



DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)
IN SOCIAL WELFARE

DOCTORAL PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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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 50 graduates as of 2008. 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 FIU's Stempel School of Public Health. 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 a full-time program requiring a significant investment of time from students. Most students complete the program in three to 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 fourth 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).
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 and the Stempel School of Public Health web sites for differing deadlines for fellowship and assistantship applications. For the School of Social Work, applications for admission should be received at the School by **February 1**. Applications submitted after that date are 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) or in a closely related field (e.g., Mental Health Counseling, Clinical or Counseling Psychology) from an accredited institution. Prior social work experience is highly desired.
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*
3. A combined quantitative and verbal score of **at least 1000** on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Appointment as a Graduate Assistant requires a combined quantitative and verbal score of **at least 1120**.
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 this institution, his or her background and experience, his or her research and specialization interests, and his or her career goals following receipt of their Ph.D.
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://social.work.fiu.edu>, 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 doctoral 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. ***An asterisk [*] indicates that the faculty member has dissertation advisor status and can supervise dissertations.***

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 Spring Semester 2006 (more complete summaries are available at <http://socialwork.fiu.edu>).

***Beaulaurier, Richard (Ph.D., University of Southern California), Associate Professor.** renzbeau@fiu.edu 305-348-5876

Civil and disability rights, mental health and aging, consumer issues, computer technology and social work curricula, community practice, administration and organizational behavior

***Cohen, David (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley), Professor.** cohenda@fiu.edu 305-348-4599

Psychopharmacology and social work practice, sociocultural aspects of medication usage, critical perspectives in mental health, foster care, law and psychiatry

***De La Rosa, Mario (Ph.D., Ohio State University), Professor.** delarosa@fiu.edu 305-348-5794

Substance abuse and acculturation in Latino populations, drug use and crime problems in Latino populations, social support system and Latino health

***Gil, Andres (Ph.D., University of Miami), Professor & Associate Vice President for Research Development.** gila@fiu.edu 305-348-0556

Adolescent substance use: epidemiology, risk factors and treatment, and cultural factors in the context of acculturation among immigrant families.

***Macgowan, Mark (Ph.D., Barry University), Associate Professor.** macgowan@fiu.edu 305-348-5883

Assessment and reduction of aggression and violence among children and youth, engagement in group work, Family Group Conferencing.

Potocky, Miriam (Ph.D., University of Kansas), Associate Professor. potockym@fiu.edu 305-348-6324

Refugee resettlement, international and multicultural social work.

***Rice, Christopher (Ph.D., Washington University), Associate Professor.** ricec@fiu.edu 305-348-5885

Health services research, brief interventions for substance abuse, evaluating social work practice, social policy.

***Stuart, Paul H. (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) Professor and Director of the School of Social Work. paul.stuart@fiu.edu 305-348-2653**
History of social welfare and the social work profession

***Thomlison, Barbara (Ph.D., University of Toronto) Professor.**
thomliso@fiu.edu 305-438-6345
Child welfare, early childhood intervention, evidence-based practice models, children's mental health, social work curriculum.

***Thomlison, Ray J. (Ph.D., University of Toronto) Professor.**
thomlir@fiu.edu 305-348-4714
Clinical practice, behavior therapy, family therapy, couples therapy, parent training, child welfare, employee assistance, curriculum development, international social work

***Wagner, Eric (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh), Professor.**
wagnere@fiu.edu 305-348-5612
Randomized, community-based clinical trials of interventions to reduce substance use problems in youth, evidence-based practice models, development of culturally-sensitive approaches to assessment and intervention of substance use and related problems.

Wong, Stephen E. (Ph.D., Western Michigan University), Associate Professor. wongse@fiu.edu 305-348-5224
Clinical practice with severe mental disorders, single-case experimental study design, critical perspectives in mental health

III. FIRST THREE SEMESTERS OF STUDY

Initial Advisement

Upon entry in the Ph.D. program, each student is assigned an 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. Students may change their advisor by agreement and by so requesting to the Doctoral Program Coordinator.

Grades

Doctoral students are required to maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA for all their courses. At the doctoral level, 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 taken again by the student.

Program of Study

The program of study for the Ph.D. in Social Welfare is comprised 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.

The following is the typical schedule for the first four semesters of study (asterisk indicates required course):

Fall Semester	Cr.
*Theory Development & Research Methods in Social Welfare	3
*History & Systems of Social Work Research	3
*Quantitative Research Methods I	3
*Qualitative Research Methods in Health & Urban Affairs	3
Total semester credits	12
Spring Semester	Cr.
*Micro-Practice Theory & Research	3
*Quantitative Research Methods II	3
Graduate Elective or Supervised Research	3
* Macro-Practice Theory & Research	3
Total semester credits	12
Summer Semester	Cr.
*Social Welfare Policy	3
Supervised Research	3
Graduate Elective	3
*Dissertation Seminar	3
Total semester credits	12
Total PhD Program course credits	36

Semesters 4 and continuing	
*Dissertation Credits (or Supervised Research or Independent Study if Doctoral Candidacy not yet attained)	min. of 3, max. of 12 per sem.
Total minimum PhD dissertation credits	24
Total Credits	60

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 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, 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 one or more theories 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, 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

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 (**see Appendix 1: “The 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.

Evaluation of the Three Major Papers

The passing grade for a major paper in the Doctoral candidacy Examination is B+ or higher. The following criteria are normally used by members of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee to evaluate the three papers:

- (1) ability to analyze, conceptualize, and think critically
- (2) ability to synthesize information and present it 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) application of social work/social science knowledge to a significant social welfare problem/issue
- (5) 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 into a formal Dissertation Proposal
- (6) potential to turn papers into publications in peer-reviewed outlets

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. Each Committee member evaluates each paper independently. Their grade is forwarded to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, accompanied by a written evaluation which covers the above and/or other pertinent criteria.

Advancement to Candidacy

To advance to candidacy, students must (1) pass all their required coursework with a grade of “B” or higher, or an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, and (2) 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 and Application to Candidacy* with the University Graduate School. The form is available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/forms.html>.**

In addition, the Doctoral Policy Committee will review the progress of all students at the end of their first year of study, and advisors will provide feedback from this review to the students.

Deadline for Advancement to Candidacy

Students are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their fourth semester of study at the latest. 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 may 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 (that is, who fail to advance to candidacy by the end of their sixth semester of study) are 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. Exceptionally, a person without a doctorate may be invited to serve on this Committee with permission from the University Graduate School. **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- Appointment of Dissertation Committee* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/forms.html>), and after a successful proposal defense, *Form D-3 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/forms.html>) 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 (see <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/faculty.html>). Changes in the Dissertation Committee membership appointments require filing a *Form D-1r Appointment of a Revised Dissertation Committee* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/forms.html>).

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 members area(s) of expertise. The Chair and the 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 hold a minimum of three meetings with the candidate:

- *at the beginning stage, when the Dissertation Proposal is submitted;*

- toward the *middle phase*, to review and evaluate the candidate's progress; &
- toward the *end phase*, prior to submitting the dissertation for 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 (follow the Graduate School's *Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual*, available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/policies.html>). 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, when successful the Committee indicates their approval by signing and completing *Form D-3 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal* (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/forms.html>). *Form D-3*, the full proposal and a five-page summary, as well as an IRB/Human Subjects approval memorandum if necessary, are forwarded for final approval/signatures to the Doctoral Program Coordinator, the Director of the School, 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 may forfeit any financial aid 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) are 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 www.osra.fiu.edu/human/index.htm). 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 of a candidate's candidacy the Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee must file a formal evaluation of a candidate's progress on Form D-4 Dissertation Committee Report of Annual Dissertation Progress (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/forms.html>).*

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 <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/forms.html>), 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/calendars.html>.

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/calendars.html>.*

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 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* [<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/policies.html>] of the University Graduate School for format requirements.

It is important to note that a proposed dissertation must be approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator, the Director of the School 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 and to sign *Form D-6 Dissertation Defense Report* (available at www.fiu.edu/forms.html).

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) attest to the completeness of the dissertation by initiating *Form D-7 Final Approval of the Dissertation* (available at www.fiu.edu/forms.html).

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 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 *Form D-4* 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 prior to forwarding *Form D-6* to the College Dean and the Dean of University Graduate School.
14. Revise dissertation on the basis of final comments from committee members received during defense.
15. Chair does final reading and signs *Form D-7*. 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 (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/policies.html>).

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

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.

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 appropriate faculty chairs 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. Blank forms are attached to this packet, available from the University Graduate School office (PC-136), or may be downloaded from the University Graduate School website (www.fiu.edu/forms.html). The following is a list of these forms:

Form D-1 – Appointment of Dissertation Committee

Form D-2 – Program for Doctoral Degree and Application to Candidacy

FORM D-3 – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

Form D-4 Dissertation Committee Report of Annual Dissertation Progress Conference

Form D-5 Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense

Form D-6 Dissertation Defense Report

Form D-7 Final Approval of Dissertation

Form D-1 – Appointment of Dissertation Committee

Form D-1 is filed when the Dissertation Committee is formed. The dissertation committee, including the major professor, is appointed on the recommendation of the department or school by the Dean of the Graduate School. The major professor must be a member of the Graduate Faculty who holds Dissertation Advisor status. Three other committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty, one of whom must be outside the department or school, but within FIU. Additional members may be appointed. If they are not FIU Graduate Faculty, a CV must accompany the form.

Form D-2 – Program for Doctoral Degree and Application to Candidacy

Form D-2 must be filed immediately after the student has passed all written and oral comprehensive and language examinations and completed all course work. The earliest students may file this form at the end of the fourth semester of study.

FORM D-3 – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

A copy of the dissertation proposal is prepared in a scholarly style and is filed with the University Graduate School using Form D-3. Members of the Dissertation Committee certify that they have met with the student for an oral defense of the proposal, reviewed the proposal, and agree to serve on the dissertation committee. *Form D-3* must be accepted by the University Graduate School at least one year

prior to graduation. Students must attach to *Form D-3*: (1) a copy of the dissertation proposal, (2) a 5-page summary of the proposal, and (3) an Institutional Review Board/Human Subjects approval memorandum as necessary.

Form D-4 Dissertation Committee Report of Annual Dissertation Progress Conference

On *Form D-4*, each dissertation committee member attests that the student is making adequate progress on work toward completion of the dissertation. Written evaluations from each of the committee member are presented on *Form D-4*. *Form D-4* is filed each year from time the candidate has defended the dissertation proposal.

Form D-5 Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense

One copy of the Dissertation, certified as complete and provisionally acceptable to the committee, and one copy of the Dissertation Defense Announcement must be submitted with this form to the University Graduate School at least THREE weeks before the proposed date of the defense or by the UGS catalog deadline, whichever date is the earlier. **It is important to note that a proposed dissertation must be approved by of the Graduate Program Coordinator, the Dean of the School and the Dean of the College prior to submission for approval of the University Graduate School Dean. 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 Graduate School Dean has approved their application, *the defense date is only proposed.***

Refer to the *Regulations for Thesis and Dissertations Preparation Manual* for the format to follow. If the announcement does not conform to the University Graduate School standard, IT WILL DELAY THE DEFENSE. An electronic version of the dissertation defense announcement must be sent to ugs@fiu.edu. The final examination committee will consist of all members of the dissertation committee and such other members of the Graduate Faculty as may be appointed by the Dean of the University Graduate School.

Form D-6 Dissertation Defense Report

Form D-6 is completed by the Dissertation Committee members and presents a report of the outcome of the dissertation defense.

Form D-7 Final Approval of Dissertation

Form D-7 is submitted by the Chair of the Dissertation Committee with a final version of the dissertation to the Dean of the College and of the University Graduate School for review and approval.

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 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

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.*

Most Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantships include a stipend and tuition waivers. Eligible students must meet all admissions requirements, including a minimum combined GRE score of 1120, and maintain good progress in their coursework. 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 .

Students with a minimum combined GRE score of 1300 are eligible to compete for the prestigious Presidential Scholarships, which provide a stipend of \$18,000 per year. Other funding opportunities are available for qualified students.

Further information on financial support for doctoral students is available from the Doctoral Program Coordinator (who maintains a folder of financial resources for doctoral students), as well as from the University Graduate School and the Financial Aid Office.

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

Appendix 1: The Research Proposal

A research 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
- (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 (1) *to show how the concepts underlying your research (and found in the research questions/objectives/ hypotheses) are operationalized into "variables,"* (2) *to describe where and how these variables will be observed or measured, and* (3) *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*, 5th 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.