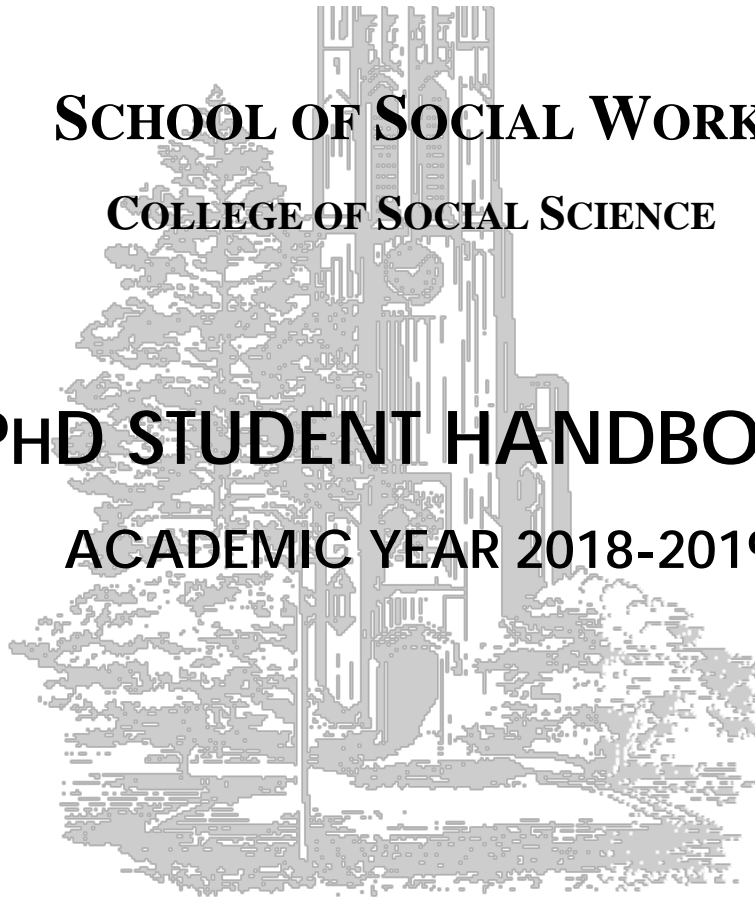


# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**  
**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

## **PHD STUDENT HANDBOOK** **ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019**



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## WELCOME

### **Mission Statement of the Michigan State University School of Social Work**

We are dedicated to educating students for competent, responsive, and ethical social work practice. Our teaching, research and outreach seek to promote positive change and social justice for diverse communities, families, and individuals.

### ***Welcome to the School of Social Work at Michigan State University!***

The School of Social Work includes students from many backgrounds in our academic programs at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels. The School's Bachelor's and Master's programs are fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The doctoral program is a member of GADE, the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education.

We take great pride in our programs, our graduates, and in our students. At the doctoral level, the School provides students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become effective members of the professional social work community. Our doctoral students receive the education and training necessary to become highly skilled social work scholars, researchers, and teachers who will enrich the lives of those they serve and the communities and institutions in which they practice, both nationally and internationally: School alumni/ae are found throughout the state of Michigan, the nation, and in several foreign countries.

The entire School is pleased that you have chosen our doctoral degree program. We look forward to getting to know you and working with you as you progress through your academic program.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Hughes'.

Anne Hughes, PhD  
Director, PhD Program



## INTRODUCTION

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The *PhD Student Handbook* provides information about the School of Social Work, the curriculum, and College of Social Science, and University policies that affect all students. In addition to the *Handbook*, students should become familiar with other documents that contain information that is pertinent to their doctoral student career. These include *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities*, *University Regulations*, and *Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University*, all found in *Spartan Life* ([www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm](http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/index.htm)), and published by the Office of Student Services. MSU *Graduate Studies* and *Academic Programs* explain University academic standards and regulations governing graduate students. The MSU *Council of Graduate Students Handbook* is also very informative. The website address for linking to useful sites is [www.msu.edu/](http://www.msu.edu/).

The director of the doctoral program is responsible for assisting students with the procedures outlined in the *Handbook*, especially prior to and during the first year of study. Although the director is always available to doctoral students, the student's guidance committee chair, who is chosen by the student during the first year in the program, will assume the role of primary advisor. Since problem-solving skills are at the heart of social work, we strongly encourage students to think of possible actions and solutions to their situations and to be prepared to discuss them. The director and associate director of the School are also available to meet with students.

Familiarity with the contents of the *Handbook* is crucial for successfully completing your degree program. It describes resources available to you, your responsibilities as a graduate student of social work at Michigan State University, and academic policies and procedures at the school and university levels.



Baker Hall –  
Home of the  
School of  
Social Work

*This handbook was first created to help students and faculty understand the Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Social Science with a concentration in Social Work and the guidelines set forth by Michigan State University, the College of Social Science, and the School of Social Work within which this PhD program operates. It was first compiled by Dr. Rena Harold, Coordinator of the PhD Program, and Dr. Susan Grettenberger, who was a doctoral student and graduate assistant to the PhD Program, in summer, 1996. It was revised in fall, 1998, 1999, and 2000, and re-written for the new doctoral program, the PhD Program in Social Work, by Dr. Harold, and Joan Ilardo Deller in spring, 2003. In 2009 and 2012, it was again revised by Dr. Sheryl Pimlott Kubiak. Most recently, it was revised annually from 2013-2018 by Dr. Angie Kennedy.*

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## DOCTORAL PROGRAM

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### I. Objectives of the MSU Doctoral Program

Contemporary social problems demand a wide range of interventions that depend on and are strengthened by a growing understanding of human needs that cut across a variety of fields of knowledge. To meet this challenge, the PhD program is designed to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the social work profession and the field of social welfare.

Specific objectives of the PhD program are to:

1. Develop the capacity to critically evaluate the status and utility of knowledge in social work and related disciplines.
2. Advance the skills necessary to formulate professionally relevant research questions, investigate them scientifically, and integrate the findings into social work practice and knowledge.
3. Promote competence in a specialized area of social work including the ability to evaluate policy, organizational, and practice components of existing social services in that area.

The doctoral program's principal goal is for graduates to assume leadership positions as: (1) social work educators; (2) researchers of social problems and social work intervention methods; (3) planners, administrators and evaluators of social service programs; and (4) policymakers and analysts.

### II. Program Description

The PhD program in social work is designed to prepare social workers for leadership positions in the profession. It emphasizes the development, analysis, and application of social work knowledge to be transmitted to students and/or related to professional work in selected practice, policy, or research settings. The doctoral program is designed to root its students firmly in the historical, epistemological, and philosophical bases of social work. It is also interdisciplinary, requiring course work in both social work and a particular social science, or across disciplines, while focusing on a selected area of study. This focused cognate is designed by the student in consultation with the guidance committee, a group of faculty chosen by the student that represents social work and the focused cognate area. Courses for the cognate may be taken from any department within the university, with appropriate approval from the guidance committee chair and committee, and are organized around a student's specific area of scholarly interest.

In addition to the designated areas of coursework, all students must satisfactorily complete statistics, research methods, and a sequenced research practicum. Finally, students must complete a comprehensive examination that bridges social work and social science knowledge, and a doctoral dissertation that also reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the degree. The student works closely with a guidance committee of faculty members, which assists with program planning and monitors progress throughout his/her doctoral program.

### III. Degree Requirements

- A. **Required Courses:** Table 1 below contains information on the courses required for completion of the doctoral program in social work at Michigan State University. Detailed descriptions of the individual courses are included in Sections B and C, below. *It is assumed that you will have completed your MSW before entering the PhD program.*

**Table 1: Courses and Number of Credit Hours Required for PhD Degree Completion**

Required Courses	Credit Hours		
	In Social Work	Outside Social Work	Total
Core SW: SW 900, 901, 905	8		8
SW Research: SW 911, 912, 920, and 930	10 <sup>a</sup>		10
Focused cognate	3 <sup>b,c</sup>	12 <sup>c,d</sup>	15
Statistics		6 <sup>d</sup>	6
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>39</b>
Dissertation: SW 999			<b>24<sup>e</sup></b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>63</b>

- a) Prerequisite is SW 830 or SW 832 or equivalent course.
- b) Up to 3 credits may be taken from School of Social Work course offerings.
- c) Can include independent study.
- d) Can include previous graduate work, outside SW, in the chosen discipline or area of study (up to 13 credits, see note below).
- e) The maximum number of dissertation credits allowed is 36.

Note: Appropriate post-MSW doctoral-level course work prior to admission to MSU's doctoral program (up to 13 credits) may be applied to the above requirements, with permission from the PhD program director.

## **B. Core Social Work and Research Classes (18 credits)**

### **SW 900: Doctoral Proseminar in Social Work (2 credits). Fall of every year.**

Acquaints student with some of the major issues in social work research and teaching. Students learn how to read empirical literature critically, and develop skills related to formulating research questions that are tied to their literature review. In addition, this course will focus on helping students develop a research agenda, specifically on problem delineation and identification of research, and start to think about their philosophy of teaching.

**SW 901: Knowledge Construction in Social Work (3 credits). Fall of even years.** Examines epistemology and theory construction in social work, such as how values and ethics influence the knowledge and theory guiding endeavor.

**SW 905: Historical and Current Analysis of Social Work and Social Problems (3 credits). Fall of odd years.** Assesses social welfare policies and social problems, the historical underpinnings of social policies and problems, and explores the use of analytic frameworks to examine the current situation.

**SW 911 & 912: Sequenced Research Practicum (2 credits each, 4 credits total). Spring and fall of every year; students take 911 in spring of their second year, 912 in fall of their third year.** Provides student with the opportunity to complete a research project from the initial formation of the research question through data collection, analysis, and manuscript/presentation production. Course is sequenced across spring and fall semester; in order to move on to 912, a student must have completed 911 and earned at least a 3.0. All students within the two semester sequence will share authorship.

**SW 920: Evaluation of Social Work Services and Practices (3 credits). Spring of odd years.** Considers the evaluation of social service organizations, service delivery, and practice outcomes. Presents evaluation models, design issues, and professional roles in planning and implementing evaluation studies related to social work practice.

**SW 930: Social Work Research Using Quantitative and Qualitative Methods (3 credits). Spring of even years.** Advanced quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches used in evaluation of social work practice, policies and programs.

## **C. Other Required Course Work (21 credits)**

### **Six Credits in Statistics (two classes at 3 credits each)**

There are multiple statistics sequences available at MSU for students to take, including courses in CEP, sociology, and political science. Please check with the PhD program director regarding which classes are appropriate to fulfill the requirement. It is recommended that students take stats during their first year in the program; courses must be semester-long, rather than brief summer courses.

### **Courses in Focused Cognate/Social Science Discipline (15 credits)**

Up to three of these credits may be in social work, either through an elective or an independent study course (SW 890). This independent study may be used

either to focus on specific content not available through regularly scheduled classes or to assist the student in preparing for the content of comprehensive examinations. It must be taken for a grade. A contract specifying the amount of weekly contact with the instructor, reading expectations and a brief description of the written product that will be the basis for a grade is included in the course registration form available from the Office of Graduate Programs in the School of Social Work.

Although the remaining credits may be taken anywhere in the university, course work must reflect an identified content area, theme or discipline as agreed upon by the student and guidance committee. For example, a student wishing to study an issue relating to families of color might take courses in sociology on race/class/gender, structural inequalities, and the family in addition to courses in the department of human development and family studies on family development. A student interested in medical ethics might take a course in sociology on medical sociology, in anthropology on medical anthropology, and in philosophy on ethics.

#### **D. The Comprehensive Exam [Additional details in Section XIII]**

The comprehensive examination should serve at least two functions: (1) *evaluative*, in that it should permit committee members to assess the degree to which students have mastery of knowledge in a particular area; and (2) *developmental*, in that it is intended to encourage the student to recognize linkages between material learned in different courses and at different times and to become exposed to material that may not have been covered in depth in formal course work. In accordance with University guidelines, the exam may be undertaken “when the prescribed course work is substantially complete as defined by the Guidance Committee.” The exam must be passed within 5 years of entering the program. Since the process generally takes up to a year, students should plan to start no later than their fourth year; generally speaking, you must have successfully completed (i.e., earned at least a 3.0) all of your core SW and statistics courses prior to starting the comps process, though exceptions can be made with approval from the PhD program director. It is required that a student pay for at least one credit during the semester in which the exam is graded by the committee.

#### **E. Dissertation: SW 999 (24-36 credits) [Additional details in Section XIV]**

After students have successfully completed the comprehensive examination and achieved candidacy, they register for these credits (note: students can register for dissertation credits prior to this point in their studies if they desire). It is required that students register for at least one dissertation credit during the semester in which they defend the dissertation. Students must successfully complete at least 24 dissertation credits to earn their PhD; the maximum number of credits is 36. The dissertation must be defended within eight years of acceptance into the doctoral program.

**Students may not begin collecting (in the case of primary data) or analyzing (in the case of secondary data analysis) their dissertation data until they have successfully defended their dissertation proposal.**

## F. Opportunities in Public Health (PH): Dual Degree and PH Graduate Certificate

**1. Dual Degree: PhD in SW/Master's in PH:** MSU offers an online, 42-credit MPH program, housed in the College of Human Medicine (HM), which is currently seeking accreditation. *While the final dual degree agreement between PH and SW is still pending, as of August 2015, what follows is a general overview. Please talk with the SW PhD program director about the dual degree if you are interested in pursuing it at this time.* In order to earn a dual degree, students must apply to both SW and PH and be accepted by both. The application to the MPH program requires that students submit an application form and a letter from the SW PhD program director to the PH program coordinator, but all of the other supporting materials (e.g., letters of recommendation, transcripts) that the student submits for admission to the SW program can be submitted to PH. Students must contact the SW grad secretary and request that these supporting documents from the SW application file be sent to PH.

The MPH requires 18 credits of core coursework (HM 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, and 806, all 3 credits each), 18 credits of electives, and 6 credits of a culminating experience. The culminating experience includes a practicum/internship (a 240-hour commitment) and a capstone paper; a range of activities may be acceptable as part of the practicum/internship, but this requires discussion with and approval from the PH program coordinator. Please see [www.publichealth.msu.edu](http://www.publichealth.msu.edu) for more information about these requirements.

SW PhD students pursuing the dual degree may count up to 9 credits of SW classes toward the PH requirements, typically the 18 credits of electives. Additionally, SW students have the option of substituting several statistics courses (CEP 932 OR 933, PPL 801 OR 802, and SOC 881 AND 882) for the required PH core class of HM 802, Biostatistics for Public Health (a 3-credit course). *Students may only count up to 9 credits total from SW/statistics toward PH*, so if a statistics course is substituted for HM 802, as described above, students may then count up to 6 additional credits of SW classes toward the 18 credits of PH electives. Both the counting of the credits from SW courses and the substitution of the allowable statistics class(es) for HM 802 must be pre-approved by the PH program coordinator, and the student must complete a PH elective request form. Also, students must earn at least a 3.0 in all classes, including PH and all classes to be counted toward the MPH (e.g., CEP 932).

Students may count 15 credits of PH courses (e.g., most of the PH core coursework) toward their required SW focused cognate classes, with approval from their guidance committee.

**2. PH Graduate Certificate:** For students interested in including PH content as part of their graduate studies, but unwilling to pursue the dual degree, the PH program offers a graduate certificate in PH. The certificate requires that students take the 18 credits of PH core courses (HM 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, and 806); substitution of another statistics course for HM 802, Biostatistics for Public Health, is not allowed. To apply for the certificate, students must complete a PH certificate application form and submit a letter from the SW PhD program director to the PH program coordinator. Students may count 15 credits of these PH courses toward their required focused

cognate classes, with approval from their guidance committee. Students must earn at least a 3.0 in all PH classes to earn the certificate.

#### IV. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy

The School of Social Work actively recruits African American, Latinx, Asian American, and Native American students, as well as students who have been economically disadvantaged (e.g., first-generation college students). The School and University Antidiscrimination policy is found in Section XXXVI. In addition, the School complies with The American with Disabilities Act.

#### V. Residency Requirement

Per MSU policy, one year of residence on campus after first enrollment for doctoral degree credit is required to permit the student to work with and under the direction of the faculty, and to engage in independent and cooperative research utilizing university facilities. A year of residence is defined as two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work each semester (i.e., at least 6 credits each semester for two consecutive semesters after beginning the program). See the Office of the Registrar, Graduate Programs, at <http://www.reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/> for more information.

#### VI. Sample Program and Tracking Your Progress via GradPlan

Table 2 below provides a typical course schedule for a full-time doctoral student.

**Table 2: Typical Course Schedule for Full-Time Doctoral Students**

Year in Program	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
<b>Year 1</b>	SW 900 Proseminar SW 901 Theory & Knowledge Construction Stats I	SW 920 Program Evaluation Stats II 3 credits outside course or SW elective	Independent research*
<b>Year 2</b>	SW 905 Policy 3-6 credits outside course or SW elective	SW 911 Research Practicum I SW 930 Research Methods 3 credits outside course or SW elective	Independent research*
<b>Year 3</b>	SW 912 Research Practicum II 3 credits outside course or SW elective	Comprehensive proposal and exam	Comp cont'd
<b>Years 4-5</b>	Dissertation proposal and dissertation	Dissertation	Dissertation

\*NOTE: Independent research during the summer is not required, but students are strongly encouraged to be active in research projects to enhance their skills.

**By the end of the first year in the doctoral program, a student should have a guidance chair and committee, and have completed a degree plan on GradPlan (gradplan.msu.edu).**

Committee members must be approved by MSU (i.e., must be in the tenure system at MSU, unless previously approved). If you wish to include a faculty member who is not from MSU, or is not a part of the tenure system, please see section XII, sub-section A (p. 15), on guidance committees. In your degree plan, you must list all of the courses you have taken or plan to take that will contribute to your PhD, with a few exceptions (e.g., if a student is approved by the PhD program director to bring in courses from outside of MSU, s/he **will not** enter those courses in GradPlan). Also, students should not enter any MSW courses in their degree plan.

Any changes that occur after the plan has been submitted (e.g., changes to your guidance committee or chair) can be added to GradPlan by the student. GradPlan was developed for doctoral students to develop their program of study, record committee approval, and make notes on all of their degree requirements as they are completed via the degree audit. The Graduate School will certify the acceptance of each dissertation final format via GradAudit; the graduate secretary or other department or college level designee has the final GradAudit sign off. GradPlan, GradInfo and GradAudit help guides may be found at:

<https://gradinfo.msu.edu/help.asp>.

## **VII. Choosing a Chair, and General Authorship and Research Guidelines**

Each incoming student will be matched with a faculty advisor by the doctoral program committee, who will be available during the first year to offer advice and mentoring. By the end of the first year, the student should select a guidance committee **chair** from the SSW tenure system faculty, whose role is to provide guidance and mentorship regarding choosing guidance committee members, the student's degree plan, the comprehensive exam and dissertation processes, professional development, and seeking employment. In consultation with the chair, the student should select their guidance committee members by the end of the first year (see p. 17 for detailed information about the committee). Note that the student may change chairs at their discretion, as long as the change does not occur during the comprehensive exam evaluation period; as noted in the section above, any change to the chair or committee must be recorded in GradPlan by the student.

The following resources, on mentoring relationships, authorship guidelines, research integrity, and institutional data, may be helpful as you begin to think about selecting a chair, publishing, and conducting research in an ethical manner:

<https://socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/PhD/Mentoring-Resources>

<http://vprgs.msu.edu/michigan-state-university-guidelines-authorship>

<https://grad.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/researchintegrity/guidelines.pdf>

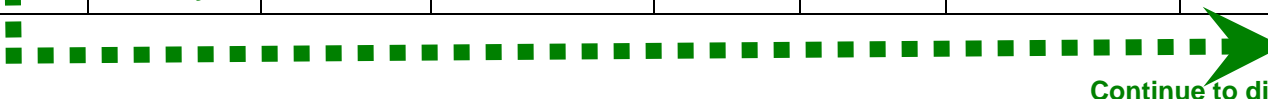
<https://tech.msu.edu/about/guidelines-policies/msu-institutional-data-policy/>


## **VIII. Doctoral Course Work and Activities Timeline**

Figure 1 on the following pages provides a typical timeline of activities, deadlines, and key forms.



Figure 1: Progression to PhD Timeline

This is a typical timeline		Year 1				Year 2	Year 3	
<b>Student's Responsibilities</b>	Student enters the program fall semester ■ ■ ■	Select guidance committee chair	Decide on committee members	Call first committee meeting; enter degree plan into GradPlan electronically	Annual review YR 1	Continue course work	Comprehensive exam proposal	Complete comprehensive exam
		Create plan of study				Annual review YR 2	Annual review YR 3	
								
<b>Faculty Responsibilities</b>	Assist with plan of study	Assist in selecting committee	Approve GradPlan degree plan (done electronically via routing from FTU system)	Assist with annual review	Assist with annual review	Evaluate comp exam proposal	Evaluate comprehensive exam	
						Assist with annual review		
Forms/tasks to be completed by student and submitted to SSW grad secretary <b>BOLDED FORMS ARE MANDATORY</b>	Plan of study	N/A	<b>Complete GradPlan degree plan online (gradplan.msu.edu) and submit online</b>	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 1	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 2	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YR 3	<b>MSU form: Record of Comprehensive Examinations for Doctoral Degree and Educational Specialist Degree Candidates</b>	
<b>Due dates for forms and activities</b>	By the end of the first semester	By the end of the first academic year	Recommended by end of first academic year; Max: fall semester of second academic year	End of first year	End of second year	End of third year	Submitted after student successfully completes comp exam; Recommended spring of third year; Max: within 5 years of beginning the PhD program	

Years 4-5						
<b>Student's Responsibilities</b>	Complete and defend dissertation proposal and Contract	Work on and submit dissertation	Complete dissertation defense	Annual review YRs 4 and 5	IRB closure by expiration date	Complete GradPlan degree audit and required forms (below); these steps must be completed to graduate
						
<b>Faculty Responsibilities</b>	Chair works with student on proposal; all members sign Dissertation Proposal Contract at end of proposal meeting (SSW form)	Chair works with student on dissertation before it goes to committee; all read dissertation	Conduct oral examination (dissertation defense); sign Record of Completion of Requirements at end of successful defense	Assist with annual review	Assist with IRB closure by expiration date	Sign Approval Form
Forms to be completed by student and submitted to grad secretary <b>BOLDED FORMS ARE MANDATORY</b>	<b>Dissertation Proposal Contract (SSW form)</b>	N/A	<b>MSU form: Record of Completion of Requirements (Record of Dissertation and Oral Examination Requirement for Doctoral Degree Candidates)</b>	<b>Progress report</b> for annual review YRs 4 and 5	<b>MSU form: IRB Closure Form</b>	<b>MSU forms: Application for Graduation &amp; Approval Form</b> Application for Graduation is obtained from and submitted to Registrar; Approval Form comes from Grad School and is submitted to Grad School
<b>Due dates for forms and activities</b>	Completed at conclusion of dissertation proposal defense	Typically during the fourth, and perhaps fifth, year	Completed at oral examination in defense of the dissertation—submitted to SSW grad secretary ASAP; Recommended by end of fifth year; Max: 8 years after beginning the program	End of fourth and fifth years	Prior to expiration date	Application for Graduation completed within first week of semester student intends to graduate; see Important Dates on Registrar's School Calendar webpage for deadlines

## IX. Annual Progress Report Guidelines, the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Requirements, and Time to Complete Degree

The **annual progress report** is an annual review of the PhD student's academic progress, performance, and professional potential. It is outlined in the Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities. Once per year at the end of the spring semester, the student will complete the progress report, then meet with her/his advisor to discuss the student's progress and goals. The committee chair and the graduate student will sign the completed annual progress report, which will then be submitted to the PhD program director. Students who are defending that spring or summer are not required to submit an annual progress report for that spring. As part of the annual progress report, students are required to submit a record of the **RCR training** they received over the past year: As of September, 2016, students are expected to complete four required CITI modules their first year, and three additional CITI modules their second year. During their third and subsequent years, students are expected to obtain at least three hours of RCR refresher training. Finally, upon graduation, students are expected to have at least six hours of discussion-based RCR training (e.g., RCR dialogue in courses, at SSW Brown Bags). For more information, see: <http://socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/PhD/Responsible-Conduct-of-Research-Plan>.

The completed progress report will be placed into the student's academic file and be used by the PhD director to prepare an annual progress letter, which will be sent to the student and chair, as well placed in the student's file. Graduate students who wish to appeal any part of the chair's evaluation may do so in writing to the PhD director, and this appeal will be filed together with the annual progress report. Students should also update their guidance/dissertation committee regarding academic progress. The "Annual Progress Report" form can be found on the PhD program's webpage.

**The University requires that students successfully pass their comprehensive exam within 5 years, and their dissertation within 8 years, of beginning the PhD program; this is defined as making satisfactory progress toward the degree. *Even if a student takes a general leave of absence or a medical withdrawal/leave, the 8-year time limit still applies.*** If a student has not successfully passed the comprehensive exam within 5 years, a meeting will be scheduled with the student, chair, and PhD director to discuss next steps. If a student has not successfully defended the dissertation within 8 years, s/he will be dismissed from the program. However, if there are extraordinary extenuating circumstances that have prevented the student from finishing within the allotted 8 years, with the approval of the PhD program director, the student may apply for an extension beyond the 8 years—this extension request must be made prior to the end of the 8-year time limit. The student must follow the extension work plan and successfully defend the dissertation within the extension time frame. The PhD director will monitor the student's adherence to the agreed-upon work plan: Failure to follow the work plan/deadlines or successfully defend will result in the student being dismissed from the program.

In order to facilitate students' timely progress toward completing their degree, if a student has completed the **6<sup>th</sup> year** of the program and has not successfully defended the dissertation proposal, a mandatory meeting between the chair, student, and PhD program director will be

held to discuss either the student leaving the program, or a concrete, detailed plan for moving forward, to be monitored by the chair and PhD program director. If it is decided at the meeting that the student does not have a realistic chance of completing the degree within the 8 years, the student will be counseled out of the program.

Similarly, if a student has completed the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the program and has not successfully defended their dissertation proposal and/or dissertation, a mandatory meeting between the chair, student, and PhD program director will be held to discuss either the student leaving the program, or a concrete, detailed plan for moving forward, to be monitored by the chair and PhD program director. If it is decided at the meeting that the student does not have a realistic chance of completing the degree within the 8 years, the student will be counseled out of the program.

## **X. Independent Study Courses**

The PhD course offerings in social work, as specified above, are designed to meet the needs of the students, and to offer exposure to the core content areas of knowledge construction and epistemology; historical, philosophical, and ethical bases of social work; evaluation research and research methods; and policy analysis. In addition, students take six credits of statistics plus three credit hours of electives in social work and 12 credit hours outside of social work that create a 15 credit hour focused cognate or area of study.

The social work curriculum includes a number of courses at the 800 level that can be taken as electives as part of the focused cognate. In addition, students may elect to fulfill some of the focused cognate credit hours through an independent study. Independent study is planned study, highly individualized, not addressable through any other course format, proposed in writing by the student on a standard form, accepted for supervision by a faculty member and approved by the student's academic advisor and the School at the beginning of the semester. (*See Academic Programs*).

**Restrictions on Independent Study Courses.** All core courses, i.e., SW 900, 901, 905, 911, 912, 920, 930, and the two statistics courses, must be taken as regularly scheduled courses. As such, independent study cannot be used as a substitute for a required or scheduled course. Students should not request an independent study primarily as a means of accommodating their schedule. Independent study is to be used as a means of augmenting a student's curriculum in a particular area in which no scheduled course is offered. Independent studies should be undertaken as part of the student's overall plan of study that is discussed with her/his Guidance Committee.

### **A. Number of Independent Credits that can be Applied to the PhD Degree in Lieu of Courses**

***For the 15 focused cognate credits, there is no set number of credit hours that can be taken through independent study. However, only three of the 15 credits can be taken in social work.***

In general, independent study should be considered when:

1. No scheduled courses exist that cover the topics of interest to the student;

2. A student is interested in pursuing a topic in greater depth than is possible within a given course; and,
3. An instructor has expertise or interest and is willing to conduct independent study courses as a means of sharing that expertise with PhD students

#### **B. Negotiating the Process and Product For Independent Study Courses**

Independent study places additional burdens on the student and instructor. They must agree upon the topics to be covered, the sources of information (books, articles, lectures, videos, research), the work products or deliverables required of the student, and method of grading. In addition, the instructor and the student must negotiate this agreement relative to the number of credit hours of the independent study. For example, University policy suggests that student spend 3 hours per week outside of classes for every hour in class related to work for a specific course. Thus, if a course is 3 credit hours, the student should be spending 6 additional hours per week on course-related work. In an independent study, the student is not attending class and therefore, should expect to spend an average of about 3 hours a week for every one credit hour of independent study (e.g., a 3 credit hour independent study should require about 9 hours of work per week).

The School recommends that students meet with the instructor a minimum of four times during the semester for face-to-face contact or through e-mail consultations. Prior to the start of the semester in which the study will be undertaken, or during the first week of the term, the student should meet with the instructor to outline the proposed work and a timeline. Students should then have progress meetings with the faculty member at least two additional times during the semester, and meet with them during the final week of the semester to discuss/present his/her final product. It is the student's responsibility to establish and maintain contact with the instructor and to see that these meetings are set. It is the faculty member's responsibility to give the student timely feedback so that s/he can complete the work as negotiated. In taking an independent study in another department or school, it is the student's responsibility to find out if that department or school has additional or alternate meeting and work load requirements.

#### **C. Timing and Minimum Grade Point Average Required to Take Independent Study Courses**

The student must be able to judge how much work s/he can undertake in a semester and self-pace her or his work, therefore the PhD program committee suggests that students have completed a minimum of one semester in the doctoral program, and have a minimum GPA of 3.25 in order to enroll in an independent study.

#### **D. Procedure For Enrolling in Independent Study Courses**

Students wishing to enroll in independent study courses in social work should get the application form from the front office at 254 Baker Hall or online at <https://www.reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/indestduyapp.pdf>. Students should prepare a one-page outline or description of their proposed topic of study and what they intend to do during the independent study prior to approaching any faculty member. This can be

used as the basis of the initial conversation and negotiation of topic and product. Upon agreement between student and faculty mentor, the student will complete sections 1 and 2 of the "Application for Independent Study" form and secure the signature of the instructor indicating her or his willingness to supervise an independent study student. Once this has been completed, the student will give the form to the SSW grad secretary, who will provide the override for the student to enroll in SW 890, and give the student a section number for the independent study that corresponds to the supervising faculty member. Please note, it is the student's responsibility to find a faculty member with whom to work. It is also the student's responsibility to learn about the enrollment procedure in undertaking an independent study in another department or school. However, the PhD program committee suggests following a similar procedure in terms of drafting a one-page synopsis of the student's plan before seeking a faculty mentor.

## **XI. Teaching During the Doctoral Program**

### **A. Teaching Content in Course Work and Activities**

The art and practice of teaching are discussed in many of the core social work courses. Beyond the experience of teaching during your doctoral program, our goal is to prepare you for a deeper understanding of your teaching philosophy and for developing elements of a teaching portfolio. Therefore, we provide content to enhance teaching expertise. For example, in the Doctoral Proseminar (SW 900) there is content on developing teaching portfolios and in the Knowledge Construction course (SW 901) there is content on teaching philosophy. In addition, Monday "Brown Bag" discussion often include instruction and information about teaching (e.g. distance education, evaluating student writing, etc.).

### **B. Teaching Mentorship**

For students that have not had an opportunity to teach, or those with limited experience in a particular area of teaching, we offer a one semester mentorship with a seasoned professor who is regarded for their teaching skill. In this mentorship, the student shadows the professor during the semester, with ongoing meetings to discuss classroom process, content, and the evaluation of assignments. Students develop their plan of learning with their mentor based on their individual needs; however, students should expect to deliver at least one lecture and participate in grading.

To request a mentorship, first talk with your advisor for suggestions and think about the sequence area you are interested in (i.e., policy, research, HBSE, micro or macro practice), then make a formal written request to the PhD director (email is fine). The PhD director will then make recommendations to the associate director of the School, who does the course scheduling. Students should request a mentorship a year in advance so that the details can be worked through. We offer a small stipend for the mentorship. As part of your development as a teacher, it is strongly recommended that you take at least two courses offered by the Office of Faculty and Organizational Development during the semester of your teaching mentorship; see <http://fod.msu.edu/> for more information on available courses, workshops, and other resources.

### C. Teaching Assignments

*It is strongly recommended that students complete their required courses and have successfully completed their comp process before teaching.* Since comps are typically completed during the student's third year, this generally means that a student would be eligible to begin teaching in the fourth year. If a student has not taught before, a successful teaching mentorship is a prerequisite. As with the request for a teaching mentorship, requests for teaching assignments should be made in advance of the year you would like to teach. Such requests should be made in writing to the PhD director (email is fine), who will then make recommendations to the associate director of the School, who does the course scheduling.

If you have a graduate assistantship as part of your funding support during the fall or spring semester in which you are assigned to teach, you will teach as a TA (teaching assistant). As a student with a GA, you are eligible to teach beginning your 4<sup>th</sup> year in the program; your teaching assistantship will be included as part of your overall funding package for that academic year. If you do not have a graduate assistantship for the relevant academic year, you may teach as an adjunct. Summer teaching is generally subject to different rules: Please talk with the PhD program director for further information if you are interested in teaching during the summer.

Teaching as a TA is subject to the rights and regulations negotiated by the Graduate Employees Union. Key rights: The new contract (through May 15, 2019) stipulates that TA stipend amounts will be increased by 10% in 2015, and 2% in 2016, 2017, and 2018, with the employment period officially August 16—December 31, January 1—May 15, and May 16—August 15. Stipends are compensation for completion of the entire body of work associated with a TA appointment, including through the submission of grades when that date falls outside the employment period. The TA tuition waiver pool for TAs has been increased from 200 to 450 per year. Article 18 of the new contract now provides for possible medical disputes where TAs may not be able to perform their employment responsibilities due to physical or mental health conditions. In addition, adoption and parental leave time provides for pay during the first work week of applicable leave; the language related to jury duty has been updated with regard to payment for lost time and reporting back to work after jury duty. The payment of union dues is now consistent with Michigan Right to Work policy. Union membership is voluntary; meeting the definition of a TA under the GEU contract is independent of union membership. One can be a TA, covered by the contract, and enjoy all of the rights and responsibilities of the agreement but not be a member of the union. Union membership is not tied to the employment relationship and is a private matter between the employee and union. Finally, the contract specifies three employment levels for TAs (Level 1, 2, and 3, depending on qualifications and prior semesters of GA experience); see the section on GA levels, pages 32-33 for more information on criteria required for each level. International TAs for whom English is not their primary language must demonstrate a minimum standard of proficiency in spoken English, or be required to take courses offered by MSU's English Language Center; for more details, see <https://elc.msu.edu/programs/ita/>.

#### D. Teaching Certificate Offered by the College of Social Science

MSU's Certification in College Teaching is an initiative of the Graduate School, in partnership with the College of Social Science. It is designed to help graduate students organize and develop their teaching experience in a systematic and thoughtful way, with assistance from faculty and campus offices and programs. Applications and acceptance into the program can be arranged through the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies within the CSS.

## XII. Guidance and Dissertation Committees

### A. Guidance Committee

The guidance committee must consist of at least four faculty members holding regular appointments in their respective departments at MSU. Generally, regular faculty are people who are in the tenure system and employed by MSU. Adjunct faculty of a department may not be considered as one of the four members unless they have regular faculty status in another MSU department or have been approved for inclusion on committees. Students may petition the Graduate School for acceptance of a non-tenure system or non-MSU faculty member as a committee member. This process is regulated by the Graduate School, and involves the potential committee member submitting their CV and supporting documents for approval at the department, College, and Graduate School levels. Please see the PhD program director for details. At least three of the committee members, including the chair, must have a PhD.

The composition must include at least two social work faculty members, one of whom will serve as the guidance chair. The student may choose to have a third social work committee member and one outside member who will generally have expertise in the student's focused cognate area, or choose to have two social work faculty members and two outside members. Additional members who can contribute to the student's program may serve on the guidance committee and assist in the work of the committee, provided that the number of such persons does not exceed the number of regular faculty on the committee, though additional members are not recommended. **The student should select his/her guidance committee chair during the spring semester of the first year.** With consultation from the chair, the student should add the remaining committee members by the end of their first academic year. At that time a meeting of the whole committee is held to discuss the student's degree plan. The student should be prepared to meet with her/his committee and present a tentative plan. After the student and committee have met and developed a degree plan, the student should go on to **GradPlan** (at [gradplan.msu.edu](http://gradplan.msu.edu)) and enter information about their degree plan. This plan will include courses to be taken, tentative comp exam topics, and the tentative dissertation topic, among other things. Once the degree plan is complete, the student should submit it online by clicking the "submit" button. The plan will then route to the graduate secretary, the committee members, and the PhD director, for their approval. Any changes, such as new committee members, changes in courses, etc., should be made by the student at any time by logging back into GradPlan. Students will have access to GradPlan for two years post-graduation.



When selecting committee members, it is important to consider that ***only the SW members will evaluate the student's comprehensive exam*** (i.e., outside members do not evaluate the comprehensive proposal or exam, only SW faculty members).

#### **B. Dissertation Committee**

The dissertation committee must include the same composition as the guidance committee (at least two social work faculty, at least one outside member). However, the individual members of the committee may be different than those who served on the guidance committee. Reasons for selecting new committee members for dissertation work may include a change in the focus of the student's interest, scheduling conflicts (e.g., a faculty member going on sabbatical), or mutual agreement between the student and a faculty member, etc. It is the responsibility of the student to negotiate any replacements on the committee with the members who are involved, and to inform the PhD program director. Change in membership must also be recorded via GradPlan by the student. As with the composition of the guidance committee, described above, faculty members must be approved, from MSU, and tenure system, unless previously approved. See the above section on guidance committees for the steps on how to gain approval for an outside member on your dissertation committee.

After students have successfully defended their dissertation proposal, the chair and committee members must sign a SSW form (the "Dissertation Proposal Contract," available on the PhD program website under "Key Forms" tab), thus agreeing to the substance and format of the dissertation.

**Please note:** For both the guidance and dissertation committees, faculty serve at the request of the student. Any student may change the composition of his/her committee at appropriate times (e.g. not after a comp exam is in process or being evaluated by the committee), and should do so when s/he feels this will assist in degree completion, making the change in a professional manner. However, any faculty member may also choose to resign membership on such a committee at any time. Students who wish to change committee members should ascertain prior to making the change whether the prospective new committee member is in agreement with the student's plan of study and/or comprehensive exam proposal, in the case of the guidance committee, and the dissertation idea and/or proposal in the case of the dissertation committee.

### **XIII. Guidelines for the Comprehensive Examination**

#### **A. Goals of the Comprehensive Exam**

The purpose of the social work comprehensive examination is threefold: Students should be able to demonstrate mastery of knowledge in a particular area or areas; demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and synthesize material within these areas; and demonstrate the capacity to write at the doctoral level. The comprehensive exam is in the form of a 30-40 page paper and is evaluated by the student's guidance committee. The comprehensive exam should focus on a substantive topic of interest to the student and focus on research findings (including different methods/approaches,

previous historical work in the area, current research, and gaps in the literature), a rationale for focusing on the topic, theoretical foundations, the policy context, and social work practice implications.

The topic should be chosen for its relationship to social work and/or social welfare, and to the student's primary area of interest. While the subject matter of the social work comprehensive exam may be related to course work or papers the student has already completed, the written product of the comprehensive exam should be independent of papers or other products completed in the student's program.

Mastery is defined as the integration, synthesis and communication of major theoretical and empirical knowledge in the designated area. A crucial analysis of the work is expected, including the identification of key issues and gaps in conceptualization, theory, and research, as well as the integration of relevant social work and social science knowledge. It is expected that the exam will cover the core social work course areas, i.e., research, history and epistemology, including philosophy/theory/ethical issues, and policy. Finally, the written document should reflect the student's ability to communicate effectively with attention to scholarly style, clarity, and composition using the most recent APA format.

**It should be noted that the active process to successfully complete the comprehensive proposal and exam can take approximately one year.** The first stage is defining your topic area followed by the submission of a proposal, in the form of a referenced outline, to your chair for approval, committee approval, and finally writing the full exam paper.

**Schedules for review, approval and grading should be coordinated between the student and committee members, keeping in mind that some faculty do not engage in work with students over the summer.**

**The student MAY NOT begin work on the comprehensive exam until the chair and committee have given their final approval of the proposal.**

## **B. The Topic Area**

Discussion of the comprehensive exam should begin with a decision about a topic area. This should be formalized with the chair. The topic should be relevant to the student's research goals and broad enough to encompass core social work areas (e.g., practice, policy, research, history, etc.), but specific enough that the literature is not overwhelming. It is suggested that the topic area consist of a specific construct (e.g., depression, trauma) or issue (e.g., welfare reform, foster care) and a population (e.g., children, women, prisoners, etc). Examples: Trauma and adolescents; prison and women; suicide and elderly; welfare reform and poor families.

## **C. The Comprehensive Exam Proposal**

### **1. Process for Proposal Approval**

Ultimately the proposal for the comprehensive exam must be approved by the social work members of the committee. However, prior to sending it to other

members, the proposal should be reviewed and approved by the chair. Obviously, this work between the student and chair will occur over a period of time (e.g., 6 months), since there are typically several rounds of back and forth revisions between the student and chair. After topic approval, the chair may guide the student to relevant readings prior to attempting the outline that will become your proposal. In addition, the student may want to seek out other faculty members with expertise in the area of inquire about key readings or review articles. The student's reading should be thorough and include readings from other disciplines, even those outside social sciences, if appropriate. For example, reading medical journals, if the topic is health-related, makes good sense. Once the student has a fairly thorough review of the literature completed, a draft of the proposal should go to the chair. The chair may approve or ask for modifications. Only after the chair approves it should it be sent out to other committee members for their review and approval.

**The chair and committee members should use the rubric, located at the end of this section, as their guide for evaluating the proposal.**

## **2. Content of the Proposal:**

Once the topic area is agreed upon, the student should begin reading comprehensively about the topic in social work and other relevant social science and/or health empirical literature. This reading will complement and build upon the reading that you have completed in your course work but under no circumstances should it be limited to course work reading. Success in creating the outline and in completing the exam will depend on the breadth of the student's reading and the knowledge of the topic area.

The proposal (see below for format details) for the comprehensive exam should represent an integration and synthesis of the student's reading, leading to a critical analysis of the topic area that demonstrates gaps in the current empirical research. This critical analysis will assist the student in developing plans for dissertation research. Content for the proposal must include attention to the following areas: rationale (i.e., an explanation of why the topic is relevant and important), historical review, policy context and/ or implications, how the topic has been empirically studied previously (including epistemology and different methods), current empirical research gaps, and implications for social work practice. **You should use the rubric for evaluating the comp proposal and exam, found at the end of this section, as your guide to what you should focus on in your comp proposal.**

**The proposal should include, at minimum, the following: 1) Topic area, 2) Brief introduction providing the background and significance of the topic (1-2 pages), 3) A very detailed outline, with references, that demonstrates the structure of your final paper with all of the areas of the rubric covered thoroughly, and 4) Reference bibliography. Individual chairs may request that students supplement their outlines with additional content, e.g., a detailed paragraph or section on each main area of the proposal.** The bibliography may include a section for references cited within the outline and another section for

additional important information that has not been included in the outline, but may be utilized in the exam. References must be predominantly scholarly writing such as peer-reviewed empirical journal articles. The main goal of the exam is a comprehensive and broad examination of the topic area and while it is difficult to say that there should be an exact number of references it is expected that there will be an extensive and exhaustive review of the literature resulting in a minimum of approximately 50 sources for your exam.

### **3. Role of the Chair and Other SW Faculty Member(s)**

The chair of the student's guidance committee will work with the student to prepare his/her comprehensive examination proposal. This assistance should include help in defining the topic and relevant literature. The chair should help the student organize the material making sure that the coverage of the topic will be broad and comprehensive, yet manageable. The second social work faculty member (and the third if the student has three members from social work) and/or other faculty may also be consulted during the preparation of the proposal outline. It is the chair's responsibility, however, to see that the proposal is in line with the goals listed above, and that the scope is such that under the normal circumstances, i.e. where a student devotes approximately a half-time effort, the comprehensive exam can be completed within a maximum of six (6) months from the acceptance of the student's proposal outline. It is assumed that the faculty will model a professional commitment to the idea of excellence in their guidance of the student during the outlining phase as well as in the grading and feedback phase.

### **4. Approval of the Proposal**

The final version of the written proposal must be reviewed by the chair and the social work faculty member(s), and formally approved, before the student is able to move forward with working on her/his comp exam.

**If the student is unable to produce a proposal that meets with the committee's approval, the student may be counseled out of or dismissed from the program. In such a case, committee members will confer with the PhD program director. It is understood that the comprehensive exam process utilizes a higher level of skills than in course work and that some students may not be able to proceed to the exam writing.**

### **5. Changing Topics, Chair, or Committee Members**

Prior to the submission of the proposal to the committee members, a student may decide to select a new topic, chair, and/or committee without penalty. However, once the proposal has been submitted to the committee, the student is committed to the topic, proposal, and current chair/committee for the duration of the proposal and comp process.

## **D. Format of the Comprehensive Exam**

### **1. Written Components**

The comprehensive exam should reflect independent work on the part of the student, i.e. committee members should not provide feedback to the work while it is in progress. In addition to the written part of the exam, the student and/or the committee may contract for an oral portion (this will be an individual decision based on committee member recommendations). The comprehensive examination paper must follow logically from the proposal approved by the chair and committee, and focus on research findings (including different methods/ approaches, previous historical work in the area, current research, and gaps in the literature), a rationale for focusing on the topic, theoretical foundations, the policy context, and social work practice implications, as already discussed in these guidelines. See the rubric at the end of this section for further guidance on what to include in your exam. **The chair and committee members should use the rubric as their guide in evaluating the comp exam.**

## **2. Length**

It is expected that the final paper will be an integrated and synthesized critical analysis of **30-40 pages** in length (not including the list of references). The paper should be double-spaced with 1" margins and size 12 font. The paper should reflect professional standards for publishable papers both in terms of adequacy of content, communication style, and presentation. Use of current APA standards is required.

## **3. Independent Work**

The exam is an independent, new effort by the student. There is no faculty review of drafts of the exam, nor should a student use prior written work for the comprehensive exam. Faculty members may not engage with the student about the exam after the proposal has been approved until the exam has been completed.

## **E. Time Frame**

Once the committee approves the proposal, the student has a maximum of six months to complete and return the comprehensive exam to the chair and committee members for evaluation. Under extenuating circumstances there may be the opportunity for an extension. The request for extension should be in writing to the chair with a copy to the PhD program director. Only one extension will be allowed, with the length to be determined by the chair and PhD director. If there is an extensive gap between proposal approval and exam completion, the chair may require an update to the literature in the proposal.

**It should be noted that comprehensive exams must be completed and approved by the committee by the end of the student's fifth year. If the student has not successfully completed and passed the exam by that time, the student will be required to meet with their chair and the PhD director to discuss next steps.**

## **F. Evaluation of Comprehensive Examinations**

## 1. Committee Responsibilities

The chair and other social work faculty member(s) on the student's guidance committee are responsible for evaluating the student's work. They may, if they deem it necessary or appropriate, seek input from other social work faculty or from the social science discipline or focused cognate committee members, but it is the social work committee members who evaluate the work as passing/acceptable or not passing/unacceptable. Close attention will be paid to whether the student is able to comprehensively cover the material in the exam. Typically, the student will be notified of the result of the examination within 2-4 weeks of completion. However if the exam is completed when faculty members are not readily available to devote time to reviewing the exam (such as just prior to University holidays or during the summer), a longer evaluation period may be required. Should a committee member be on leave or no longer on the faculty while the student is in the process of working on the exam, it is hoped that this member will continue to work with the student until the completion of this process. If this is not possible, or if the student or faculty member finds this unacceptable, the chair and/or members of the doctoral program committee will assist the student in finding a replacement or will serve in that capacity themselves.

## 2. Grading: The following grades can be assigned to the student's work

Evaluation of the exam is based on the rubric found after this section. The rubric encourages students to successfully integrate the material, the breadth of literature reviewed, critical analyses across readings, comprehension and clarity of the writing, and adherence to APA standards.

The exam that the student completes and turn into the committee may be found to be **acceptable** or **unacceptable**. If acceptable, the process is complete and the student advances to the dissertation proposal. If the exam is deemed unacceptable by the committee the student has the option of either re-writing the exam or withdrawing from the program. Re-writing the exam may be minor, such as strengthening a particular area or adding a few references, or extensive. An extensive re-write may be because the student was unable to synthesize or critically analyze the literature or has left out significant and important literature on the topic area. In the case of an exam requiring extensive re-writes or extenuating circumstances, a second revision may be requested. However, the opportunity to complete a second revision of the exam is up to the discretion of the chair/committee in concert with the PhD program director. **There will be no more than two revisions under any circumstances.**

If the student does not successfully meet the objectives of the exam, even after revision, the student will not be given a pass and will be dismissed from the program. Formal grievance processes are available if the student feels that their failure is based on personal factors or inappropriate or unfair behavior of the committee. (Note: See section on Grievances).

If a revision by the committee is requested, the committee will give the student sufficient feedback and detailed expectations about how and in what time frame the student should revise the work to achieve an acceptable status. If the student's committee members cannot reach a majority opinion on a grade, an additional reader will be assigned. Alternatively, the committee members can ask the doctoral program committee to review the comprehensive exam.

Following the successful completion of the exam, the student's guidance committee will complete the "Record of Comprehensive Examinations" form and **the student will submit the signed form to the SSW graduate secretary.** **Students must be registered for at least one credit hour (typically a dissertation credit) during the semester in which the comprehensive exam is graded.**

### 3. Rubric for Assessing Comprehensive Proposal and Exam

**Table 3: Evaluation Rubric**

<b>Areas of Assessment</b>	<b>Absent 0</b>	<b>Minimal 1</b>	<b>Fair 2</b>	<b>Acceptable 3</b>	<b>Superb 4</b>
Writing is clear and comprehensible					
Rationale for study is detailed					
Integration & synthesis of content areas					
Critical analyses across content areas					
Extensive/exhaustive reading evident					
Reviews history of issue/problem					
Addresses policy context/implications					
Provides a theoretical framework					
Current empirical research reviewed is broad and well-integrated					
Demonstrates an understanding of the epistemology underlying previous empirical studies					
Demonstrates an understanding of what methods were used in prior empirical studies, and how these methods may shape current findings					
Gaps in empirical research are identified and discussed					
Discussion of the implications and importance of the area in terms of social work practice					
Adherence to current APA Standards					
For exam only: Paper is 30-40 pages in length					

Note: This rubric is not intended to provide a score or cut point for successful comprehensive proposals and exams. It is intended to be a communication device so that expectations are clearly delineated prior to the exam and areas for revision can be articulated.



## XIV. The Dissertation

### A. The Structure and Approval of the Dissertation Proposal

**1. Structure of Proposal:** The structure of your dissertation proposal will be suggested by your chair. For example, some chairs require that the proposal mirror the first three chapters of a dissertation (the introductory overview chapter, the literature review, and the methods chapter) while others require only a detailed outline and bibliography. Its structure will also depend upon whether or not you are doing a traditional dissertation, or the multiple manuscript option (see below). At a minimum, the dissertation proposal should include the following areas:

- **Rationale or significance of the proposed research**, citing relevant literature and illuminating the gaps in current research.
- **Introduction/lit review:** Literature/prior empirical research that provides a background to your proposed research.
- **Statement of the problem or specific aims** for the proposed project, including specification of major research questions or hypotheses to be addressed.
- **Research plan**, including proposed **methods** and timelines for completing all phases of the research. The timeline should include the process for obtaining **human subjects approval. The PI for your IRB application must be your current chair or another current designated committee member.**
- **Resources** required to complete the proposed research, (e.g., cooperation of outside agencies, research assistants, external funding sought or received).

**Note that students MAY NOT begin collecting (in the case of primary data) or analyzing (in the case of secondary data analysis) their dissertation data until they have successfully defended their dissertation proposal, had their dissertation methods approved by the committee, and received IRB approval.**

**As with the comprehensive proposal and exam process, students should expect to spend many months on both the dissertation proposal and dissertation.** With each, students should anticipate writing multiple drafts over time, with feedback from the chair. Students should anticipate that chairs may take several weeks to review and return drafts, and should build this back and forth process into their anticipated timelines. Also note that faculty are not expected to work with students over the summer (i.e., talk with your chair and committee members about their availability during the summer months, and do not assume they will be available).

**2. Approval of the Proposal:** As with the comprehensive proposal, the student's chair should approve the final version of the proposal before the proposal goes to the committee members for their review and approval. **The chair's role is to ensure that the proposal is in strong shape and ready for review/approval by the entire committee.** Committee members must have at least 2-3 weeks to review the proposal, before meeting with the student and chair to discuss the proposal. This dissertation proposal meeting can be

structured more formally like a defense (i.e., with the student making a brief presentation, the committee members questioning the student about their work, then the committee members voting on whether or not the student's proposal was acceptable, what changes need to be made, and so on) or more informally like a meeting; the structure is at the chair's discretion. It is common for the committee to make recommendations for changes to the proposal, or make recommendations about certain aspects that should be incorporated into the dissertation. **At any rate, the dissertation proposal, as well as any required changes that the committee members feel are necessary, must be approved by the chair and committee members, and the Dissertation Proposal Contract (a SSW form available on the PhD program's webpage) must be signed and submitted to the SSW graduate secretary before the student may proceed with working on her/his dissertation. This rule applies to data collection and analysis, as described above, as well as writing up the results and discussion.**

## **B. General Information about the Dissertation Process, and the Multiple Manuscript Option**

After the proposal has been approved by the dissertation committee, the student typically works on **the dissertation** primarily under the direction of the chair. The extent to which other committee members are involved during the actual course of the dissertation writing/feedback process will vary based on the chair's preferred process; the interest, availability, and expertise of the committee members; and the needs of the student. It is up to the chair to stipulate the schedule and format for the student to submit drafts of the dissertation for the chair's review (e.g., the chair may wish to see complete drafts of the dissertation for review, or prefer to review it chapter by chapter). **Regardless of the details of the review/feedback process between the chair and student, the student should plan on devoting several months to the process, and make sure to be realistic in scheduling the date of the dissertation defense.** A general rule is that the student should plan to have a completed first draft to the chair at least 3-4 months prior to the tentative dissertation defense date. The timeline will look different if the chair wishes to review chapter by chapter—the primary point is that the student must allow for multiple months for the feedback/revisions process. As with the proposal, the chair decides when the dissertation is ready to go to the committee members for their review. The committee members must be given at least 2 weeks to review the dissertation prior to the defense, though 3 weeks is preferred.

As the title indicates, a **multiple manuscript dissertation** involves the production of multiple papers, i.e., at least three separate publishable manuscripts. The chair and committee will evaluate whether the manuscripts are publishable, based on their expertise regarding particular journals. In other words, it is not acceptable for the student to write three manuscripts that are not judged to be publishable—they must be evaluated as publishable in terms of their methods, sample size, findings, and so on, at the proposal stage. These three chapters follow a chapter entitled "Introduction" that introduces the general theme of the dissertation, and are completed by a chapter entitled "Conclusion" that should integrate the major findings of the individual three chapters (manuscripts). As with any dissertation plan, the doctoral student must propose this type of dissertation to her/his committee to ascertain whether the chair and committee members agree that this is a good method for the student's topic and research plan.

The three publishable manuscripts do not need to be totally related, though typically there is some relationship, e.g., a common theme, qualitative and quantitative reports from the same study, different sets of variables from the same study, the same general population group, etc. Each of the manuscripts stands on its own, thus producing three separate potential articles for the author. Each manuscript can refer to the other as one would when publishing different works that refer to prior methods, findings, etc., but the manuscripts are discrete and must each have their own literature review, methods section, findings, discussion, tables, figures, and references.

- One of the three manuscripts can be a critical review of the literature that is broader than the literature review provided for each research article, e.g., a state of the field type of article similar to that which might be found in *Psychological Bulletin*.
- The remaining two articles (or all three) must each report on the research conducted for the dissertation. They may be quantitative or qualitative in nature, or employ mixed methods.
- Each article must have its own abstract as would be required for submission to a journal.
- In addition, the dissertation must have an overall abstract.
- The introductory chapter should provide an overview of the work to be presented.
- The concluding chapter should provide a broader summary than is presented in each article, and should discuss what has been learned as a result of this body of work, and what the implications are for social work education, research, practice, and/or policy, as relevant.

### **Sample Outline for a Multiple Manuscript Dissertation**

Chapter 1: Introduction to the overall topic of the dissertation and a very brief discussion of the chapters that follow and how they relate to the topic.

Chapter 2: Paper #1: Can be a literature review paper of the overall topic area or a research project that includes an Introduction, Methods section, Results, and Discussion.

Chapter 3: Paper #2: A research project/study reported as above.

Chapter 4: Paper #3: A research project/study reported as above.

Chapter 5: Conclusions/summary for the dissertation across all three papers.

### **C. The Dissertation Defense**

When the dissertation has been approved by the chair and sent to the committee members for their review, the student and dissertation chair set a date for the dissertation defense. All members of the dissertation committee must be present at the defense (or be able to participate via Skype or telephone), and must evaluate and approve the final product. The final defense is intended as an opportunity for the student to clarify, elaborate, and/or justify the procedure utilized and the findings obtained. Its structure will be determined at the chair's discretion: Typically, the student will make a brief 10-15 minute presentation, overviewing the study and highlighting key findings (may use PowerPoint, or a more informal approach, depending on what the chair advises), and then the committee will ask the student questions and engage in

discussion as a group. **Please note:** per the guidelines from the Graduate School, the dissertation defense must consist of two parts as described in the Graduate Handbook. The first is a presentation by the doctoral student that must be open to faculty members and members of the public without a vote. The second part is the examination portion of the defense, which only the dissertation committee members may attend.

#### D. After Successful Dissertation Defense

After the defense has been conducted, the committee may approve the dissertation as is or require the student to make modifications and/or additions. Upon acceptance of the dissertation and successful defense, the proper form (the "Record of Dissertation and Oral Exam") is completed and signed by the dissertation committee, **then the student must submit it to the SSW graduate secretary**. Once the student has made the changes required by their committee, they must finalize its format and submit it. The guidelines for formatting and submitting your dissertation are extensive; details and deadlines can be found on the Graduate School website at: <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/>. The information entitled "Formatting Guide" and "Formatting Tutorial" is especially helpful. Students should provide a copy of the finished dissertation to their chair, and perhaps each committee member. Each student is responsible for closing out her/his dissertation research, via the IRB Closure form (available on the IRB website or on the PhD program webpage). Finally, after the defense, the student must go into GradPlan and enter their IRB# and finalized, approved dissertation title; they should also complete an exit survey ([exitsurvey@grd.msu.edu](mailto:exitsurvey@grd.msu.edu)).

## XV. Academic Standards

### A. Program Time Limits

1. The program is designed to take five years to complete. Further, MSU mandates time limits for completion: All PhD students are required to successfully defend their dissertation within 8 years of beginning the first course to be counted toward the PhD degree. Students are expected to successfully pass their comprehensive exam within 5 years of beginning their degree program. If the 8-year time limit is not met, the student will be dismissed from the program. See the section entitled Annual Progress Report and Time to Complete Degree, on p. 12, for further details.
2. Under extraordinary extenuating circumstances, if a student is not going to meet the 8-year time limit, with the approval of the PhD program director, s/he may apply for an extension. This extension must be requested prior to the expiration of the 8 years. See p. 12 for details.

### B. Grade Point and Passing Grades in SW Courses

For a graduate degree, a student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or above in all classes. In addition, the School of Social Work requires that a student achieve at least a 3.0 in each of the following courses: SW 900, SW 901, SW 905, SW 911, SW 912, SW 920, SW 930, and the additional required statistics courses. **A student who earns a final grade below 3.0 must register for the class again, re-take it, and earn a 3.0 or better.** If a student's cumulative grade point average drops

below a 3.0 and s/he has a GA, she will lose her GA and can be automatically dismissed from the program. If s/he earns a grade below 3.0 in two of these core classes, the PhD Director will call an ASSR (Academic Standing and Student Review) meeting. See the section on ASSRs for further information.

All incompletes must be removed by the specified mid-point of the following regular academic year semester, and all deferred grades must be removed within two year or else that class will have to be retaken.

## **XVI. Student Responsibilities**

### **A. Academic Performance**

Per MSU academic standards, the accumulation of grades below 3.0 (including N grades in the P-N grading system) in more than two courses of three or more credits each removes the student from the program. A graduate student who falls below an overall 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in any given semester will lose their GA (if applicable) and may be automatically dismissed from the program. Credit is not awarded by the University for grades below 2.0 in graduate courses.

### **B. Academic and Professional Integrity**

**Academic integrity** refers to fraud and/or misrepresentation in written class assignments, including but are not limited to:

1. Representing work of another person, including materials from the professional literature and data, as one's own (plagiarism).
2. Submitting a written assignment prepared for one class as original work in another class, or in the comp exam (self-plagiarism).
3. Representing data that were not actually collected, and/or results that were not actually analyzed in the way they are presented.

See also General Student Regulation, Protection of Scholarship and Grades, *Spartan Life*. Such conduct constitutes grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. See the section on ASSRs on pp. 54-56.

**Professional integrity** involves conducting oneself in a professional manner in courses, graduate assistantships (research or teaching), and all other contexts in which the student is engaged in an MSU-related function or role, or is representing MSU. See the section on non-academic reviews on pp. 56-57.

### **C. False Information**

Fraud and misrepresentation include, but are not limited to:

1. False statements in applications for financial aid.
2. Identifying oneself as a student in the School of Social Work without being officially registered and/or paying fees.
3. Falsifying degrees or professional credentials to clients or agencies.

4. Falsifying University class-hour commitments or schedules to any employer or field agency.
5. False statements in application materials.

(See also General Student Regulation 5.0, Protection of University Functions and Services, *Spartan Life*.)

Such conduct constitutes grounds for disciplinary action including dismissal from the School of Social Work.

#### D. **Adjudication**

Adjudication of cases of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards, and falsification of admissions and academic records follows the steps describe in the Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities document found in *Spartan Life*.

#### E. **Leaves of Absence (General, Medical, or Grief)**

As described in the section on time to complete the degree (p. 12), taking a leave of absence, whether for general reasons or medical ones, does not stop the 8-year time clock. Students may request a **general leave of absence** from the program for extenuating personal or professional circumstances by submitting a written request to the PhD program director, after consultation with their guidance or dissertation committee chair. The student must be in good standing, as determined by the PhD program director (i.e., must have been performing successfully in both recent or current classes as well as GA duties or other assigned roles), and must meet with the PhD director in-person in order for the leave of absence to be considered and approved by the PhD director. When the student is ready to re-enter the program, s/he must contact the PhD director and chair to discuss re-entry and timelines to completion of the program.

The University has a specific procedure for students who may qualify for a **medical withdrawal/leave**. For further details, please talk with the PhD director and see: <http://undergrad.msu.edu/medicalwithdrawal>. This process is specified for undergraduates, but applies to graduate students as well.

If a student requires a **grief-related leave of absence**, it is their responsibility to a) notify their chair and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled in a timely manner (no later than one week after learning of the situation), b) provide appropriate verification as specified by the chair and relevant faculty, and c) complete all missed work. It is the responsibility of the chair to a) determine with the student the expected period of absence, depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of the request, and c) make reasonable accommodations so the student is not penalized. If employed as an RA, the student must also notify their supervisor; TAs should refer to the bereavement policy in GEU CBU Article 18.

## RESOURCES

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### XVII. Financial Aid and Assistantships

There are several basic sources of funding for PhD students:

- The School of Social Work for graduate assistantships (GAs) and University Fellowships (the UDF and UEF)
- The University Office of Financial Aid for federal loans and work study

In general, GAs and UFs are awarded to qualified incoming students at the time of admission, though some assistantships may become available during the student's time in the program. Highly qualified, research-focused students will be guaranteed four years of GA support. Students who need additional financial assistance should contact the MSU Office of Financial Aid, at: [www.finaid.msu.edu](http://www.finaid.msu.edu). Early application for aid is recommended. International students are encouraged to contact the staff at MSU's Office for International Students and Scholars (<http://oiss.isp.msu.edu/>) for information on financial support: <http://oiss.isp.msu.edu/students/financial.htm>. The following websites have useful information about financial aid and other resources; students should also plan to talk with advisors about potential sources of fellowships, scholarships, and the like.

**Table 4: Resources**

FAFSA - Free Applications for Federal Student Aid On the Web	<a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Financial Aid Information Page	<a href="http://www.finaid.org">www.finaid.org</a>
Scholarship News (search by race, ethnicity, and so on)	<a href="http://www.free-4u.com/index.html">http://www.free-4u.com/index.html</a>
Ford Foundation International Fellowship Program	<a href="http://www.fordfound.org">www.fordfound.org</a>
Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans	<a href="http://www.pdsoros.org">www.pdsoros.org</a>
The National Association of Social Workers Foundation	<a href="http://www.naswfoundation.org">www.naswfoundation.org</a>
Hispanic Scholarship Fund	<a href="http://www.hsf.net">www.hsf.net</a>
Council on Social Work Education Minority Fellowships	<a href="http://www.cswe.org">www.cswe.org</a>

#### A. Graduate Assistantships

##### 1. Academic Requirements of Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistantships that are supported by the School are obtained as part of the student's funding package upon admittance to the PhD program. Graduate assistants are enrolled students whose primary goal is to complete an advanced degree. GAs must show progress toward earning a degree as a condition of maintaining the assistantship. Further, students' performance in their GA role

(including UF recipients) will be evaluated and monitored by the PhD program director at least once per year, if not more frequently. **If students are not satisfactorily performing their GA responsibilities (as evaluated by their GA supervisor and/or the PhD director), or failing to meet general academic and professional expectations as stipulated in their GA offer letter, their GA may be terminated.**

**Note:** Those students who are assigned a **teaching assistantship** are covered by the contract negotiated by the Graduate Employee Union, which was formed in 2002. The GEU and MSU have a collective bargaining agreement that covers the stipends, benefits and working conditions for teaching assistants; see the section on teaching on p. 15, and GEU website for more information: <http://geuatmsu.org/>.

Social work provides assistantships based on available funds and match between the student and area of need. Graduate assistantships provide tuition reimbursement, health insurance and a stipend. The PhD program director must make recommendations for an assistantship appointment; these are approved by the Director of the School. Graduate assistantships are available to graduate students who are actively pursuing degree programs. A graduate assistant must be registered as full-time for each semester in which s/he holds an assistantship.

Assistants are appointed on a quarter-time (10 hours/week), half-time (20 hours/week), or three-quarter-time (30 hours/week) basis for 18 weeks each fall and spring semester and 12 weeks for summer semester. Per MSU policy, GAs are hired at three different levels (1, 2, or 3), depending on qualifications and prior experience as a GA. **Level 1** requires admission as an MSU grad student, a bachelor's degree, and less than two semester's experience as a GA or full-support fellow. **Level 2** requires admission as an MSU grad student, a master's degree, or at least two semester's experience as a GA or full-support fellow. **Level 3** requires admission as an MSU grad student, a master's degree, and at least six semester's experience as a GA. To be a Level 3 RA, it is also required that you have successfully passed your comprehensive exam. See MSU Human Resources: <http://www.hr.msu.edu/hiring/studentemployment/gradasst/GradAsstFAQ.htm> for more information about GA levels and other GA-related details.

#### **Additional Grad Assistantship Information:**

Updated information about graduate assistantships can be found on the MSU Graduate School website at <http://grad.msu.edu>. A limited number of half-time graduate assistantships are available through Residence Life. The website is [www.reslife.msu.edu](http://www.reslife.msu.edu). You can apply for these positions prior to acceptance into the program, with hiring contingent upon acceptance into the program. Please notify the social work graduate advisor if you decide to apply.

## **2. Assignment of Graduate Assistants to Faculty**

A graduate assistant's duties are assigned by the PhD program director, in consultation with the doctoral program committee and Director of the School.



Assistants may be assigned to one or more faculty members. Some assistantships are awarded as part of a grant or contract and carry special work assignments (e.g., a GA supported by a faculty member's research grant, vs. one supported by the School).

### **3. Assistantship Renewal**

For School-supported GAs, by April 15th of each calendar year the School will notify each graduate assistant in writing of one (or more) of the following; (a) that her/his assistantship will be renewed for the following academic year, (b) that the assistantship will be renewed provided the assistant is able to meet certain (specified) conditions; (c) that the assistantship will be renewed provided that the School is able to meet certain (specified) conditions; (d) that the assistantship will not be renewed for the following academic year. If the assistantship is not renewed, the reasons for non-renewal will be given to the student.

#### **B. University Distinguished and Enrichment Fellowships**

These competitive awards are offered by the Graduate School to up to 40 incoming graduate students campus-wide; the fellowships offer 5 years of funding, including 2 fellowship years and 3 GA years. The PhD program director must formally nominate students during the application process. For more information, please see the Graduate School webpage at: <http://grad.msu.edu/universityfellowships/>.

#### **C. Graduate Office Fellowship (GOF) Funds**

Each academic year and summer, the School is given funds from the Graduate School that are designated for doctoral students for such things as conference travel, research support, and so on. The School's policy has been that incoming doctoral students, without graduate assistantships, will receive an amount of money from this pool, the amount of which is contingent on the amount given to the School, and the number of incoming students. Any funds that remain after the initial disbursement are given next to 2<sup>nd</sup> year doctoral students, then 3<sup>rd</sup>, and so on. Each early fall and spring the PhD program director will send out an email to PhD students about the GOF funds available for the academic year and summer, respectively; interested students will make their requests at that time.

#### **D. Additional Travel and Conference Funds**

Both the College and the Graduate School offer additional opportunities for obtaining funds for research and presenting at conferences. The instructions and form can be accessed here at: <http://grad.msu.edu/forms/docs/studenttravel.pdf>.

#### **E. Dissertation Completion Fellowships**

For students nearing the completion of their degree requirements, the College of Social Sciences offers a competitive scholarship: The Dissertation Completion Fellowship (DCF) is applied for in the semester prior to the semester of completion. Dates for submission are available from the PhD program director. Applications need to be

approved by the dissertation chair (in letter format) with emphasis on demonstrating that completion is likely within the next semester.

**F. Adjunct Instruction and Field Liaison**

Doctoral students, with sufficient teaching and/or practice experience, may be offered part-time employment in the School of Social Work. This work is time-limited to either a semester (i.e., in the case of a specific course) or an academic year (i.e., in the case of field liaison work). Students interested in either of these opportunities should contact the PhD program director.

**G. Federal Direct Stafford Loans**

Most students who file the FAFSA will qualify for the Direct Stafford Loan, either subsidized or unsubsidized. The loan amount will vary depending on the student's academic level and need. Interest does not accrue on a subsidized loan until the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below half-time enrollment. Interest does accrue on an unsubsidized loan while the student is in school, but payment of the interest may be deferred until payment of the principal begins or the student may choose to pay while in school. Additional information can be found at the Office of Financial Aid website at: <http://www.finaid.msu.edu/>.

**H. MSU Loans**

The Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU) offers up to \$100 per semester.

The MSU Office of Financial AID provides low interest rate short-term loans. Loans are usually granted in amounts of \$300 or less to registered students who can demonstrate the ability to repay within 60 days. Short-term loan applications are available at the Office of Financial Aid. The normal processing time is two working days.

**I. Perkins Loans**

Perkins Loans are available to some high-need students. Students who qualify based on their enrollment on data gathered on the FAFSA will be offered the Perkins Loan. The Perkins Promissory Note will also be mailed to these students and must be returned to MSU before the loan can be disbursed. The principal and interest is deferred while the student is in school.

**J. Student Employment**

The Student Employment Office at MSU can assist with your search for employment on and off campus. Most students are able to work 10-15 hours a week while maintaining good academic standing. Information on student employment can be found at the Career Services Network website at: <http://careernetwork.msu.edu/>.

## **XVIII. Organizations**

**A. Student Association of Black Social Workers (SABSW)**

The SABSW was formed to provide academic and social support, programming, and networking opportunities related to the interest and issues of African-American students. The organization provides a forum for African-American students to exchange ideas and develop programs in the interest of African Americans both on campus and within the African-American community. All interested students are welcome.

**B. Student Organization for Latino/a Social Workers (OLASW)**

The Student Organization for Latino Social Workers is the only national, professional organization representing Latino social workers. It works to define and advance the Latino agenda within the social work profession in the United States and Puerto Rico. OLASW helps identify educational, economic and professional barriers that may affect Latino social work students. MSU students are active in the organization in Lansing and Michigan.

**C. Triangle Coalition**

This organization seeks to eliminate discrimination based on alternative sexual orientations through education and advocacy efforts, while promoting a climate of tolerance, acceptance, and comfort in exploring lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender concerns at the School, College, University, and community levels. All students, faculty, staff and alumni are welcome.

**D. Alumni/AE Board of Visitors**

This group of supportive alumni/ae of our programs provides financial assistance for selected School projects and serves as a network of professionals who advise the School on matters of curriculum renewal or assist the School in its educational planning. Members can be contacted to assist students with career planning. All graduates are invited to become involved.

**E. Phi Alpha**

The purpose of the School's Beta Chapter of the national social work honor society is to recognize outstanding academic performance. Membership in Phi Alpha Honor Society is open to graduate students who have met the requirements of overall GPA of 3.5 or higher and a minimum of 27 credits completed in the social work curriculum. The Chapter sponsors two annual receptions to award membership certificates and honor new members.

**F. Council of Graduate Students (COGS)**

The Council of Graduate Students (COGS) is the official governing body of all MSU graduate students. The objectives of COGS are to promote the academic, social, and economic aims of graduate and graduate-professional students; to establish effective communication among graduate and graduate-professional students; and to create channels of communication with other student organizations and with the academic and administrative units of the University.

## **XIX. Student Participation in Governance**

We hope that students will participate in the governance and life of the school and the program. There are doctoral student representatives to School meetings, on the Doctoral Program Committee, the Educational Planning Committee, the Diversity Task Force, and several other ad hoc groups, including search committees.

#### **A. Student Participation in School Meetings**

Students are represented at regular school meetings by selected members of the student body. School meetings are open to all students majoring in social work who wish to attend without voting privileges. Doctoral student representatives can suggest items for the agenda of School meetings by notification to the Director's secretary. Items must be in the Director's office by Monday noon of the week of the School meeting. Agenda items may be deferred at the discretion of the Director of the School when there is not ample time for complete discussion.

#### **B. Student Participation in School Committees**

Students are represented on all standing committees of the School and their subcommittees except those dealing with matters relating to personnel or the rights and duties of faculty members.

A doctoral student may sit on the Educational Policy Committee, PhD program committee and or/or search committees, the Diversity Committee that is responsible for planning the key Martin Luther King Day Celebration, and other diversity-related events.

Any doctoral student who is teaching, or assisting in teaching a course in the School will be invited to sit on the sequence committee that is responsible for the particular course.

### **XX. School Events**

- A. Fall Community Welcome and Orientation:** The School schedules an all-day orientation early in the fall semester. An overview of the School will be given as well as specific information regarding school services, procedures and advising.
- B. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration:** The School of Social Work presents an annual program on the beliefs and teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and related diversity issues. All social work students, faculty, staff and alumni are invited to participate in this event.
- C. Luncheon Seminar Series (Brown Bag):** Faculty from the School of Social Work and from related disciplines present seminars on various topics of interest including research and teaching topics. These are held periodically throughout the academic year (dates are in the school calendar and typically distributed via the listservs) and are advertised by posted flyers. Students are encouraged to attend and present.
- D. Recognition Ceremony:** In lieu of holding its own graduation, The School of Social Work organizes a recognition ceremony for graduates in the spring of each year. Each doctoral graduate is honored individually during this time, and is invited to address the

audience briefly. This has been a meaningful ceremony attended by most students. PhD graduates are also encouraged to attend the Graduate School's Graduation.

- E. **Doctoral Student Meetings:** The school schedules at least one meeting per year (typically in the early fall) for all doctoral students to meet together with doctoral committee members for discussion, information sharing, and networking.

## **XXI. University Services and Resources**

The University provides a wide array of services to students to assist them as they adjust to campus and academic life.

### **A. The Writing Center, 300 Bessey Hall, 432-3610, <http://writing.msu.edu>**

The Writing Center staff consults with writers at all levels of proficiency and at all stages of the composing process. Students can go to the Writing Center on their own or at the suggestion of a faculty member.

### **B. Learning Resources Center, 209 Bessey Hall, 355-2363**

This is a self-paced, individualized learning center that offers free assistance to students who want to improve their study skills. Its goal is to help students develop strategies and techniques to be academically successful. Workshops on specific study skills are offered throughout the year.

### **C. Service Learning Center, 27 Student Services, 353-4400**

This is a volunteer program that gives students the opportunity to learn more about different work environments while providing community service. Staff are available to assist students in choosing a program that meets their interests.

### **D. Career Services Network, 113 Student Services, 355-9510,**

<http://careernetwork.msu.edu/>

Assists students find part-time employment while in school and career placement services upon graduation. Provides workshops on resume writing, interviewing, and other related topics.

### **E. College of Social Science Career Services, 201C Berkey Hall, 353-9202,**

<http://www.socialscience.msu.edu/about-us/overview/career-services/>

The College of Social Science prioritizes career preparation for its students. Resources are available through the Office of Student Affairs and Services in the College, as well as the MSU Career Services Network.

### **F. Career Success: PhD Career Services, 110 Linton Hall, 353-3220,**

<http://careersuccess.msu.edu/PhDCareers>

PhD Career Services, together with the Graduate School, provides multiple online resources, workshops, and advising to support the various career paths doctoral students choose to pursue.

### **G. Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities, 120 Bessey Hall, 353-9642**

Staff specialists are available to respond to mobility, visual, hearing, alternative learner, and other populations to facilitate their involvement in University activities. Other resources are available for students with special needs.

**H. Counseling Center Main Office, 207 Student Services, 355-8270**

**330 Olin Health Center (for off-campus students), 355-2310**

**Multi- Ethnic Counseling 207 Student Services 355-8270**

Students should feel free to contact the Counseling Center for personal concerns and crisis counseling. Professional counseling and psychological services are offered to assist with personal as well as career concerns. All services are confidential. Initial consultations are free of charge; all services are free to students carrying 1 or more credits in the semester they receive services. In addition to professional counseling, a self-management laboratory and workshops are offered.

**I. Olin Health Center, 355-7573**

Primary medical care for both acute and chronic medical problems is available on a walk-in and appointment basis.

**J. The College of Social Science, 355-6673**

The School of Social Work is situated within the College of Social Science. Doctoral students may contact the office of the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Study at the number listed above regarding matching funds for conference travel and presentations. Student affairs, most notably questions regarding registration and requirements can be addressed to the Director of Student Affairs at 353-5219.

**K. The Graduate School, 355-0301**

The PhD Program in Social Work is also under the auspices of the Graduate School. "The mission of The Graduate School is to serve as an advocate for graduate education to the university and beyond and to enhance the quality of graduate education at MSU in all its diverse dimensions." Students can access many of the necessary forms for their program at the Graduate School's site:  
<http://grad.msu.edu/forms/>.

**L. Additional Wellness and Safety Resources**

Other resources include the MSU Travel Clinic, Safety Resources, Classroom Safety, and MSU's policy on Domestic Violence and Sexual Misconduct (see also pp. 59-61):

<http://travelclinic.msu.edu/>

<http://studentaffairs.msu.edu/health-wellness-safety/index.html>

<http://edwp.educ.msu.edu/ead/hale-happenings/2015/active-shooter-violence-prevention-workshop-for-msu-graduate-students-postdocs/>

[https://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/uwidepolproc/RVSM\\_Policy.htm](https://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/uwidepolproc/RVSM_Policy.htm)

## XXII. School of Social Work Services

### A. The Graduate Programs Office, 355-7519

The School of Social Work has a graduate programs office located in Baker Hall. The office is staffed by the graduate office assistant who provides information and help regarding registration, overrides, necessary forms, etc.

### B. The School's Website

Much information regarding the School of Social Work, its courses, schedules, calendar, policies and procedures can be found on our website at <http://socialwork.msu.edu/>.

### C. Schedule

The School publishes a schedule of courses each semester that contains updated revisions not found in the MSU schedule of courses. Students should obtain a copy of this updated schedule prior to registration. It is available outside of the School's main office, 254 Baker Hall and on the School's web site. The most recent changes to the School's schedule are posted in the main office and on our web site.

### D. School Calendar

The School prepares a calendar listing major events in the life of the School. The calendar is available in early September and is available on the School's website.

### E. Bulletin Boards

The School maintains bulletin boards in the corridors of the second floor of Baker Hall for information that is useful to students, such as notices of conferences, employment opportunities, School events and university activities.

### F. Your MSU Email Address

The University provides each student with a free email account (<https://mail.msu.edu/imp/login.php>). The School and the University use these accounts to communicate with students. **It is imperative that all social work students access their MSU email account on a regular basis** to receive information about school events, course offerings, course schedule changes, job and volunteer opportunities, and other important information. **It is also critical that students do not allow their mailboxes to become full, or any emails sent will be returned.**

### G. PhD Student Listserv

The School has a listserv for our doctoral students: [phdlist@list.msu.edu](mailto:phdlist@list.msu.edu). The listserv provides a venue for disseminating information about School events, reminders, and discussions of relevant topics. You will be subscribed to the list prior to the start of your first year in the program.

A reminder: When you want to respond to the person who sent the message to the listserv, do not use the reply function, because this sends the reply to the entire list. Use the forward function and type in the sender's email address.

#### **H. Student Mailboxes**

Student mailboxes are located in hall on the second floor of Baker Hall. Students should check their mailboxes often for information from the School.

#### **I. LeMoyné Snyder Computer Laboratory, 521 Baker Hall**

This computer lab is available to students of the School of Social Work. Hours of operation are posted in the computer lab. There are other computer labs around campus that are available to MSU students. Check <http://microlabs.msu.edu/> for locations and hours of operation.

#### **J. Employment Opportunities**

Professional social work vacancies are posted throughout the School and sent out on the social work student listserv. A job book with employment postings is kept in the graduate resource office, Room 235. Faculty vacancies for other universities and colleges are posted on a bulletin board outside Room 235.

#### **K. Conference Rooms, 221 and 241 Baker Hall**

The conference rooms are used by faculty and students for various types of meetings, including guidance and dissertation committee meetings. Students can schedule this room in the main office, 254 Baker Hall.

#### **L. PhD Student Office and Library, 34 Baker Hall**

The PhD student offices are located on the garden level of Baker Hall. There are computers and desk space available for study. You will need to request a key from the business office manager to use this office space. The PhD library is in room 34. It includes copies of past dissertations, dissertation proposals, and comprehensive examinations that can be checked out. If you intend to utilize a copy of one of these items for an extended length of time, please make a copy and return it to the library for other to use.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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### **XXIII. Academic Policies**

All students enrolled in the academic programs of the School of Social Work are held accountable to academic regulations specified by the School, the College of Social Science, The Graduate School, and by the University in effect at the time they are admitted.



#### A. Registration

Students should consult the PhD program director and/or their guidance committee chairs about their academic programs when they have questions about program requirements prior to course registration. Students should enroll as soon as possible for courses to avoid being locked out of sections of courses. Students can enroll for spring semester classes when they enroll for the fall semester. The School guarantees a seat for all required classes.

#### B. Overrides

If a student wants an override to get into a closed section of a class, s/he needs to secure the permission of the course instructor. There is no guarantee that an override will be granted when the section is at its maximum capacity. Instructors make these decisions because the number of students in their sections has a strong impact on the class dynamics and the faculty member's resources. If the course is taught by an adjunct instructor, permission for overrides should be granted by the Associate Director. The Associate Director will exercise judgment with regard to balance and size of sections taught by adjunct instructors. Overrides in other departments/programs should be sought through the office of the Graduate Program Director in each department.

#### C. Student Records

All application materials of matriculated students, except official transcripts and School and University applications will be kept in a separate file accessible to the Coordinator of Graduate Programs and the Director. It will be destroyed upon graduation. Application materials of non-matriculated students will be kept for one academic year and then will be destroyed.

The student's file will be available to the student's advisor/guidance committee chair, the Coordinator of Graduate Programs and other faculty on an "as needed" basis. In special circumstances when additional confidentiality is required, student folders will be kept in the Director's office.

### XXIV. Release of Information About Students

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act restricts the School and individual faculty members from releasing information concerning a student's academic record. Students who want the School and/or individual faculty members to provide letters of reference or recommendation **that include details from the student's academic record** (e.g., GPA, a grade in a course) must complete, sign, and return a release of information authorization to the Office of the Coordinator of Graduate Programs. This form will then be filed in the student's permanent academic record. It can be amended and/or terminated at any time.

The School of Social Work adheres to the University's policies pertaining access to and release of student academic records. Absent a need to know, the University generally does not release student information to third parties, including parents, without the student's written permission. There are limited exceptions to these operating guidelines (such as

health and safety emergencies), depending on the circumstances of a particular case. The following MSU website provides detailed information regarding the University's policies on student records: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.aspx>

The release and disclosure of student records maintained by the University are, in large measure, governed by state and federal laws and by University policy. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restricts the School and individual faculty members from releasing information concerning a student's academic record.

Students who want individual faculty members to provide letters of reference or recommendation ***that include details from the student's academic record*** such as a specific grade, must complete, and sign a FERPA form. The individual faculty member should keep a copy of the FERPA release for their own records. It can be amended and/or terminated at any time. The FERPA form to request a reference can be found at: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/read/StudentReferenceRequestReleaseForm.pdf>

## **XXV. Departmental Student Records**

All application materials of matriculated students, except official transcripts and School and University applications will be kept in an application file accessible to the student's advisor/guidance committee chair, the Director of the PhD Program and other faculty on an as needed basis. It will be destroyed upon graduation. Application materials of non-matriculated students will be kept for one academic year and then will be destroyed. Students have the right to view their own application materials except for any letters of recommendation that have been designated as confidential. To view this file, the student needs to make an appointment with the graduate programs office assistant.

The student's academic file will be available to the student's advisor/guidance committee chair, the Director of the PhD Program and other faculty on an as needed basis. In special circumstances when additional confidentiality is required, academic folders will be kept in the director's office. Students have the right to view this file. To view this file, the student needs to make an appointment with the graduate programs office assistant.

The typical PhD student's academic file has three sections that include the following information:

1. Grade folder: Grade reports and other pertinent information concerning grades such as notices from the Dean's Office about grade issues, administrative action forms, admissions information such as the acceptance letter from the School, Recommended Action Form, PhD Program Application Form, Graduate School Application form, and undergraduate and graduate school transcripts.
2. Guidance committee folder: Annual Progress Reports, reports of the guidance committee, research Internship forms, records of the comprehensive exam, any amendment forms, and the dissertation committee member's Progress Report form.

3. Miscellaneous: Miscellaneous information pertaining to student's academic progress such as leave of absence requests, awards and fellowship forms.

If students are hired as employees in the School (e.g., as an instructor), their personnel records will be stored in a separate file, as is outlined in the Graduate Employees Union/Michigan State University (GEU/MSU) contract and the Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities (GSSR). The file may include: graduate student instructional rating reports (or summaries), formal written evaluations, and any supplementary information (GSSR 2.5.2.2.). Only information pertaining to the student's employment status will be in the personnel record file (MSU/GEU Article 22). This information may be used by the student or faculty members for such matters as renewal of assistantships, teaching assignments, recommendations, and the need for further training (GSSR 2.5.2.3.). Students have the right to access this file. Students have a right to have a copy of all or part of their personnel record, with costs incurred in copying assessed to the student. Students have the right to place a written response to any evaluation contained in his/ her personnel record (MSU/ GEU Article 22). All personnel records are maintained by the School office manager. Students need to make an appointment with the office manager to view these files. For additional information about the GEU, including the current GEU/MSU contract, please go to <http://www.geuatmsu.org/>.

## XXVI. Grading

Grading in each course is based on evaluation by the instructor of a student's academic performance. Students are informed of all course requirements and grading criteria at the beginning of each course. Grading criteria for each course are included in the course syllabi. The University uses a numerical grading system, a supplemental credit-no credit system, and a limited pass-no grade system. There are limitations on the amount of course work that can be completed on the credit-no credit system and the pass-no grade system. The credit-no credit and pass-no pass systems are only available for courses that are specified as having either of those grading systems. Students should consult the instructor if they have questions about grading.

### A. Criteria

Numbered grades represent categories of performance.

4.0	Excellent	I	Incomplete
3.5	Good	DF	Deferred
3.0	Passable	CR-NC	Credit-No Credit
2.5	Low	P-N	Pass-No Grade
2.0	Lowest		
1.5-0.0	No credit given		

Academic credit is awarded at the minimum level of 2.0 for PhD students. The minimum cumulative grade point average required for graduation is a 3.0. A PhD student who accumulates grades below 3.0 (including N grades in the P-N grading system) in more than two (2) semester courses of three or more credits each will be dismissed. The School has additional grade requirements for its PhD students; please see the section on passing

grades in social work and required statistics courses (pp. 29-30) for more information. All grades submitted by instructors are final. They cannot be changed by re-examination or by submission of additional work.

## **B. Postponement of Grading**

When special or unusual circumstances occur, the instructor can postpone assignment of the student's final grade in a course by submitting an I-Incomplete or DF-Deferred in lieu of a grade.

### **1. Incomplete Grades**

Incomplete (I) grades are given only when

- a) The student has completed at least twelve (12) weeks of the semester, but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reasons; and
- b) has done satisfactory work in the course; and
- c) in the instructor's judgment, the student can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Compelling reasons are:

1. Illness or injury that makes it impossible for the student to complete course work and are documented by a physician's written statement attesting to the serious nature of the condition; or
2. Illness or injury of a close relative for whom the student is responsible for providing daily care and documented by physician's written statement attesting to the serious nature of the condition;

When these conditions are met, the instructor files a REPORT OF I-INCOMPLETE at the time course grades are due. This specifies what the student must do, and when, to remove the I-Incomplete. The School office gives a copy to the student, and retains a copy for at least one year.

Removing Incomplete Grades:

All required work must be completed and a grade must be reported to the Office of the Registrar no later than the middle of the student's next semester in attendance (summer session excluded) if that semester is within one calendar year following receipt of the I-Incomplete. The exception to this deadline is that an instructor can submit an Administrative Action form stating that course structure necessitates delay of make-up grading until the end of the student's next semester in attendance.

**Failure to complete the required work by the due date will result in a grade of 1/0.0 or I/N**, depending on the grading system under which the student was enrolled. It is the student's responsibility to complete the course work and submit it to the instructor, allowing adequate time for the instructor to

grade the work and submit the grade to the Registrar by the stated deadline. A student who does not register for MSU classes subsequent to the receipt of an I-Incomplete has one calendar year to complete the required work; after one year, the I-Incomplete remains part of the student's academic record, and the course can be completed only by re-enrollment.

**An extension of time for completion of the required work** can be approved by the College offering the course only by means of an Administrative Action form documenting physician-certified illness or other extraordinary circumstances such as those for which an initial Incomplete grade is given as described previously.

## **2. Deferred Grades**

A deferred (DF) grade applies to the numerical, the CR-NC and P-N system. Deferred grades are given to students who are doing satisfactory work but cannot complete it because of reasons acceptable to the instructor. The required work must be completed and a grade reported within two calendar years. If not completed within the time limit, the DF-Deferred will be changed to DF/N. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

## **C. Repeating a Course**

The University policy is that "a graduate student who received a grade of 2.0 or, CR, or P in a course may not repeat the course on a credit basis with the following exception: with the approval of the assistant dean, a graduate student may repeat a course in which a grade of 2.0 or 2.5 was received. The number of credits that a graduate student may repeat is determined by the student's guidance committee, in accordance with unit policies." The School of Social Work's policy is that a maximum of two, three-credit hour courses can be repeated. Whenever a course is repeated on a credit basis, the last grade and credits earned completely replace the previous grade in computing grade-point averages; however, all entries remain a part of the student's permanent academic record.

Any course repeated for credit must be taken on the same grading system under which the course was taken the first time. A student will be given only one opportunity to repeat a course.

# **XXVII. Graduation**

## **A. Certification for Graduation and the Degree Audit in GradPlan**

Certification for PhD candidates follows the procedures established by the Graduate School and Registrar. Please see <http://grad.msu.edu/etd/> for more information.

The certification process consists of an assessment of the student's academic record, via the degree plan in GradPlan. In order for the PhD director to approve of the degree, the degree audit must also be complete in GradPlan. If the student does not meet the program or degree requirements and/or does not have a completed degree plan and degree audit in GradPlan, the final degree will not be approved and the student cannot graduate and earn the PhD.

## **B. Graduation Ceremonies**

The University holds commencement ceremonies at the Breslin Center in May and December. Graduate students from all disciplines participate in this event. It is a traditional graduation ceremony open to all graduate students who are graduating from MSU that semester. Students finishing their requirements during the summer may participate in the May or December ceremonies.

In addition to the University-wide events, the School has its own Recognition Ceremony (see above) for graduates held on the morning of the graduate commencement. The School ceremony celebrates our graduates and gives students and faculty a chance to meet for a final time as a group. It includes speeches by selected faculty and students and a hooding ceremony. Students who have completed their PhDs are invited to speak at the Recognition Ceremony.

## **XXVIII. Career Counseling and Placement by Faculty and MSU Career Services**

The faculty of the School of Social Work have broad career experiences in human services. Their experience is an invaluable resource to our students as they ponder their career and job options. Students are encouraged to seek out faculty members to gain additional insights into careers as educators, researchers, policy analysts, administrators, etc. In addition, as faculty and staff learn of employment opportunities, students are notified through the student listserv and on the School bulletin boards.

Graduating doctoral students often meet as a group to talk about the job search process including preparing a professional vita and “job talks.” When students are invited for interviews, the School will assist the student in doing a practice talk in order to get feedback from faculty and student colleagues.

The MSU Career Services Network is available to all MSU students. It is located in room 113 of the Student Services building and at <http://careernetwork.msu.edu/>.

## **XXIX. Student Academic Grievance Procedures**

The Graduate School has established a formal grievance procedure for graduate students. What follows is a detailed description of the procedure. Each right of an individual places a reciprocal duty upon others: the duty to permit the individual to exercise the right. The student, as a member of the academic community, has both rights and duties. Within that community, the student’s most essential right is the right to learn. The University has a duty to provide for the student those privileges, opportunities, and protections which best promote the learning process in all its aspects. The student also has duties to other members of the academic community, the most important of which is to refrain from interference with those rights of others which are equally essential to the purposes and processes of the University. (GSRR Article 1.2)

The *Michigan State University Student Rights and Responsibilities* (SRR) and the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities* (GSRR) documents (available on the Graduate School website) establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures

to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the SRR and the GSRR, the School of Social Work (SSW) PhD Program has established the following Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating graduate student academic grievances and complaints. (See GSRR 5.4.)

#### **A. Jurisdiction of the SSW PhD Program Hearing Board**

1. The Hearing Board serves as the initial Hearing Board for academic grievance hearings involving PhD graduate students who allege violations of academic rights or seek to contest an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records). (See GSRR 2.3 and 5.1.1.)
2. Students may not request an academic grievance hearing based on an allegation of incompetent instruction. (See GSRR 2.2.2) Please see the following section of these Guidelines for information about a grade grievance.

#### **B. Composition of the Hearing Board**

1. The Program shall constitute a Hearing Board pool no later than the end of the tenth week of the spring semester; as a member of the pool, a faculty member or PhD student will volunteer to make themselves available to serve on the Board, should a student seek a grievance hearing. Hearing Board pool members will serve one year terms, with reappointment possible. The Hearing Board pool should include both faculty and PhD students. (See GSRR 5.1.2 and 5.1.6.)
2. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall be the most senior faculty member, who shall vote only in the event of a tie; typically the PhD Director will serve in this role. In addition to the Chair, the Hearing Board shall include an equal number of voting PhD students and faculty; no more than one faculty member of the Board shall be a member of the PhD Program Committee in any given year. (See GSRR 5.1.2, and 5.1.5.)
3. The Program will train hearing board members about these procedures and the applicable sections of the GSRR. (See GSRR 5.1.3.)

#### **C. Referral to the Hearing Board**

1. After consulting with the instructor and appropriate unit administrator, graduate students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. When appropriate, the Department Chair, in consultation with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for an initial hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.6.2.)
2. At any time in the grievance process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.3.2.)
3. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the Dean of The Graduate School will select the appropriate Hearing Board for cases involving graduate students. (See GSRR 5.3.5.)

**4.** Generally, the deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is the middle of the next semester in which the student is enrolled (including Summer). In cases in which a student seeks to contest an allegation of academic misconduct and the student's dean has called for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has **10** class days to request an academic grievance to contest the allegation. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1 and 5.5.2.2.)

**5.** If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the university during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the university no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may proceed. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)

**6.** A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted. (See GSRR 5.1 and 5.3.6.)

#### **D. Pre-hearing Procedures**

**1.** After receiving a graduate student's written request for a hearing, the Chair of the Department will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.2, 5.4.3.)

**2.** Within **5** class days, the Chair of the Hearing Board will

- a) forward the request for a hearing to the respondent and ask for a written response;
- b) send the names of the Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within **3** class days of this notification. In addition to conflict of interest challenges, either party can challenge two hearing board members without cause (GSRR 5.1.7.c);
- c) rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College, or designee (See GSRR 5.1.7.). Decisions by the Hearing Board chair or the College Dean (or designee) on conflict of interest challenges are final;
- d) send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and the respondent's written response, and send all parties a copy of these procedures.

**3.** Within **5** class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request, and, after considering all requested and submitted information:

- a) accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.
- b) reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties; e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)



c) the GSRR allows the hearing board to invite the two parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing. However, by the time a grievance is requested all informal methods of conflict resolution should have been exhausted so this option is rarely used. (See GSRR 5.4.6.)

d) If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary, and request a written response to the grievance from the respondent.

**1.** At least **5** class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the (1) time, date, and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) a copy of the hearing request and the respondent's reply; and (4) the names of the Hearing Board members after any challenges. (See GSRR 5.4.7.)

**2.** At least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board the names of their witnesses and advisor, if any, and request permission for the advisor to have voice at the hearing. The chair may grant or deny this request. The Chair will promptly forward the names given by the complainant to the respondent and visa versa. (See GSRR 5.4.7.1.)

**3.** The Chair of the Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party's witnesses at least **3** class days before the hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)

**4.** In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least **3** class days before the scheduled hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9c.)

**5.** Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See GSRR 5.4.8.)

**6.** At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing.

**7.** Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close an open hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.)

**8.** Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.and 5.4.11.)

## **E. Hearing Procedures**

**1.** The Hearing will proceed as follows:

a) Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Hearing Board: The Chair of the Hearing Board introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the respondent and advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including announced time restraints for presentations by each party and the witnesses, and informs the parties if their advisors may have a voice in the hearings and if the proceedings are being recorded. Witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. The Chair also explains:

- In academic grievance hearings in which a graduate student alleges a violation of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof.
- In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof.
- All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the Hearing Board, based on "clear and convincing evidence." (See GSRR 8.1.18.)

(See GSRR 5.4.10.1 and 8.1.18; for other definitions, see GSRR Article 8.)

2. If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause. (See GSRR 5.4.9a.)
3. If the respondent fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing or, only in unusual circumstances, hear the case in his or her absence. (See GSRR 5.4.9-b.)
4. If the respondent is absent from the University during the semester of the grievance hearing or no longer employed by the University before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1.)
5. To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.10.2.)
6. Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.
7. Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent, and the respondent's advisor, if any.
8. Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.

**9. Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses:** The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, and statement directly relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.

**10. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant:** The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.

**11. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent:** The respondent refutes statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.

**12. Final questions by the Hearing Board:** The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

## **F. Post-hearing Procedures**

**1. Deliberation:** After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly following the hearing and/or at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting. (See Section IV.D above.)

**2. Decision:**

a) In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which a majority of the Hearing Board finds, based on "clear and convincing evidence," that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall recommend an appropriate remedy to the Department Chair or School Director. Upon receiving the Hearing Board's recommendation, the Department Chair or School Director shall implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board, within **3** class days. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Chair or Director. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly forward copies of the final decision to parties and the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.4.11.)

b) In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which the Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on "clear and convincing evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Department Chair or School Director that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the instructor, the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file, pending an appeal, if any to the College Hearing Board within **5** class days of the Hearing Board's decision. If an academic disciplinary hearing is pending, and the Hearing Board decides for the instructor, the graduate student's disciplinary hearing before

either the College Hearing Board or the Dean of The Graduate School would promptly follow, pending an appeal, if any, within **5** class days. (See GSRR 5.5.2.2 and 5.4.12.3)

**3. Written Report:** The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within **3** class days of the hearing. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board's decision. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall then implement an appropriate remedy. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within **5** class days following notice of the decision, or **5** class days if an academic disciplinary hearing is pending. The Chair shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision. (See GSRR 5.4.12 and 5.5.2.2)

#### **G. Appeal of the Hearing Board Decision**

**1.** Either party may appeal a decision by the Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board for cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records.) (See GSRR 5.4.12.)

**2.** All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the College Hearing Board within **5** class days following notification of the Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.)

**3.** A request for an appeal of a Hearing Board decision to the College Hearing Board must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing, that the initial Hearing Board failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the Hearing Board were not supported by "clear and convincing evidence." The request also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate. (See GSRR 5.4.12.1, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.4.)

#### **H. Reconsideration**

If new evidence should arise, either party to a hearing may request the appropriate Hearing Board to reconsider the case within **30** days upon receipt of the hearing outcome. The written request for reconsideration is to be sent to the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall promptly convene the Hearing Board to review the new material and render a decision on a new hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.13.)

#### **I. File Copy**

The Chair of the Department shall file a copy of these procedures with the Office of the Ombudsperson and with the Dean of The Graduate School. (See GSRR 5.4.1.)

Approved by the faculty on May 11, 2015

### **XXX. Student GRADE Grievance Procedures**

The Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document establishes general rules for grade appeals for students. In such a hearing, the student has the burden of proof that her/his grade has been based on factors other than, or in addition to performance, such as race, sex, personal animosity or the like. Neither disappointment with a grade, hard work that was not rewarded, nor an instructor's very high standards constitute grounds for a viable grade grievance.

The grievant must put in writing what is believed was unfair and the remedy being sought. When the School receives those items in writing, a hearing panel will be convened. Half the panel will be composed of social work doctoral students; the other half, faculty members. Since the chair must be a faculty member, the director will designate a faculty member to chair the hearing unless s/he has a real or apparent conflict of interest. No one on the panel should have any immediate involvement with the course or the parties, nor have any conflict of interest, whether real or apparent.

Each party will have access to any documents that constitute "evidence." Each party has a right to present whatever s/he considers to be relevant, to have supporting witnesses if s/he wishes, to question the other party and any witnesses, to rebut any "evidence," and to have counsel from within the University either for advisory purposes or to present the case on her/his behalf. A witness should be confined to her/his own recollection, not that of others.

Procedurally, the grievant will make the first statement during the hearing, to be followed by the instructor. No interruptions are allowed during opening presentations. The chair will direct questions, by the parties and by the panel, after the presentations.

Panel members will be allowed to question the parties whenever they wish. This is an informal hearing. The panel will listen to the facts of the matter at hand. Additional information could be requested. The chair will keep the discussion focused and insure that civility is maintained. Time limits are at the chair's discretion.

There will be a written record of the session that can be used in an appeal. Both parties will be asked to make brief closing statements if they wish to do so. Both parties, and any attending persons, will then be excused and the panel will meet in executive session to deliberate. The panel's decision and written rationale will be distributed to the parties. This can be used in an appeal.

Appeals must be justifiable. An appeal is a review of the record for procedural and due process issues. It is not a fresh hearing or an opportunity for introduction of new issues. Appeal of a School decision is made to the College of Social Science. Either party can appeal. The parties should consult the MSU publication, *Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities*, for further information concerning grievance procedures.

## XXXI. Academic Standing and Student Review (ASSR)

### A. Definition

Students are expected to maintain acceptable academic standing (i.e., meet the requirements for passing grades and cumulative GPA outlined in this handbook, for their GA as outlined in their GA offer letter, and in terms of professional conduct, see below section). If a student is struggling in terms of maintaining acceptable academic standards, an ASSR will be required. This process is designed to be helpful to students while balancing the need to protect the academic standards of the School and the ethics and standards of the social work profession. The ASSR is not a student complaint or grievance procedure. If a student believes that a grade(s) has been assigned unfairly or that a violation of her/his student rights has occurred, the student should initiate an informal complaint or formal grievance (see above). The ASSR is initiated by faculty on behalf of a student whose academic problems are threatening her/his status as a student in the School. Note that some situations will result in automatic dismissal from the PhD program, with no ASSR process (see p. 57, section XXXIII for further details).

### B. Reasons for Calling an ASSR

An ASSR is called to determine whether or not the student can continue in the program, provided that specified remedies are found. The table below provides examples of events that can trigger an ASSR, possible steps a student must take to address the situation, and consequences of not completing the steps. **In some cases, the PhD Director will recommend that a student develop and complete a plan in order to stay in the program; in other cases, the student will be asked to leave the program or be dismissed.**

Table 5: Examples

Examples of Precipitating Events	Possible Student Steps to Rectify the Situation	Consequences of Not Completing Steps
Student's performance in GA is poor and student is struggling in course work (e.g., has earned a grade lower than 3.0).	Student may lose GA or be required to take steps to improve performance during the next semester; student is required to re-take course and earn a grade of 3.0 or better.	Student will be dismissed from the program.
In the opinion of any faculty member, a student is experiencing difficulty that threatens her/his academic progress.	Student must present a plan describing how academic performance will be improved within a specified time period. The plan must be approved by the ASSR members. The plan may include taking a leave of absence in order to attend to difficulties. The student must follow the plan and complete course work, attaining grades of 3.0 or above.	Student will be dismissed from the program.
Allegations of unethical conduct made by any student or faculty member require an ASSR. Appropriate actions beyond the School will be taken if indicated.	If allegations are not substantiated, student will be able to remain in the program and must strictly adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and MSU and School of Social standards.	If allegations are substantiated, student will be dismissed from the program. Depending on the misconduct, appropriate authorities will be notified.

### **C. ASSR Process**

Typically, the PhD Program Director will schedule and chair the ASSR. Occasionally, a faculty member may wish to call an ASSR. The student's advisor/chair and classroom instructor (as appropriate) will be asked to attend the meeting. The student is expected to attend and can bring an "advocate-supporter" who must be someone from the University community, e.g., a faculty member or another student. The process is designed to be informal and non-adversarial. After exploring the situation, the PhD Director, in consultation with participants, will make a recommendation that will be reported to the Director of the School who could concur, modify or reject it. The recommendation may include placing the student on probation pending the successful completion of the recommended plan, strongly recommending that the student voluntarily leave the program permanently or temporarily (i.e., take a leave of absence for a specified time period), or dismissing the student from the program. The student is able to appeal or dispute the recommendation to the Director of the School. The recommendation will be formulated in a written report of the hearing submitted to the student and to the Director of the School.

The report and recommendation will be kept in a confidential folder available only to the PhD Director and the student's advisor/chair. It will not be used in a reference letter or any other similar document. The student can write one addendum to the report if s/he wishes.

### **XXXII. Non-Academic Review and Informal Administrative Review**

Because social work is a profession, social work students must also demonstrate that they possess the qualities necessary to become social work educators and researchers, in addition to successfully completing their academic work. Although it happens on only rare occasions, there are times when faculty members feel strongly that a particular student does not possess these qualities. In that event, a non-academic review is called to talk with the student about their status in the PhD program. There are two major reasons for non-academic review: 1) failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability required for professional practice, or inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward SSW colleagues, faculty, or staff, and 2) consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional relationships. As doctoral students are not in the field during their studies, the rare instances in which this might happen would be primarily in a classroom setting or when participating in research (e.g., in their role as a graduate assistant, or while engaging in dissertation research).

Should it be determined that a student meets any of the reasons, a non-academic review meeting will be typically called by the PhD program director. A faculty member may also call the review meeting. The meeting will typically be attended by the student, PhD program director, chair/advisor, and other faculty who have voiced concerns about the student. The student can bring an "advocate-supporter" who must be someone from the University community. The student will be asked to speak about the concerns and to provide any evidence that would dispute the information that was provided to the PhD program director. The director will make a determination about whether the student should withdraw or be dismissed from the PhD program. Should the student disagree with the determination, s/he can present information to the Director of the School who will either uphold or overturn the

determination. The Director's factual review will look at the information presented and the process used to make the determination.

Occasionally, the PhD director will call a meeting with students, faculty, and/or administrators to informally attempt to resolve a specific student problem without invoking the formal ASSR process. These meetings are informal and designed to promote the informal resolution of issues. If the meeting does not produce a resolution or if the student does not meet the conditions agreed upon in the meeting, an ASSR will be the next step.

### **XXXIII. Automatic Dismissal from the PhD Program**

Certain situations, as outlined in this student handbook, will result in automatic dismissal from the PhD program: Failure to successfully complete an acceptable comprehensive exam proposal, failure to pass the comprehensive exam, and failure to complete the dissertation within the 8-year time limit (without applying for and receiving an extension), will all result in automatic dismissal from the program. Additionally, if a student loses their GA because of poor performance or a cumulative GPA below 3.0, the student may be dismissed from the program.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

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### **XXXIV. Research by Students**

#### **A. Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects and RCR**

Whenever students do research in classes which utilize human subjects, they must consult with their instructors to determine whether they must go through a review of their projects by the MSU Human Research Protection Program (<http://humanresearch.msu.edu/>). Federal and University regulations require that all research projects involving human subjects be reviewed and approved by an IRB before initiation. Under the regulations, research is defined as a formal investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. A human subject of research is an individual (1) from whom an investigator obtains data by interaction or intervention or (2) about whom the researcher obtains confidential information.

Each department at MSU also offers additional coverage of research and research ethics through its **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)** plan. The School of Social Work's plan focuses on ways students can obtain information about research ethics through a variety of sources, including courses (e.g., the coverage of research ethics in SW 900, SW 911, and SW 912), Brown Bags, the New Doctoral Student Orientation in the fall, workshops offered by the College of Social Science, and so on. Students are required to complete a certain number of annual hours of RCR training; see the section on the annual progress report and RCR requirements, p. 12, for further details.

The Social Science/Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB) is one of three IRB Committees on the Michigan State University East Lansing campus. Michigan State University's IRBs were established to advance the goal of conducting research with



diligence and integrity. The purpose of the committee is to protect the rights, welfare and privacy of human subjects who participate in research conducted by students and/or faculty affiliated with MSU. Applications submitted to the SIRB generally encompass social, behavioral, and educational research and are considered medically non-invasive.

**Online Research Guide:** Additional information on the regulations governing student research at MSU can be found in a comprehensive manual at:

<http://humanresearch.msu.edu/hrpmanual.html>. The purpose of this online guide is to provide MSU researchers with a central location to access information pertinent to conducting research. This guide links to information in various MSU units, including policies, procedures and guidelines, forms, and training.

**SIRB Information:** Information on the composition of the Social Science/Behavioral/Education Institutional Review Board (SIRB) is located at:

<http://humanresearch.msu.edu/sirb.html>.

**Forms and Applications:** Required forms for application to the Human Research Protection Program are located at: <http://humanresearch.msu.edu/forms.html>.

## **B. How the IRB Review Process Works**

The review process begins when an investigator submits an application to the MSU Human Research Protection Program office; **the PI must be your current chair or a current designated committee member.** Depending upon the level of risk to subjects in the protocol, the project is assigned to one of three review categories (exempt from full review, expedited review, full review) and sends it to one, two or five reviewers, respectively. If the reviewer (or reviewers) is satisfied that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are adequately protected, s/he approves it. However, if the reviewer has concerns, the reviewer returns written comments to the Human Research Protection Program office for transmission to the investigator. The investigator must then send a response to each comment, in writing, to Human Research Protection Program which will forward it to the reviewer(s). If the proposal is either an exempt or expedited proposal, an approval letter can be issued as soon as the reviewer (or reviewers) approves. When a proposal received full (five-member sub-committee) review, an approval letter is issued after the proposal is discussed and approved by vote of the full committee at its monthly meeting.

## **C. Closure of IRB File Following Dissertation Completion**

Upon completion of the dissertation, the responsible project investigator must complete and submit a closure application indicating the reason for closure. The closure application is available on the IRB website, or via the PhD program webpage.

**Human Research Protection Program is located at:**

207 Olds Hall

Michigan State University

E. Lansing, MI 48823

phone: (517) 355-2180; fax: (517) 432-4503

e-mail: [irb@msu.edu](mailto:irb@msu.edu)

e-mail: <http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu/>

## **XXXV. MSU Policy on Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is reprehensible and will not be tolerated at Michigan State University. Such behavior subverts the mission of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well being of students, faculty, and staff.

The University prohibits sexually harassing behavior, including that made unlawful by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights act. University policy and the law also prohibit retaliation against persons who report sexual harassment.

### **A. Confidentiality**

To the extent permitted by law, the confidentiality of each party involved in a sexual harassment investigation, complaint, or charge will be observed, provided it does not interfere with the University's ability to investigate the allegations or take corrective action.

### **B. Prohibited Acts**

No member of the University community shall engage in sexual harassment. Persons who engage in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal for employees and/or suspension for students.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, or other behavior of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or status in a course, program, or activity.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for a decision affecting an individual's employment or participation in a course, program, or activity.
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or performance in a course, program, or activity, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment in which one engages in employment, a course, a program, or an activity.

### **C. Examples of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment encompasses any unwanted sexual attention. Examples of behavior encompassed by the above definition include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical assault;
2. Threats or insinuations which cause the victim to believe that sexual submission or rejection will affect her/his reputation, education, employment advancement or any conditions which concern the victim's standing at the University;
3. Direct propositions of a sexual nature;

4. Subtle pressure for sexual activity an element of which may be conduct such as unwelcome leering;
5. Conduct (not legitimately related to the subject matter of the work, course, program or activity in which one is involved) intending to or having the effect of discomforting and/or humiliating a reasonable person at whom the conduct is directed. This may include, but is not limited to, comments of a sexual nature or sexually explicit statements, questions, jokes or anecdotes, and unnecessary touching, patting, hugging or brushing against a person's body.

Depending upon the circumstances, any of the above types of conduct may be sexual harassment and subject to disciplinary action, even if that conduct only occurs once.

#### **D. Seeking Assistance in Filing a Complaint**

Students who believe they are the victims of sexual harassment may seek information and assistance from:

- the chairperson, director, or dean of the relevant unit
- supervisory support personnel
- Women's Resource Center
- Ombudsman
- Student Life or Residence Hall staff
- MSU Counseling Center
- Sexual Assault Crisis and Safety Education Program at the MSU Counseling Center
- Faculty or Staff Academic Advisors
- Faculty Grievance Official
- Anti-discrimination Judicial Board Coordinator
- Office of Student Employment

If the student, faculty member, or staff member wishes to file a complaint, s/he may take the following action(s):

- \* If the alleged harasser is a faculty or staff member, the affected individual(s) may make a written complaint to that employee's unit administrator.
- \* If the alleged harasser is the unit administrator, the affected individual(s) may make a written complaint to the unit administrator's superior or another unit administrator within the department.
- \* If the alleged harasser is a student, the affected individual may file a complaint with the Office of Judicial Programs.

A student, faculty, or staff member also may elect to file a written complaint with the Anti-discrimination Judicial Board for non-disciplinary relief, or with another

appropriate dispute resolution body. The filing of such a complaint does not prevent the university administration from taking independent disciplinary action.

#### **E. Awareness**

Members of the University community are responsible for knowing and understanding the university's policy prohibiting sexual harassment. Students who do not understand the policy should contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

### **XXXVI. MSU Anti-Discriminatory Policy**

The following policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on April 9, 1993.

#### **A. Article I. Purpose**

Michigan State University's scholarly community-building efforts occur within the context of general societal expectations, as embodied in the law. The University, consistent with its policies and governing law, promotes institutional diversity and pluralism through mechanisms such as affirmative action, within an over-arching strategy promoting equitable access to opportunity. The University's commitment to non-discrimination is the foundation for such efforts.

This policy states expectations for institutional and individual conduct. It applies to all University community members, including faculty, staff, students, registered student organizations, student governing bodies, and the University's administrative units, and to the University's contractors in the execution of their University contracts or engagements,<sup>1</sup> with respect to the following:

1. All educational, employment, cultural, and social activities occurring on the University campus;
2. University-sponsored programs occurring off-campus, including but not limited to cooperative extension, intercollegiate athletics, lifelong education, and any regularly scheduled classes;
3. University housing; and
4. Programs and activities sponsored by student governing bodies, including their constituent groups, and by registered student organizations.

#### **B. Article II. Prohibited Discrimination**

Unlawful acts of discrimination or harassment are prohibited.

In addition, the University community holds itself to certain standards of conduct more stringent than those mandated by law. Thus, even if not illegal, acts are prohibited under this policy if they:

1. Discriminate against any University community member(s) through inappropriate limitation<sup>2</sup> of employment opportunity<sup>3</sup>, access to University residential facilities, or participation in educational, athletic, social, cultural, or other University activities on the

basis of age, color, gender, handicapper status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight<sup>4</sup>; or

2. Harass any University community member(s) on the basis of age, color, gender, handicapper status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight.

These prohibitions are not intended to abridge University community members' rights of free expression or other civil rights.

### **C. Article III. Mediation and Adjudication**

Mediation of claims and disputes, through consultation provided by offices serving the University, is encouraged<sup>5</sup>.

Complaints under this policy may be submitted for non-disciplinary adjudication according to the provisions of the "Procedures of the Anti-Discrimination Judicial Board." Upon its review, the ADJB may recommend that appropriate disciplinary proceedings be initiated, if such has not already occurred. Disciplinary proceedings are governed by the documents listed below.

Excepting the President and the General Counsel, any University community member may be named in a complaint.

The contracts, policy documents, and procedures listed below provide avenues for the consideration of disciplinary complaints or actions against the various members of the Michigan State University community.

1. [Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University](#):
  - a. Bylaws of the Medical Staff, Colleges of Human and Osteopathic Medicine: Michigan State University
  - b. MSU Extension Service Continuing Employment Policy and Dismissal Hearing Procedure
  - c. Dismissal of Tenured Faculty for Cause
2. [Faculty Grievance Procedure](#): General Grievance Procedure for Non-Unionized Employees
3. [Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#): Librarian Personnel Handbook of Policies, Procedures, and Practices: Michigan State University
4. [Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities](#):
  - a. Michigan State University collective bargaining agreements
  - b. Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual

## **XXXVII. Office of the University Ombudsperson**

Conflicts, disagreements, and issues sometimes arise during the course of a graduate program. If you find yourself in this situation and have exhausted the internal resources for resolving the issue, you may contact the Office of the University Ombudsperson.

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving University-related concerns. Such concerns include: student-faculty conflicts; communication problems; concerns about the university climate; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University; that is, it does not speak or hear for the University.

Contact the Ombudsperson at any point during an issue when a confidential conversation or source of information may be needed. The Ombudsperson will listen to your concerns, give you information about university policies, help you evaluate the situation, and assist you in making plans to resolve the conflict.

Contact information:

Office of the University Ombudsperson  
129 N. Kedzie Hall  
(517) 353-8830  
ombud@msu.edu  
<https://ombud.msu.edu/>

## XXXVIII. Conclusion

Social work is an ethics-based profession. Appropriate use of self is the foundation upon which we build our professional skills at every level of education: BASW, MSW, and PhD. We hope that the material presented in these *Guidelines* helps you learn more about the program, and the expectations that faculty, staff and the practice/research community place upon social work students.

By its very nature, several sections of a student handbook describe policies and procedures for responding to difficulties that students may encounter during their graduate education. However, the great majority of graduate students either do not experience academic difficulty or such matters are handled in a non-adversarial approach through joint problem solving. Throughout students' experiences in graduate school, their strengths and potential should be acknowledged. Graduate students are ultimately responsible for their educational experience and active engagement in learning is encouraged.

We hope you will continue to have a connection with the School long after you have completed your doctoral program.

<sup>1</sup> This policy does not apply to the conduct of a contractor's internal affairs, nor does it apply to the conduct of contractual engagements to which the University is not a party.

<sup>2</sup> Limitations are inappropriate if they are not directly related to a legitimate University purpose.

<sup>3</sup>For purpose of this policy, "employment opportunity" is defined as job access and placement, retention, promotion, professional development, and salary.

<sup>4</sup>University ordinances, written regulations and policies, and published ADJB decisions approved by the President, provide guidance on the harassing acts prohibited by Section 2 and the discriminatory acts prohibited by Section 2.

<sup>5</sup>Consultation with one or more of the following may be useful:

- the chairperson, director, or dean of the relevant unit,
- supervisory support personnel,
- the Women's Resource Center,
- the Ombudsman,
- the Office of Minority Student Affairs,
- Student Life or Residence Halls Staff,
- Sexual Assault Crisis & Safety Education,
- faculty or staff academic advisors,
- the MSU Counseling Center, and
- the Faculty Grievance Official.