



Ph.D. SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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

Mark J. Macgowan, PhD, LCSW
Professor and Coordinator
Ph.D. Program in Social Welfare, School of Social Work
Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work
Florida International University
11200 SW 8th Street, GL 488
Miami, FL 33199
Tel: (305) 348-5883

<http://PhDSocialWelfare.fiu.edu>

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PREFACE

We have tried to ensure that the information in this handbook is complete and up-to-date and consistent with current policies and practices approved by Florida International University. However, these policies and procedures are subject to change, and policies and procedures that pertain to individual students are those that are or were operational during the writing of this version of the Handbook. Readers are advised to consult other sources, such as the University Catalog and the website of the University Graduate School, to ensure a more recent and exhaustive coverage. Students should also have a copy of the University's *Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual*, which sets forth policies and procedures for all graduate students, as well as the *Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation*, and the University Graduate School's *Calendars and Deadlines*; all documents are available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/>.

THE PH.D. PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WELFARE

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission Statement

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

Most applicants to the Ph.D. Program are social work practitioners, although the Ph.D. Program is not designed to increase or improve clinical practice skills. In courses, seminars, and supervised or individual study and research, collaborative work with faculty, as well as opportunities to teach, students are encouraged to develop and strengthen their skills in the methods of scientific inquiry, to deepen their understanding and analysis of social problems and public issues, and to contribute to the knowledge base of social welfare.

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

Graduates of the PhD Program

Founded in 1992, the Ph.D. Program has produced over fifty graduates. Most graduates have obtained positions as faculty members in schools of social work across the country. Some work as research social scientists in research centers.

Interdisciplinary Collaborations

Several opportunities exist for interdisciplinary collaborations as a doctoral student. The School of Social Work is part of the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work. Moreover, the School of Social Work has longstanding collaborations with the Departments of Criminal Justice, Psychology, and Public Administration, and the College of Nursing.

Full-Time Program

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

Summary Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

1. Completion of 36 credit hours of required coursework, with a grade of "B" or higher in each course; completion of a minimum of 24 dissertation credit hours following advancement to candidacy; continuous registration for at least 3 credit hours of doctoral-level credits during each semester following advancement to candidacy; maintenance of an overall cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0
2. Filing, before the end of the sixth semester of study, three major papers, each having obtained a grade of at least B+ from each member of a three-member faculty Committee (Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee).
3. Successful defense of a Dissertation Proposal before a duly constituted Dissertation Committee.
4. Completion of a dissertation under the guidance of the Dissertation Committee.
5. Defense of the dissertation before the Dissertation Committee and the University community.

6. The Ph.D. degree must be obtained within seven years of admission into the Ph.D. Program.

Admission Deadline

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

Admission Requirements

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

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

1. A Master's degree in social work (MSW) from an accredited School of Social Work or in a closely related field (e.g., Mental Health Counseling, Clinical or Counseling Psychology). Prior social work experience is highly desired (PLEASE NOTE: For those who would like to teach clinical/direct practice in an accredited School of Social Work after graduation, the Council on Social Work Education requires two years post-MSW direct practice experience).
2. Evidence of superior academic achievement in undergraduate and previous graduate education, including at least a 3.00 (upper division) undergraduate GPA and at least a 3.5 graduate GPA. *All official transcripts must be sent **directly** to Florida International University, Office of Admissions, P.O. Box 659003, Miami, FL 33265-9003. Students who graduated from FIU do not need to send their FIU transcripts.*
3. Submission of quantitative and verbal scores of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
4. Documentation of successful completion (with a grade of "B" or better) of one or more graduate-level courses in research methodology or statistics.
5. Three letters of reference from academic and/or professional sources.
6. Two samples of writing (e.g., published articles, research reports, book reviews, manuscripts submitted for publication, or papers prepared specifically for admission to a Ph.D. Program).
7. A personal statement describing the applicant's reasons for wishing to pursue doctoral studies at this time and at FIU, his or her background and experience, and his or her career goals following receipt of their Ph.D. The statement should discuss, in at least one page, the applicant's specific research and specialization interests to provide the Admissions Committee with a clear understanding of the applicant's thoughts and knowledge on these interests.
8. Applicants who do not meet all admission requirements but demonstrate outstanding abilities or accomplishments may also be considered; however, exemption from particular requirements may need to be requested from the University Graduate School.
9. An admissions interview may be requested.

Assessment of intellectual capacity is based mainly on GPA and GRE scores and academic references. Assessment of motivation, knowledge of the field, personal qualities, and writing ability is done by a review of work experience, personal statement, writing samples, letters of reference, and, at the discretion of the Ph.D. Coordinator, an admissions interview.

Applicants are responsible to ensure that required documents are received by FIU and by the School of Social Work by the stated deadlines. Please refer to the School of Social Work website, <http://phdsocialwelfare.fiu.edu/StudentsPros/Pages/Application-Procedures.aspx> , for instructions on where to send each document. The Admissions Committee reviews only completed application folders.

Transfer of Credits from Previous Course Work

Students in the Ph.D. Program cannot substitute or obtain waivers for *required* courses. The Ph.D. Coordinator may consider the transfer of doctoral level courses (not part of a previously earned degree) toward the completion of a maximum of six elective (or supervised research or independent study) credit hours. Students must explain in writing how the previous course or courses are directly related to the current area of doctoral study.

Doctoral Policy Committee

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

II. FACULTY RESEARCH INTERESTS

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

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact faculty members directly to discuss their interests and possibilities of collaboration. The following constitutes a brief listing of the research interests of the doctoral faculty of the School of Social Work as of the date of this publication (more complete summaries are available at <http://stempel.fiu.edu/academics/social-work/faculty-staff/>).

Beaulaurier, Richard* (Ph.D., University of Southern California), *Associate Professor*. renzbeau@fiu.edu 305-348-5876. Dr. Richard Beaulaurier's scholarship focuses on the social and health issues of older adults who are difficult to reach, marginalized and stigmatized. His recent scholarship focuses on their risk for HIV/AIDS, intimate partner abuse, and disability. All of his work focuses on maximizing consumer involvement in exploring and expanding the range of choices and options, preparing consumers to deal more effectively with professionals and agencies, and empowering people to seek policy and program alternatives to improve their situations in the way they understand to be most appropriate. Dr. Beaulaurier teaches in the areas of non-profit management, community organizing, research methods, and social policy.

Burke, Shanna (PhD, Boston), *Assistant Professor*. sburke@fiu.edu; 305-348-7462. Dr. Shanna L. Burke is an assistant professor in the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work. Burke's current research investigates genetic and psychosocial risk and protective factors associated with the development of neurodegenerative diseases. Her research analyzes clinical, neuropathological and genetic data collected by sites across the United States. Burke recently assisted with a community-based investigation to promote oral health in nursing home populations and is the co-investigator in a national pilot investigation of successful recruitment strategies in National Institutes of Health funded clinical studies involving human subjects. Dr. Burke has experience in examining entitlement enhancements for neurodevelopmental conditions in order to provide evidence for adding new conditions to the Social Security Administration's Compassionate Allowance Initiative. She has taught courses on research methodology and gerontology at FIU.

De La Rosa, Mario* (Ph.D., Ohio State University), *Professor*. delarosa@fiu.edu; 305-348-5794. Dr. Mario De La Rosa is a social work professor for the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work. He is an internationally known researcher who has published widely on Latino substance abuse, substance use as a risk factor for HIV/AIDS, violence, delinquency, and cross-cultural issues. Over the course of his academic career, he has served on numerous National Institutes of Health scientific review committees and peer-review scientific editorial boards. He is a past member of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparity (NIMHD) National Advisory Council. Dr. De La Rosa is the founding and current director of the Center for Substance Use and AIDS Research on Latinos in the United States (CRUSADA), which is a National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparity (NIMHD funded) P-20 Center of Excellence. He has won two awards for "Excellence in Research" at FIU and is the recipient of the National Award of Excellence in

* Indicates that the faculty member has Dissertation Advisor Status and can supervise dissertations.

Research by a Senior Investigator from the National Hispanic Science Network on Drug Abuse for his lifelong research efforts.

Fava, Nicole (PhD, University at Buffalo), *Assistant Professor*. nfava@fiu.edu; 305-348-4568. Research areas include healthy adolescent and young adult development, sexual health, trauma, and childhood maltreatment.

Gil, Andres (Ph.D., University of Miami), *Professor & Vice President for Sponsored Research*. gila@fiu.edu; 305-348-0556. After earning a Ph.D. in Medical Sociology from the University of Miami, Dr. Gil became the Director of the South Florida Youth Development Project at the University of Miami. In 1992, Dr. Gil joined the Western Consortium for Public Health at the University of California, Berkley where he was a research scientist. Later, he became an Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Relations at the University of Connecticut. He was recruited as an Assistant Professor of Social Work and also has served in numerous advisory and review committees to NIH institutes, including the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the National Institute in Mental Health (NIMH), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Dr. Gil has served as the Director of Research Development for the School of Social Work, and the former College of Health and Urban Affairs (CHUA). Currently he is the Associate Vice President for Research Development for FIU.

Hui Huang* (Ph.D, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), *Assistant Professor*. hui.huang2@fiu.edu; 305-348-4599. Dr. Hui Huang is interested in studying children and families who are dually involved in child welfare and other public service sectors. She has research experience with large scale projects, such as the MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change Research and the evaluation of the Illinois Title IV-E Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Waiver Demonstration. Dr. Huang has received funding from the National Institute of Justice for her research on the effects of neighborhood on delinquency among foster youth. She is committed to partnering with state and local agencies, helping states harness the power of data and evidence, developing and rigorously evaluating practices and policies. Dr. Huang is also a research fellow for the Fostering Panther Pride initiative at FIU.

Kawam, Elisa (PhD, Arizona State), *Assistant Professor*. ekawam@fiu.edu; 305-348-4918. Dr. Elisa Kawam has worked in the field of child welfare/maltreatment and community-based prevention for over a decade. Previously, she worked as a clinician in child welfare and as a supervisor for a transitional residential program for pregnant/parenting teen mothers with child maltreatment histories. With a passion for understanding the root causes of cyclical and intergenerational patterns of neglect, abuse, trauma, inequality and related health behaviors, Dr. Kawam researches the etiology of trauma as it relates to violence, the role of epigenetics in trauma/child abuse, attachment/social supports in parenting, and mitigating/aggravating factors of PTSD/trauma symptomology in child welfare. Furthermore, Dr. Kawam aims to incorporate trauma informed knowledge into social work research, practice, policy and teaching.

Macgowan, Mark* (Ph.D., Barry University), *Professor*. macgowan@fiu.edu; 305-348-5883. Dr. Macgowan's scholarship focuses on advancing rigorous, impactful, and culturally-relevant group work, particularly in the areas of substance use, mental health, and social well-being. He is the author of *Guide to Evidence-Based Group Work* and co-author of *Group Work Research*, both with Oxford University Press, and is co-editor of *Evidence-Based Group Work in Community Settings* and *IASWG Standards for Social Work with Groups*, both with Taylor & Francis. Dr. Macgowan has received multiple professional or university awards for excellence in teaching and research. He recently held the Fulbright-Scotland Visiting Professorship at the University of Edinburgh, where he was engaged in teaching and research about global perspectives on evidence-based group work. As a licensed therapist

and supervisor of therapist trainees, he has significant clinical experience, mainly with persons with substance use problems and those affected by disasters. He currently serves as a mental/behavioral health specialist with federal, state, and local government disaster response medical teams.

Martinez, Marcos (PhD, Arizona State), *Assistant Professor*. marcmart@fiu.edu; 305-348-5885. Dr. Marcos Martinez is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work. His line of research focuses on minority health disparities, specifically the etiology and prevention of substance use, risky sexual activity and other deleterious health risk behavior among Hispanic and American Indian youth. Dr. Martinez's work on several NIH funded studies has focused on the development and delivery of culturally sensitive prevention/interventions to minority adolescents and their parents. In this respect, his work targets socio-cultural, familial and developmental risk and protective factors associated with adolescent health behavior. Dr. Martinez's research has been recognized by the National Hispanic Science Network and he is a former NIDA Interdisciplinary Research Training Institute on Hispanic Drug Abuse Fellow.

Potocky, Miriam* (Ph.D., University of Kansas), *Professor*. potockym@fiu.edu; 305-348-6324. Refugee resettlement, international and multicultural social work. Dr. Miriam Potocky is an internationally-recognized expert on refugee resettlement. She has authored over 50 publications, including the ground-breaking Best Practices for Social Work with Refugees and Immigrants (Columbia University Press). Dr. Potocky's work on refugees has been funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families, the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, the International Rescue Committee, and the Gulf Coast Jewish Family and Community Services. She is currently the principal investigator for "Project MIRACLE: Motivational Interviewing for Refugee Adaptation, Coping, and Life Enhancement," funded by The Lois and Samuel Silberman Fund. Dr. Potocky teaches courses on social work with immigrants and refugees, social work with diverse populations, research methodology, practice evaluation, and quantitative data analysis. Among numerous awards and honors, Dr. Potocky has the distinction of being the first and only woman in the history of the FIU School of Social Work to earn the status of full professor.

Ruggiano, Nicole* (Ph.D., University of Delaware), *Assistant Professor*. nruggian@fiu.edu; 305-348-1058. Dr. Nicole Ruggiano is an associate professor in the School of Social Work and a John A. Hartford Geriatric Social Work Scholar. Her overall research agenda aims to inform practice, management, and policies that promote self-determination and health self-management for older adults with chronic conditions. Dr. Ruggiano has conducted a number of investigations focusing on health and home and community-based services for this population. She also researches human service policy advocacy. In addition to her research, she teaches courses in social welfare policy, macro practice, and research across the undergraduate and graduate curricula. Dr. Ruggiano also works closely with community-based agencies on projects aimed at addressing the needs of older adults in South Florida.

Stuart, Paul H.* (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) *Professor*. paul.stuart@fiu.edu; 305-348-2653. Professor Paul H. Stuart earned an M.S.W. at the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. in history and a Ph.D. in history and social welfare at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He has worked as a social worker in public welfare, recreation services, health care, and community mental health. He has served as a clinical social worker in the Indian Health Service, U.S. Public Health Service, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Stuart had over 30 years of teaching experience in South Dakota, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Alabama, before joining the FIU faculty in 2007. His research has focused on the history of Indian-white relations in the United States, the history of social welfare, and the history of the social work profession. He is the author of several books, including *The Indian Office: Growth and Development of an American Institution, 1865-1900* (UMI Research Press, 1979) and *Nations within A Nation: Historical Statistics of American Indians* (Greenwood Press, 1987), in addition to numerous articles

and chapters in books. He co-edited the Encyclopedia of Social Welfare History in North America (Sage, 2005), with John M. Herrick of Michigan State University. He has been active as a reviewer and editorial board member for scholarly journals and is currently Archives Editor for the Journal of Community Practice. At FIU, Stuart teaches courses in social welfare policy and services, including SOW 3232, SOW 3233, and SOW 5235. In 2015, the Florida Education Fund honored Stuart with the William R. Jones Outstanding Mentor Award for 2015.

Thomlison, Barbara* (Ph.D., University of Toronto) *Professor*. thomliso@fiu.edu; 305-438-6345. Dr. Barbara Thomlison is a professor in the School of Social Work and Director of the Institute for Children and Families at Risk. She teaches advanced clinical practice and family intervention courses in the graduate program. Her research interests include parenting programs, children at risk of maltreatment, family and youth violence, foster care and early childhood interventions. Dr. Thomlison's extensive publications include articles, chapters and books in the areas of child maltreatment interventions, parenting for effectiveness, family assessment, risk and resilience, foster care, APA style format and evidence based internships, forensic assessment and intervention in child sexual abuse, and designing evidence-based intervention search strategies. Dr. Thomlison is actively involved as a board member in local and national child welfare, foster care and family service organizations.

Thomlison, Ray J. (Ph.D., University of Toronto) *Professor*. thomlir@fiu.edu; 305-348-4714. Dr. Ray Thomlison is professor of social work. He brings to this position over thirty years of experience in numerous universities both as a faculty member and administrator. He began his teaching career at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. He was a Professor at the University of Toronto Faculty in Social Work for ten years before assuming the the position as Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. He was Dean at the University of Calgary for fifteen years prior to assuming his responsibilities at the School of Social Work, Florida International University. Dr. Thomlison has been a visiting professor, visiting lecturer, and teacher in numerous universities in Canada. These includes University of British Columbia, York University in Toronto, Lakehead University, and the University of Regina. Since the mid 1980's Dr. Thomlison has been called upon by numerous foreign governments and universities to work with them in a consultative capacity regarding social work education. He has served these functions in such countries as the Peoples' Republic of China, Russia, Nicaragua, Japan, The United Arab Emerits and England. In addition he had served as the external appraiser for the University of Hong Kong, Department of Social Work and Social Administration. In each of the Universities where Dr. Thomlison has served he has been an active participant in policy development committees and recruitment committees. He has a great deal of experience as a participant and leader in Community Organizations, Boards of Directors, and other social and health Service Organizations.

Wagner, Eric* (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh), *Professor*. wagnere@fiu.edu; 305-348-5612. Dr. Eric F. Wagner is a professor in the School of Social Work, the director of the FIU-Banyan Research Institute on Dissemination, Grants, & Evaluation (FIU-BRIDGE), and a clinical psychologist licensed to practice in Florida. He is an internationally-recognized expert on brief interventions for alcohol and drug users, with a particular emphasis on youth, minority, and immigrant populations. Dr. Wagner's community-based clinical research has been sponsored by NIAAA, NIDA, the Ware Foundation, and the Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología. He has served as an expert for NIAAA, the United Nations, the United States Department of Education, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and SAMHSA, regarding adolescent substance use problems.

Wong, Stephen E.* (Ph.D., Western Michigan University), *Associate Professor*. wongse@fiu.edu; 305-348-5224. Before coming to FIU, Dr. Stephen Wong worked as a

program director and researcher in psychiatric hospitals and residential treatment centers in California, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida. Dr. Wong also served as a faculty member for the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and as a consultant for the Illinois Department of Children and Families. He has conducted numerous empirical studies using behavior analysis, behavior therapy, and single-case experimental designs to teach social and independent living skills to persons with severe and persistent mental disorders. In recent years, Dr. Wong's research interests have broadened to include the study of ideological, political, and economic forces shaping mental health services.

III. FIRST THREE SEMESTERS OF STUDY

Initial Advisement

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

First Three Semesters

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

Program of Study

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

Table 1. Schedule for Program of Study

Fall Semester	Cr.
SOW 7216 Social Welfare Policy	3
SOW 7406 History & Systems of Social Work Research	3
SOW 7492 Theory Development & Research Methods in Social Welfare	3
PHC 6709 Quantitative Research Analysis I (or equivalent)	3
Total semester credits	12
Spring Semester	Cr.
SOW 7237 Micro-Practice Theory & Research	3
SOW 7238 Macro-Practice Theory & Research	3
PHC 6718 Quantitative Research Analysis II (or equivalent)	3
AAA xxxx Graduate Elective (or SOW 7916 Supervised Research)	3
Total semester credits	12
Summer Semester	Cr.
SOW 7936 Dissertation Seminar in Social Welfare	3
SOW 7493 Research Methods in Social Welfare II (or equivalent)	3
AAA xxxx Graduate Elective (or SOW 7916 Supervised Research)	3
SOW 7916 Supervised Research	3
Total semester credits	12
Total PhD Program course credits	36
Semesters 4 and Continuing (min 3 credits per semester max 12)	
<i>If Doctoral Candidacy attained:</i>	
SOW 7980 Dissertation Credits (min 24 hours)	3
<i>If Doctoral Candidacy <u>Not</u> attained:</i>	
SOW 7916 Supervised Research or	3
SOW 6914 Independent Research	1
Total minimum PhD dissertation credits	24
Total Credits	60

Grades

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

Annual Review

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

http://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/Annual_Evaluation_Form.pdf

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

IV. THE DOCTORAL CANDIDACY EXAMINATION (THREE MAJOR PAPERS)

Specialization

Each student is expected to specialize in three areas:

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

These areas are expected to be linked to form a foundation for the dissertation work. For example, one might specialize in "substance abuse among minority youths" as a social problem, in "prevention" as an intervention area/practice model related to this social problem, and in "longitudinal research" as a research methodology appropriate for the development of knowledge and skills about the problem or the intervention. Other examples: "gender and depression" (problem area), "self-help" (intervention area/practice model), and "ethnographic research" (research methodology); "child sexual abuse" (problem area), "court-ordered or mandatory family treatment" (intervention/practice model), and "survey methods" (methodology area); institutional racism and discrimination (problem area), community organization (intervention area/practice model), evaluation (methodology area). The preceding examples are merely for illustration purposes.

During the first three semesters of study, students work on producing a major paper on each of these areas. Each paper represents a substantial, critical literature review and analysis demonstrating advanced analytical skills, of approximately 40-60 pages or more. The problem/theory and intervention papers at least should be written with a view to eventual publication, and students should have a good idea of journals suitable for their submission. Students use their various course assignments to progress on these papers, and faculty members teaching in the Program are expected to tailor their course assignments in keeping with the objective of helping students to complete their three papers.

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

Students begin to formulate topics for their three papers as soon as possible following admission to the Program. They meet and discuss mutual interests with several faculty members in the School and other departments — with a view to choosing three (3) faculty members to supervise their work in each area. These three faculty members form the student's Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee. The student and each supervising faculty member should agree on a topic early on and all members should be aware of the nature of the other papers the student is planning to prepare and with whom. Papers may be written in accordance with a written question/guideline developed with the supervising faculty.

Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee is composed of three faculty members who are members of FIU's Graduate Faculty. At least two are from the School of Social Work at FIU, and one may be from another academic unit at FIU (It is advisable to pick an outside member at this stage, to facilitate the future composition of the Dissertation Committee). The Chair of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee must be a faculty member from FIU's School of Social Work.

Typically, each member of this Committee works with the student in one of the three areas: social problem/issue/theory, intervention area, research methodology. The student selects a Chair by the beginning of their second semester of study. The Chair and other Committee Members assist the student in any task relevant to a successful completion of the three

papers. The Chair and the student keep other members abreast of ongoing work and progress, by means of copies of correspondence, evaluations, etc. Ideally, this Committee should meet once every semester to review the student's work, until the student advances to candidacy. In any case, this Committee must meet at least once to review the student's work. Changes in an appointed Committee must be approved by the Doctoral Program Coordinator.

Social Problem/Issue/Theory Paper

There are no a priori limits on suitable topics in this area, which usually refers to a "social problem" – usually manifest in individual, familial, organizational, institutional, or broadly societal dysfunction – or a "public issue" that is of significant concern to one or more actors in social welfare. Examples of *broad*, multidimensional problem areas include child abuse or neglect, crime and delinquency, homelessness, human rights abuses, inadequate health care insurance, poverty, psychological distress or mental illness, health conditions, racism, sexism, substance abuse, unemployment, urban deterioration, youth violence, and many others. Some examples of public issues include acculturation, aging of the population, disaster relief, ethnic disparities in access to health care, family preservation, globalization and social policies, housing, social support, technology in human services, medicalization, multiculturalism, refugee resettlement, rights of the disabled, etc.

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

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

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

Intervention Area/Practice Model Paper

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

Recognizable modes of social intervention include, but are not limited to, administration, advocacy, case management, casework, client education, community organization, consciousness-raising, crisis intervention, early intervention, family treatment, group work,

hospitalization, individual psychotherapy, organizational development and change, prevention, psychopharmacology, and supervision. Associated with many of these interventions are practice models such as the behavioral, biopsychosocial, biopsychiatric, cognitive-behavioral, ecological, empowerment, feminist, humanistic-existential, psychodynamic, recovery, strengths-based, systems, and task-centered. Students are expected to develop an understanding of the distinctions between interventions and the practice models employed to deliver them.

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

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

Research Proposal Paper

Research methodology generally refers to clarity of problem definition, a critical review of scientific literature bearing on this problem, the formulation of research questions, hypotheses, or objectives, and the specification of an appropriate study design to collect and analyze information bearing upon the questions or hypotheses. The design itself involves a choice of a general approach to be used in the inquiry, including a description of the procedures to be used to select a sample for study, to select methods or create instruments to organize data or measure variables, to determine the reliability and validity of the observations or measurements made, and to analyze the data so as to answer the research questions, reach theoretical saturation, accept or reject a hypothesis, or meet stated research objectives. Research methodology also involves explicit consideration of ethical issues that bear on the protection of human subjects.

Students are expected to demonstrate research competency by drafting a research proposal. It is expected that this research proposal will constitute the foundation for the student's formal Dissertation Proposal approved by their Dissertation Committee after advancement to candidacy. See the appendix for an outline of the Research Proposal.

Evaluation of the Three Major Papers

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

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

Advancement to Candidacy

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

In addition, as noted earlier, students and their Faculty Advisors/Committee Members are to complete, by the end of each year of study, the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan (available at the website above). The Doctoral Policy Committee will review the progress of all students at the end of each year of study, after the evaluation and mentoring plan is completed.

Deadline for Advancement to Candidacy

Students are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their sixth semester of study. Students who fail to meet this deadline can apply to the Doctoral Program Coordinator for an extension of no more than two semesters. Students applying for such an extension will forfeit any financial assistance they may be receiving. The extension is granted only on the basis of a well-justified plan for successful completion of the three papers. *Students who fail to meet this second deadline (i.e., who fail to advance to candidacy by the end of their eighth semester of study) may be terminated from the Ph.D. Program.*

Review of Steps Leading to Advancement to Candidacy

(The first three steps are simultaneous)

1. Complete each semester's courses satisfactorily
2. Meet and discuss interests with as many faculty members as possible
3. Identify topics for each of the three papers
4. Identify faculty members likely to work with you, especially a major professor who will serve as Chair of your Doctoral Candidacy Examination
5. Obtain the Doctoral Program Coordinator's approval for the composition of your Committee
6. Work on the papers under the supervision of the members of your Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee; submit drafts to each member for comments
7. Early during the semester in which you expect to have your papers successfully graded, usually the third or fourth semester of study, file *Form D-2 (Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy)*
8. Obtain a final grade and a final written evaluation for each paper from each member, and ensure that these are forwarded to the Doctoral Program Coordinator
9. Submit a copy of each final paper to the Doctoral Program Coordinator
10. Be sure Form D-2 has been filed. This is also a good time to file Form D-1 (*Appointment of Dissertation Committee*).

V. THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Following advancement to candidacy, doctoral candidates must submit a dissertation, which embodies the results of scholarly research giving evidence of originality and is a contribution to social work/social welfare knowledge. A minimum of 24 dissertation credit hours are required, usually taken with the Chair of the Dissertation Committee while working on one's dissertation research.

Dissertation Committee

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

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

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

Expectations of the Dissertation Committee

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

Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation Proposal typically grows out of the research proposal paper submitted for the Doctoral Candidacy Examination. It follows the usual guidelines of a research proposal, including problem definition, preliminary review of the literature and conceptual framework, research questions or hypotheses, design, sampling plan, measures, data collection strategies, and data analysis methods, ethical issues, time frame (cf. Appendix "Research Proposal"). The Dissertation Committee has the opportunity to raise questions, give input, request revisions, and evaluate these revisions before approving the dissertation proposal.

Approval of the dissertation proposal has a formal procedure. The Committee meets with the doctoral candidate for an oral presentation of the dissertation proposal. Once the proposal is successfully defended, the Committee members indicate their approval by signing and completing *Form D-3 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>). The D-3, full proposal, a five-page summary meeting UGS guidelines (cf. http://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/Proposal_Guidelines.pdf), as well as an IRB/Human Subjects approval memorandum, if necessary, are forwarded for final approval/signatures to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the Academic Dean, and the Dean of the University Graduate School.

Deadline for Submitting a Dissertation Proposal

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

Research Involving Human Subjects

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

Evaluation of Doctoral Dissertations

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

- *Committee members are expected to respond to written drafts within three weeks.*
- *At the end of each year the Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee must file a formal evaluation of a candidate's progress on the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>).

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

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

After the candidate has submitted a complete draft of the dissertation to the members of the Committee, each member evaluates the dissertation independently and determines whether in his or her opinion the candidate may proceed to the Dissertation Defense. This evaluation must be in writing and should normally cover the criteria listed above and/or other pertinent criteria. Copies of these evaluations are appended to *Form D-5 Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense* (available at the student forms site noted above), which is signed by each member of the Dissertation Committee and then forwarded by the Chair to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the School Director, the Dean of the College, and the Dean of the University Graduate School for final approval/signatures. Candidates and their Committee members are cautioned to follow the University Graduate School Deadlines for filing the various forms. Deadline dates change each year and are available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-calendar-deadlines.shtml>.

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

Dissertation Defense

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

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

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

It is important to note that a proposed dissertation must be approved by the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the Director of the School (if Graduate Faculty) and the Dean of the College prior to submission for approval of the Dean of the University Graduate School. In order for this requirement to be met, additional time is required. Candidates are urged to submit their complete application for a

dissertation defense to the Program Coordinator *six (6) weeks in advance of their anticipated oral defense date. Candidates should note that until the Dean of the University Graduate School has approved their application, the defense date is only proposed.*

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

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

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

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

Review of the Steps in the Dissertation Process

1. Complete Doctoral Candidacy Examination satisfactorily.
2. Complete selection of Doctoral Dissertation Committee membership (usually composed of former Doctoral Candidacy Committee plus another member)
3. Work with Chair and Committee members to revise and finalize the Dissertation Proposal (which usually grows out, with minor or necessary modifications, of the research proposal submitted for the candidacy examination).
4. Submit necessary materials to Institutional Review Board.
5. Submit signed *Form D-3* with all attachments. A first meeting of your Dissertation Committee should have been held.
6. Conduct the dissertation research.
7. Continue to work with Committee Members on dissertation drafts. Work closely with Chair and keep all Committee Members apprised of progress. Share drafts and solicit comments and suggestions. Use Committee Members as consultants and advisors. A second meeting of your Dissertation Committee should have been held.
8. Write and rewrite chapters.
9. Prepare for dissertation defense by keeping the Committee actively involved. File the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan each year.
10. Upon approval of the Chair and all Committee Members, schedule tentative date for a Dissertation Defense.

11. Upon completion of a dissertation, submit *Form D-5* signed by the Committee Chairperson and other Members of the Committee. The application must be filed in sufficient time to allow the Dean of University Graduate School to publish the notice in a monthly calendar of dissertation and thesis defenses for the University community.
12. Before Defense, distribute copies of dissertation to Chair and Committee Members. A third meeting of your Dissertation Committee should have been held.
13. Defend dissertation. Dissertation Committee approves (or not) the defense.
14. Revise dissertation on the basis of final comments from Committee Members received during defense.
15. Chair does final reading and signs *Final ETD form*. Chair delivers it to Doctoral Program Coordinator for review before forwarding to the Dean's office for final approval.
16. Submission of Dissertation to Library.
17. Provide Doctoral Program Coordinator with a copy of dissertation for the School's files.

Publication of Dissertations

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

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS (FORMS)

Individual Study/Supervised Research/Dissertation Credit Contract Forms

Each semester that students sign up for SOW 6914 (Independent Study), SOW 7916 (Supervised Research), or SOW 7980 (Dissertation Credits), they must fill out a form outlining the expected work to be done during the semester. At the end of the semester, the supervising faculty member evaluates the student's progress. These forms may be [downloaded here](#) (.doc format).

Forms Required by the University Graduate School

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

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

VII. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Continuous Registration

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

Time Limit for Completion of Ph.D. Degree

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

Conferral of the Doctoral Degree

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

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

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

VIII. FINANCIAL AID

Within-State tuition fees at FIU are reasonable (<http://finaid.fiu.edu/index.php?id=1572>). However, there are fellowships that cover tuition and provide additional funds to help students focus on their studies without the burden of outside employment. There is financial support for students applying to the Program, as well as for Current Students.

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

Students Applying to the Program

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

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

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

Current Students

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

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

There are numerous opportunities for funding from sources outside the university for students currently enrolled. Consult the Program's website for those opportunities: <http://phdsocialwelfare.fiu.edu/StudentsCurrent/Pages/Funding.aspx>

APPENDIX: THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A dissertation proposal generally contains two basic parts. First, we conceptualize the "research problem" or identify an issue of interest. Second, we define a research strategy and indicate how the research will be carried out. Each part contains different sections. The aim and the contents of each section, as well as a suggested length in typed double-spaced text, are outlined in this handout. Each section is important, but depending on the research approach and methods, the sections might be constructed or ordered differently. It is not so much the exact order or contents of the sections that matter as their *articulation into a coherent whole*. Overall, your research proposal is expected to be about 35 to 60 double-spaced pages, excluding references.

A. CONCEPTUALIZING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. Presentation of the Proposed Research (~ 3-6 pages)

The aim of this section is to *allow the reader to appreciate the social and scientific significance of the proposed research*. Though it appears at the beginning of the proposal, it is often finalized after the latter is completed. It generally contains:

- (a) a statement of the general objective of the research
- (b) a discussion of the significance/pertinence of the topic/problem for different concerned actors/stakeholders and for Social Work
- (c) a brief indication of the stage of development of scientific knowledge on this topic/problem
- (d) a brief formulation of the "research problem"

2. State of Knowledge / Critical Review of the Literature (~ 12-20 pages)

The aim of this section is to *document what we already know about this particular topic/problem, how researchers have studied it in order to provide us with this knowledge, and what additional knowledge and/or new approach may be needed to meet the research objective*. It generally contains:

- (a) a detailed description of the topic/problem (who is affected, how so, where, etc.)
- (b) a synthetic review of findings from earlier studies bearing or focusing on the topic/problem
- (c) an analysis of the conceptual approaches and research methods used by previous researchers to arrive at these findings
- (d) an analysis of the strengths and limits of these findings, especially indicating the gaps, contradictions, & ambiguities in findings
- (e) a brief indication of the sort of investigation that may be needed in order to meet the research objective

3. Theoretical Model / Analytical Framework and Research Question (~ 3-5 pages)

The aim of this section is to *summarize and conclude* the work done in the previous two sections by *outlining a model of the interactions between the key concepts discussed in the literature review*, from which you will formulate one or more *specific research questions, hypotheses, or objectives*. This section generally contains:

- (a) a summary of the key concepts which you have selected from the literature reviewed
- (b) a description (written and/or graphic) of how these concepts are interrelated (a "theoretical model")
- (c) a precise statement of the research question, hypothesis, or objective which derives directly from this theoretical model which you have just elaborated, or, depending on the general approach, a broad "grand tour" question and a series of sub-questions

B. DESCRIBING THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

4. Choice of a Research Strategy (~ 1-2 pages)

The aim of this section is to *justify the choice of a research design and/or strategy in order to answer the research question* posed in the preceding section. It generally contains:

- (a) a description of your general design (qualitative, descriptive-correlational, case-control, quasi-experimental, experimental, etc.) and how and why it is the best one for your particular question

5. Population, Subjects, Cases, Situations Under Study (~ 2-5 pages)

The aim of this section is to *describe precisely the population (samples, cases, groups, institutions, documents, situations, processes, phenomena, etc.) under study*. It generally contains:

- (a) a definition and a description of the subjects

(b) a description of how these subjects will be selected for study

6. Identification and Measurement of Phenomena of Interest (~ 5-8 pages)

The aims of this section often depend on the type of approach and research strategy used (e.g., inductive and qualitative, deductive and quantitative, etc.). A deductive approach using quantitative methods would aim (a) *to show how the concepts underlying your research (and found in the research questions/objectives/ hypotheses) are operationalized into "variables,"* (b) *to describe where and how these variables will be observed or measured, and* (c) *to evaluate the probable quality of the data thus obtained.* (A more inductive approach might place less emphasis on operationalization). This section contains:

- (a) operationalization of concepts into variables (as needed and justified)
- (b) a description of the sources of data collection/measurement/observation
- (c) a description of the method(s) of data collection/measurement/observation
- (d) a description of the instrument(s) of data collection
- (e) a discussion of the quality (validity, reliability) of the both the methods and instruments of data collection/measurement/observation

7. Data Analysis (~ 3-8 pages)

The aim of this section is to *plan and explain what you intend to do with the data obtained in order to answer the research question.* It generally contains:

- (a) a description of how the raw data will be prepared/transformed/reduced for analysis
- (b) a description of the methods of data analysis used (e.g., iterative searching, content analysis, statistical tests, etc.) and a discussion of their assumptions and limits
- (c) clear indications of which research questions or objectives or hypotheses will be answered or addressed by which methods of data analysis

8. Limits of the Study (~ 3-5 pages)

The aim of this section is to *show precisely the various limits inherent in your study.* In essence, you are *specifying to the reader just what this study can accomplish, and what it cannot accomplish.* These limits are understood by discussing the threats to the validity of your design, the validity and reliability of your measurement, data collection, and data analysis strategies. *These limits may be discussed in each of the previous sections or grouped in this single section.* It generally contains:

- (a) a discussion of the biases pertinent to the research design as applied to your particular case
- (b) a discussion of validity and reliability issues relevant to your data collection/measurement/observation strategies and to your instruments
- (c) a discussion of the validity and reliability issues relevant to your data transformation and analysis

9. Pertinence of the Study (~ 1-2 pages)

The aim of this section is to *show the pertinence of the anticipated results.* It contains:

- (a) a description of the anticipated results
- (b) their relevance to the subjects in your study, practitioners, researchers, policy-makers, society, and/or other concerned stakeholders

10. Calendar and Budget (~ 1-2 pages)

The aim of this section is to *indicate the time and the human, material, and financial resources needed to conduct the research activities.* It contains:

- (a) a calendar of the study anticipating when each phase begins and ends
- (b) a budget indicating and justifying each expense (salary, materials, other)

11. Ethical Considerations (~ 2-4 pages)

The aim of this section is to (1) *identify the ethical implications (large or small) of the research you are planning to undertake,* and (2) *to show that all necessary precautions will be taken to protect the rights and well-being of research subjects.* It generally contains:

- (a) a description of the benefits and risks for those who participate in the research, and a description of ways to protect subjects from the risks
- (b) how subjects' informed consent shall be obtained (how risks shall be disclosed)
- (c) how subjects' anonymity and how data confidentiality shall be protected
- (d) a discussion of other pertinent ethical questions (researcher loyalties, impact of funding sources, questionable uses of results, research in involuntary settings, etc.)

12. Dissemination of Results (~ 1 page)

The aim of this section is to *show how the results of this study will be disseminated among those most likely to benefit from them.*

- (a) a description of the specific forums where results will be presented (journals, websites, books, congresses, lectures, classes, workshops, etc.)

13. Bibliography

This section contains a complete list, in American Psychological Association style (*APA Publications Manual*, latest edition) of all sources or authors cited in the proposal.

14. Abstract

This section, *placed at the beginning of the proposal* but usually written at the end of the research process, usually contains a 250-word statement of the background and objective of the study, the study design, the methods of data collection and the instruments used, the anticipated results, and their pertinence.