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# School of Social Work

## PhD Program Student Handbook (2022 edition)

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## **WELCOME TO THE LSU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK DOCTORAL PROGRAM!**

*On behalf of the LSU School of Social Work faculty and staff, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the PhD program! Your acceptance to the program is, without doubt, a major milestone in your life, and the faculty are eager to support, encourage, and sometimes challenge you as you pursue a knowledge-generating path that will contribute to the betterment of the social work profession. We hope you take full advantage of the learning opportunities availed to you by our internationally-recognized faculty who, quite literally, have no reason to be here without you. We look forward to getting to know each and every one of you.*

*Welcome!*

*Catherine Lemieux*

This handbook gives PhD students a valuable roadmap regarding the School's educational programs, services, opportunities, and student rights and responsibilities. Requirements and procedures specific to the PhD program are discussed in the handbook and additional information is available on the [School of Social Work](#) web page. This guide is intended as a supplement to the [LSU General Catalog - The Graduate School](#), which is the authoritative source for academic regulation of the University. It is the responsibility of graduate students to be familiar with the contents of the [LSU General Catalog – The Graduate School](#), the [LSU Graduate Student Handbook](#), as well as this handbook. Students are also responsible for being aware of and meeting all graduate deadlines posted on the Graduate School web page: [Graduate School Calendars](#).

This current handbook was updated in Fall 2022 by the School of Social Work Director, School of Social Work PhD Program Director, and the Office of Student Services.

All information in the handbook is subject to change.

## PHD PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

We at the LSU School of Social Work believe that doctoral education in social work must involve first and foremost a passionate commitment to learning, and a specific commitment to the pursuit of new knowledge that can improve the lives of our client populations. The PhD Program at the LSU School of Social Work prepares the next generation of social work educators, researchers, administrators, and policy-makers to contribute to the creation of the knowledge base of our profession. We prepare students above all else to conduct empirical research targeted at the pressing needs of our client populations and service systems. Social work practitioners must have the highest quality up-to-date knowledge to strengthen the evidence base of their work, and it is the job of doctoral-trained social workers to provide this.

The major educational outcomes for our doctoral students are:

- To learn about the historical and contemporary contexts of social work research, focusing on the nature of research questions posed and the methods used to address these;
- To learn to critically analyze the quality and merits of social work research in a variety of substantive areas;
- To produce original research relevant to the field of social work, including the framing of research questions, synthesis of the existing relevant literature, the use of appropriate methods to investigate answers to research questions, and the analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of data; and
- To translate learning to practice, especially through preparation for teaching beginning social work professionals.

The LSU School of Social Work doctoral program is the only PhD in Social Work program in Louisiana. Students are expected to explore diverse areas and traditions of inquiry and use a variety of research methods, all the while keeping a sharp focus on the need for information to inform social work practice. It is important to note that ours is not an advanced clinical program. The course of study in the doctoral program is completely oriented toward mastering the skills needed to design and conduct empirical social work research. The social work profession increasingly demands evidence-based knowledge and expertise in research and evaluation. Recently, the [Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work \(GADE\)](#), a consortium of social work PhD Program Directors, completed a national study that found that social work programs at virtually all levels in the United States face a tremendous shortage of doctoral-trained academicians to fill the ranks of the social work programs in our colleges and universities. Thus, there is a tremendous need for social work academicians who are properly trained, passionate about pursuing the answers to important questions affecting client populations, and eager to take on the challenges to improving social work practice and the well-being of our clients. The LSU School of Social work faculty is well-equipped to effectively mentor, support, and guide doctoral student research.

## DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

### **Minimum time & course credit requirements:**

- 6 semesters (3 years) full-time enrollment
- 54 graduate credit hours

### **Expected & maximum time for completion of degree:**

- Between 3 to 5 years of continuous, full-time enrollment
- Between 4 to 6 years of continuous, part-time enrollment
- Not more than 7 years

### **Phases of doctoral study:**

#### **1. Coursework**

- Core courses – 15 credit hours in social work core doctoral courses
- Research Methods & Statistics – 12 credit hours MINIMUM methods & statistics
- Interdisciplinary & Electives – 12 credit hours MINIMUM of elective coursework

#### **2. General Examination**

- Upon completion of 39 hours of required and elective coursework, students must sit for and pass a General Examination

#### **3. Dissertation**

- Enrollment in a MINIMUM of 15 dissertation credit hours
- Completion and oral defense of dissertation project proposal
- Completion of a traditional 5-chapter dissertation *or* a three-paper dissertation
- A formal, successful oral defense!

## DOCTORAL CURRICULUM TIMELINE

The following diagram is an overview of a general timeline to meet the requirements the doctoral curriculum, the components of which are described in detail in the following sections.

Year Credits	Semester 1	Semester 2	Summer
1 (≥ 18 credits)	SW 7200 Colloquium 1 Stats 1 SW 7807 Theories in SW	SW 7201 Colloquium 2 Stats 2 Elective CFS Concentration -CFS 7056 or CFS 7057	Activity Report
2 (≥ 21 credits)	SW 7202 Policy Research SW 7204 Intervention Research Advanced Methods or Stats	SW 7207 Integrative Seminar SW 7206 Research Practicum Elective Select & Confirm *Chair	SW 7205 Pedagogy Activity Report
3 (≥ 15 credits)	General Exam SW 9000 Dissertation Hours (≥ 3 credits)	Dissertation Proposal SW 9000 Dissertation Hours (≥ 3 credits)	Activity Report

Years 4 & Beyond

General Exam &/or Dissertation Proposal if not yet complete  
Dissertation  
SW 9000 Dissertation Hours (≥ 15 credits total)  
Electives according to interest/need

\*Students are encouraged to work with their Major Professor (also called "Chair") to determine appropriate electives that support their dissertation research. There is no maximum number of electives that can be taken; however, students are expected to balance training needs and time to conduct their dissertation research.

## DOCTORAL COURSEWORK

The coursework in the doctoral program in social work covers 3 areas: core courses, research methods & statistics, and interdisciplinary electives. Upon completing coursework, students must complete a General Examination, and then complete and orally defend a dissertation (referred to as the "Final Examination" by the LSU Graduate School).

### Core Social Work Doctoral Courses (15 credit hours)

The following 5 courses comprise the 15 required credit hours of core social work courses:

**SW 7200 Integrative Colloquium in Social Work I:** Broad-ranging analysis and discussion of problems and issues in the social work profession. Focuses on problem definition and literature reviews.

**SW 7201 Integrative Colloquium in Social Work II:** Broad-ranging analysis and discussion of problems and issues in the social work profession. Focuses on research methods and design.

**SW 7202 Issues and Research Problems in Social Policy:** Issues and problems in social welfare policy; research focus on policy formulation. Focuses on research design of projects focused on policy-relevant questions.

**SW 7204 Issues and Research Problems in Social Work Intervention:** Social work intervention with individuals, families, groups, and communities; formulation and development of problem-solving research agendas. Focuses on research design of projects conceptualizing and testing interventions.

**SW 7207 Integrative Seminar:** An Integrative Seminar to develop research questions and hypotheses. and initial drafts of the dissertation proposal, including introduction, literature review, and methods sections.

### Research Methods & Statistics Courses (12 credit hours MINIMUM)

A MINIMUM of 12 credit hours in research methods and statistical analysis.

#### ***Statistics***

**Stats 1:** Taken outside of department (e.g., POLI 7962, ELRC 7006)

**Stats 2:** Taken outside of department (e.g., POLI 7963, ELRC 7016)

#### ***Advanced Research Methods or Statistics***

One additional research or advanced statistics course chosen in consultation with Chair or Advisor and related to dissertation research (e.g., ELRC 7280 [Applied Research, Measurement & Evaluation], ELRC 7243 [Qualitative Methods in Educational Research], ELRC 7220 [Educational Program Evaluation]).

### ***SW 7206 Research Practicum***

Supervised research experience; demonstration of collaborative and/or independent research.

### **Interdisciplinary and Elective Courses (12 credit hours MINIMUM)**

A MINIMUM of 12 credit hours (4 courses) of elective, interdisciplinary coursework. With one exception regarding non-MSW students (described in next paragraph), electives should be in departments outside the School of Social Work. Students may consider courses in one or more of the following disciplines: Anthropology, Economics, Education, Finance, History, Human Ecology, Management, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology. Other disciplines not listed may also be considered with approval from the Director of the PhD Program or the Major Professor/Chair.

**Students Without the MSW Degree:** Students who are admitted to the program who do not hold the MSW degree must enroll in the 3-credit course, SW 7004, Human Diversity and Oppression.

### ***Masters Level Courses as Electives***

PhD students may enroll in masters level courses providing that additional depth and breadth of knowledge will be attained specific to students' research area of interest.

- Students must discuss course requirements with Chair/faculty advisor prior to enrollment
- Courses must be taught by a PhD-level instructor
- Excluding SW 7004 (Human Diversity and Oppression), Master's level courses must be in departments outside of the School of Social Work.

### ***Independent Studies***

An Independent Study (IS) is an individual-instruction course. A student does not attend class on a formal basis, but instead works with an individual professor on a subject of interest.

- Each IS is worth 3 credit hours
- A maximum of 6 credit hours of coursework may be IS
- Prior to enrollment in an IS, a written plan of work must be submitted to and approved by the student's Chair/ or Advisor
- Written evidence of approval must be presented prior to registration

### **Dissertation Hours (15 credit hours MINIMUM)**

While preparing for and completing their General Examination and dissertation research, students may enroll in Dissertation hours. These credit hours permit students to work independently on their dissertation projects and students are assigned a P/F grade, not a letter



grade. After successfully completing their General Examination, students must enroll in at least 15 credit hours of SW 9000 Dissertation hours before they can be considered for graduation.

## **GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS (GRAs)**

In GRA positions, students work closely with a faculty member who serves as the student's supervisor. The primary outcomes for GRAs are to (1) gain experience in conducting research and (2) learn about faculty responsibilities in academia. The PhD Program Director coordinates the appointment of GRAs and distributes notices for assignments. GRAs and their work are governed by [Policy Statement 21](#).

As a GRA, students may work on a research project in the faculty member's area of interest, which may or may not align with the student's area of interest. Dependent upon their level of engagement and quality of work, students may be given the opportunity to be included in scholarly activities that result from their work (e.g., submission of abstracts for conference presentations, co-authoring publications, development and submission of research grant proposals). Other GRA duties may include assisting faculty in course preparation and grading, or other administrative duties substantive to learning the role of a faculty member.

*GRA appointments require 20 hours per week of work in both the Fall and Spring semesters.* Location and schedule of work are negotiated by the student and the faculty member who supervises their work.

### **Criteria for GRA Appointment**

- Enrollment in a minimum of 9 credit hours in both fall and spring semesters
- GPA of 3.00 or higher
- Appointments for students enrolled in less than 9 credit hours will not be renewed

### **Supervision & Evaluation**

- GRAs are supervised by their assigned faculty member
- Evaluation of the student's performance is based on the following criteria: productivity, time commitment, dependability, initiative, relationships skills/behaviors, initiative, etc.
- Additional feedback may be offered by the PhD Program Director, based on information provided in the student's annual Activity Report

### **Resolution of GRA Concerns**

- GRAs are expected, if at all possible, to discuss any concerns regarding their work responsibilities with the faculty member supervising their work
- In the event that a student either believes that the faculty supervisor has not adequately addressed their concerns, or reports that they are uncomfortable speaking to their supervisor about their concerns, students should then direct their concerns to the PhD Program Director

- In the event that the student has first spoken with their faculty supervisor and the PhD Program Director, and their concerns remain unresolved, the student should then direct their concerns to the Director of the School of Social Work

## **SELECTION OF MAJOR PROFESSOR/CHAIR & DOCTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Major Professor/Chair is the faculty member who leads the doctoral advisory (DA) committee that oversees the General Examination, dissertation research and oral defense. Students are expected to identify and obtain the agreement of a faculty member who will serve as their Major Professor/Chair. During the coursework phase, students should meet with School of Social Work faculty broadly in order to identify the person(s) whom they would like to serve as their Major Professor/Chair. Students are encouraged to take the time to get to know faculty to make an informed decision; however, they should select a Chair *no later than the final semester of coursework*.

Once the student has selected their Major Professor/Chair, they should deliberate with the Chair to determine the other faculty members who will serve on their DA committee. In most cases, the composition of the DA committee remains constant for both the General Examination and the student's dissertation project.

### **DA Committee Composition Requirements**

- The Major Professor/Chair must be either an associate or full member of the LSU Graduate Faculty
- Two faculty members may serve as Co-Chairs
- A minimum of three (3) persons is required, plus the Dean's Representative assigned by the Graduate School
- At least one half the members must be full-time tenured or tenure-track LSU faculty
- A minimum of two (2) faculty members must be from the School of Social Work
- Other members may be from the School of Social Work or outside of the School of Social Work if pertinent to the area of concentration, so long as at least one is a full member of the graduate faculty
- A member from another university may serve in addition to LSU graduate faculty members if approved by the PhD Program Director and the Dean of Graduate School
- Any declared outside minors require representation, either from among the first three members of the committee or by additional appointments to the committee

## GENERAL EXAMINATION

### Purpose

The purpose of the General Examination is to evaluate students' knowledge and application of the material covered in coursework undertaken in the PhD program. Additionally, the General Examination asks students to develop and demonstrate expertise, as well as to integrate social work knowledge in an area specific to their academic interests. The final product from this exam is expected to substantively contribute to the development of the students' dissertation literature review, theoretical framework, and methods.

Students will begin to develop or refine specific substantive and research interests as they progress through the program, as well as identify faculty members who share these interests and who might serve on a DA committee. The Major Professor/Chair becomes the student's primary academic advisor, and henceforth will authorize, review, and sign all doctoral degree forms. Together, the student and Major Professor/Chair will then choose the rest of the DA committee membership to recommend to the Graduate School.

Due to the comprehensiveness and depth of the General Examination, students should set aside a concentrated study period, usually several months, to prepare for the written and oral components. The examination proposal, described in greater detail below, should facilitate decision making about the timing of the General Examination, which ultimately is determined by all parties: the Major Professor/Chair, DA committee members, and the student.

The General Examination date is the date of the oral exam, not the written portion. The oral exam must be scheduled on a day that the DA committee agrees to meet and on a day that the University is open. The General Examination may be completed during the summer if all DA committee members are available. The "Request for Doctoral General Defense and Degree Audit Form" must be submitted to the Graduate School at least 3 weeks prior to the date of the General Examination oral defense. All doctoral degree forms can be obtained from the [Graduate School website](#).

### Topical Areas

As the student moves through the doctoral program, they will develop a specialization or area of focus within social work. In the content of the General Examination, the student will be expected to demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of policy, research, theory, and practice; and to show an understanding of how these apply to the substantive area of focus. The student and the Major Professor/Chair of the DA committee will decide upon the structure and scope of each content area to be covered in the exam, which must be comprehensive enough to demonstrate expert competence over broad segments of social work and demonstrate a high degree of familiarity with the content of and current progress in the area of focus or the declared minor, if appropriate. If the student has declared an outside minor, the minor department has the right to decide the format and structure of its part of the examination.

The General Examination covers 3 areas: (1) Substantive, (2) Interventive, and (3) Methodology. In some cases, a DA committee member may require a separate theory section for a total of 4 sections. The **Substantive Area** identifies and describes a major social work problem and situates it within an area of study, clearly describing key concepts, theory and bodies of research that define the area. The **Interventive Area** identifies and describes interventions that have been used or proposed to address the problem at both the micro (e.g., prevention, treatment), and macro (e.g., local, state, federal policy) levels. Underlying theories and/or conceptual frameworks that explain how and why the interventions are effective are included in this section in the absence of a separate theory section. The **Methodology Area** describes the social science research methods used to explore, describe, or explain both the substantive and interventive areas.

In consultation with the Major Professor/Chair and the other members of the DA committee, the student will prepare approximately 4-6 broad learning objectives and a comprehensive bibliography in each content area (i.e., Substantive, Interventive, Methodology). Bibliographies should go well beyond prior classroom reading, thereby prompting students to deepen their understanding of each area and to expand knowledge about the area of focus. DA committee members, who typically are responsible for overseeing one or more sections of the exam, will set questions that are anchored in students' learning objectives and that can be answered using the sources listed in the bibliography.

To facilitate the process of guiding the student's reading and setting questions, the student will submit to the Major Professor/Chair and DA committee members an examination proposal that contains learning objectives and bibliographies relevant to each of the three aforementioned content areas and theory (if requested by a DA committee member). The student should individually confer with DA committee members throughout this process to confirm that the student's examination proposal is sufficiently comprehensive to proceed with testing.

### **Structure**

Students may choose, in consultation with the Major Professor/Chair, one of two options for the written General Examination: in-house (on campus) or take-home, when approved by the Major Professor/Chair and DA committee members. Both options require an oral defense of the exam. The Major Professor is responsible for coordinating the logistics of both exam options. The in-house examination is the compulsory option. The take-home examination may be allowed in exceptional circumstances (e.g., among students with documentation from the LSU Office of Disability Services germane to accommodation for the take-home option). *The take-home option must be approved by the PhD Program Committee at least two weeks prior to examination.*

For the in-house exam, the student will write the exam on campus, over the course of 3-4 days, but within a 1-week period of time. The Major Professor/Chair will locate suitable space for test taking, as well as provide a computer that does not have Internet access. The amount of time provided to write each question on each day will be determined by the Major Professor/Chair

and DA committee members, in consultation with the student. Exam questions formulated by DA committee members will be provided to the student at the start of each designated time period. If approved by the Major Professor/Chair and DA committee members, students may use annotated bibliographies. Students may bring only snacks and keys into the exam room. Students must arrange to store all other personal items while taking the exam.

For the written take-home exam, the student will receive the exam questions from the Major Professor/Chair at a predetermined time. The student will then have 72 hours to complete and submit the written exam to the DA committee members.

The student will proceed to the oral defense of the General Examination following the approval of the Major Professor/Chair and the DA committee. The oral defense will be held no later than 2 weeks following the written exam. This oral exam serves two functions: The first is a supplementary function, permitting the student to enrich and enlarge upon material in the written exam. The second is an integrative function, providing the student with the opportunity to apply knowledge about practice, policy, research methodology, and theory to issues within the substantive area of focus.

### **Grading of General Examination**

In order for students to proceed to the oral defense of the General Examination, the DA committee first determines that the student has passed the written portion of the examination. A student deemed to have failed the written examination does not proceed to the oral defense of the examination, and the first failure of the examination is reported to the Graduate School as such. In order for students to pass the General Examination, there may be no more than one dissenting vote. The written exam can be retaken once. In retaking the written exam, the student will rewrite only those portions of the exam that have been failed.

## **DISSERTATION**

The dissertation is a work of original scholarship that contributes in a meaningful way to the expansion of knowledge in social work. It is the final written document of a research study planned and conducted by the student with the advice and guidance of the Major Professor/Chair and members of the DA committee. A student is expected to demonstrate expertise in a topic area, conduct independent research to answer a question within that area, and generate original findings that contribute new knowledge to that area of study. A successful oral dissertation defense is the final requirement for receiving the PhD in Social Work. Dissertation research may be undertaken only after completion of the General Examination *and* successful defense of a dissertation project proposal.

### **Dissertation Hours**

Students are expected to enroll for a minimum of 3 hours per semester while working on their dissertation. Students must complete a total of 15 hours of dissertation study.

- Once enrolled in dissertation hours, continuous enrollment is required

- Students must be enrolled in at least 3 dissertation hours in the semester they graduate OR be approved by the Graduate School for "degree-only" status
- Dissertation hours do not count toward the accumulated hours of elective coursework

### **Dissertation Process**

The dissertation process includes confirming/selecting the Major Professor/Chair and DA committee, identifying one or more specific areas of research interest, preparing and defending a dissertation proposal, completing the research, writing the dissertation, and orally defending the dissertation. *The oral defense of the dissertation can be taken no earlier than three calendar months subsequent to the date of successfully completing the General Examination.* Students may choose between two dissertation formats, the traditional 5-chapter format or the three-paper format, each described in the Appendix.

An emeritus member of the Social Work faculty with full Graduate Faculty status at the time of their retirement may co-chair the dissertation work of students already in progress providing the student has successfully completed both the General Examination and the dissertation proposal, and that a currently active faculty member tenured in the School of Social Work with full Graduate Faculty status serves as co-chair for the remaining work. Outside such circumstances, the student must select a new chair and may retain the emeritus member as a voting member of the committee with appropriate approvals by the Director of the PhD Program and the Graduate School.

Any potential conflicts of interest among DA committee members or between the student and DA committee members shall be disclosed to the PhD Program Director, who will have the final say in deciding whether a faculty member may serve on the student's doctoral committee. All such decisions may be appealed via LSU's established appeals and grievance processes.

### **Dissertation Proposal & Proposal Defense**

The dissertation proposal is the first step in the writing of the dissertation. The purpose of the dissertation proposal review is to inform all members of the DA committee of the direction and substance of the proposed research and to seek their advice and approval. The review also clarifies the areas that need further development and serves both as the research design for the study and a contract between the student and the DA committee. The student will develop the dissertation proposal with the guidance of the Major Professor/Chair and DA committee members. In consultation with the members of the DA committee, the Major Professor/Chair and the student will set a date for the formal review of the dissertation proposal. *Students must provide a complete proposal document to all DA committee members at least 2 weeks prior to their scheduled proposal defense, as well as comply with all other LSU Graduate School requirements.*

### **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval**

Upon the DA committee's approval of the dissertation research proposal, the student must submit an application to the LSU IRB for approval to conduct human subject research. Unless

the student is working on a professor's project that has already been approved by the IRB, the Major Professor/Chair should ensure that all IRB requirements are satisfied prior to allowing the student to either use pre-existing data or collect data from research participants. *Under no circumstances may data be collected for the student's proposed study prior to the proposal defense and receipt of IRB approval.*

### **Dissertation Defense**

The Major Professor/Chair and student deliberate with the DA committee to set a defense date once the Major Professor/Chair determines the student is ready to present and defend their findings. Students must provide their written document to the DA committee at least 2 weeks prior to the defense, as well as comply with all other "Final Examination" requirements stipulated by the LSU Graduate School.

The oral defense of the dissertation is the DA committee's opportunity to review and evaluate the dissertation project findings, the written documentation of the project, and allow for the student's oral explanation of the study. Prior to the beginning of the meeting, the Major Professor/Chair excuses all non-committee members to privately discuss any emergent concerns about proceeding with the defense. Providing no major concerns are raised, non-committee members are invited back into the meeting so the defense can proceed. During the defense, the student presents a summary of the dissertation project, including a statement of the problem, major research questions, theoretical base, methodology, results and conclusions. DA committee members then raise questions or ask for clarification. At the conclusion of the defense, DA committee members privately discuss any revisions required to the written document and vote on whether to pass the student. In order for the student to pass the oral dissertation defense, there can be no more than one dissenting vote. If the student is asked to make revisions, the committee can choose whether these need to be approved by the entire DA committee or only by the Major Professor/Chair. The student will complete all requested revisions prior to submitting the written dissertation to the Graduate School.

In keeping with LSU's standard practices and generally accepted doctoral program conventions, the dissertation defense is a public meeting, open to any member of the University community including faculty and students, and any member of the public. Guests may not participate in the defense and ensuing discussion unless specifically invited to do so by the Major Professor/Chair and only after DA committee members have been satisfied. No dissertation defense shall be conducted as a "closed" meeting unless the scientific data upon which the work is based is restricted for security purposes by a state or federal governmental entity.

### **Timely Completion of the Degree after the Final Defense**

Graduation may not be postponed for reasons having to do with funding availability, continuation of research projects, or other matters tangential to the awarding of the degree. The Graduate School requires that all dissertation documents and corrections must be approved no later than the regular semester following the oral defense of the dissertation. A

passing dissertation defense may be voided by the Dean of the Graduate School for failing to submit an approved document in a timely manner.

### **Electronic Dissertation Requirements**

The LSU Graduate School provides guidelines for correctly preparing the dissertation document for final submission on the worldwide web. LSU is a member of the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, an international organization dedicated to promoting the adoption, creation, use, dissemination, and preservation of electronic theses and dissertations.

The Graduate School has developed guidelines that provide uniform standards for meeting LSU's document requirements, while allowing for differences across disciplines. All dissertation documents must be consistent with [these guidelines](#).

## **DOCTORAL PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Academic Advising in the PhD Program**

The Director of the PhD Program typically serves as the doctoral faculty advisor to all students during the coursework phase of the program. With input from the Director of the PhD Program, the student selects a Major Professor/Chair no later than the last semester of coursework. The Major Professor/Chair ideally remains constant until the student graduates. Students are encouraged to meet with their Major Professors/Chairs as often as necessary to ensure continuity in the program or to resolve any problems.

Doctoral students are required to meet with either the Director of the Doctoral Program while completing coursework, or their Major Professor/Chair at least once per semester during the school year to discuss courses and review or update the planned program of study.

The Office of Student Services assists students in scheduling courses in the correct sequence, provides basic information about various options, liaises between the Graduate School and School of Social Work, monitors reports on students who may be experiencing difficulty, and keeps students' records current. Students should consult with the Director of the Doctoral Program and/or Major Professor/Chair before dropping a course or adding a course outside of the university and/or in another campus department.

The coursework phase is guided by a formal academic course plan, or program of study, developed in consultation with the Director of the PhD Program. The program of study lists all curricular requirements for the degree, including courses accepted by the committee from other universities or programs. The program of study should be filed with the Graduate School prior to the General Examination.

The DA committee, whose members are chosen by the student in consultation with the Major Professor/Chair, should include at least one representative from the minor field (if appropriate). DA committee members are approved when the request for the dissertation defense (Final Examination) is submitted to the Graduate School. Although students often work with one or more mentors, the Director of the Doctoral program serves as the primary academic



advisor for all students during the coursework phase of the program. Toward the end of the coursework phase, students work more closely with a DA committee that is facilitated by a Major Professor/Chair, who then serves as the primary academic advisor. Upon completion of the coursework phase, students must pass the General Examination; however, many students begin preliminary work on their dissertation research projects during the last year of coursework or while preparing for the General Examination.

### **Registration for PhD Courses**

Registration is done on-line through a MYLSU account. Students schedule the prescribed courses as outlined in the appropriate program of study before each semester begins. New students receive registration information during the summer, while continuing students meet with their academic advisor (Director of PhD Program or Major Professor/Chair) to determine suitable courses. The Office of Student Services will facilitate registration of courses undertaken with a primary instructor for individual student, such as Independent Studies (SW 7905 or 7906), the Research Practicum (SW 7206), and dissertation hours (SW 9000). The maximum course load for full-time doctoral students is 9 hours during the fall and spring semesters and 6 hours during the summer term. Requests for permission to schedule more than the maximum number of hours must be submitted in writing to the PhD Program Director. Registration is defined as a student paying tuition and fees. Until a student's fees are processed by the Bursar's Office, a student is not registered and may be purged from classes. For more information and for access to current course offerings, see the Schedule Booklet located at: Schedule booklets.

### **Part- and Full-Time Enrollment in the PhD Program**

There is no residency requirement stipulated by the LSU Graduate School; thus, students may pursue either a part-time or full-time program of study. Students who work full-time outside of school must remain enrolled in the part-time program. If work circumstances change such that full-time enrollment is feasible, students may switch from part-time to full-time enrollment if approved by PhD Program Director/Chair, and those who want to switch from full-time enrollment to part-time enrollment may also do so with approval. However, it should be noted that full-time students who receive funding and/or tuition exemption may become ineligible for said funding/exemption when the student changes from full- to part-time enrollment.

### **PhD Student Appeals of Admission Decisions**

Applicants who have been denied admission to the doctoral program, including reenrollment and readmission, have the right to appeal. Appeals will be directed, first, to the Director of the Doctoral Program, who may request that the Doctoral Committee re-examine its decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing. If the student is not satisfied with the result of this review, the student may appeal the decision directly to the Director of the School of Social Work. If the student is not satisfied with the result of the School of Social Work Director's review of the application, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Human Sciences and Education.

### **Reenrollment and Readmission of PhD Students**

When a previously enrolled student does not enroll for two consecutive semesters, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, and subsequently wishes to reenroll; the student must submit a written request for reenrollment to the Director of the Doctoral Program. Requests for reenrollment will be reviewed by the Director of the Doctoral Program and the Doctoral Committee. Reenrollment decisions will be based on student's performance in the doctoral program and relevant input from faculty who have interacted with the student while in the program. Reenrollment is not guaranteed to formerly enrolled students who apply for reenrollment. When a student has not enrolled for three or more consecutive semesters, inclusive of the summer term, Graduate School policies governing readmission will apply.

### **PhD Program Grade Requirements and Grade Appeals**

No more than six credit hours of grades of "C" will be counted toward the PhD degree. Grades of D or F will not count toward the PhD degree and those courses must be repeated. Students who obtain grades of C or lower may be placed on probation or dropped by the Graduate School if the semester and/or cumulative GPA drop below a 3.0. For more information consult the LSU General Catalog section on [Grade Appeals](#). Formal appeal procedures are outlined in the [LSU General Catalog - The Graduate School](#). Students have the right to use appeal procedures without fear or coercion, harassment, intimidation, or reprisal for making the appeal, a right which the School of Social Work will safeguard. A student who is dissatisfied with a grade should first meet with the faculty member to discuss the situation and attempt to arrive at a solution. If the matter is not resolved between the student and faculty member AND the student still wishes to appeal further, the student may submit a written appeal to the Director of the School of Social Work. If the student is not satisfied with the decision reached, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Human Sciences and Education. More information on grade appeal process can be found in the [LSU General Catalog - The Graduate School](#).

### **PhD Course Credit Transfer**

Course credit may be transferred and the specific number and types of courses are determined on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the Director of the Doctoral Program, who solicits input and advice from the Doctoral Committee and Director of Student Services. In general, courses may be considered for LSU School of Social Work doctoral credit if:

- The course(s) were taken as part of another PhD program and are comparable to LSU SSW doctoral-level courses;
- The course(s) were taken within the 5 years prior to application to the LSU PhD program;
- Grades of A or B were earned in the course(s); and
- Other relevant criteria are met, as set forth in the [LSU General Catalog - The Graduate School](#)

### **Time Limit for Completion**

The LSU Graduate School maintains a policy that the doctoral degree must be completed within 7 years. Extensions beyond year 7 are not automatic and require a formal meeting of the student's DA committee to:

- Address the validity of the petition/written request by the student;
- Endorse the quality of the student's preparation/research;
- Establish a reasonable expectation for completion given student's circumstances. Outcomes from this meeting will be formally documented by the student's Major Professor/Chair and then authorized by the Directors of the Doctoral Program, Student Services, and the School of Social Work. The written petitions will be submitted to the LSU Graduate School for a final decision. More than a single, one-year extension should only be granted for truly exceptional cases.

### **Child & Family Studies Concentration**

The School of Social Work offers a Child and Family Studies (CFS) concentration within its PhD in Social Work degree. The CFS concentration is awarded to doctoral students who complete a minimum of 15 hours of designated CFS research and elective courses, as follows:

- CFS 7056: Theories of Child Development
- CFS 7057: Theories in Family Science
- CFS 7090: Research Methodology in Child and Family Studies
- Two (2) additional CFS 7000-level courses.

Successful completion of the CFS concentration requires fulfillment of all PhD in Social Work Program requirements. The CFS Director should be notified during the first semester of coursework if the student wishes to complete the CFS concentration.

### **Tuition Awards for Graduate Students**

The Dean of the Graduate School may award up to 200 tuition exemptions to graduate students from underrepresented groups. These tuition awards provide for an exemption from either or both the resident and nonresident fee. Recipients are responsible for paying required University fees. Preference is given to students who identify as belonging to underrepresented cultural backgrounds. Students must be a new admission to a graduate program at LSU and be nominated by their departments. The Director of the PhD Program, in consultation with the PhD Committee, nominates qualified students who are newly admitted to the School of Social Work.

### **Information Sharing Policy in the PhD Program**

Information disclosed during student meetings or correspondence with faculty, faculty advisor, or administrative staff will not be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about the student's professional and/or academic performance. Faculty and administrative staff will share pertinent information with each other and the student for the professional purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns. To work together effectively, it is essential that relevant information be shared between involved parties.

### **Codes of Ethics & Practice Standards: PhD Students**

Doctoral students who hold either the BSW or MSW degree are expected to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, and the Louisiana Practice Act: Rules, Regulations, and Procedures of the Practice Act. Doctoral students with other degrees and professional certifications are expected to abide by the corresponding codes of ethics and statutory practice standards.

### **Termination of PhD Students from the Social Work Program**

Students may be terminated from the social work program for academic reasons, which include inability to pass courses and not satisfactorily completing the exit requirements, including the General Examination or the Final Examination (i.e., oral dissertation defense)

### **Student-Initiated Removal of a DA Committee Member**

When a student requests that a DA committee member, including the Major Professor/Chair, be removed from either the General Examination or dissertation committee, and that committee member does not voluntarily resign from the committee, then the Major Professor/Chair will call a meeting of the DA committee at which time the issues involved in the case will be discussed. The DA committee then may make a recommendation as to whether the DA committee member in question should resign. If the issue is not resolved, it may be brought by either the student or the DC committee member in question to the Director of the PhD Program and PhD Committee for a review, and; subsequently, if the issue remains unresolved, to the Director of the School of Social Work for a final decision. A student-initiated change of the Major Professor/Chair late in the student's course of study is regarded as very unusual and will be considered only in extraordinary circumstances. Examples may include cases where there is a dual relationship, major conflict of interest, or where the Major Professor/Chair is clearly not providing, or is unable to provide, adequate guidance to the student.

### **Committee Member-Initiated (Self-) Removal from a Student Committee**

When a DA committee member wishes to remove themselves from a student's General Examination or Dissertation committee, the DA committee member should write a memo to the student explaining why this course of action has been taken. The memo should be copied to the Major Professor/Chair, Director of the Doctoral program, and Director of the School of Social Work. The student and Major Professor/Chair may then select a faculty member to replace the outgoing DA committee member. In the event that the Major Professor/Chair removes themselves, the student, in consultation with the Director of the Doctoral Program, will select a replacement. It is not the responsibility of the Director of the School of Social Work to replace DC committee members who have removed themselves.

### **Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education (GADE)**

Founded in the late 1970s, [GADE's](#) primary purpose is to promote excellence in doctoral education in social work, especially through networking, information sharing and advocacy. LSU School of Social Work PhD Program is a member of GADE. Members:

- focus on sharing experiences to support innovation and excellence in teaching and learning and the advancement of the quality of doctoral research;
- support the success and professional development of doctoral students in all their diversity;
- promote recognition of doctoral students' achievements and contributions;

- commit to identifying and sharing potential funding sources or other resources that support doctoral education;
- provide guidance and support to new and developing doctoral programs here and abroad;
- disseminate “Guidelines for Quality in PhD Programs;” and
- represent and promote the interests and concerns of social work/social welfare doctoral programs in the larger profession.

## **NAVIGATING LSU**

(in alphabetical order)

### **Address Changes**

Students whose physical address and/or telephone numbers change during the course of the year must update this information with the School of Social Work AND with the University Registrar’s Office. The School of Social Work change can be made by Emailing the [Office of Student Services](#), who directs the change to other offices within the School of Social Work. The University Registrar’s change can be made by visiting the office in Thomas Boyd Hall or by using a MYLSU account to make changes on-line.

### **Administrative Structure and Governance of the School**

The Director of the School of Social Work is responsible for the overall operations of the school, while the faculty administers the BSW, MSW & PhD programs. The Director of the PhD Program works closely with the faculty and students to ensure that graduates are prepared to fulfill roles in research, policy analysis, teaching, and the development of new knowledge for interventions that addressing social problems and social welfare issues. The Doctoral Committee reviews applications, monitors the PhD curriculum components and timeline, and ensures that doctoral students are represented via standing committees of the School of Social Work. The Director of Student Services works closely with students, faculty, and the university at large to facilitate all aspects of student services and admissions. For more information about the history, vision, mission, and goals of the LSU School of Social Work, please visit the [School of Social Work web site](#).

### **Communication**

Email using LSU’s MYLSU is the primary method of communicating with students and all students are required to obtain a MYLSU Email address and regularly check their Email. Log in information is Emailed to students upon acceptance to LSU by [LSU Information Technology Services](#). Email addresses are maintained for MYLSU accounts only. Forwarding MYLSU mail to another service provider mailbox is the responsibility of the student.

Students employed by the School of Social Work in any capacity (e.g., GRA) must have current contact information, including a mobile phone number, on file with the School of Social Work, Office of Student Services.

### **Dropping and Adding Courses**

The University sets specific deadlines for adding and dropping courses each semester and places these dates on numerous academic calendars. The School of Social Work also provides a

calendar with these dates to all students, which can be found on the school's website. Students should pay particular attention to last day to add and drop dates as dropping courses may affect graduation. See the academic calendars at [Academic Calendar](#).

### **Fees and Financial Aid**

Details for current University fees, expenses, scholarships, and financial aid are found in the LSU General Catalog. Students who need financial aid, especially loans, should contact: [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#), Pleasant Hall, LSU.

### **Library**

The LSU Library is the main library within the LSU Libraries system and is a depository for extensive holdings and collections, state and U.S. government publications, newspapers from around the state, region, nation, and world, extensive microform holdings, and listening rooms with extensive collections of recordings. The LSU Library also houses a computer lab, individual and group study areas, a graduate reading room, and a coffee shop. Assistance is available from subject specialists and through a centralized reference service, and a government documents reference desk. Students may check out books at the LSU Library with an LSU ID/TIGER card. The Interlibrary Loan program allows students to borrow research material not found in the LSU Library. More information regarding library services, including computerized literature searches, may be found at [LSU Libraries](#).

### **Office of Disability Services**

The University is committed to making reasonable efforts to assist individuals with disabilities in their efforts to avail themselves of services and programs offered by the University. To this end, Louisiana State University will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with documented qualifying disabilities. If you have a disability and need accommodations, you must register with [Office of Disability Services](#) in 124 Johnston Hall where required and recommended accommodations will be conveyed to instructors. Students will not be given accommodations without proper registration, documentation and consultation with the faculty member about the accommodation.

### **Parking**

Parking for students is available for an annual fee on the LSU campus. When students register, the Office of Parking & Transportation will mail a commuter parking tag. This tag should be visible at all times and it allows the student to park in any blue commuter lot. Special provisions are made for those students who have special physical or medical problems that prevent them from walking the 3-6 blocks from the parking areas to the classroom areas. Students are only permitted to park in assigned lots and designated areas; deviating from these areas will result in a parking ticket or having the car towed away. Students must satisfy all parking tickets (as well as all outstanding fines) in order to register for the subsequent semester, obtain a transcript, receive grades, or graduate. After 4:30 p.m., students can use most campus parking spaces as long as the parking pass is properly displayed. Additional information about parking can be found [here](#).

### **Residence Food Services**

Residence Food Services offers several meal plans for [resident](#) and [commuter](#) students. Several restaurants are housed in the Union and a campus cafeteria is located within the Pentagon cluster of dormitories. Other options are available [on-campus](#) and [off-campus](#).

### **Student Health Center**

During the registration process, all full-time students are required to pay a health service fee. Part-time students may elect to pay this fee, thereby entitling them to use the Health Center services on the same basis as regular students. Dependents, however, are not entitled to use the service. In addition to the outpatient medical clinic, the Health Center offers a mental health clinic, pharmacy, medical laboratory, x-ray, and physical therapy. The Center charges reduced rates for some prescriptions, tests, x-rays, and physical therapy. Students with serious conditions are referred to outside physicians and hospitals at the student's expense. Detailed information about the Student Health Center may be found at the [Student Health Center](#) website. Student hospitalization insurance is available at nominal rates at registration for those who wish to purchase it.

### **Student Identification Card**

Upon paying fees to the university, all new students are required to obtain a student identification card, the Tiger Card. The Tiger Card Office is located in the Student Union. Students must present this ID for a variety of services and functions. For example, the Tiger ID is needed to check out library books, take advantage of student rates at the Union recreational areas, attend campus functions at a discount rate, and obtain student tickets to athletic events. Some area businesses also offer discounts to students who present their ID. The student Tiger Card is also used as a debit card, which allows the student to make purchases around campus. Additional information about student identification cards can be found [here](#).

### **Textbooks**

Barnes & Noble at LSU is the official campus bookstore located at the corner of Highland and Raphael Semmes roads. It sells textbooks for each class offered, as well as auxiliary books for research. Several additional commercially-owned bookstores within the three-block area adjoining campus also carry books and school materials. Students should be prepared to purchase multiple textbooks for each class. The Barnes & Noble at LSU Store website can be found [here](#).

### **Security**

Student safety and security is a major priority of LSU; the campus makes every effort to keep the environment as safe and well-lit as possible. Personal items should be kept with a student at all times. Most buildings on campus are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. The campus has its own police force, and an [escort service](#) is available for students during the evening hours. Please view the training videos and safety tips at the [website for LSU Police](#).

### **Student Rights & Responsibilities**

As citizens, LSU students possess the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, the state of Louisiana, and federal, state, and local laws. Among these are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom to petition, due process rights, and equal protection under the law. There are, however, limitations on the time, place, and circumstances in which constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and rights may be exercised. U.S. courts have recognized that reasonable university regulation of student conduct is necessary, and have also established standards by which to judge those regulations. The School of Social Work shares a commitment to applying these student rights in the classroom and in all transactions with School faculty, administration, and staff. In addition to the basic rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and interpreted by the courts, LSU recognizes rights specific to students in the student-university relationship. Students have the right:

- to participate in activities of the University free from discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or veteran status;
- to the opportunity for a quality education;
- to know the University's regulations, rules, and policies by which they are governed;
- to participate in the formulation of University policies and to advocate changes in University regulations, rules, and policies;
- to a formal grade appeal procedure, in which the student may request consideration of an action by the University through one of its employees which the student believes adversely affected them; and
- to confidentiality of all student educational, disciplinary, medical and psychiatric records

With student rights come student responsibilities. Federal court decisions affirm that, by voluntary entrance into the academic community, the student voluntarily assumes obligations and responsibilities reasonably imposed by the University. Beyond those responsibilities embodied in the law, students have the responsibility:

- to be good citizens of the LSU community, conducting themselves in a manner which helps create an environment conducive to the broad educational mission of LSU;
- to learn and comply with rules, policies, and requirements established by the University for the governance of students; and
- to respect the rights and freedoms of other members of the LSU community.

Students' responsibilities are detailed in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) (the Code) and every student should review this document carefully. The Code begins with a statement of Commitment to Community, which is the guiding principles for the LSU community. The continued success of LSU depends on the faithful commitment by each community member to these basic principles.

The Code also outlines students' rights under the University's judicial process. In addition to these rights, students retain all the basic rights and freedoms guaranteed to all citizens. Other



particular rights and responsibilities of LSU students are included in various Policy Statements and Permanent Memoranda. In Section 5 of the Code, the University specifies student accountability for a violation of the Code applies to conduct that occurs on the Campus, at LSU-sponsored activities, and/or when the student is representing LSU. The University retains the discretion to extend its jurisdiction over student conduct as a violation of the Code when the student behavior threatens the learning environment and would be a violation of the Code had the behavior occurred on campus.

### **Academic Integrity**

At the heart of the intellectual process lies the principle of academic integrity. Students are expected to do their own work, and where the work of another is used, to give proper credit for the source. To falsify one's work or to steal the words or ideas of another is to corrupt the process by which knowledge is advanced and is a violation of the [Code of Student Conduct](#). According to LSU policy, academic misconduct is defined as any of the behaviors outlined in Section 10.1 of the Code and will not be tolerated. Likewise, behavioral misconduct is defined as any of the behaviors outlined in Section 10.2 of the Code and will not be tolerated. When a faculty member has a reasonable basis for believing that a student has committed a violation of the Code, they are bound to submit evidence of the violation to the [Office of Student Accountability and Advocacy](#) (SAA). LSU faculty are not permitted to take any disciplinary or punitive actions for Code violations outside this formal process. SAA investigates the violation and may determine the necessity for a hearing. Students found responsible by SAA for violation(s) of the Code will be subject to penalties determined by SAA. Sanctions levied against students who are not U.S. citizens can result in additional serious consequences that include loss of financial assistance and change in immigration status.

### **Examinations and Grading**

The faculty of the School adheres to the University's general policy on examinations and grading as stipulated in the Graduate School Catalog - The Graduate School, which students are urged to read carefully. Students should pay particular attention to the circumstances under which the incomplete (I) grade can be awarded and the responsibilities of the instructors and the student to have this grade removed. Failure to remove the "I" grade by the specified date will result in the "I" grade becoming a permanent "F".

Student grading is governed by [Policy Statement 44](#). At the beginning of each course, instructors publicize the nature and weighting of the components that they will factor into the final grade. Grading is based on assigned work and is evaluated equitably, with no special consideration given to individual students. All instructors are required to hold a final examination and to issue the final grade in a timely manner. Upon completion of any course, students may ask instructors to review and explain their examination grades and final grade. Final grades can be obtained by utilizing a student's MYLSU account. Students should be aware that not all grades will be reported at the same time.

### **Student Evaluation of Teaching**

At the end of each semester, students have the chance to evaluate their courses, which provides feedback to instructors, with the goal of improving the quality of instruction. Course evaluations are completed electronically through links provided by the University at designated times. Students' evaluations are anonymous.

### **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement**

We believe diversity, equity, and inclusion enrich the educational experience of our students, faculty, and staff, and are necessary to prepare all people to thrive personally and professionally in a global society. Therefore, LSU is firmly committed to an environment that affords respect to all members of our community. We will work to eliminate barriers that any members of our community experience.

To make LSU a place where that can happen, we must recognize and reflect on the inglorious aspects of our history. We now acknowledge the need to confront the ways racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, classism, LGBTQ+ phobia, intolerance based on religion or on national origin, and all forms of bias and exploitation have shaped our everyday lives.

We accept personal and professional responsibility to eliminate bias and oppression wherever they are found. We understand our obligation to speak up when we see bias whether it be in our teaching, study, or daily work. Our community will educate themselves proactively and continuously about how to intervene and bring bias to the attention of others with commitment and compassion.

We will hold ourselves accountable for our actions and inactions, and for maintaining intentional, measurable, and meaningful efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion, including through ongoing evaluation of our policies, practices, and procedures.

### **Nondiscrimination, Sexual Harassment, & Title IX**

LSU provides equal opportunity for all qualified persons in admission to, participation in, or employment in the programs and activities which the university operates without regard to race, creed, color, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, or veteran's status. LSU has implemented a procedure to address complaints for those who believe they have been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment in violation of this policy. Please know that your instructors are here to support you and listen to your experience. We also want you to know that we are mandatory reporters and must report what we know to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. All LSU employees, with few exceptions, are required to report instances of sex- or gender-based harassment and discrimination, including sexual misconduct and power-based violence (e.g., sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, retaliation, etc.) for which they may not be the victim, but of which they are aware. The Office of Civil Rights & Title IX is the LSU office responsible for investigating complaints regarding any type of discrimination, sexual harassment, or power-based violence. The Office of Civil Rights & Title IX is located in 118 Himes Hall and the phone number is (225) 578-9000. If you are aware of an individual who has been victimized, you are encouraged to contact the Office of Civil Rights & Title IX or file an online report by visiting [LSU's Domestic & Sexual Violence Support and Reporting](#) website and clicking the [Report an Incident](#) box. If you have been assaulted, harassed, or a victim of violence, we encourage you to contact the Office of Civil Rights & Title

IX. Please reach out for help immediately. Some excellent resources available to Baton Rouge residents include:

- STAR (Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response; 24/7 hotline: (855) 435-STAR (7827)
- IRIS Domestic Violence Center; 24/7 hotline: (800) 541-9706
- The Lighthouse Program; (225) 578-5718
- VIA LINK; (800) 273-TALK (8255) [national line but answered from New Orleans]

National resources include:

- RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network); 24/7 hotline: (800) 656-4673
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center

For additional information, visit [www.lsu.edu/civil-rights](http://www.lsu.edu/civil-rights) the [Office of Civil Rights & Title IX](#) and review [PM-73](#) (Prohibiting Power-based Violence, including Sex- and Gender-based Harassment and Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct).

SOURCE: <https://www.lsu.edu/academicaffairs/syllabus-statements/index.php>

## **APPENDIX: DISSERTATION FORMATS**

### **Five-Chapter PhD Dissertation Option**

The following is a suggested outline for the 5-chapter dissertation document:

#### **Front Matter**

Title/author/date  
Acknowledgments  
Abstract  
Table of Contents  
List of Tables  
List of Figures  
List of Appendices

#### **Chapter 1**

##### **Introduction and Conceptual Framework**

An introductory statement that outlines the purpose of the study  
Statement of the problem(s) to be addressed  
Significance/importance of the study  
Brief note of literature relevant to major variables of the study  
Primary research questions and/or hypotheses posed with rationale  
Supplemental research questions and/or hypotheses (if any) posed with rationale  
General conceptual or theoretical focus/framework of the study  
Definitions of key terms/study variables (conceptual and operational definitions)  
Assumptions/limitations of the study

#### **Chapter 2**

##### **Literature Review**

Literature review pertinent to scope of the study  
Literature review pertinent to study variables

#### **Chapter 3 Methodology**

Basic research design  
Independent and dependent variables  
Study measures/instrumentation  
Sample and sampling procedure  
Data collection procedures  
Qualitative and/or quantitative data analysis methods used

#### **Chapter 4 Results**

Major results/findings for study hypotheses and/or research questions  
Major results/findings for supplemental hypotheses and/or research questions (if any)

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion, Discussion, and Implications**

Major findings and conclusions

Discussion

Implications of the findings for:

Theory

Research

Social work practice/social welfare policy

Education

This outline can be modified as determined by the Major Professor/Chair, other DA committee members, and the student, especially for dissertations that are policy analyses and historical studies.

### **Three-Paper PhD Dissertation Option**

The following is a suggested outline for the three-paper dissertation proposal and the three-paper dissertation document:

#### **Three-Paper PhD Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation proposal for the three-paper format will consist of the introductory chapter, detailed outlines for the three planned papers, and a complete methods section for at least one of the planned empirical papers. Authorship must be negotiated and agreed upon in writing as part of the dissertation proposal. Any subsequent changes in co-authorship must be approved by all members of the student's DA committee in writing.

#### **Three-Paper PhD Dissertation Format**

PhD students may opt to write their dissertations in a format consisting of three publishable papers plus abstract, introductory chapter, and concluding chapter. The articles should form a cohesive body of work that supports a theme or themes that are expressed clearly in the introduction to the dissertation. The structure and content of the introduction and concluding chapter will be essentially the same as in the traditional 5-chapter dissertation format. The concluding chapter will also specifically present and discuss linkages (i.e., similarities and differences, themes or patterns) between the separate manuscripts that are included in the dissertation, striving as much as possible to present the document as representative of a coherent body of work.

The three middle chapters representing the three publishable papers will include one systematic review of existing research on the substantive topic or an article based on a theoretical or policy approach to the substantive topic. The other two articles should be empirical research based on data analyzed by the student as part of the dissertation process.

**Authorship**

Students must be sole or first author on all articles. As first authors, students are responsible for development and articulation of a concept or idea for research, development of a proposal to pursue this idea, development of a research design, conducting research and analysis, writing major portions of a manuscript, designing an intervention or assessment (if relevant), and interpreting results. One article may be co-authored with the Major Professor/Chair and/or DA committee members. The two remaining articles must be sole-authored by the student. Any authorship in addition to the student is determined in consultation between the DA committee and the student and may be based on the nature of the data collected (e.g., in collaboration with a community organization where authorship should be shared with a community partner or with a faculty member who collected the data being used). However, in all cases, the student must be responsible for writing at least 80% of any co-authored manuscript and must be the sole author of the methods and results sections and any tables summarizing data presented in those sections. Authorship must be negotiated prior to development of a manuscript and agreed upon in writing by all contributors as part of the completed dissertation proposal. Any subsequent changes in co-authorship must be approved by all members of the student's dissertation committee in writing.

To avoid conflicts of interest, any co-authors who are members of the student's DA committee must recuse themselves from judging articles carrying their name. In these cases, additional faculty members chosen by the PhD Program Director will determine the suitability of the article(s) in question.

**Journal Submission**

Journals must be approved by all members of the dissertation committee. The committee will help select peer-reviewed journals that will both challenge the student and offer a reasonable chance of publication success. Only scholarly articles submitted to and/or published in peer-reviewed journals can be approved.

Articles must be ready for submission prior to the dissertation defense and should be submitted as soon as possible following the oral defense, once any changes suggested by the DA committee at the defense are made. No articles written, accepted for publication, or published prior to the dissertation proposal should be included. All three should be written after the proposal defense. One article may be submitted following the completion of the successful proposal defense and prior to the oral dissertation defense. *It is important to note that acceptance of a manuscript for publication by a journal does not constitute acceptance or approval of the manuscript as part of the dissertation by the student's Major Professor/Chair and DA committee members. It is the responsibility of the DA committee to determine if a manuscript fully meets degree requirements for the dissertation.*