public Policy and Inequality	F	Examines public policy's role in shaping and addressing social and economic inequalities.
P SC 5903	3	Social Movement Theory	Irreg.	Studies theories of social movements and their impact on public policy and social change.
P SC 5233	3	Health Policy	Irreg.	Provides an understanding of health policy making and administration in the U.S.
SOC 5823	3	Social Demography	Irreg.	Introduces demographic variables and data sources for studying population changes.
SOC 5033	3	Sociology of Housing	F	Studies housing development, issues, and policy in the U.S. since 1860.
SOC 5143	3	Program Evaluation	Irreg.	Emphasizes research design and economic analysis in public policy evaluation.

Course Number	Credit Hours	Title	Semester Offered	Purpose
SOC 5833	3	Social Psychology	Irreg.	Explores research topics in social psychology and personality studies.
SOC 5383	3	Social Stratification	Irreg.	Examines sociological theories and research on social stratification and inequality.
SOC 5543	3	Deviance and Social Control	Irreg.	Investigates theories and research on deviance and social control.
SOC 5623	3	Race and Ethnicity	Irreg.	Studies theories of racial and ethnic relations and their social impacts.
SOC 5703	3	Sociology of Education	F	Discusses the interplay between education systems and societal structures.
SOC 5723	3	Sociology of the Family	Irreg.	Analyzes family dynamics, changes, and their implications for society.
SOC 5733	3	Sociology of Gender	Irreg.	Examines gender issues across various social contexts.
SOC 6373	3	Sociology of Sexualities	Irreg.	Considers sociological perspectives on sexuality and gender identity.
SOC 6503	3	Women and Crime	Irreg.	Focuses on the sociological aspects of women's involvement in crime.
PSY 6713	3	Leadership Theories, Research, and Practice	Irreg.	Examines leadership theories and practices across various contexts.
PSY 5423	3	Current Theories in Social Psychology	Irreg.	Covers contemporary theories and research in social psychology.
PSY 5433	3	Classic Issues in Social Psychology	Irreg.	Reviews foundational theories and studies in social psychology.

Appendix IV: Directed Reading / Independent Study Contract (S WK 5960 or S WK 5990)

Course Overview and Contract Structure

This contract follows a standard eleven section structure so that every Directed Reading (S WK 5960) and Independent Study (S WK 5990) course is documented, graded, and supported the same way. Two completed illustrative examples follow this blank template: one for an Independent Study, and one for a Directed Reading built around the Social Welfare Policy Analysis component of the Comprehensive General Examination.

Credit Hours:

Semester:

Student Name:

Student ID:

Faculty Supervisor:

Date of Agreement:

1. Course Overview

Course Title:

Briefly describe the focus of the course, what the student will study or produce, and how the course relates to the student's program of work.

Course Type (check one):

- ☐ S WK 5960 Directed Readings: faculty-guided study of a focused set of readings on a specific topic.
☐ S WK 5990 Independent Study: student-directed investigation or project mutually agreed upon with the faculty supervisor.

2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Connection to Long-Term Academic/Professional Goals:

3. Timeline and Milestones

In addition to what is included below, outline specific deliverables or checkpoints with due dates. A mid-semester review is required.

Assignment	Description	Due

--	--	--

4. Assignment Descriptions

For each graded assignment listed in Section 7, describe the required components, the length and format, the process for feedback and revision, and the due date.

5. Student Responsibilities

- Completion of assigned readings, projects, or written work according to the agreed schedule.
- Participation in regular biweekly faculty meetings.
- Communication of challenges or delays as they arise.
- Participation in a mid-semester review to reflect on progress and revise goals if necessary.

6. Faculty Responsibilities

- Provide initial guidance in defining goals and scope.
- Offer timely feedback during the semester, especially at the mid-term review.
- Evaluate the student's work using transparent and documented criteria.
- Assign a final grade based on performance relative to stated objectives.
- Meet biweekly with the student to discuss readings, progress, and feedback.

7. Grading Breakdown

Graded Activity or Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade

Total: 100%

8. Evaluation Criteria

This course is letter graded (A through F), consistent with other three credit graduate coursework. The General Evaluation Rubric below is applied to every graded assignment listed in the Grading Breakdown, using the required components described for that assignment in Section 4 as the basis for evaluation within each dimension. Numeric scores are then converted to a final letter grade using the Grade Scale table at the end of this section.

General Evaluation Rubric:

Dimension	90 to 100 (A)	80 to 89 (B)	70 to 79 (C)	69 and below (F)
Conceptual and Technical Quality	Demonstrates excellent, accurate understanding and application of the relevant concepts to this assignment.	Demonstrates adequate understanding and application of the relevant concepts, with minor gaps.	Demonstrates partial understanding; application of concepts needs improvement but shows significant effort.	Does not demonstrate an adequate grasp of the relevant concepts.
Rigor and Completeness	Fully and accurately addresses all	Addresses all required	Addresses most required	Fails to address the required

	required components for this assignment at a professional academic level.	components adequately, with minor omissions or inconsistencies.	components, but with notable gaps that require improvement.	components at an acceptable level.
Integration and Application	Excellent integration of relevant literature, prior coursework, or the assigned project, as applicable to this assignment.	Adequate integration of relevant literature, prior coursework, or the assigned project.	Limited integration; connections are present but underdeveloped.	Little or no meaningful integration or application.
Clarity and Organization	Clear, well organized, and professionally presented in the appropriate format.	Generally clear and organized, with minor issues in format or presentation.	Organization or clarity issues that require improvement, though effort is evident.	Unclear or disorganized to a degree that impedes understanding.
Timeliness and Professionalism	Submitted on time, with strong responsiveness to feedback and professional engagement.	Submitted on time, with adequate responsiveness to feedback.	Late or minimally responsive to feedback but shows effort.	Not submitted on time and unresponsive to feedback.

Grade Scale (Numeric to Letter Grade Conversion):

Numeric Score	Letter Grade	Descriptor
90 to 100	A	Excellent, exceeds course expectations
80 to 89	B	Good, meets course expectations
70 to 79	C	Fair, partially meets course expectations, improvement needed
69 and below	F	Failing, does not meet course expectations

Final Grade Assigned: Numeric Score: _____ Letter Grade: _____

9. Signatures

By signing below, both parties agree to the expectations, deliverables, and evaluation plan outlined in this contract.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Director/Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

10. Supporting Materials

Rather than being submitted as separate attachments, the supporting materials that accompany this contract are incorporated directly into the body of this document, as follows:

- Project description, proposal, or reading list: incorporated in Sections 1, 2, and 4.
- Timeline and milestones: incorporated in Section 3.

11. Reading Plan (Preliminary)

List the primary text(s) and supplemental readings for this course in APA 7th edition format.

Example 1: Independent Study Contract (Illustrative)

The example below shows a fully completed Independent Study contract with identifying details replaced by bracketed placeholders, so it can serve as a model for any student and faculty supervisor.

Credit Hours:

3

Semester:

[Semester, Year]

Student Name:

[Student Name]

Student ID:

[Student ID Number]

Faculty Supervisor:

[Faculty Supervisor Name]

Date of Agreement:

[Date]

1. Course Overview

Course Title: Independent Study in Applied Factor Analysis within Program Evaluation

This Independent Study course will emphasize a focused investigation of Quantitative Factor Analysis and how it can be implemented in real-world program evaluations. Under faculty mentorship, the student will engage in activities such as getting IRB approval for research, engaging in conceptual investigations of factor analysis through reading and processing academic material under the guidance of the professor, running an actual program evaluation, creating evidence-based questionnaires, and applying the concepts derived from the readings to this final project. The course will also support the student's broader scholarly development by exposing them to the rigors and complexities involved in gathering data, conducting statistical analyses, and also working with real-world agencies to collaborate on community-based research that aims to both meet agency-specific goals while simultaneously deriving objective, evidence-based scientific data.

Course Type (check one):

- ☐ S WK 5960 Directed Readings: faculty-guided study of a focused set of readings on a specific topic.
- ☒ S WK 5990 Independent Study: student-directed investigation or project mutually agreed upon with the faculty supervisor.

2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Critically analyze and synthesize scholarly literature related to Factor Analysis.
2. Demonstrate a proven ability to grasp the concept and apply it to various data sets.
3. Develop questionnaires that gather data for concepts related to Collective Hope, Burnout, and other relevant variables like Team Cohesion (relative to change).

4. Develop foundational capacities for conducting a quantitative research project focused on employee data collection, including quantitative survey instrument development, IRB preparation materials, and recruitment strategies.
5. Use this collected data to perform a Factor Analysis and derive evidence-based conclusions from it.
6. Learn to work with colleagues on all the aforementioned objectives.

This course may be structured as a collaborative project if more than one student is enrolled.

Connection to Long-Term Academic/Professional Goals:

This course supports the student's development of advanced quantitative research competency in factor analysis, which the student can use for future research and potentially their dissertation. The student will also gain meaningful experience writing IRB proposals, running program evaluations, collecting data, creating surveys, and doing complex data analysis.

3. Timeline and Milestones

In addition to what is included below, outline specific deliverables or checkpoints with due dates. A mid-semester review is required.

Assignment	Description	Due
Conceptual Synthesis Paper 1	Initial conceptual synthesis paper: student will synthesize assigned readings with a 2-3 page paper demonstrating their understanding of the previous month's readings. This paper will form the foundation of a literature review for a publishable paper that will serve as the deliverable of the class.	Week 1-3
Draft of Program Evaluation	Student will draft a program evaluation plan for the program evaluation to be conducted at [Partner Agency/Organization Name].	Week 4
IRB & Ethical Research Materials	Draft development of consent forms, recruitment materials, survey administration procedures, confidentiality plans, and ethical considerations related to surveying employees at the partner agency. Written IRB approval must be obtained before any data collection begins.	Week 5 (must be approved before Week 6)
Conceptual Synthesis Paper 2	2nd conceptual synthesis paper: student will synthesize readings with a 2-3 page paper demonstrating their understanding of the previous month's readings. This will include a methods section that describes the usage of factor analysis using data obtained via the program evaluation.	Week 6
Data Collection	Student will spend this time collecting data from 100-500 employees at [Partner Agency/Organization Name] related to Collective Hope, Burnout, and Team Cohesion. Data collection may not begin until written IRB approval has been received.	Weeks 6-11
Conceptual Synthesis Paper 3	3rd conceptual synthesis paper: student will synthesize readings with a 2-3-page paper demonstrating their understanding of the previous month's readings.	Week 9
Final Analysis of Data	Final submission of a written Factor Analysis of the collected data including the data and critical analysis of the data. Material aimed to be considered adequate for actual publication. Estimated length: 20 to 25 pages, double spaced, including references.	Weeks 12 to 14, with final submission during Finals Week

Agency Presentation of Findings	Student will present the purpose, methods, findings, and practical recommendations of the program evaluation and factor analysis to relevant stakeholders at [Partner Agency/Organization Name], in language accessible to a non-academic agency audience.	Finals Week
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4. Assignment Descriptions

Conceptual Synthesis Papers 1, 2, and 3

Each conceptual synthesis paper asks the student to critically synthesize the readings assigned during the preceding month and to connect that literature directly to the applied program evaluation conducted at [Partner Agency/Organization Name]. The three papers build cumulatively toward the literature review and methods sections of the Final Analysis Report.

Required Components:

- Synthesis of the assigned readings for the corresponding month, with attention to how each source informs the program evaluation
- A clear organizing argument connecting the readings to Collective Hope, Burnout, or Team Cohesion as measured in this project
- For Paper 2 only, a methods section describing how factor analysis will be applied to the data obtained through the program evaluation
- APA 7th edition formatting for in-text citations and the reference list

Length and Format:

- Length: 2 to 3 pages per paper, double spaced, not including references
- Format: academic paper with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion
- Professional, analytic tone appropriate for a literature review

Process: The student drafts each paper independently and submits it to the faculty supervisor at the corresponding biweekly meeting for written feedback. Feedback on each paper should be incorporated into the literature review and methods sections of the Final Analysis Report.

Due Dates: Paper 1, Weeks 1 to 3. Paper 2, Week 6. Paper 3, Week 9.

Program Evaluation Plan

The student designs a written plan for the program evaluation to be conducted at [Partner Agency/Organization Name]. This plan translates the course learning objectives into a concrete evaluation design and gives the faculty supervisor and agency contact a shared reference point before data collection begins.

Required Components:

- Statement of evaluation purpose and evaluation questions
- Description of the population, sampling approach, and target sample size of 100 to 500 employees
- Identification of the constructs to be measured, Collective Hope, Burnout, and Team Cohesion, and the instruments used to measure them
- Data collection procedures and proposed analytic approach
- A timeline for evaluation activities and a plan for communicating results back to the agency

Length and Format:

- Length: 4 to 6 pages, double-spaced
- Format: written evaluation plan with headed sections corresponding to the components above

Process: The student drafts the plan, revises it in consultation with the faculty supervisor, and finalizes it in consultation with the agency contact at [Partner Agency/Organization Name] before it is implemented.

Due Date: Week 4.

IRB and Ethical Research Materials

Required Components:

- Completed IRB application appropriate to the review level anticipated for this project
- Informed consent form and recruitment materials
- Description of data storage, security, and confidentiality procedures
- Final version of the quantitative survey instrument, submitted as supporting documentation

Length and Format:

- Length as required by the University of Oklahoma IRB submission checklist; no fixed page count
- Format: completed IRB application packet with all required attachments

Process: The student drafts all materials and submits them to the faculty supervisor for review before formal submission to the IRB office, then revises the materials in response to IRB feedback until written approval is received. No data collection activity described below may begin until this approval is granted.

Due Date: Week 5, with written IRB approval required before the Data Collection period begins in Week 6.

Data Collection

Once IRB approval has been received, the student administers the finalized quantitative survey instrument to 100 to 500 employees at [Partner Agency/Organization Name], measuring Collective Hope, Burnout, and Team Cohesion.

Required Components:

- Recruitment consistent with the approved IRB materials
- Secure storage of all collected data
- A one page progress memo at the midpoint of the collection period summarizing response rate and any recruitment concerns
- Initial data cleaning and a preliminary descriptive summary of the data set

Process: The student begins data collection only after receiving written IRB approval and follows the approved consent and recruitment procedures throughout.

Due Dates: Weeks 6 to 11, contingent on IRB approval obtained in Week 5. Progress memo due at Week 8.

While the primary academic use of the data will be for the program evaluation study, the data itself may be used for future publication by the student(s) depending on the nature of the findings.

Final Analysis Report

The Final Analysis Report is the culminating written product of the course. It integrates the literature review and methods content developed across the three Conceptual Synthesis Papers with the results of the factor analysis performed on the data collected at [Partner Agency/Organization Name]. The report should be written at a level of quality adequate to submit for publication consideration.

Required Components:

- Literature review section, drawing on and extending Conceptual Synthesis Papers 1 through 3

- Methods section describing the program evaluation, sample, instruments, and analytic approach
- Results section reporting the factor analysis
- Discussion section connecting the findings to the literature on Collective Hope, Burnout, and Team Cohesion and to the practical needs of the partner agency
- Reference list in APA 7th edition format

Length and Format:

- Length: approximately 20 to 25 pages, double spaced, including references.

Process: The student submits a complete draft to the faculty supervisor for feedback and revises the draft prior to final submission.

Due Dates: Weeks 12 to 14, with final submission during Finals Week.

Agency Presentation of Findings

As a culminating activity connecting the academic and applied components of this course, the student presents the results of the program evaluation and factor analysis to relevant stakeholders at [Partner Agency/Organization Name].

Required Components:

- A 20-to-30-minute presentation summarizing the purpose, methods, and findings of the program evaluation in language accessible to a non-academic agency audience
- Practical recommendations for the agency based on the findings
- A brief question and answer period with agency stakeholders

Length and Format:

- Slide deck of approximately 12 to 18 slides
- One-page executive summary handout for agency staff

Process: The student schedules the presentation and prepares materials in consultation with the faculty supervisor, delivers the presentation to the agency contact and relevant staff, and submits a short written summary of the feedback received.

Due Date: Finals Week, scheduled in coordination with the availability of [Partner Agency/Organization Name].

5. Student Responsibilities

- Completion of assigned readings per the reading plan.
- Participation in regular biweekly faculty meetings.
- Submission of analytic and reflection memos as assigned.
- Development of a quantitative survey instrument and preliminary IRB materials.
- Conducting and reflecting upon pilot testing of the quantitative survey instrument with a small sample prior to full-scale administration.
- Completion of a theoretically grounded, reflexively developed, and pilot tested quantitative survey instrument suitable for future dissertation or independent research development.

6. Faculty Responsibilities

- Provide initial guidance in defining goals and scope.
- Offer timely feedback during the semester, especially at the mid-term review.
- Evaluate the student's work using transparent and documented criteria.
- Assign a final grade based on performance relative to stated objectives.
- Meet biweekly with the student to discuss readings, progress, and feedback.

7. Grading Breakdown

Graded Activity or Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Conceptual Synthesis Paper 1	5%
Program Evaluation Plan	10%
IRB and Ethical Research Materials	10%
Conceptual Synthesis Paper 2	5%
Data Collection and Participation	5%
Conceptual Synthesis Paper 3	5%
Final Analysis Report	40%
Agency Presentation of Findings	10%
Biweekly Meeting Participation and Professionalism	10%

Total: 100%

8. Evaluation Criteria

This course is letter graded (A through F), consistent with other three credit graduate coursework. The General Evaluation Rubric below is applied to every graded assignment listed in the Grading Breakdown, using the required components described for that assignment in Section 4 as the basis for evaluation within each dimension. Numeric scores are then converted to a final letter grade using the Grade Scale table at the end of this section.

General Evaluation Rubric:

Dimension	90 to 100 (A)	80 to 89 (B)	70 to 79 (C)	69 and below (F)
Conceptual and Technical Quality	Demonstrates excellent, accurate understanding and application of the relevant concepts to this assignment.	Demonstrates adequate understanding and application of the relevant concepts, with minor gaps.	Demonstrates partial understanding; application of concepts needs improvement but shows significant effort.	Does not demonstrate an adequate grasp of the relevant concepts.
Rigor and Completeness	Fully and accurately addresses all required components for this assignment at a professional academic level.	Addresses all required components adequately, with minor omissions or inconsistencies.	Addresses most required components, but with notable gaps that require improvement.	Fails to address the required components at an acceptable level.
Integration and Application	Excellent integration of relevant literature, prior coursework, or the assigned project, as applicable to this assignment.	Adequate integration of relevant literature, prior coursework, or the assigned project.	Limited integration; connections are present but underdeveloped.	Little or no meaningful integration or application.
Clarity and Organization	Clear, well organized, and professionally	Generally clear and organized, with minor issues in	Organization or clarity issues that require	Unclear or disorganized to a

	presented in the appropriate format.	format or presentation.	improvement, though effort is evident.	degree that impedes understanding.
Timeliness and Professionalism	Submitted on time, with strong responsiveness to feedback and professional engagement.	Submitted on time, with adequate responsiveness to feedback.	Late or minimally responsive to feedback but shows effort.	Not submitted on time and unresponsive to feedback.

Grade Scale (Numeric to Letter Grade Conversion):

Numeric Score	Letter Grade	Descriptor
90 to 100	A	Excellent, exceeds course expectations
80 to 89	B	Good, meets course expectations
70 to 79	C	Fair, partially meets course expectations, improvement needed
69 and below	F	Failing, does not meet course expectations

Final Grade Assigned: Numeric Score: _____ Letter Grade: _____

9. Signatures

By signing below, both parties agree to the expectations, deliverables, and evaluation plan outlined in this contract.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Director/Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

10. Supporting Materials

Rather than being submitted as separate attachments, the supporting materials that accompany this contract are incorporated directly into the body of this document, as follows:

- Project description and proposal: incorporated in Section 1 (Course Overview), Section 2 (Learning Objectives), and Section 4 (Assignment Descriptions).
- Timeline and milestones: incorporated in Section 3 (Timeline and Milestones).
- Reading list and preliminary bibliography: incorporated in Section 11 (Reading Plan).

11. Reading Plan (Preliminary)

Primary Text:

Brown, T. A. (2015). Confirmatory factor analysis for applied research (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Supplemental readings:

Evudottir, E. E., & Heimisson, G. T. (2024). Using confirmatory factor analysis and qualitative methods to translate, adapt, and revise personality inventories: The example of the HEXACO-100 and HEXACO-60 in Icelandic. *Psychological Test Adaptation and Development*, 5(1), 117 to 126.

Fine, A. H., Thayer, C. E., & Coghlan, A. (2000). Program evaluation practice in the nonprofit sector. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 10(3), 331 to 339.

Hellman, C. M., Pharris, A., Munoz, R., Schaefer, S., & Featherngill, J. (2025). Perceived collective hope: Development and validation of a scale. *European Management Journal*. Advance online publication.

Jones, A. E., Walters, J. E., & Brown, A. R. (2024). Confirmatory factor analysis of the Social Worker Satisfaction Scale. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 34(4), 450 to 461.

Smith, J. D., & Hasan, M. M. I. (2020). Quantitative approaches for the evaluation of implementation research studies. *Psychiatry Research*, 283, Article 112521.

Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., & Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways: Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(4), 570 to 585.

Example 2: Directed Reading Contract (Illustrative)

The example below shows a completed Directed Reading contract built to prepare a student for the Social Welfare Policy Analysis section of the Comprehensive General Examination, using a child welfare policy as the illustrative case.

Credit Hours:

3

Semester:

[Semester, Year]

Student Name:

[Student Name]

Student ID:

[Student ID Number]

Faculty Supervisor:

[Faculty Supervisor Name]

Date of Agreement:

[Date]

1. Course Overview

Course Title: Directed Reading in Social Welfare Policy Analysis: Family Preservation, Prevention Services, and Child Welfare System Reform

This Directed Reading course provides focused preparation for the Social Welfare Policy Analysis component of the Comprehensive General Examination. Under faculty guidance, the student will complete a structured sequence of readings on social welfare policy analysis frameworks and apply one such framework to a specific piece of federal child welfare legislation, the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA, P.L. 115-123). Through a sequence of synthesis papers and a culminating policy analysis paper, the student will practice each stage of the policy analysis process required for the exam: describing the background and context of a social problem, selecting and justifying an analytic framework, examining relevant policy provisions, assessing strengths and weaknesses, evaluating outcomes, and formulating recommendations. The course is designed to build the independent scholarship and analytic writing skills the student will need to complete the Social Welfare Policy Analysis section of the Comprehensive General Examination.

Course Type (check one):

- ☒ S WK 5960 Directed Readings: faculty-guided study of a focused set of readings on a specific topic.
☐ S WK 5990 Independent Study: student-directed investigation or project mutually agreed upon with the faculty supervisor.

2. Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Critically analyze and synthesize scholarly, legal, and policy literature relevant to the U.S. child welfare system, with emphasis on family preservation, foster care prevention, and permanency.

2. Compare candidate social welfare policy analysis frameworks and select and justify one for analyzing federal child welfare legislation.
3. Examine the background, context, and legislative history of the Family First Prevention Services Act within the broader history of federal child welfare policy, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.
4. Assess the strengths, weaknesses, and unintended consequences of the Family First Prevention Services Act for children, families, and state child welfare systems.
5. Evaluate available implementation and outcome evidence related to prevention services, congregate care placements, and family reunification.
6. Formulate evidence-based policy recommendations addressing identified implementation gaps or unintended consequences.
7. Produce a policy analysis paper structured according to the Social Welfare Policy Analysis outline required for the Comprehensive General Examination.

Connection to Long-Term Academic/Professional Goals:

This course situates the student's developing expertise in child welfare policy within the broader program of research and provides direct, structured preparation for the required Social Welfare Policy Analysis section of the Comprehensive General Examination. The analytic framework, background research, and writing produced in this course may also inform a future policy-relevant chapter of the student's dissertation.

3. Timeline and Milestones

In addition to what is included below, outline specific deliverables or checkpoints with due dates. A mid-semester review is required.

Assignment	Description	Due
Policy Synthesis Paper 1	Initial synthesis paper: student will synthesize assigned readings on the history of the U.S. child welfare system and the family preservation versus child safety policy debate, with a 2-3 page paper demonstrating their understanding of the previous month's readings.	Weeks 1-3
Policy Analysis Framework Memo	Student identifies and justifies the social welfare policy analysis framework to be applied to the Family First Prevention Services Act, and outlines how the framework's components will structure the Final Policy Analysis Paper.	Week 4
Annotated Bibliography	Student compiles an annotated bibliography of sources addressing the background, provisions, and implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act.	Week 5
Policy Synthesis Paper 2	2nd synthesis paper: student synthesizes readings on the core provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act (prevention services, congregate care limits, licensing standards) and their relationship to the Adoption and Safe Families Act and prior law. Includes a draft background and context section.	Week 6
Draft Analysis: Strengths and Weaknesses	Student drafts the section of the Final Policy Analysis Paper assessing the strengths, weaknesses, and unintended	Weeks 7-9

	consequences of the Family First Prevention Services Act, applying the chosen framework.	
Policy Synthesis Paper 3	3rd synthesis paper: student synthesizes empirical and practice literature on early implementation outcomes of the Family First Prevention Services Act (for example, prevention service utilization, congregate care placement rates, and state-level variation).	Week 9
Draft Outcomes Evaluation and Recommendations	Student drafts the sections evaluating policy outcomes and articulating evidence-based recommendations.	Weeks 10-11
Final Policy Analysis Paper	Final submission of the integrated Policy Analysis Paper, following the required components in Section 4. Written at a level of quality that models the Social Welfare Policy Analysis section of the Comprehensive General Examination.	Weeks 12 to 14, with final submission during Finals Week
Practice Oral Discussion	Student presents a summary of the policy analysis findings to the faculty supervisor and responds to questions, simulating the oral defense component of the Comprehensive General Examination.	Finals Week

4. Assignment Descriptions

Policy Synthesis Papers 1, 2, and 3

Each policy synthesis paper asks the student to critically synthesize the readings assigned during the preceding period and to connect that literature directly to the developing policy analysis of the Family First Prevention Services Act. The three papers build cumulatively toward the background and context, and literature review, sections of the Final Policy Analysis Paper.

Required Components:

- Synthesis of the assigned readings for the corresponding period, with attention to how each source informs the policy analysis
- A clear organizing argument connecting the readings to the family preservation and child safety dimensions of child welfare policy
- For Paper 2 only, a description of the core provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act and their relationship to the Adoption and Safe Families Act and prior law
- APA 7th edition formatting for in-text citations and the reference list

Length and Format:

- Length: 2 to 3 pages per paper, double spaced, not including references
- Format: academic paper with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion
- Professional, analytic tone appropriate for a literature review

Process: The student drafts each paper independently and submits it to the faculty supervisor at the corresponding biweekly meeting for written feedback. Feedback on each paper should be incorporated into the corresponding section of the Final Policy Analysis Paper.

Due Dates: Paper 1, Weeks 1 to 3. Paper 2, Week 6. Paper 3, Week 9.

Policy Analysis Framework Memo

The student identifies and justifies the social welfare policy analysis framework that will structure the Final Policy Analysis Paper (for example, Chambers and Wedel's practical public policy analysis method or Gilbert and Terrell's dimensional framework).

Required Components:

- Brief description of at least two candidate frameworks considered
- Justification for the framework selected, including its fit with the Family First Prevention Services Act as a case
- An outline of how the framework's components will structure the Final Policy Analysis Paper

Length and Format:

- Length: 2 to 3 pages, double spaced

Process: The student drafts the memo and finalizes the choice of framework in consultation with the faculty supervisor.

Due Date: Week 4.

Annotated Bibliography

Required Components:

- 12 to 15 sources addressing the legislative history, provisions, and implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, and/or child welfare policy analysis more broadly
- A brief annotation for each source describing its content and its relevance to the policy analysis
- APA 7th edition reference formatting

Length and Format:

- Length: approximately 4 to 6 pages

Due Date: Week 5.

Final Policy Analysis Paper

The Final Policy Analysis Paper is the culminating written product of the course and mirrors the required structure of the Social Welfare Policy Analysis section of the Comprehensive General Examination.

Required Components:

- Introduction and the importance of policy analysis in addressing the social problem of family separation, permanency, and child safety
- Background and context of the social problem and related policies, including the history of federal child welfare policy from mandatory reporting through the Adoption and Safe Families Act to the Family First Prevention Services Act
- Selection and explanation of the chosen policy analysis framework
- Detailed policy analysis, including examination of relevant policy provisions, assessment of policy strengths and weaknesses, and evaluation of policy outcomes
- Policy recommendations based on the analysis findings
- Reference list in APA 7th edition format

Length and Format:

- Length: approximately 15 to 20 pages, double spaced, including references (scaled for a directed reading; the Comprehensive General Examination itself requires 50 to 60 pages excluding references)

Process: The student submits a complete draft to the faculty supervisor for feedback and revises the draft prior to final submission.

Due Dates: Weeks 12 to 14, with final submission during Finals Week.

Practice Oral Discussion

As a culminating activity connecting the reading and writing completed in this course to the oral defense skills required at the Comprehensive General Examination, the student presents a summary of the policy analysis to the faculty supervisor.

Required Components:

- A 20-to-30-minute presentation summarizing the background, framework, findings, and recommendations of the policy analysis
- A brief question and answer period with the faculty supervisor addressing anticipated committee questions

Length and Format:

- Presentation outline or slide deck of approximately 8 to 12 slides

Due Date: Finals Week.

5. Student Responsibilities

- Completion of assigned readings per the reading plan.
- Participation in regular biweekly faculty meetings.
- Submission of synthesis papers, the framework memo, the annotated bibliography, and drafts according to the agreed schedule.
- Development of a policy analysis paper suitable for use as a model for the Social Welfare Policy Analysis section of the Comprehensive General Examination.
- Active, professional engagement in the feedback and revision process.
- Participation in the practice oral discussion simulating the oral defense component of the Comprehensive General Examination.

6. Faculty Responsibilities

- Provide initial guidance in defining goals and scope, including the selection of the child welfare policy to be analyzed.
- Offer timely feedback during the semester, especially at the mid-term review.
- Evaluate the student's work using transparent and documented criteria.
- Assign a final grade based on performance relative to stated objectives.
- Meet biweekly with the student to discuss readings, progress, and feedback.

7. Grading Breakdown

Graded Activity or Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade
Policy Synthesis Paper 1	10%
Policy Analysis Framework Memo	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Policy Synthesis Paper 2	10%
Policy Synthesis Paper 3	10%
Final Policy Analysis Paper	35%
Practice Oral Discussion	5%
Biweekly Meeting Participation and Professionalism	10%

Total: 100%

8. Evaluation Criteria

This course is letter graded (A through F), consistent with other three credit graduate coursework. The General Evaluation Rubric below is applied to every graded assignment listed in the Grading Breakdown, using the required components described for that assignment in Section 4 as the basis for evaluation within each dimension. Numeric scores are then converted to a final letter grade using the Grade Scale table at the end of this section.

General Evaluation Rubric:

Dimension	90 to 100 (A)	80 to 89 (B)	70 to 79 (C)	69 and below (F)
Conceptual and Technical Quality	Demonstrates excellent, accurate understanding and application of the relevant concepts to this assignment.	Demonstrates adequate understanding and application of the relevant concepts, with minor gaps.	Demonstrates partial understanding; application of concepts needs improvement but shows significant effort.	Does not demonstrate an adequate grasp of the relevant concepts.
Rigor and Completeness	Fully and accurately addresses all required components for this assignment at a professional academic level.	Addresses all required components adequately, with minor omissions or inconsistencies.	Addresses most required components, but with notable gaps that require improvement.	Fails to address the required components at an acceptable level.
Integration and Application	Excellent integration of relevant literature, prior coursework, or the assigned project, as applicable to this assignment.	Adequate integration of relevant literature, prior coursework, or the assigned project.	Limited integration; connections are present but underdeveloped.	Little or no meaningful integration or application.
Clarity and Organization	Clear, well organized, and professionally presented in the appropriate format.	Generally clear and organized, with minor issues in format or presentation.	Organization or clarity issues that require improvement, though effort is evident.	Unclear or disorganized to a degree that impedes understanding.
Timeliness and Professionalism	Submitted on time, with strong responsiveness to feedback and professional engagement.	Submitted on time, with adequate responsiveness to feedback.	Late or minimally responsive to feedback but shows effort.	Not submitted on time and unresponsive to feedback.

Grade Scale (Numeric to Letter Grade Conversion):

Numeric Score	Letter Grade	Descriptor
90 to 100	A	Excellent, exceeds course expectations
80 to 89	B	Good, meets course expectations
70 to 79	C	Fair, partially meets course expectations, improvement needed
69 and below	F	Failing, does not meet course expectations

Final Grade Assigned: Numeric Score: _____ Letter Grade: _____

9. Signatures

By signing below, both parties agree to the expectations, deliverables, and evaluation plan outlined in this contract.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Program Director/Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

10. Supporting Materials

Rather than being submitted as separate attachments, the supporting materials that accompany this contract are incorporated directly into the body of this document, as follows:

- Reading list and bibliography: incorporated in Section 11 (Reading Plan).
- Timeline and milestones: incorporated in Section 3 (Timeline and Milestones).

11. Reading Plan (Preliminary)

Primary Texts:

Chambers, D. E., & Wedel, K. R. (2012). Social policy and social programs: A method for the practical public policy analyst (5th ed.). Pearson.

Gilbert, N., & Terrell, P. (2013). Dimensions of social welfare policy (8th ed.). Pearson.

Supplemental readings:

Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-89, 111 Stat. 2115.

Berrick, J. D. (2018). The impossible imperative: Navigating the competing principles of child protection. Oxford University Press.

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2018). Family First Prevention Services Act fact sheet. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

Family First Prevention Services Act, Pub. L. No. 115-123, Div. E, 132 Stat. 232 (2018).

Font, S. A., & Gershoff, E. T. (Eds.). (2020). Foster care and best interests of the child: Integrating research, policy, and practice. Springer.

Roberts, D. E. (2002). Shattered bonds: The color of child welfare. Basic Civitas Books.

Stoltzfus, E. (2018). The Family First Prevention Services Act (P.L. 115-123): Highlights of child welfare provisions (CRS Report No. R45073). Congressional Research Service.

Appendix V: Advising Calendar

This appendix maps the entire program in a single view: which advisor is responsible at each stage, what phase a student is typically in, and what each of the two annual advising sessions covers. Full-time and part-time students reach these phases on different timetables, consistent with the Program Completion Timetable earlier in this Handbook, so the year ranges below are typical rather than fixed. Part-time students should always confirm their individualized plan of study with the Ph.D. Program Director as well.

Advising Cadence at a Glance

Program Year	Advisor	Typical Phase	Fall Session Focus	Spring Session Focus
Year 1	Ph.D. Program Director (initial advisor)	Coursework	Confirm enrollment, plan spring registration, begin the search for a permanent advisor	Finalize a permanent advisor by April 1, plan fall registration, complete the first annual core competency assessment
Year 2 (full-time) / Years 2 to 3 (part-time)	Chosen (permanent) advisor	Coursework completion	Confirm enrollment, plan spring registration, build the research agenda	Identify a comprehensive exam topic and committee, plan fall registration, submit the Advisory Conference Report
Year 3 (full-time) / Year 4 (part-time)	Chosen advisor, as committee chair	Comprehensive Exam and candidacy	Draft the exam proposal and secure committee approval	Complete the exam paper and oral defense, apply for candidacy
Year 3 to 4 (full-time) / Year 5 to 6 (part-time)	Chosen advisor, now dissertation chair	Dissertation	Draft or refine the dissertation proposal, or submit a complete draft; confirm continuous enrollment	Complete research, analysis, and writing; prepare for and complete the oral defense
Remaining years, up to Year 7	Chosen advisor	Dissertation completion and defense	Confirm continuous enrollment; plan a fall defense if applicable	Finalize revisions, secure committee approval, and submit to the digital repository

The sections that follow present the full agenda for each session, grouped first by semester and then by phase, so an advisor can turn straight to the right table for a given student.

Fall Semester Sessions: Preparing for Spring

Held once each fall, after classes are underway. The purpose of this session is to check on the semester in progress and to set up everything the student needs for spring: registration, committee or defense scheduling, and any deliverable due over the winter.

Year 1: Initial Advisor (Ph.D. Program Director)

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
Confirm fall enrollment	Verify the fall schedule matches the recommended full-time sequence (Theories for Social Work, Applied Quantitative	Classes begin late August;

	Research Methods, Applied Qualitative Research Methods, and Doctoral Professional Seminar I) or the individualized part-time plan of study developed with the Program Director.	add/drop closes early September
Review the program of work	Discuss how the semester is progressing and revisit the program of work, as required at the start of every term under the Annual Review of Progress Policy.	Beginning of term
Plan spring registration	Identify spring courses through the OU Class Search system and confirm any elective, directed reading, or independent study approvals are secured before spring registration opens.	Spring registration typically opens in October
Begin the search for a permanent advisor	Discuss the student's emerging research interests and identify faculty members whose interests align, encouraging early contact well ahead of the spring deadline.	Permanent advisor must be approached by April 1
Encourage professional development	Point the student toward fall workshops, faculty and alumni spotlights, and job talks, coordinating attendance with the student's GRA supervisor.	Ongoing through the fall

Coursework Completion: Chosen Advisor

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
Confirm fall enrollment	Verify the second-year schedule (an Advanced Statistics or Methods elective, two specialization electives, and Doctoral Professional Seminar III, or the equivalent part-time plan).	Classes begin late August
Hold the first check-in with the new advisor	Review research interests and how coursework choices are building toward a future comprehensive exam topic.	Beginning of term
Plan spring registration	Identify remaining specialization and methods electives needed to complete coursework and confirm approvals before spring registration opens.	October
Build the research agenda	The advisor begins shaping the student's early research agenda, consistent with the advisor's role during the coursework phase, and discusses professional networking opportunities.	Ongoing
Discuss publication and conference opportunities	Identify a first target for a conference presentation or manuscript, since supporting the student toward publication is part of the advisor's role in this phase.	Ongoing

Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy: Chosen Advisor

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
Confirm ACR approval	Verify the Advisory Conference Report is approved by the Graduate College, since it must be current before the exam can be scheduled.	Before the exam is scheduled
Select a topic and draft the proposal	Begin drafting the Comprehensive General Exam proposal under the chair's guidance.	August and September

Submit the proposal for review	Submit the initial proposal and gather committee feedback.	October
Finalize proposal approval	Incorporate feedback and resubmit for final approval, clearing the student to begin the research and writing phase.	November
Confirm committee composition	Verify the committee meets composition requirements before the exam proceeds.	Ongoing
Flag Graduate School deadlines	Note the deadlines to apply for the Doctoral General Examination and to request a Degree Check, if the student is on that cycle this term.	September 4

Dissertation: Chosen Advisor

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
Confirm candidacy and committee appointment	Verify the Graduate School has officially appointed the Dissertation Committee following the candidacy application.	Early in the dissertation phase
Select a topic and draft the proposal	For a student beginning dissertation work, start drafting the proposal with the chair.	August and September, dissertation Year 1
Submit the proposal and gather feedback	Submit the proposal for initial committee review.	October, dissertation Year 1
Finalize proposal approval	Incorporate feedback and secure final approval to begin research.	November, dissertation Year 1
Confirm IRB approval	Verify Institutional Review Board approval is in place before any research with human subjects begins.	Before data collection
Review the complete draft	For a student further along, review the complete draft submitted for committee review and discuss revisions.	August through November, dissertation Year 2
Confirm continuous enrollment	Verify enrollment in at least two credit hours of SWK 6980 for the semester.	Every fall semester
Plan a fall defense, if applicable	If defending this fall, confirm the Request for Final Oral Examination and its supporting documents are submitted at least two weeks before the defense date.	Final day for a fall defense is in late November

Spring Semester Sessions: Preparing for Fall

Held once each spring. The purpose of this session is to close out the current year, complete the deliverables due in spring, and set up registration, committee work, and planning for the fall ahead.

Year 1: Initial Advisor (Ph.D. Program Director)

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
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Review spring progress	Confirm the spring schedule matches the recommended sequence (Social Work Andragogy and Methods, Advanced Quantitative Data Analysis, Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis, and Doctoral Professional Seminar II) and check in on grades and workload.	Beginning of term
Finalize permanent advisor selection	Confirm the student has identified and approached a faculty member, secure mutual agreement, and document the new advising arrangement with the Program Director. If the first choice has declined, help identify an alternative.	April 1
Plan fall registration	Identify second-year fall courses through the OU Class Search system and confirm approvals before fall registration opens.	Fall registration typically opens in March or April
Complete the annual core competency assessment	Conduct the required annual assessment of core competencies; for a first-year student this typically still involves the Program Director.	Every April
Confirm the written annual review	Ensure the student receives the Graduate College's required written annual review of progress.	Once each year
Hand off to the permanent advisor	Brief the incoming permanent advisor on the student's progress, research interests, and program of work so advising continues without gaps into the second year.	Before the second year begins

Coursework Completion: Chosen Advisor

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
Review spring progress	Confirm the spring schedule (Doctoral Professional Seminar IV and remaining electives) and check in on coursework completion.	Beginning of term
Plan fall registration	Confirm all required coursework will be complete before the comprehensive exam year begins and identify any remaining electives for the fall.	March
Identify a comprehensive exam topic, chair, and committee	Begin the conversation about a comprehensive exam topic, confirm the advisor's role as committee chair, and identify additional committee members.	Ongoing, ahead of the exam year
Submit the Advisory Conference Report	Confirm the ACR is completed and submitted to the Graduate College, since it must be filed at least one semester before the general examination.	At least one semester before the exam
Complete the annual core competency assessment	Conduct the required annual assessment with the now-established permanent advisor.	Every April
Plan summer coursework	Discuss the summer specialization elective built into the curriculum sequence.	Summer term

Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy: Chosen Advisor

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
Monitor the research and writing phase	Check progress on the exam paper, which is drafted from December through February.	December through February
Confirm paper submission	Confirm the exam paper is submitted at the beginning of March and track the committee's feedback.	Early March
Prepare for the oral defense	Help the student prepare for the oral defense, typically scheduled for mid-April.	Mid-April
Review the defense outcome	Discuss the outcome, determined immediately after the defense, and any required revisions.	April
Begin candidacy materials	If the student passed, begin the Statement of Preparation, the Rationale for Dissertation Committee Membership, and the Application for Doctoral Candidacy.	Following a successful defense
Complete the annual core competency assessment	Conduct the required annual assessment.	Every April
Plan for the dissertation proposal	Begin identifying a dissertation topic, since formal proposal work is expected to start by the end of the second year, with candidacy targeted by the end of this year.	Ongoing

Dissertation: Chosen Advisor

Topic	What to Cover	Linked Deadline
Monitor research and data collection	Check progress on research and data collection for a student earlier in the dissertation.	December through February
Monitor data analysis and writing	Check progress on analysis and writing of the dissertation chapters.	March through May
Confirm final submission and pre-defense preparation	For a student further along, confirm the final dissertation version is submitted, and the student is preparing for the oral defense.	December through February, dissertation Year 2
Prepare for and review the oral defense	Support preparation for the oral defense and discuss the outcome: pass, redo, or fail.	March
Finalize revisions and committee approval	Confirm any required revisions are completed and approved by the full committee.	April and May
Plan the final copy and submission	Discuss formatting requirements, copyright permissions, authorship documentation, and any embargo decision, then confirm submission to the digital repository.	Before the Graduate College's final deadlines each May
Confirm continuous enrollment	Verify enrollment in at least two credit hours of SWK 6980 for the semester.	Every spring semester

Discuss career coaching and the job market	Connect the student with mock interviews, teaching demonstration tutorials, and other career coaching supports as graduation approaches.	Ongoing as graduation nears
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Reference Tables

OU Academic Calendar Quick Reference

Illustrated with Fall 2026 and Spring 2027 dates, the most recently published OU academic calendars at the time this appendix was prepared. Confirm the current year's dates with the OU Registrar.

Term	Date	Event
Fall	August 24	Classes begin; late registration fee begins
Fall	August 28	Final day to register or add a class without instructor permission
Fall	September 4	Final day to apply for the Doctoral General Examination and to request a Degree Check
Fall	September 8	Add/drop and 100% charge-reduction window closes
Fall	September 9 to October 30	Automatic grade of W for graduate students who drop a course
Fall	November 20	Final day to submit the Report of Reading Copy Submission
Fall	November 27	Final day for a fall dissertation defense
Fall	December 1	Final day to file a graduation application (for spring degree conferral)
Fall	December 4	Final day to complete the Doctoral General Examination, submit the Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission form, and complete a Non-Thesis Exam
Fall	December 14 to 18	Final examinations
Fall	December 18	Final day to complete work needed for graduation
Spring	January 19	Classes begin
Spring	January 22	Final day to register or add a class without instructor permission
Spring	January 30	Final day to apply for the Doctoral General Examination and to request a Degree Check
Spring	February 2 to April 2	Automatic grade of W for graduate students who drop a course
Spring	March 15 to 19	Spring break
Spring	April 1	Deadline for a permanent advisor to be identified and approached (Year 1 full-time, Year 2 part-time)
Spring	April 16	Final day to submit the Report of Reading Copy Submission
Spring	April 30	Final day for a spring dissertation defense
Spring	May 7	Final day to complete the Doctoral General Examination, submit the Approval for Thesis/Dissertation Submission form, complete a Non-Thesis Exam, and submit the dissertation to the electronic repository
Spring	May 10 to 14	Final examinations
Spring	May 14	Final day to complete work needed for graduation

Annual and Recurring Requirements

Several advising requirements are tied to the calendar year rather than to a single session, and they are easy to lose track of across a five- to seven-year program. This table gathers them in one place.

Requirement	Timing
Initial advisement	The Ph.D. Program Director serves as initial advisor through the first year for full-time students, or through the first two years for part-time students.
Permanent advisor selection deadline	April 1 of the first year for full-time students; April 1 of the second year for part-time students.
Program of work review	Beginning of each fall and spring semester, per the Annual Review of Progress Policy.
Written annual review of progress	Once each year; results are communicated to the student in writing by the Graduate College mandate.
Annual core competency assessment	Every April, between the student and their mentor or dissertation supervisor/chair.
Graduate Research Assistant appointment cycle	Runs August 1 through July 31 each year; funding is reviewed annually and is not guaranteed beyond each academic year, typically up to four years.
Continuous enrollment after candidacy	A minimum of two credit hours of SWK 6980 every fall and spring semester; summer enrollment is required only if defending or using university facilities that summer.
Target for advancement to candidacy	End of the third year for full-time students; end of the fourth year for part-time students, per the program's completion timetables.
Dissertation proposal window	Up to six months following candidacy approval.
Final deadlines set by the Graduate College	Candidacy within six years of admission; dissertation defense within seven years of admission.

Milestone Targets by Enrollment Status

The Handbook sets both a target completion point and, where applicable, a final Graduate College deadline for each major milestone. Use this table alongside the session tables above to judge whether a given advisee is on pace.

Milestone	Full-time target	Full-time final deadline	Part-time target	Part-time final deadline
Coursework completion	2 years	None specified	3 years	None specified
Comprehensive General Exam passed	3 years	None specified	4 years	None specified
Application to candidacy approved	3 years	6 years	4 years	6 years
Dissertation proposal approved	3.5 years	None specified	5 years	None specified
Dissertation defended	4 years	7 years	6 years	7 years

Used together, the cadence overview, the session tables, and these three reference tables give advisors a recurring, twice-a-year structure for tracking a student's progress from admission through dissertation defense, while leaving room for the individualized planning that part-time students require in consultation with the Ph.D. Program Director.

Appendix VI: Glossary of Acronyms

This glossary collects the acronyms used throughout this Handbook, defined as they are used here rather than as general dictionary entries. It is not exhaustive of every term OU or the Graduate College may use elsewhere.

Acronym	Meaning
ACR	Advisory Conference Report, described under Advisory Conference near the end of the Ph.D. Curriculum chapter.
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act.
ADRC	The University of Oklahoma's Accessibility and Disability Resource Center.
APA	American Psychological Association; the citation and formatting style required for the Comprehensive General Exam, dissertation, and related written work.
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P.L. 105-89), referenced in the Appendix IV illustrative Directed Reading example.
CESL	The University of Oklahoma's Center for English as a Second Language program, referenced under International Student Admission Requirements.
CR/NC	Credit / No Credit, a grading basis described under Credit/No Credit Courses Policy.
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education, referenced in connection with the Minority Fellowship Program.
DSW	Doctor of Social Work; DSW faculty may serve on Comprehensive General Exam committees alongside Ph.D. faculty.
EOO	The University of Oklahoma's Equal Opportunity Office, referenced under Institutional Equity Policies and the Equal Opportunity Grievance process.
FFPSA	Family First Prevention Services Act (P.L. 115-123), referenced in the Appendix IV illustrative Directed Reading example.
FTE	Full-time equivalent, used in describing graduate assistantship appointments.
GPA	Grade point average.
GRA	Graduate Research Assistant.
IRB	Institutional Review Board, described under Human Subjects Review in the Dissertation section.
iRIS	The University of Oklahoma's online system for submitting IRB research proposals.
LOA	Leave of Absence, described under Leave of Absence Policy.
M2 / M3 / RM3 / RM4	Graduate faculty membership levels defined by the Graduate College that determine who may serve on or chair a doctoral committee; described under Membership in the Advisory Conference section of the Ph.D. Curriculum chapter.
MFP	Minority Fellowship Program, administered by the Council on Social Work Education.
NASW	National Association of Social Workers, whose Code of Ethics governs student professional conduct.
NIH	National Institutes of Health, referenced as a source of human subjects protection training.
OU	The University of Oklahoma.
RCR	Responsible conduct of research, a training requirement described under Human Subjects Review in the Dissertation section.

SWK	The course subject code used for Social Work courses at OU, as in SWK 6003.
VA	The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; referenced in connection with Veterans' Benefits and enrollment requirements.