



UNIVERSITY *of*  
DENVER

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

**University of Denver  
Graduate School of Social Work  
Ph.D. Program**

**Ph.D. Program Handbook  
2023-2024**

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## Preface

The Ph.D. Program Handbook is designed to provide important program information to Ph.D. students in the Graduate School of Social Work. It is not intended to be a complete statement of all School and University policies. In addition, note that the policies and procedures described in the Handbook are subject to change at the discretion of the Graduate School of Social Work, the Office of Graduate Studies, the Office of the Provost, and the University Trustees. They are not to be considered or otherwise relied upon as a complete statement of the legal terms and conditions of student enrollment and status. Instead, this Handbook has been designed to provide, in summary form, important information regarding Ph.D. studies at the Graduate School of Social Work in particular and the University of Denver in general. Students must also consult the Graduate Policy Manual available at <http://bulletin.du.edu/graduate/academic-requirements-policies-and-procedures/> and remember that students are responsible to comply with those graduate policies, forms, and procedures. Further information is available from the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.

Students must also note that the regulations of the University and of the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies are the prerogative of bodies outside the School. With regard to the regulations they set, those bodies have authority. The regulations of the School are designed to operate within the context of those bodies, but in the case of a discrepancy, the general regulations have priority. In other words, where there is a conflict between this Handbook and the OGE Graduate Policy Manual, the OGE Graduate Policy Manual takes precedence. Although this Handbook aims to give as accurate and complete information as possible from year to year, changes to policy and program requirements do occur so students should also check with their advisor, their Dissertation Director, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, or the Office of Graduate Education on any matters of which they are unsure.

When a new Ph.D. Handbook is issued that has significant changes, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will provide the new Ph.D. Handbook with information about the changes to all currently enrolled doctoral students who are beyond their first year. Students may elect to stay with their current Ph.D. Handbook or request to fall under the policies and procedures of the new Ph.D. Handbook. Students who wish to change to the new Ph.D. Handbook should request this change, in writing, with an email directed to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. Students must follow the policies and procedures of a single handbook and may not choose policies and procedures from different handbooks.

## Welcome Message from the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education

On behalf of the administration, faculty, staff, current students, and Ph.D. program alumni, we welcome you to the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver and to your doctoral education experience. We are excited to have you here with us and look forward to working with you over the coming years while you embark on this new chapter in your life.

Founded in 1968, the University of Denver School of Social Work Ph.D. Program is one of the oldest doctoral social work programs in the U.S. and has produced approximately 200 graduates, most of whom have gone on to assume leadership positions in academia, in government, and in research institutions. We hope that the time you spend in our program will challenge you intellectually to deepen your thinking as an emerging social work scholar so you too can take your place among the leaders in our chosen profession.

The GSSW faculty who will be integrally involved in your education as instructors, mentors, co-authors, supervisors, and colleagues have a deep commitment to your success and to ensuring that the doctoral program continues to produce stewards of our profession who are passionate about social work's vision of a more just and equitable world. They have a wide range of substantive and methodological expertise and among them you will find some of the leading scholars in our profession. Take the time and the initiative to get to know them and their work.

Currently, we have more than 25 active students in our doctoral program. Typically, five or six new students enter each year, and they consistently report experiencing a faculty and staff committed to their success and graduation. We hope this Handbook provides you with information pertaining to the steps that lead to successful completion of your program and the array of policies and procedures related to those steps, but if you have any questions that remain unanswered, please let us know.

Sincerely,

*Jennifer C. Greenfield*

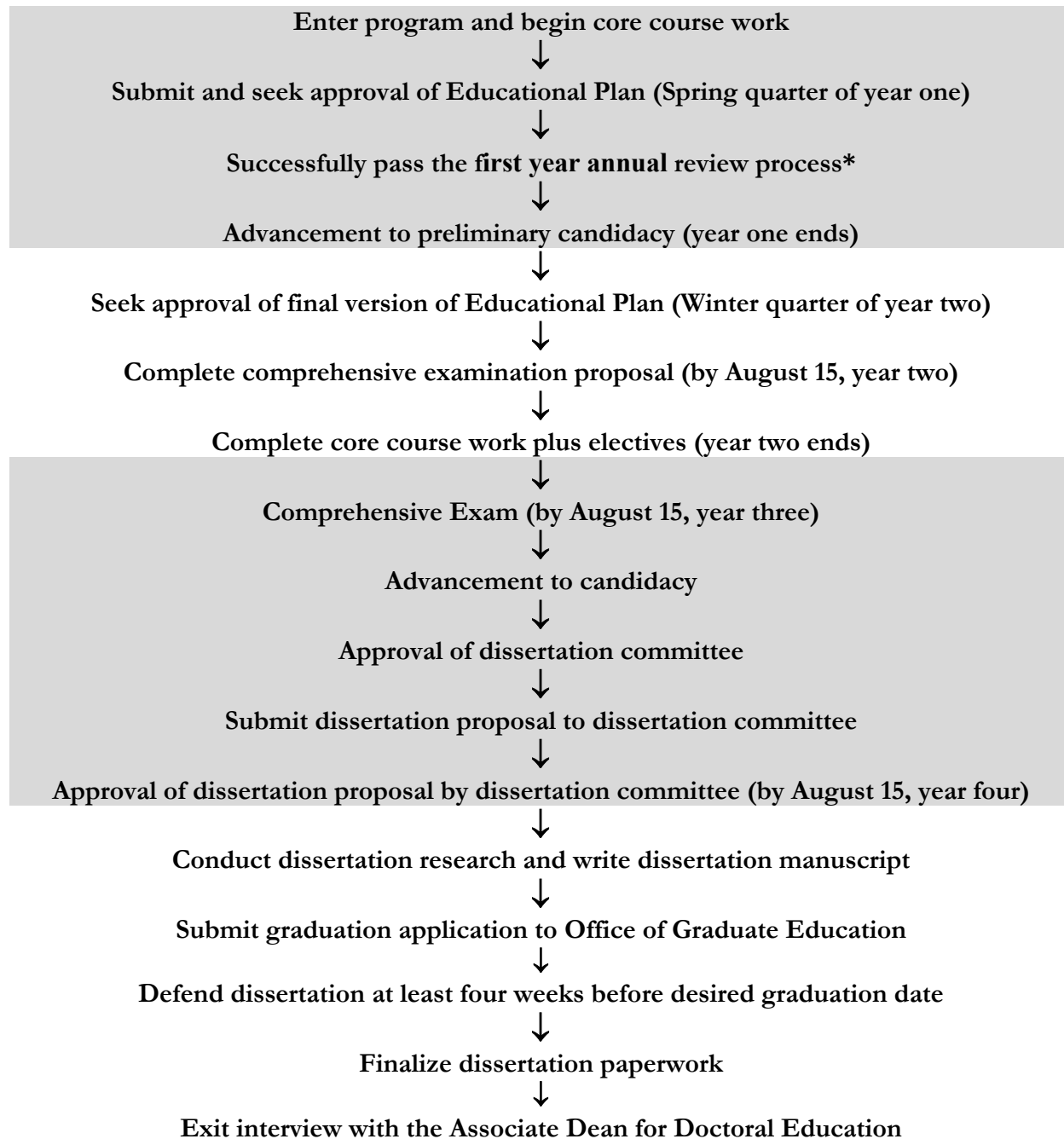
Jennifer C. Greenfield, MSW, PhD  
Associate Dean for Doctoral Education &  
Associate Professor

## General Information

- Address: University of Denver  
Graduate School of Social Work  
Craig Hall, 2148 South High Street  
Denver, CO 80208
- Phone Numbers: Jennifer C. Greenfield, Ph.D., Associate Professor & Associate Dean for  
Doctoral Education: 303-871-2770  
Freyja Hofler, Program Coordinator: 303-871-2650  
Adela Smith, GSSW Registrar: 303-871-2170  
GSSW reception desk: 303-871-2886
- Mailboxes: Ph.D. students can retrieve mail sent to them at Craig Hall from the GSSW  
Business Office on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.
- Computing: Ph.D. students are expected to provide their own mobile computers and  
software, although many relevant software programs are available for free  
through DU (<https://www.du.edu/it/services/software/software-for-students>). DU support for student-owned machines is available at 303-871-  
4700. GSSW also provides desktop computing resources in some Ph.D.  
student offices, including access to Microsoft Office and quantitative and  
qualitative data analysis packages. GSSW has technology operations staff that  
provide internal support for instructional purposes. GSSW instructional  
technology support can be reached at 303-871-4680.
- Portfolio: The Ph.D. program maintains a group presence on the GSSW Student  
Resources Portfolio\* and Teams sites, where forms and handbooks are  
posted. Students are required to participate in the DU Portfolio\* and Teams  
communities.
- Copy Resources: The GSSW printing/copy machines are available for assigned GTA work. In  
general, GSSW supports paperless approaches and copy machines can  
digitize and be used to e-mail digital documents. GSSW also provides  
networked printers throughout Craig Hall and the PhD Student Offices.
- Dissertations: Dissertations completed by prior Ph.D. students are available in the  
“University of Denver Dissertations” database through the DU library.
- Program Committee  
for 2023-2024: Jennifer C . Greenfield, Associate Professor and Chair  
Inna Altshul, Associate Professor  
Tyrone Hamler, Assistant Professor  
Heather Taussig, Professor  
N. Eugene Walls, Professor
- Ph.D. Program  
Coordinator: Freyja Hofler
- Faculty and Staff Directory: <https://socialwork.du.edu/about/gssw-directory>

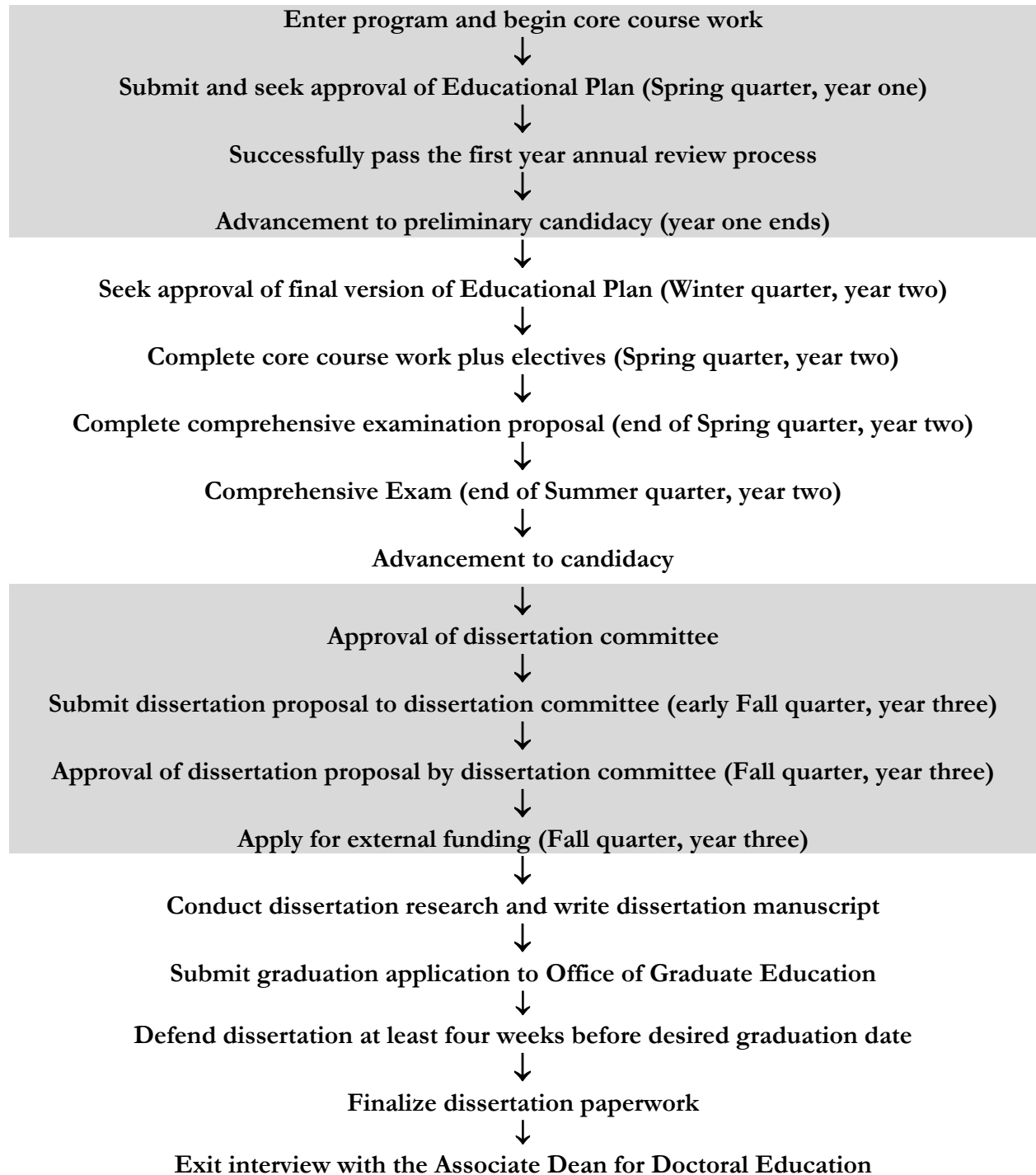
\*DU will be transitioning from Portfolio to another portal provider soon, and all forms and other  
resources will transition to the new portal when it is available.

## Steps in the Ph.D. Program



While the above plan outlines a typical path to completion of the PhD within mandatory deadlines, students who plan on graduating in four years and/or seeking external funding for their dissertation will likely need to modify the schedule to ensure that their dissertation proposal is ready in time for many of the funding opportunities that occur during the fall quarter. Students should identify funding opportunities early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the program and plan thoughtfully to ensure timely completion of required components. See below for an alternative timeline incorporating that process.

## Steps in the Ph.D. Program (Alternative Timeline)



## Program Description

Whether as faculty members in top schools of social work, research scientists in universities, or analysts at policy think tanks, our graduates respond to today's most urgent needs. While we are home to one of the nation's oldest and highly ranked social work doctoral programs, nothing about our program is old-fashioned. We center:

Team-based mentorship...Strong relationships with multiple faculty mentors drives our students' success in becoming productive well-rounded scholars.

A Critical Social Justice Lens...We embody a deep commitment to fostering social justice integrating intersectionality, equity-based solutions, and structural understandings of intractable issues.

Community-Based Research and Collaborative Knowledge Creation...Our extensive network of community-based partners works in alliance with us to co-create knowledge, awakening creative solutions.

Strengthening Public Impact...Translating our scholarship into tools that are useful within and outside the academy harnesses our scholarship for lasting social change.

Foundation in Theory...The development of scholars who are solidly ground in theory and require a foundation grounded in the philosophy of science.

Producing Excellent Teachers...We believe that the ability to implement evidence-based teaching and pedagogy are central qualities of top scholars.

Varied Methodologies... Our students learn and practice quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research designs and analytic approaches to produce the most impactful research.

The Ph.D. Program emphasizes:

- knowledge discovery and development in social work science
- mastery of approaches to scholarly inquiry and multiple ways of knowing
- development of teaching skills, including anti-oppressive pedagogical techniques
- dissemination of scholarly work across multiple audiences and settings
- collaboration and community-engaged scholarship
- an intellectual culture that values new ideas and discovery
- using research for social impact

Graduates of the Ph.D. Program are expected to: 1) think conceptually and critically about social work issues; 2) apply theoretical and practical reasoning to social work practices and social policy; and 3) conduct research that contributes to the social work knowledge base. Many are also skilled social work instructors who are dedicated to using anti-oppressive approaches in the classroom and in mentoring relationships, as well as in their scholarship.



Before students arrive—in collaboration with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education—they should begin identifying potential mentors among faculty members. A mentor is a faculty member who may have been identified by the student as a scholar with whom they might like to work and who usually shares the scholarship interests, methodological approaches, cultural experiences, or interpersonal fit with the student. Mentors may be assistantship supervisors, dissertation directors, or other faculty with whom the student works. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education is the official advisor for all first-year students until students identify another member of the faculty to serve in that role, which is typically done in the fall quarter through completion of the initial Student Development Plan.

In the Winter quarter of their first year, students develop their Educational Plan in consultation with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and their academic advisor. This plan includes required core courses in addition to elective courses chosen by students to help acquire a theory emphasis and the knowledge and the skills needed to conduct dissertation and independent research.

The Educational Plan should be approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education; in cases where coursework above the required 75 credits is requested by the student, the Educational Plan and request for additional credits is presented to the Doctoral Program Committee and then the Dean of GSSW for approval.

The Educational Plan is a formal, official document, which is filed with the Office of Graduate Education and used to confirm completion of coursework requirements for graduation. A copy of each student's most current Educational Plan is kept in the GSSW Ph.D. Program Office. The student's advisor must approve any minor changes to the document. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education must approve major changes to the document. In both cases, change documents are kept in the student's record. When the student is advanced to candidacy, the Educational Plan is used as a basis for certifying that the student has completed their coursework. As such, the student should keep their Educational Plan updated as changes occur by filing a new form with the Program Coordinator via the GSSW PhD email account.

University policy requires a minimum of 135 quarter credit hours beyond a baccalaureate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in social work. For an MSW or equivalent (e.g., MSSW, MSSA), 60 quarter hours toward this requirement may be credited for "A" or "B" work completed as part of the master's degree conferred through an accredited school of social work. Transcripts of students with a master's degree in an academic discipline other than social work will be reviewed, and up to 45 credits of master's work and up to 15 credits of post-master's work may be counted toward the Ph.D. degree for "A" or "B" work in courses that are sufficiently related to degree requirements. Students without an MSW or BSW may be required to take SOWK 4020: Integrated SW Practice for Social Justice, SOWK 4132: Power, Privilege and Oppression from a Critical Multicultural Perspective, and/or other MSW courses determined by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education after a review of the student's transcript to intellectually ground them in the discipline; in some cases, tuition for these credits may be the responsibility of the student. Continuous enrollment credits are not calculated toward the degree requirements. Students with more than one Master's degree may additionally petition for additional credits to be transferred to meet the requirements of the PhD, pending approval of the Office of Graduate Education with support from the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.

In addition to the 60 credit hours granted for the MSW degree, a typical program consists of 75 quarter-hour credits, distributed as follows: 49 hours of required course credits and 26 hours of elective course credits. Students are required to take at least one 3-credit theory course along with 6 additional credits of advanced methodology or statistics as part of their 26 elective hours. All courses and independent studies must be consistent with the student's Educational Plan and approved by the student's academic advisor each quarter.

Students transferring from other social work or related Ph.D. programs may transfer up to 15 quarter credit hours of doctoral work, in addition to 60 quarter credit hours from an MSW degree. All transfer students must take 48 or more credit hours at the University of Denver to qualify for graduation. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will individually determine each transfer student's status regarding which doctoral core courses need to be taken at DU.

Candidacy is achieved after completing course work, successfully completing an annual review process at the end of the first year of course work, and successfully completing a comprehensive examination that demonstrates thorough knowledge of social work issues, theory, policy, research, and marginalized populations. All students are required to complete the Comprehensive Examination. The Comprehensive Examination, described later in this document, is a paper on an approved topic followed by an oral examination.

Advancement typically occurs in the summer quarter of the second academic year or fall quarter of the third academic year, depending on the student's program completion trajectory. At that point, the student selects their Dissertation Committee members and Dissertation Director. Time required to complete dissertation requirements varies. Details regarding the dissertation are provided later in this document.

The program is designed to be completed in four years, on average, although some students complete the Ph.D. program within 4 ½ to 5 years of their date of enrollment. Students **must** complete the Ph.D. Program within seven years of the date of first enrollment. Extensions are not granted for other than exceptional circumstances. Such requests (for a one-year program extension beyond the seven-year time period) must be approved by the Office of Graduate Education. See <http://bulletin.du.edu/graduate/academic-and-student-support-services-policies-and-procedures/academic-exceptions-complaints-grievances-and-appeals/exceptions/> for details about the process of making an extension request. In addition, medical leave of absences are available for students who meet such criteria. Details about requesting a medical leave of absence are available at <https://studentaffairs.du.edu/student-outreach-support/types-student-support/medical-leave-reentry>. Time on medical leave does not count toward completion of required milestones. Students who may be considering a medical leave should discuss their timeline and the required milestones with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. Personal leaves are also available under certain circumstances and with approval of the Office of Graduate Education. However, personal leaves do not reset timelines for completion of programmatic milestones or completion of degree. Details about requesting a personal leave of absence are available at <http://bulletin.du.edu/graduate/academic-requirements-policies-and-procedures/student-withdrawal-from-the-university/personal-leave-of-absence/>.

## Ph.D. Program Core Course Requirements

All students must successfully complete the following core doctoral courses in the Ph.D. Program:

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### Year One<sup>\*,\*\*</sup>

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#### Fall Quarter:

- SOWK 5000: Seminar in Professional Social Work Issues (2 credits)
- SOWK 5110: Introduction to Advanced Quantitative Research Method (3 credits)
- SOWK 5120: Introduction to Advanced Qualitative Research Method (2 credits)
- SOWK 5201: Introduction to Statistical Methods in Social Work (5 credits)<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

#### Winter Quarter:

- SOWK 5000: Seminar in Professional Social Work Issues (2 credits)
- SOWK 5121: Qualitative Data Analysis (3 credits)
- SOWK 5202: Correlation and Regression (4 credits)
- SOWK 5990: Critical Approaches to Quantitative Research Methods (3 credits)
- SOWK 5300: Social Science Theory and Philosophy of Science (3 credits)

#### Spring Quarter:

- SOWK 5000: Seminar in Professional Social Work Issues (2 credits)
- SOWK 5990: Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis (3 credits)
- SOWK 5130: Mixed Methods Research in Social Work (3 credits)
- ELECTIVE: (up to 3 credits; Categorical Data Analysis strongly recommended)

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### Year Two

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#### Fall Quarter:

- SOWK 5301: Social Work Theory in Research and Practice (3 credits)
- SOWK 5450: Preparing for the Comprehensive Exam: Knowledge Integration from a Social Justice Perspective (1 credit)
- SOWK 5500: Pedagogy in Social Work Education (3 credits)
- ELECTIVE: (3 – 6 credits; min. of 1 credit hour to maintain full-time status)

#### Winter Quarter:

- SOWK 5450: Preparing for the Comprehensive Exam: Drafting a Proposal (2 credits)
- SOWK 5101: Social Welfare Policy Analysis and Development (3 credits)
- SOWK 5700: Teaching Practicum (3 credits)
- ELECTIVE: (3 – 6 credits)

#### Spring Quarter:

- SOWK 5990: Critical Approaches to Facilitating and Teaching: Anti-Racist, Feminist, and Queer Pedagogies (3 credits)
- ELECTIVE: (6 – 9 credits; min. of 5 credits to maintain full-time status)<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>

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\*Contingent upon faculty available, the scheduling of courses may occasionally vary.

\*\*For students entering the program without an MSW, the sequencing of courses will likely vary depending on an individualized assessment of the students' previous degree(s).

\*\*\*Students may elect to waive SOWK 5201 if they have a graduate level statistics course in which they made an A or B, or Pass (in the case of Pass/Fail courses). The students must apply for the waiver using the Graduate Course Substitution or Waiver Approval Form located at <http://www.du.edu/media/documents/graduates/graduatesubstitutionwaiver.pdf>, and must attach a copy of the syllabus for the graduate level statistics course they completed. A course on research methods does not qualify for the waiver as methods courses frequently do not have in-depth coverage of statistical analysis and inference. The credit hours waived must be replaced with credit hours of advanced statistical training.

\*\*\*\*All required course credits must be completed in the first two academic years. This is required to be eligible for a pre-doctoral fellowship in year 3. Additionally, should a student require course credits or opt to take courses beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the program, tuition costs incurred are not covered by GSSW and will be the responsibility of the student.

## Core Course Descriptions

### **SOWK 5000 Seminar in Professional Social Work Issues**

Examines the dilemmas and challenges confronting the social work profession and social work education. Examines the nature of professional education, the nature of the profession itself and the forces internal and external to the profession that have an impact upon practice and education.

### **SOWK 5101 Social Welfare Policy Analysis and Development**

Applies analytical techniques to development of social welfare policy stressing the ability to formulate a policy hypothesis (i.e., a statement, in testable form, of a basic premise undergirding a policy position) and to reach conclusions based on analysis of empirical evidence related to the policy hypothesis.

### **SOWK 5110 Introduction to Advanced Quantitative Research Methods**

Introduces students to quantitative approaches to conducting social research. The course includes material related to measurement, sampling, research design, data collection, and data analysis. While each of these topics encompasses technical issues to be mastered by doctoral students, the logic and underlying rationale of these research methods is of prime importance in this course. A second component of the course requires students to define and begin to develop a substantive area of intended study and research during their enrollment in the doctoral program. Elements of articulating a substantive research area and steps toward defining key research questions in a topical area are reviewed. Aspects of conducting literature reviews leading to the articulation of a substantive research area are discussed in class sessions.

### **SOWK 5120 Introduction to Advanced Qualitative Research Methods**

This course provides a substantive doctoral-level review of content on qualitative research methods and strategies. It is developed for students from social science disciplines. The content includes the nature of the method, the epistemological implications and assumptions, and appropriate applications. Student learning and evaluation includes the experience of developing a research proposal based on qualitative methodology and conducting data collection for a mini-research project. This class is a prerequisite for SOWK 5121 Qualitative Data Analysis. This course is required for social work doctoral students. Students from other departments may register for the course with permission from the professor.

### **SOWK 5121 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The focus of this course is on data analysis and interpretation, demonstration of the science of the analysis, and presentation of findings in oral and written forms. Students are expected to conduct qualitative analyses on textual data they collected as part of SOWK 5120 or as a result of some other qualitative data collection experience. Over the course of the term students will learn to code and analyze their data, interpret findings, orally present those findings, and write a final paper in which they demonstrate a rigorous engagement with qualitative data analysis and the literature relevant to their topic. This course is for SOWK PhD students only. Cognate students may be permitted on a case by case basis, space permitting. Prerequisite: SOWK 5120

### **SOWK 5130 Mixed Methods Research in Social Work**

This course introduces doctoral students to mixed methods research in social work and the social sciences. Students will explore mixed methods as a third research paradigm that strategically

combines both quantitative and qualitative methods within a single inquiry. The course encourages students to actively reflect on previous qualitative and quantitative research training. Specific topics for the course include: history and language of mixed methods research; relevant paradigms and epistemological debates; mixed methods design and research questions; and analysis and dissemination considerations.

#### **SOWK 5201 Introduction to Statistical Methods in Social Work**

Examines the use and interpretation of statistics in educational and human services research, including descriptive and inferential statistics.

#### **SOWK 5202 Correlation and Regression**

Examines correlational and multiple regression research designs and their application to social work and social science problems. Prerequisite: SOWK 5201 (or waiver).

#### **SOWK 5300 Social Science Theory and Philosophy of Science**

This foundation doctoral level course introduces traditional issues and recent developments in the philosophy of science, and provides an overview of social science theory and theoretical frameworks. It will examine philosophical questions on scientific inquiry and the consequences modern science imposes on our basic understanding of knowledge and nature. The course analyzes and critiques the social-and-behavioral-science foundations that undergird the social work knowledge base and current social work theories.

#### **SOWK 5301 Social Work Theory in Research and Practice**

Examines how theories, conceptual frameworks, perspectives, and models are used specifically within social work research, education, and practice. This course explores how theories are used in research and in social work interventions on individual, family, group, organizational, community, and policy levels. The course analyzes and critiques the social work knowledge base and the current state of social work theories. SOWK 5300 is the pre-requisite for this course.

#### **SOWK 5302 Categorical Data Analysis (4 Credits)**

This course is an intermediate statistics class for doctoral students in the social sciences. The course is designed to provide a general understanding of categorical data analysis. Course content will focus on regression analyses for categorical dependent variables/outcomes. Students are often familiar with linear regression analyses that are used for continuous dependent variables/outcomes, but these data analysis methods are inappropriate when working with binary, ordinal, multi-categorical (i.e., nominal with >2 categories), and count dependent variables/outcomes. This course will cover a range of data analysis methods to examine categorical dependent variables/outcomes, such as logistic, ordinal, multinomial, and poisson/negative binomial regression analyses. For each method, students will learn the background; statistical underpinnings/assumptions; computation of statistics; interpretation and reporting of statistical results. Students also learn computer applications that are used to perform these statistical analyses. Data analysis using computer software (Stata) is required.

#### **SOWK 5405 Advanced Qualitative Analysis (3 Credits)**

Provides an understanding of analysis methods used to draw meaning from qualitative data, methods that must be practical, applicable, and understandable to other observers. Prepares students to use a systematic, scientific process of analysis that captures the meaning of data while avoiding research self-delusion and unreliable or invalid conclusions. Topics include data collection, data

reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Methods include application of computer software. Prerequisite: SOWK 5402. Required.

**SOWK 5450 Preparing for the Comprehensive Exam: Integration from a Social Justice Perspective**

Divided into two quarters (1 credit in fall of year 2; 2 credits in winter of year 2), the focus of this course is to help you frame, organize, develop, and complete a proposal for your comprehensive exam, with a particular emphasis on building your skills in integration, synthesis, and critical thinking related to the social justice implications of your work. Students will receive support and feedback about how to integrate theory, policy and empirical research when stating the aims and implications of their proposal. Additionally, students will learn to apply a critical social work perspective to analyze the limitations of existing understandings of their substantive areas of interest. Students will learn to acknowledge complexity and bias of vantage and values in social work scholarship, identify the influence of context and question assumptions about dominant policy, research, and theoretical frameworks, and demonstrate a general understanding of the ways societal privilege and prejudice set the frame for analysis and intervention with the problem. Advisors and mentors participate in class presentations and critiques as a part of preparing the student for the comprehensive exam proposal meeting.

**SOWK 5500 Pedagogy in Social Work Education**

Examines philosophies, theories, and pedagogical models that are utilized in social work education. It explores how various perspectives shape the approaches and techniques used and how these, in turn, impact classroom effectiveness and issues of classroom management. The course incorporates concepts and develops skills based on evidence-based teaching.

**SOWK 5600 Critical Approaches to Facilitating and Teaching: Anti-Racist, Feminist, and Queer Pedagogies (3 Credits)**

This course introduces students to anti-racist, feminist, queer, anti-oppressive and other critical perspectives on facilitation and pedagogy. The course is organized in four sections: theoretical frameworks; the role of identities in facilitation, training, and teaching; facilitation and course design and strategies; and supporting social action. Prerequisite: [SOWK 5500](#).

**SOWK 5700 Teaching Practicum**

Provides an opportunity to work with a faculty mentor on issues associated with course design, classroom instruction, and student evaluation. Students may register for two sections of 5700 during their program, but a minimum of one section is required.

**SOWK 5990 Special Topics (1-5 Credits)**

This special topics course provides students with the opportunity to learn content appropriate to graduate social work education that is not currently incorporated into the standard PhD curriculum. Given the ever-changing nature of social work practice, theory, and research, topics of importance emerge each year which have particular relevance for a period of time or may be new emergent topics that will have relevance for the future of the discipline of social work. As such, this course provides a mechanism through which courses may be offered on a one-time basis. Topics may be related to advanced social work theory, pedagogy, or research. Topics vary from term to term and may be initiated by program administrators, faculty, or by student interest.

### **SOWK 6991 Independent Study**

Students undertake special study in a defined area of interest with faculty consultation. By arrangement. *8 qtr. hrs. maximum.*

## **Elective Courses**

### Electives to Support Student Educational Plans

In addition to the core courses, students must complete 26 elective hours in theory, policy, research methodology/analysis, and in a substantive area of study. Students work with their advisor and other faculty members to develop an Educational Plan that includes 26 elective hours.

Students are required to take one three-credit theory course and six credits of advanced methodology and statistics as part of the 26 elective hours. The remaining elective hours can include courses in advanced research methodology/analysis, advanced theory and substantive area elective courses. Eight hours of independent study are allowed as part of a student's elective plan of study. Up to 8 credit hours of relevant Ph.D. level work completed at other universities after enrollment at GSSW can be transferred and counted toward the total 26 elective hours.

Electives may be chosen from other University of Denver departments and/or other universities with approval of the advisor and Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. All courses taken outside GSSW must be designated as doctoral level by the departments offering them. Selected Master's level courses that complement the student's course of study may be taken with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education's approval, generally with a stipulation that additional expectations for student performance are negotiated with the course instructor prior to the start of the course. Students taking Master's-level courses for doctoral credit within GSSW are expected to perform at a level beyond that expected of Master's students, usually with additional written products or course contributions in the form of guest lectures or other leadership activities. Courses in University College may be taken for credit but require approval by the Associate Dean of Doctoral Education given they may incur additional tuition costs.

### Independent Study Electives

Independent Study electives are arranged through a joint agreement between a faculty member and one or more students. All proposals must be approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. The plan may be initiated by faculty or students to achieve a particular content objective. A student may acquire up to 8 hours of credit in Independent Study during the program. Units of Independent Study that substitute for a required elective course (i.e., required theory electives, required statistics/methods course electives) will count for that course and are not counted toward the 8 hours limitation. Credit hours of more than 8 must have special permission from the student's advisor and Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.

An Independent Study elective should:

- have a purposeful relationship to the student's Educational Plan;
- be taken either as an enrichment for the student's learning or because of a deficiency in a particular content area in the curriculum;



- not be considered if it is a duplication of course content offered during the year in the regularly scheduled classes (please see Directed Study option below);
- be taught by a qualified, full-time faculty member; and,
- be guided by a written contractual agreement (Independent Study Form) between the faculty member and student.

A copy of the Independent Study Form is available from the Ph.D. Office or the GSSW Registrar. This form must be approved by the student's advisor and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and submitted to the GSSW Registrar **prior to the last day of the quarter before it will be registered.**

### Directed Study

Under special circumstances only, a student may be allowed to register for a DU course as a **directed study** in the event that the course is not offered during the quarter in which it must be taken. Students pursuing a course as directed study must follow the syllabus for the catalog course to the extent that the individualized study format permits. For more information about directed studies, please contact the GSSW Registrar. Directed studies require the same approvals as independent study and may be denied at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. Courses taken as directed study will not be counted towards the 8-credit hour limitation on independent study as they are counted as required coursework.

### Electives from Outside the University of Denver

Students may take up to 8-quarter hour (Ph.D. level) graduate credits at institutions other than the University of Denver. The procedures for taking courses in other institutions are as follows:

- The student shall make a written request to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education describing the course and including detailed official information as to the course content (e.g., bulletin descriptions or course syllabus). The relevance of the course to the student's program of study should be demonstrated in the written request. The student's advisor shall approve this/these course(s) and so note by signing the student's Educational Plan (a copy of this plan should be attached to the request).
- A minimum grade of **B** must be earned in order for the outside course to be transferred and credited to the DU degree. An official transcript record shall be sent, at the student's request, to the GSSW Registrar.
- Regulations applying to independent study within DU shall also apply with respect to independent study at institutions other than DU.
- GSSW and DU are not responsible for tuition costs related to courses taken outside DU.

Exceptions to this policy and/or procedures and regulations must be requested in writing to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. A rationale statement, submitted as a Word document or PDF via email and signed by the student and their advisor, should set forth the basis for the request of exception and should be attached to the student's request.

## Academic Advising

The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education teaching the first-year seminar advises all first-year students in collaboration with the student's primary advisor. The Educational Plan is to be developed with the student's advisor and submitted to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education for review and approval, and then will be reviewed and approved by the Associate Dean by the middle of the student's third quarter of course work.

Prior to the end of the first year in the program, students should consult with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education regarding their preferences for a permanent advisor. The permanent advisor can be chosen from among GSSW tenure-line faculty members. Exceptions to this may be granted following the procedure outlined by the Office of Graduate Education. The choice of the advisor must be approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and should be noted on the Student Development Plan.

Often, this faculty member will remain as the advisor through the comprehensive examination and dissertation process. However, as described below, the advisor can be changed at the request of either the student or the faculty member.

1. Request for change initiated by student. The student should discuss the desire to change advisors with their assigned advisor. The student should provide the advisor with a memo stating the student's intent to change advisors. The student shall then locate a faculty member to succeed the previous person, discuss the faculty's willingness to assume the role of advisor and obtain from that person a memo to that effect. The student then shall forward the memo(s) and a statement requesting the change to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education who will send an official notice of the change to all involved parties and the GSSW Registrar.
2. Request for change initiated by faculty member. The faculty member wishing to cease being a student's advisor should discuss this change with the student and forward a memo to that effect to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education shall consult with the student to identify possible replacements. The student may then approach other faculty to discuss their willingness to take up the responsibility. When a successor has been found, that faculty member will forward a memo to that effect to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, who will follow through with an official notice of the change to all involved parties and the GSSW Registrar.
3. Appeals. The GSSW Office of the Dean is the final point of appeal.

## Student and Academic Performance

The Ph.D. Program of the Graduate School of Social Work has established the following grading policies.

## General

The policies of the University of Denver Graduate Council, under which the GSSW operates, provide that advanced degrees are not awarded automatically upon the completion of any required number of courses or hours of credit. Student status is subject to continued review, and if the student makes unsatisfactory progress, the student may be terminated from the program.

The doctorate is the highest degree offered by the University. It is conferred upon students who successfully complete those requirements that the faculty have prescribed. Total achievement within the framework of accepted standards and course requirements constitutes the major consideration in awarding the doctorate.

## Grading

The University of Denver uses a letter grading system based on value points associated with each letter. The following sets forth the letter grades and their value points. Certain courses such as teaching practicums are graded as Pass/Fail. Unless designated as such, all other courses use the letter grading system.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Points</u>
A	94-100	4.0
A-	91- 93	3.7
B+	88- 90	3.3
B	84- 87	3.0
B-	81- 83	2.7
C+	78- 80	2.3
C	74- 77	2.0
C-	71- 73	1.7
F	70 or below	0
I	Incomplete; no value until removed	

The "I" grade cannot be used to extend the opportunity for improving performance or raising the grade achieved within the usual quarter timelines. An Incomplete is to be used only under exceptional circumstances, such as illness, family emergency, etc. The "I" must have a grade value within one year or it will automatically become an "F". Please see <http://www.du.edu/registrar/records/incompletegrade.html> for specific policies and procedures related to incomplete grades.

## Required Grade Levels

Students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 at all times.<sup>1</sup> GPAs will be computed regardless of outstanding Incompletes. All policies pertaining to the

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<sup>1</sup>Maintenance of a 3.0 grade point average, by itself, does not constitute sufficient evidence of acceptable academic performance in the Ph.D. Program. Other bases for termination from the Ph.D. Program due to academic difficulties include receiving grades of C (2.0) or below for nine or more hours of courses taken for Ph.D. Program credit (whether inside or outside the Graduate School of Social Work) and receiving a grade of less than C (2.0) in any core course at any time. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will notify the student in the event of any of these conditions.

GPA will be implemented regardless of any outstanding Incompletes. If at the end of any quarter a student's cumulative GPA is less than a 3.0, the student will have one quarter to raise the cumulative GPA above 3.0. **If the student's cumulative GPA is less than 3.0 for two consecutive quarters, the student will be terminated from the Program.** In addition, students receiving grades of C+ or lower in a required course are required to re-take the course. When a student retakes a course, the credit hours earned in the initial course (with the C+ or lower grade) do not count toward credit hours required for the degree. Students may not retake a course through the Directed Study method unless no other option exists to complete the course during their time in the program and only at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.

The GSSW Registrar will notify students in writing at the end of any quarter in which their cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. The notification, with a copy to the student's advisor, will:

1. note the student's cumulative GPA;
2. indicate that if the student's cumulative GPA is not above 3.0 at the end of the next academic quarter in which the student is enrolled that the student will be terminated from the Program; and
3. require the student to contact their advisor immediately to develop a plan designed to remedy the academic deficits.

A student whose cumulative GPA is less than 3.0 for two consecutive terms will be notified in writing by the GSSW Registrar and Associate Dean for Doctoral Education of their termination from the program. The notification, with a copy to the student's advisor, will state:

1. the basis for the termination from the program;
2. the fact that the student will not be allowed to enroll in additional courses at the University of Denver; and,
3. the fact that the student has a right to appeal the termination to the Dean and that this appeal must be made in writing within two weeks of the date the student was notified of the termination.

### Rights of Appeal for Academic Grades

Grade appeals must be based on problems of process and not on differences in judgment or opinion concerning academic performance. The burden of proof rests on the student to demonstrate that one or more of the following occurred:

- The grading decision was made on some basis other than academic performance and other than as a penalty for academic misconduct.
- The grading decision was based upon standards unreasonably different from those which were applied to other students in the same course and section.
- The grading decision was based on an unreasonable departure from previously articulated standards.

The grade appeal process is outlined on this webpage:

<http://www.du.edu/registrar/records/gradeappeal.html>

### Evaluation of Progress for First Year Students and Advancement to Preliminary Candidacy

The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will evaluate student progress during the third quarter of the first year for full-time students. The evaluation will involve a review of the student's Educational Plan, a discussion of the student's performance in courses taken during the first year, and discussion of the student's performance in research activities, as assessed via feedback on the Student Development Plan and, when needed, consultation with the student's mentors.

To be considered as having made satisfactory academic progress, a student must have completed all first-year courses and present a minimum of 3.0 grade point average. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, after approving the plan, will facilitate the Ph.D. Program Committee approval process by presenting the Educational Plan and leading the discussion of the student's performance. Based on satisfactory progress in all course work, approval of the Educational Plan by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, positive assessments by the student's mentor(s), and a majority vote of the Ph.D. Program Committee, the student will be advanced to the status of preliminary candidacy.

In addition to satisfactory academic progress, evaluation of the student's performance in the program should also address (a) issues of adherence and commitment to the program's guiding values, (b) feedback on student performance in assistantships, teaching responsibilities, and research projects from student's mentors and supervisors, and (c) student's suitability for doctoral education and future potential as an emerging scholar with all faculty involved in the student's educational endeavor. This may include attention to issues of critical thinking, professionalism, collegiality, work behaviors, cultural responsiveness, ethics, and other factors important in the development of a career as a social work scholar.

If the committee judges that a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, has concerns about the student's performance, or judges that the student does not have an adequate Educational Plan, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will address the appropriate issues with the student. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education is empowered to develop and approve a revised plan to remedy the situation and move the student to preliminary candidacy on a timeline that includes time for remedial action and assessment of progress toward outlined goals.

#### Evaluation of Continuing Students

The academic performance of continuing students will be reviewed annually by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, using the annual review process outlined above. In addition, an advisor or any professor can bring concerns about a student to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education at any time throughout the academic year. Concerns may be raised about academic performance, collegiality, ethics, or any other professional standards of the social work field and/or the academy. When deemed urgent, these concerns will be addressed through a meeting of the student, their advisor, professor(s) raising the concern, and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education; alternatively, the concerns will be incorporated into the annual review process. A written plan to address the concern(s) must be submitted and approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and will be filed in the student's academic record. The written plan should be specific about what is required and include a timeline for completion of the requirements. If the written plan (and its timeline) is not completed as outlined, the student may be terminated from the program.

#### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, commonly known as plagiarism, occurs when someone takes credit for work produced by another. Academic dishonesty and the appearance of dishonesty are avoided if proper bibliographic citations are included whenever the work of another is used. Proper bibliographic citations are described in the *APA Publication Manual* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). Students are expected to purchase the APA Manual for use during their doctoral studies. The APA manual is available in the DU Bookstore or in most major bookstores, and through the University library's online resources. Faculty may use plagiarism and/or AI detection software to scan assignments, manuscripts, etc. completed by doctoral students. Additionally, doctoral students may opt to use plagiarism software available through the university's Writing Center to pre-check any of their work prior to submitting it.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

1. Representing any work of another person, including materials from the professional literature, as one's own product and achievement.
2. Quoting from another work without indicating the fact by quotation marks or indentation and acknowledging the source.
3. Paraphrasing without proper acknowledgment of the source.
4. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid in any assignment or examination.
5. Submitting a written assignment prepared for one class as original work for any other class without prior knowledge and permission of the instructor.
6. Representing interaction of clients in written case materials that did not in fact happen or presenting untrue statements in such material.
7. Fabrication of data sets or the editing or otherwise changing of existing data sets.
8. Violation of Generative Artificial Intelligence Usage Guidelines, found in Appendix D of this handbook.

Sanctions, Corrective Actions, and Termination due to Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty may occur in the context of a core or elective course, in completion of duties in the student's graduate assistantship or other funded support or non-funded opportunities (pre-doctoral assistantships, external dissertation grants, faculty grants, collaborative unfunded projects with faculty, etc.), in research or other activities undertaken collaboratively with other student colleagues, or in sole authored/administered projects. In cases involving coursework, a course instructor has the right to levy appropriate sanctions and/or require specific corrective actions that must be followed by the student. Instructors should inform the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and/or the Ph.D. Program Committee that academic dishonesty has occurred and request that the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and/or Committee complete a review of the alleged dishonesty. Academic dishonesty may also occur in assignments or work completed outside formal classroom settings (e.g., comprehensive exams, dissertations, independent studies). Faculty discovering academic dishonesty that occurs outside the classroom will refer such cases to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and/or Ph.D. Program Committee for review. Similarly,

accusations of academic dishonesty emerging out of collaborative work with other students should be reported to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and/or PhD Program Committee.

Upon receipt of a case involving academic dishonesty, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and/or the PhD Program Committee will review the incident and recommend sanctions and/or corrective actions. A student who has violated principles of academic dishonesty may be terminated from the program. A termination decision for reasons of academic dishonesty is made by a majority vote of the Ph.D. Program Committee membership. Notification, with a copy to the student's advisor, will state:

1. the nature of the academic dishonesty and basis for the termination from the Program;
2. the fact that the student will not be allowed to enroll in additional courses at the University of Denver; and
3. the fact that the student has a right to appeal the termination to the Dean and that this appeal must be made in writing within two weeks of the date the student was notified of the termination.

Depending on the severity of the academic misconduct, the case may additionally be referred to the University of Denver's Office of Student Conduct for review.

#### Rights of Appeal for Academic Dishonesty

Appeals are made to the Dean, who will determine a cause for appeal and appoint an ad hoc faculty appeal committee of three members to review the case and make recommendations. The Dean will designate the chair of the committee. This committee shall hear the appeal within three weeks of the time the appeal is made and will furnish a decision in writing to the student and the Dean within one week of its hearing. The chair of the appeal committee shall act as recorder. If the Dean does not determine just cause for appeal, the student will be terminated from the program.

If the student believes that the process of appeal and resolution have not been satisfactory, the student may appeal in writing to the Provost. The Provost may refer appeals to appropriate bodies or personnel for their recommendation on specific issues. In some cases, the Provost may refer an appeal to the Graduate Council for its recommendation. The Provost is the final authority in the appeal process; final action by the Provost should, when possible, take place within four weeks after the receipt of appropriate recommendations.

GSSW Ph.D. Program appeal procedures are based on processes outlined in the University of Denver *Graduate Policy Manual*. Additional details regarding the appeal process outside of GSSW are described in this manual. The manual is available on-line at <http://bulletin.du.edu/graduate/academic-requirements-policies-and-procedures/>

## **Educational Policies**

### Academic Integrity and Ethical Conduct

Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, the criteria for student evaluation and review found in the *Graduate School of Social Work Academic Bulletin & Student/Faculty Handbook*, and the University rules concerning academic dishonesty, also found in the *Graduate School of Social Work Academic Bulletin & Student/Faculty Handbook*. Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior at all times, showing respect to peers, instructors, and diverse points of view.

The University defines “academic dishonesty” as:

1. Plagiarism – representation of another's work or ideas as one's own.
2. Cheating – actual or attempted use of resources not authorized by the instructor for academic submission.
3. Fabrication – falsification or creation of data, research, or resources to support academic submission.
4. Aid of academic dishonesty – intentionally facilitating plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication by others.

All are grounds for disciplinary action, including course failure and dismissal from the University. Course assignments and program milestones will be submitted and screened for plagiarism through DU-acquired software.

### Academic Writing

GSSW follows the citation and writing style described in *APA Publication Manual*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition for all written submissions and assignments, unless otherwise specified by the instructor.

### Class Attendance Policy

Attendance is a matter of professional behavior. Students are expected to attend *all meetings of a class* for which they are registered. Instructors are expected to establish attendance requirements for their classes and may, at their discretion, use class attendance as one factor in assigning a grade for a class. Participation in official University activities, personal emergencies, and major religious observances (see below) are all considered valid reasons for absence. Students who miss more than 2 class sessions may not be allowed to pass that course. *It is the responsibility of the student to check with the instructor regarding any absence from class and to make arrangements regarding the work missed.* The responsibility for completing all work in the course rests with the student.

Please review your course syllabus for attendance expectations specific to each course and pay attention to timely messages about course delivery modalities, especially in the context of the ongoing COVID19 pandemic or other relevant public health emergencies.

### Name and Pronoun Use in the Classroom

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. The instructor will gladly honor your request to address you by a different name or gender pronoun. Please advise your instructor of this preference early in the quarter so that they may make appropriate changes to language use in the classroom.

### Religious Accommodation Policy



## Rationale:

The University of Denver community is enriched by individuals of many faiths that have various religious observances, practices, and beliefs. In affirming this diversity, it is university policy and practice to provide religious accommodations for students and employees unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship.

Many of these religious observances are related to holy days, or days of observance. Faculty, staff, student organizations and other programming groups are strongly urged to be mindful of major holy days in their scheduling. A list of the most-frequently observed religious holidays can be found at: <https://www.du.edu/culturalcenter/spiritual-life/events-activities/index.html>. Please note that this list is meant to be inclusive, and that religious holidays have no official status at DU.

## Religious Accommodation Policy:

University policy grants students excused absences from class or other organized activities for observance of religious holy days unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship. Faculty are asked to be responsive to requests when students contact them IN ADVANCE to request such an excused absence. Students are responsible for completing assignments given during their absence but should be given an opportunity to make up work missed because of religious observance.

Once a student has registered for a class, the student is expected to examine the course syllabus for potential conflicts with holy days and to notify the instructor by the end of the first week of classes of any conflicts that may require an absence (including any required additional preparation/travel time). The student is also expected to remind the faculty member in advance of the missed class, and to make arrangements in advance (with the faculty member) to make up any missed work or in-class material within a reasonable amount of time.

Examples of reasonable accommodations for student absences might include: rescheduling of an exam or giving a make-up exam for the student in question; altering the time of a student's presentation; allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work or arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment due dates; releasing a graduate assistant from teaching or research responsibilities, etc. The student must be given the opportunity to do appropriate make-up work that is equivalent and intrinsically no more difficult than the original exam or assignment. Faculty should keep in mind that religion is a deeply personal and private matter and should make every attempt to respect the privacy of the student when making accommodations (for example, it is not appropriate to announce to the class that a student is doing a presentation or making up an exam at a later date because of their religious observance).

If a student and course instructor cannot agree on an accommodation, the student may bring the matter to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education for a decision. Additional resources in resolving disagreements over accommodations include the University Chaplain, the Center for Multicultural Excellence, and the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity. If there is still no agreement, the student may bring the matter to the school or college dean's office, where a final decision will be made. Students who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of religion by the denial of a requested religious accommodation may contact the Office of Diversity

and Equal Opportunity to learn about filing a discrimination complaint.

### Students with Disabilities

Students who have a disability protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and want to request accommodations must make an appointment with the Disability Services Program (DSP) [303-871-2278], located in the Morgridge College of Education (Ruffatto Hall, 1999 E. Evans Ave.) on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. The *Handbook for Students with Disabilities* is available online at <https://www.du.edu/studentlife/disability-services/index.html> and is also available from the Director of Career and Student Development for GSSW students. The *Handbook* provides guidance on DU policy and procedures concerning students with disabilities.

After DSP has determined and notified a student of the accommodation(s) to be afforded, the student must immediately contact his or her instructors concerning how the accommodation(s) will be implemented, because accommodations cannot be offered retroactively.

### Technology Use in the Classroom

GSSW supports the use of technology for learning and advancing knowledge while at the same time respecting the classroom environment. In order to create and maintain an optimal learning environment, we ask that students use technology appropriately as directed by the instructor of the course. Work on laptops, cell phones, and other devices that is outside class assignments can disrupt fellow students and negatively hinder the shared learning of all participants.

GSSW courses may utilize audio and video recording, and you will be informed of the days and times when your voice and image may be recorded. By participating in recorded sessions, you consent to allow the University of Denver to reuse the recordings for educational purposes.

When using non-DU hosted services for school related work, DU cannot guarantee privacy and you are bound to the terms and agreements of any such service.

## **Programmatic Milestones**

The Graduate School of Social Work expects students in the Ph.D. Program to make consistent progress toward completion of their degree. Programmatic milestone deadlines have been established and eligibility for certain types of financial support is tied to timely completion of programmatic milestones. Should students find themselves in need of medical leave, they should consult with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education who will work with the PhD Program Committee to determine changes in milestone deadlines and timing of funding. In general, non-medical personal leave will not alter timelines for completion of programmatic milestones.

### Year One Programmatic Milestones

At the end of the first year (August 15<sup>th</sup>) of the Ph.D. Program, students are expected to have:

- a) successfully completed approximately one-half of the course credits required for completion of their degree;

- b) received feedback from faculty supervisor(s) of satisfactory work through Graduate Research Assistantship(s) (if awarded) as indicated on Student Development Plan; and,
- c) developed and received approval for their Educational Plan;
- d) successfully completed the annual review process; and,
- e) selected a permanent academic advisor.

These milestones need to be completed in order to move into preliminary candidacy and receive 2<sup>nd</sup> year funding. If any of the milestones are not completed by the end of the first year of the Ph.D. program, a written plan (including timeline) for addressing the deficiency must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education for approval to continue in the program. The remediation plan will be filed in the student's educational file. GSSW Assistantships will not be awarded to students who have not completed their year one programmatic milestones by the end of the first academic year.

### Year Two Programmatic Milestones

At the end of the second year (August 15<sup>th</sup>) of the Ph.D. Program, students are expected to have:

- a) successfully completed all course credits required for completion of their degree (including completion of any incompletes);\*
- b) received feedback from faculty supervisor of satisfactory work as a Graduate Research Assistant as indicated on Student Development Plan;
- c) updated and finalized their Educational Plan;
- d) successfully completed and received approval on their comprehensive exam proposal; and,
- e) successfully completed the annual review process.

If any of the milestones are not completed by the end of the second year of the Ph.D. program (August 15 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year), a written plan (including timeline) for addressing the deficiency must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education for approval. GSSW Pre-Dissertation Assistantships will not be awarded to students who have not completed their year two programmatic milestones by the end of the second academic year (see section on GSSW Pre-Dissertation Assistantships below).

\*All required course credits – 75 credits for those entering the program with an MSW and up to 90 credits for those entering the program with a Master's degrees in a related field – must be completed in the first two academic years. This is required to be eligible for a pre-dissertation assistantship in year 3. Additionally, should a student require course credits or opt to take courses beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the program, tuition costs incurred are not covered by GSSW and will be the responsibility of the student.

### Year Three Programmatic Milestones

At the end of the third year (August 15<sup>th</sup>) of the Ph.D. Program, students are expected to have:

- a) successfully passed their comprehensive exam\*;
- b) been moved to final candidacy;
- c) received feedback from faculty supervisor of satisfactory work as a Graduate Research Assistant as indicated on Student Development Plan;
- d) successfully completed the annual review process; and,
- e) completed and received approval for their dissertation proposal.

GSSW Dissertation Assistantships will not be awarded to students who have not completed their year three programmatic milestones by the end of the third academic year (see section on GSSW Dissertation Assistantships below).

\*All students are expected to have successfully passed their comprehensive exam by the end of their fourth year in the program. Failure to have done so will result in termination from the program.

## **Financial Support Parameters & Eligibility**

### Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA)

GRAs are generally made available to qualified first and second year students who are still in the process of completing their coursework. In special circumstances, GAs may also be awarded to students beyond their first two years of the program when they are available. They typically include an annual living stipend (in exchange for up to 20 hours of work per week supervised by a GSSW faculty member), a waiver of health insurance fees (for students enrolled in at least 8 credit hours), and a full tuition scholarship (for students in the first two years of the program). Health insurance will not be reimbursed once students drop below 8 credit hours of enrollment, at which point students will need to pay for student health insurance or public insurance independently.

Parameters for GA work and eligibility are under the jurisdiction of the Office of Graduate Education and are outlined in the Graduate Policies & Procedures Manual of that office.

GA work assignments and faculty supervisors are assigned based on:

- a) Faculty requests for particular students;
- b) Faculty requests for assistance with tasks that enhance the educational experience of doctoral students;
- c) Student requests for particular faculty supervisors;
- d) Substantive and/or methodological match; and/or,
- e) Student career goals.

The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education makes GA faculty supervisor assignments on an annual basis prior to the beginning of the academic year. While every effort will be made to accommodate faculty and student requests, there is no guarantee and assumptions should not be made about assignments until officially notified by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. Should any problems arise in the GA work assignments, the student and/or faculty supervisor should notify the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education promptly so the situation can be addressed.

GA responsibilities may include teaching, research, or administrative responsibilities. However, as the primary purpose of the Ph.D. program is to produce highly qualified emerging scholars for the social work field, responsibilities should primarily be focused on research-related activities. In general, no more than 10-15% (2-3 hours per week) of the students' time should be focused on teaching and administrative responsibilities. Faculty request for teaching support should primarily rely on the teaching practicum required of all second-year doctoral students.

### GSSW Pre-Dissertation Assistantships

GSSW Pre-Dissertation Assistantships are offered to all qualified third year students who have met their second-year milestones (see section on Year Two Programmatic Milestones above). Students who have not completed all of their Year Two Programmatic Milestones by the end of their second academic year are not eligible for GSSW Pre-Dissertation Assistantship funding, unless arrangements for remediation have been confirmed with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education through the process outlined above. Attainment of Year Two Programmatic Milestones after the second academic year has ended does not meet the requirement for eligibility and, as such, funding for only part of the third-year experience is not permitted.

Pre-dissertation Assistantships are set at the same funding level as GA stipends, including coverage of student health insurance. GSSW provides up to (6) Assistantships each year.

For AY 2022-2023, GSSW will offer:

<b>Type of Assistantship</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Funding Level</b>
GSSW Dean's Pre-Dissertation Assistantship	(2)	GA Stipend Level
Jeffrey M. Jenson Pre-Dissertation Assistantship	(1)	GA Stipend Level
Walter F. LaMendola Pre-Dissertation Assistantship	(1)	GA Stipend Level
Susan S. Manning Pre-Dissertation Assistantship	(1)	GA Stipend Level
James R. Moran Pre-Dissertation Assistantship	(1)	GA Stipend Level

Named assistantships are created to honor retired GSSW faculty who have – during their tenure as faculty members – been instrumental in supporting the doctoral program. Named assistantships are awarded to outstanding doctoral students whose area of research mirrors the areas of interest of the faculty member being honored. In years in which an outstanding doctoral student whose area fits with the focus of the named assistantship does not exist, the assistantships will revert to being a GSSW Dean's Pre-Dissertation Assistantship.

The Jeffrey M. Jenson Pre-Dissertation Assistantship recognizes a doctoral student with a focus on the promotion of behavioral health, positive youth development, preventive interventions, and/or advanced quantitative approaches. The Walter F. LaMendola Pre-Dissertation Assistantship recognizes a doctoral student who has a focus on theory development and/or technology issues. The Susan S. Manning Pre-Dissertation Assistantship recognizes a doctoral student with a focus on qualitative methodologies, leadership development, and/or gender-related issues. The James R. Moran Pre-Dissertation Assistantship recognizes a doctoral student who has a focus on the intersection of inequality, poverty, and discrimination.

PhD students who accept the GSSW Pre-Dissertation Assistantship can teach up to 3 courses total (over the fall, winter, spring quarters) during their third year and be paid at the adjunct rate above and beyond their assistantship stipend. Teaching requires a great deal of time and effort. It is recommended that students teach no more than 2 courses over the academic year to allow sufficient time to conduct research and work toward their program milestones (comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal), but up to 3 courses will be allowed. Students are encouraged to discuss workload with their assistantship supervisor(s) and other mentors so they can be intentional and thoughtful about making room for teaching while considering other responsibilities and goals.

No student is required to accept a Pre-Dissertation Assistantship for third year funding and may pursue other financial arrangements if they are more congruent with the student's needs and career goals. Students who decline Pre-Dissertation Assistantship funding may teach as adjunct instructors in the GSSW program, up to three courses per year at regular adjunct pay ONLY if they have attained the Year Two Programmatic Milestones. Third year students who have not attained the Year Two Programmatic Milestones are not eligible to teach for GSSW until such time as those goals have been achieved. Students on personal or medical leave have their student status on hold and, thus, their annual teaching load should be negotiated with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and number of courses per quarter is not restricted by the PhD program.

### *Teaching*

Students interested in teaching during the PhD program should contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs who determines if the student is qualified to teach for the program, the number of courses the student can teach, and what courses are available to teach. Students will likely end up teaching courses in the foundation year, rather than a concentration year course, dependent upon course availability. The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs is the official supervisor for teaching responsibilities and may require meeting once per quarter to review teacher/course evaluations, and additional meetings to support the student's development as a teacher (e.g., new teacher orientation, pedagogy discussions, etc.). Teaching evaluations should be at a level deemed acceptable by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education for continued teaching in the program.

### *Work in Addition to Pre-Dissertation Assistantship Funding*

Students may seek employment, including grant- or center-funded employment at GSSW or elsewhere on the DU campus, in addition to third year Pre-Dissertation Assistantship funding. *However, we strongly discourage such activity as it may impede the student's completion of their program or the student's ability to attain the Year Three Programmatic Milestones which must be attained in order to be eligible for (a) fourth year funding via the GSSW Dissertation Assistantship mechanism and/or (b) adjunct teaching for GSSW.*

### GSSW Dissertation Assistantship

Contingent upon funding availability, GSSW Dissertation Assistantships are offered to qualified fourth year students who have met their third-year milestones (see section on Year Three Programmatic Milestones above). Students who have not completed all of their Year Three Programmatic Milestones by the end of their third academic year are not eligible for GSSW Dissertation Assistantship funding, unless arrangements for remediation have been arranged with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education through the process outlined above. GSSW Dissertation Assistantships are funded by the Graduate School of Social Work and are typically set at the same stipend level as GA stipends, and include coverage of student health insurance.

### *Logistics of Dissertation Assistantship Funding*

No student is required to accept a Dissertation Assistantship for fourth year funding and may pursue other financial arrangements if they are more congruent with the student's needs and career goals. Students who decline Dissertation Assistantship funding may teach as adjunct instructors in the GSSW program, up to five courses per year at regular adjunct pay ONLY if they have attained the Year Three Programmatic Milestones. Fourth year students who have not attained the Year Three Programmatic Milestones are not eligible to teach for GSSW until such time as those goals have been achieved.

Because the intent of the Dissertation Assistantship funding is to support outstanding graduate students in the completion of their dissertations, 10 of the required 20 hours per week are automatically allocated to completion of the doctoral dissertation. This work falls under the supervision of the student's dissertation director. The remaining 10 hours may additionally be under the supervision of the student's dissertation director or may be supervised by another faculty member but should focus on either (a) the production and dissemination of non-dissertation research or (b) the conversion of dissertation chapters into manuscripts for submission to publication outlets.

#### *Work in Addition to Dissertation Assistantship Funding*

Students may seek employment, including grant or center-funded employment at GSSW or elsewhere on the DU campus, in addition to fourth year Dissertation Assistantship funding. *However, we strongly discourage such activity as it may impede the student's completion of their program or the student's ability to complete their doctoral work in a timely fashion.* Fourth year students receiving Dissertation Assistantship funding may teach up to three courses as an adjunct instructor, in addition to receiving Dissertation Assistantship funding. That is, any adjunct teaching for Dissertation Assistants is above and beyond the funding provided by the Dissertation Assistantship funding mechanism and is therefore paid at the normal adjunct rate.

#### *Eligibility for Adjunct Teaching Positions*

Because not all fourth-year students may receive a Dissertation Assistantship (dependent on funds available), many students elect to teach as an adjunct instructor at GSSW while completing their doctoral program. From the fourth year and beyond, doctoral students may teach up to (5) courses per year depending on their teaching skill level (as assessed by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs), and courses available in the MSW program to be taught. No student is required to teach as an adjunct instructor and there is no guarantee that students will be hired to teach as an adjunct, even if they desire to do so. That decision is the sole purview of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

For students who do not receive fourth year Dissertation Assistantships, up to five courses may be taught in the academic year and those courses are paid at the normal adjunct rate. To be eligible to teach as an adjunct in the MSW program, all doctoral students who are in their fourth year or beyond must have attained their Year Three Programmatic Milestones (see section above on Year Three Programmatic Milestones). Fourth (and beyond) year students who have not attained the Year Three Programmatic Milestones are not eligible to teach for GSSW until such time as those goals have been achieved.

#### External Doctoral Fellowships

GSSW doctoral students are encouraged to apply for external fellowships to support their doctoral dissertation and other research work. Application for and receipt of external fellowships and grants are typically viewed quite positively when the student enters the job market. Listed in Appendix B are some potential mechanisms for obtaining additional support for dissertation and other research work. Anytime external funding is being sought, the student should contact the GSSW Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development and follow the procedures for submission of proposals outlined by them. Students planning on seeking external funding (particularly for dissertation work) should thoroughly review the timelines required by external funding sources as many deadlines will necessitate completion of programmatic milestones (particularly the approval of the dissertation proposal) in a manner that is faster than the timeline for completion of the doctorate in four years.

### Data Sharing

When engaging in collaborative research, including projects that use data owned by other parties, identifying the parameters of use of the data and other aspects of the project are important details to address. To assist students in addressing these issues, a sample Project Proposal/Data Use Agreement has been included as Appendix C. While use of the agreement (or similar form) is not mandated, it is recommended for use in all collaborative projects.

## **Enrollment after Course Completion**

University of Denver Office of Graduate Education policies require that all graduate degree-seeking students must be in active status and continuously enrolled Fall through Spring terms (also, summer enrollment may be required for some students). Enrollment may consist of registration for courses or Continuous Enrollment. A graduate student who is not in active status and not continuously enrolled must apply for readmission.

Continuous Enrollment is the mechanism utilized during the time when courses have been completed, and the student is working on their comprehensive exam, dissertation proposal or dissertation. Continuous Enrollment credits are not included on the transcript and do not count toward the Ph.D. course credit degree requirements. It is a placeholder mechanism to ensure that the student maintains active status at the University while completing their comprehensive exam and their dissertation.

### Continuous Enrollment

Continuous Enrollment (CE) is for students who have completed all their coursework. CE is only allowed when a student is pursuing academic work/research necessary to complete a degree and is designed primarily for students who are working on a dissertation, comprehensive exam, thesis, or required internship. CE allows students to maintain active status with the University and to use university resources; including library, e-mail, lab access, student health insurance and reduced rates at the Coors Fitness Center. It is not to be used for enrollment purposes while making up an Incomplete. An exception is possible if all other course work is completed and the student is working on the thesis or dissertation while completing the work required for the incomplete. *The*



*quarterly continuous enrollment fee and associated technology fee are the responsibility of the student and are not covered by GSSW.*

### Continuous Enrollment Registration

CE requires annual approval by the student's faculty advisor and the Office of Graduate Studies. CE Approval Forms are located on-line at <http://www.du.edu/media/documents/graduates/CE.pdf>. Students should print the form, obtain their advisor's signature and submit it to the Office of Graduate Education. Permission to enroll for CE is granted on a quarter-by-quarter basis. Students requesting CE registration must complete and submit the required form prior to the beginning of the subsequent quarter (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer) in order to be enrolled, though in some cases enrollment for Fall quarter should be completed by the end of the prior Spring quarter in order to ensure certification of continuing status with external entities, such as some student loan programs.

Students are responsible to register themselves online for CE each quarter. Registration for CE must follow the Registrar's deadlines. To avoid late registration charges, students must register for CE prior to the first day of classes. CE hours will not appear on student transcripts. Students must register and pay for CE on a term-by-term basis.

## **Teaching Trajectory**

While every student brings unique experiences and skills to the experience of teaching in higher education, most students will typically adhere to the following teaching trajectory:

Year 1: Acting as a teaching assistant through GRA mechanism (2-3 hours per week maximum)

Year 2: One or two teaching practicums with GSSW faculty (for credit)

Year 3+: Independent teaching of own class through adjunct teaching mechanism

Building student's teaching skill set should be tailored to the individual student. Deviation from this trajectory should only occur when it is in the student's best educational interest and after discussion with the student, advisor, and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. Students may request assignment as an adjunct instructor during the summer quarters, upon approval from the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

## **Emerging Scholar Trajectory**

While every student brings unique experiences and skills to the experience of conducting research, one suggested trajectory to foster the independence of the emerging scholar is the following:

Year 1: 90% faculty-directed research, 10% student-directed research

Year 2: 75% faculty-directed research, 25% student-directed research

Year 3: 50% faculty-directed research, 50% student-directed research

Year 4: 10% faculty-directed research, 90% student-directed research

Because each faculty-student working relationship will differ based on student experiences and faculty need, the workload and trajectory should be discussed at least annually to insure congruence between faculty and student expectations. Building the student's research skill set should be tailored to the individual student. Deviation from this or similar trajectory should only occur when it is in the student's best educational interest and after discussion with the student, advisor, and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.

### **Annual Review Requirement**

Each year that a student is enrolled in coursework, they will be required to participate in an annual review process; in addition, those who are serving in GRA roles in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years may be asked to complete an annual review at the discretion of the Associate Dean and/or at the request of the student or their advisor. Advancement to preliminary candidacy after the 1<sup>st</sup> year is contingent upon a positive review by the Associate Dean and successful participation in the annual review process. Further continuation in the program beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> year is similarly contingent upon addressing any remedial actions or concerns outlined in the 1<sup>st</sup> or subsequent annual reviews, as well as meeting other advancement requirements as outlined in this Handbook. Annual review meetings must be completed before August 31 of each academic year between each student and the Associate Dean of Doctoral Education or a designated member of the PhD Program Committee.

Assessment of student performance each year is compiled using transcripts, qualitative instructor feedback, and qualitative feedback from research supervisors, which is primarily collected from the completed Student Development Plan at the end of each Spring quarter. Once data from these sources is available, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will draft a brief Annual Review Summary for each student, with special attention to the following criteria:

1. Quality of work
2. Quantity of work
3. Timely and Effective Communication
4. Development as an Independent Scholar
5. Milestone Progress
6. Commitment to DEI, Community Engagement, and Public Impact

When specific concerns have been identified as areas in need of extra attention—beyond the typical developmental process of a PhD student—the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will draft a remediation plan and will review the student performance summary and remediation plan with the Doctoral Program Committee. The Committee will review the summary and plan, amend it as appropriate, and vote to approve the plan. The Associate Dean will then schedule a meeting with each student to review their student performance summary, and in the case of students for whom a remediation plan has been drafted, the student will have an opportunity to review the plan, suggest amendments, and choose whether to proceed forward in the program with the plan as outlined.

Typically, annual review meetings will be conducted with the student by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education; however, when the Associate Dean is also the student's primary advisor, another member of the Doctoral Program Committee will conduct the meeting. The goals of the meeting will be to review the student performance summary, review the remediation plan when relevant, and provide the student an opportunity to offer feedback about their experience in the

program including strengths and challenges they have experienced with coursework and mentorship. Relevant feedback collected during these meetings will be compiled and reviewed by the Associate Dean and PhD Program Committee and addressed as needed.

#### Appeal Process:

At the completion of the annual review meeting, the student will have two weeks to provide a written appeal to the Associate Dean of Doctoral Education. If the grievance is not addressed to the satisfaction of the student, students may engage the Procedures for Academic Grievances and Appeals as described in the Graduate Bulletin: <http://bulletin.du.edu/undergraduate/procedures-for-academic-grievances-and-appeals/>.

## Comprehensive Examination Requirement

The Graduate Council of the University of Denver determines general policies governing the conduct of graduate study. Among the requirements established by the Graduate Council is the successful completion of a comprehensive examination, a written and oral exam designed to evaluate the student's work at the University of Denver. University regulations provide that the comprehensive examination is a separate and independent requirement at the doctoral level. The purpose of the examination is to provide a means by which the student demonstrates capacities for independent and systematic scholarship in keeping with the educational objectives of the doctoral program of the Graduate School of Social Work. The examination serves also as a basis for determining the student's readiness for pursuit of the doctoral dissertation. While the objectives of the examination differ from those of the dissertation, it is recognized that in some situations interconnectedness may result in sharpening the student's understanding of issues bearing upon the dissertation research problem.

The comprehensive examination in the Ph.D. Program in the Graduate School of Social Work consists of a written proposal, an oral review of the proposal, a written paper, and an oral exam. In regard to timeline, the student should submit a comprehensive examination proposal by August 31st of the second year of study and complete the examination process by the end of Fall Quarter of the third year of study. All students are expected to have successfully passed their comprehensive exam by the end of their fourth year in the program. Failure to have done so will result in termination from the program.

### The Comprehensive Examination Proposal

The exam focuses on a selected problem of importance for social work. The student selects the comprehensive exam topic in consultation with their advisor. The student prepares the comprehensive examination proposal with the advice and consultation of their advisor, the faculty readers, and any other interested parties. The student's advisor and two readers assigned by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education constitute the Comprehensive Examination Committee. Students may indicate preferences for Comprehensive Examination Committee members among GSSW faculty, however, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education is not bound by those preferences.

The comprehensive examination proposal is a proposal for an examination. It is not the examination and it is not a dissertation proposal. The purpose of the readers in this phase is to ensure that the

topic can be the subject of an examination (for example, that it is a significant problem of concern to social work). The student should prepare a double-spaced comprehensive examination proposal, no longer than 12 pages, that presents an argument for a substantive area of interest that is of central importance to social work. The proposal should build a case for the inclusion or exclusion of specific material in each section. For example, given the page limitation of the paper, it may not be possible to address all of the theories or policies that may be relevant to a particular topic. In such a case, the proposal needs to address which theories and policies will be covered in the paper and provide a rationale for the choices. The readers guide the student in terms of the specifics of what the readers expect to be covered in an examination paper on this topic (being mindful of the four required areas below). The fifth required area (Conclusions & Implications) is not prescribed in the proposal but emerges in the examination paper based on the investigation.

Required areas of comprehensive exam proposal:

- A. Statement of the substantive/problem area
- B. Analysis of theoretical frameworks for examining the problem area
- C. Review of key policy approaches in the problem area
- D. Critical review of relevant research

All proposals need to meet scholarly standards, such as APA format, scholarly language, and good grammar and should be submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office when completed. After the proposal is formally submitted to the Ph.D. Program Office, it is distributed by the Ph.D. Program Office to the advisor and readers. The advisor and readers have 2 weeks to review it and provide written feedback noting strengths and critiques of the proposal. Their reviews are submitted back to the Ph.D. Program Office for distribution and will be distributed together after they are all received. The reviews will be given to the student with copies to the advisor and all readers. The student and the advisor should meet to discuss the reviews. The student and advisor, in conjunction with the Ph.D. Program Office, schedule the oral review meeting within two weeks of receiving faculty feedback. While discouraged, students submitting comprehensive exam proposals during holiday or summer breaks will need to work with their advisor and faculty readers to determine committee member availability and should not presume availability of faculty during these times. As such, the two-week time window for feedback on the comprehensive exam proposal may be longer for these students. The advisor then convenes the meeting of the readers and the student.

#### Oral review of comprehensive exam proposal

The meeting is an oral review to establish common understanding of the feedback and to develop clear expectations for the comprehensive exam paper. At the oral review of the proposal, the comments are discussed, and readers formally determine if it is approved, approved with qualifications, or not approved. The oral review attached to the proposal phase is intended to ensure that the student knows clearly what the readers want included in the examination paper. It is not a defense.

Students are not expected to write the proposal or parts of it again for continued review unless it does not meet one or another of the four required areas or a rewrite is required by their committee. The student cannot proceed with writing the paper until all readers approve the proposal.

The comprehensive exam proposal oral review may be held in person at DU or via Zoom or other videoconferencing technology, as long as all members of the committee agree to a virtual meeting. Approval forms and rubrics should be submitted by the Committee chair electronically, and should be signed using the DocuSign-enabled forms available from the GSSW PhD Program Office.

### The Written Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the written comprehensive paper is for the student to demonstrate integration of social work knowledge and the capacity for independent and systematic scholarship consistent with the standards and expectations of Ph.D. education. In the paper, the student will move forward with the issue identified in their proposal (an issue or problem of importance for social work) and discuss significant historical, theoretical, policy, and research issues associated with the problem. This discussion and analysis should demonstrate readiness to begin work on the Ph.D. dissertation.

The topic must be of significance to social work or social welfare and be sufficiently established to allow the student the opportunity to examine and critically review a body of scholarly literature and research. The paper includes five sections. In the first section, the student defines and articulates an issue or problem of importance. Subsequent sections examine theory, policy, and research relevant to the identified problem. A recommended outline follows:

- A. Statement of the substantive/problem area  
The student will define and demonstrate a familiarity with a substantive topic. Discussion should demonstrate an understanding of the prevalence, nature, historical antecedents, and recent trends associated with the problem area or topic. Biases, prejudices, and omissions, especially those relevant to vulnerable populations, should be explicated.
- B. Analysis of theoretical frameworks for examining the problem area  
Two or more social theories that provide a context for understanding the onset and/or persistence of the identified social problem should be identified and critically reviewed. Discussion in this section should include an assessment of the utility of the selected theories for informing social interventions aimed at the problem.
- C. Review of key policy approaches in the problem area  
The student will identify the range of key policy approaches aimed at preventing or ameliorating the problem area. One major policy approach should be selected and described in detail. Effects and limitations of this policy should be identified and discussed. Suggestions for policy reform should be noted.
- D. Critical review of relevant research  
In this section, the student discusses and critically analyzes relevant empirical evidence and research related to the problem area. This review should include a discussion of the dominant methodological approaches used to examine the problem. Important gaps in the knowledge base should then be identified. The section should conclude with the identification of two or more research questions that the student views as necessary to advance knowledge pertinent to the problem area.
- E. Conclusions and implications

A brief section that summarizes the problem area and identifies next research steps should be included.

Upon completion of the comprehensive examination paper, the student emails a copy to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator for distribution to all committee members. Within two weeks, the readers and advisor are to independently prepare their respective written feedback on the strengths and critiques of the paper and submit them by email to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator for forwarding to the student and to members of the examining committee. The advisor, with the student, arranges for the oral examination to take place, normally within two weeks of receiving the committee's comments. While discouraged, students submitting comprehensive written exams during holiday or summer breaks will need to work with their advisor and faculty readers to determine committee member availability and should not presume availability of faculty during these times. As such, the two-week time window for feedback on the comprehensive exam proposal may be longer for these students.

### Evaluation Criteria for the Comprehensive Paper

The length of the paper should not exceed **60 double-spaced pages**, excluding references. Papers exceeding this page limit will not be accepted and will be returned by the Ph.D. Program Office to the student for editing. Recognizing that space limitation creates the need for selectivity, the student must present a rationale for selection and exclusion of pertinent content. There is an expectation that the student will rely predominately on primary sources from the literature.

The selected topic should be pertinent to social welfare and/or the social work profession and should build on the content of the core and outside courses the student has completed. In addition, the paper should address the relevance of the topic to vulnerable populations. Critical analysis must be demonstrated throughout the paper. Critical analysis requires the student to evaluate the material presented and to provide a well-reasoned explanation for their conclusions.

The Comprehensive Examination Paper grading rubric (See Appendix A) should be used by the student in assisting them to prepare their examination paper and by the faculty for evaluating the quality of the comprehensive paper. The student's advisor is responsible for gathering the completed rubrics from all readers, entering scores from all readers into the final scoring rubric summary page, and submitting the scoring rubric summary page to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator.

### The Oral Comprehensive Exam

The purpose of the oral comprehensive examination is to provide the student an opportunity to respond to the comments and any other questions that the readers may raise in relation to the comprehensive exam paper. The examination lasts approximately ninety minutes.

The comprehensive exam oral review may be held in person at DU or via Zoom or other videoconferencing technology, as long as all members of the committee agree to a virtual meeting. Approval forms and rubrics should be submitted by the Committee chair electronically and should be signed using the DocuSign-enabled forms available from the GSSW PhD Program Office.

A decision on the student's performance is determined by majority vote of the Comprehensive Examination Committee. The options for the vote on the student's written and oral presentation performance are pass or fail. If the average score on the rubric summary page across all readers

across all elements of the rubric is above 4.5, the comprehensive exam committee may recommend a “Pass with Distinction.” The recommendation, in written form, is attached to the rubric summary page and will be reviewed by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and the Ph.D. Program Committee. Upon review of the materials, the Ph.D. Program Committee may concur with the comprehensive exam committee and approve a “Pass with Distinction.” The advisor should have the "Comprehensive Examination or Paper Orals Form" signed and forwarded to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator within two days following date of oral examination.

In the event of failure, the student will be allowed to choose another topic and proceed through the examination (paper and oral) a second time. A student is allowed only two opportunities to complete the comprehensive examination process before being terminated from the Ph.D. Program.

### Role of the Faculty in the Comprehensive Exam Process

Faculty readers function as reviewers and will read the comprehensive examination paper only at the time of final submission. Therefore, once the examination proposal is approved, the role of the readers is evaluative, not consultative. The student’s advisor also plays an active consulting role during preparation for the comprehensive exam paper proposal. However, after a comprehensive exam paper proposal is accepted, the advisor's role is largely administrative. As chairperson and member of the comprehensive oral examination committee, the advisor's responsibility is to advise the student and to ensure a fair hearing for the student, consistent with the criteria established in this document. A student’s advisor and other faculty may offer general consultation on logistics or structure of the exam paper at any point during the comprehensive examination process but should not provide consultation on the content of the exam itself. No faculty member will read all or a portion of a comprehensive paper prior to the time it is sent to the Ph.D. Program Office to be forwarded to the assigned readers for reading.

As the comprehensive examination is, by definition, an examination, students should ensure that the paper is solely their own work. Colleagues, editors, or other students should not read all or a portion of a comprehensive paper prior to the time the oral examination has been completed and submitted. As the comprehensive exam is seeking to integrate content from the student’s doctoral education and coursework, it may include content from previous papers as long as those papers are solely the work of the student.

## **Dissertation Requirements**

### Introduction

Completion of a dissertation is a major requirement of the program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree. The Graduate School of Social Work requires the completion of a satisfactory dissertation in the field of social work, and the policies for completion of the dissertation oral defense are overseen by the Office of Graduate Education at the University of Denver. Those policies and relevant forms may be found here: <https://www.du.edu/graduate-education/current-student-resources/dissertation-thesis-information>.

The dissertation requirement is designed to afford students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to (1) do competent research in social work, (2) organize materials logically, write clearly, and make sound interpretations and conclusions from the facts presented, and (3) make a contribution

to the field. Dissertations may take the form of a book-length manuscript describing a single scientific study undertaken by the student or may be a document that includes three publishable manuscripts along with an introductory chapter and concluding chapter that describe the work undertaken and how the study(s) described contribute to the relevant field(s) of knowledge. The two formatting options are described in greater detail in the Graduate Bulletin and on the website of the Office of Graduate Education:

The dissertation supervision process at the Graduate School of Social Work at DU is a committee-directed undertaking. While each candidate and committee will work out the methods and procedures somewhat differently, the basic principles require all committee members to be involved in decisions and checkpoints in a very active manner. The dissertation committee should work collaboratively throughout the dissertation process. Further, in the interest of assuring that policies are applied to all students in the same way, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education may serve as a quality checkpoint/monitoring role by reviewing and signing off on decisions at various points in the process should any concerns arise.

### Selecting a Dissertation Committee

Students should consult with their advisor and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education as they begin to consider selecting a dissertation committee. The choice of members for the committee should be guided by the candidate's need for consultation on substantive matters, research methods, and analytic approaches. It is common for a student to form a committee by choosing one person with whom they have an established working relationship, one person who has special substantive knowledge related to the research topic, and one person who has special research methods or statistical knowledge congruent with the proposed dissertation research. Clearly a particular faculty member can fulfill more than one of these roles. Any faculty member who is asked to serve as the dissertation director or be a member of a dissertation committee is free to accept or decline the student's request without providing any justification.

The University of Denver describes the requirements for a dissertation committee at the University level in its bulletin: <http://bulletin.du.edu/graduate/academic-requirements-policies-and-procedures/doctoral-degree-requirements/doctoral-dissertation/>. Adhering to these requirements, the doctoral candidate's dissertation oral defense committee is recommended by the school and approved by the Associate Provost for Graduate Education. The *Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Committee Recommendation* form should be submitted to the Office of Graduate Education as soon as the dissertation proposal has been approved or defended but no later than the first day of the quarter in which the student expects to complete his/her degree.

### Composition

In adhering to DU requirements, the GSSW PhD Program Committee has established the following committee composition requirements. The committee is composed of a minimum of three and a maximum of six voting members, including the dissertation director. This includes the dissertation director but does not include the Oral Defense Committee Chair, who is a non-voting committee member and must be a tenured faculty member from a department, school, or college other than GSSW.

Tenure-line and research faculty from DU, including those outside GSSW, are automatically eligible to serve on dissertation committees if the dissertation subject is appropriate to their field of



expertise. Faculty with other designations (e.g., clinical, teaching, professor of the practice) are eligible to serve as voting members of the committee if they have been actively involved in research and scholarship in a relevant field and meet the requirements set forth by Office of Graduate Education. Requests to include an appointed faculty member who is not tenure track or research faculty (e.g., clinical, teaching, professor of the practice) as a voting committee member should be sent via email to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education for review by the PhD Program Committee. A minimum of one voting committee member must be a tenure/tenure track faculty member from GSSW.

Faculty from appropriately related programs who hold the terminal degree in their field may serve on the committee as long as GSSW has the majority representation and a majority of the members hold the earned doctorate. When a doctoral degree is interdisciplinary, faculty representation from all disciplines must be reflected on the committee. If the student would like to include a member of the committee from outside DU and have that member vote, the student should contact the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education who will assess qualifications and seek approval from the Office of Graduate Education if appropriate.

#### Oral Defense Committee Chair

The committee member from outside the student's graduate department represents the Associate Provost for Graduate Education and serves as chair of the oral defense committee. The oral defense committee chair must be a tenured member of the DU faculty and must hold an earned doctorate from an accredited institution. It is the responsibility of the student to find an appropriate oral defense committee chair to serve who meets these requirements. This should be done well ahead of the scheduled oral defense.

#### Dissertation Director

The dissertation director must be a tenured/tenure-track faculty or research faculty member of GSSW. It is the dissertation director's responsibility to ensure that the student's research meets appropriate academic standards for the discipline in which the degree is being conferred. Under some circumstances, faculty with other designations (e.g., clinical, teaching, professor of the practice) can serve as the dissertation director when they meet criteria set forth by the Office of Graduate Education and with approval of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education and Ph.D. Program Committee.

#### Special Members

On rare occasions, students may request to add an adjunct faculty member, post-doctoral appointee, a professor from another institution, or another qualified person—including someone without a doctorate but with other appropriate qualifications—as a special committee member. A special member may not be considered a substitute for one who meets the University requirements; rather, the special member should be considered as an addition to the core committee. Students also may request that a non-tenure track, full-time appointed DU faculty member serve as committee chair. These requests must be supported by a strong rationale, have the support of the student's program and be approved by the Associate Provost for Graduate Education. The request must include: a statement of rationale, the proposed special member's CV and *Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Committee Recommendation* form.

Prior to completion of the dissertation proposal, the student chooses members for the dissertation committee and completes the committee form with the required signatures. The form is then given

to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator to forward to the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education who reviews the committee for review of expertise contribution and final approval. The form is placed in the student's file. The dissertation director becomes the student's formal advisor. No changes in committee membership may occur unless a written request signed by both the student and committee member is submitted and approved by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education.

In consultation with committee members the student prepares the dissertation proposal following the format presented in this section. In selecting a topic, the student should keep in mind that:

1. The subject should have significance for social work theory, knowledge, practice, education, or for social work research methodology; or for new syntheses or analyses of existing social work knowledge.
2. The problem may relate to the past or the present; may make use of library material or material obtained in the field and such material may be from primary or secondary sources.
3. The study should be feasible in terms of the time requirements of the program and available resources.

### Structure of the Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation is an original scholarly work in which a student demonstrates their ability to conduct research pertaining to an important problem in social work or social welfare. The dissertation study should be conducted with the highest possible standards of rigor and scholarship. Students submit a written dissertation proposal following the successful completion of the comprehensive examination. The dissertation proposal is developed in consultation with a student's dissertation committee and is a required step before beginning dissertation research. The proposal is 25-40 pages in length and should provide sufficient detail about the proposed study's purpose, aims, and methodology. Issues of appropriateness and feasibility should also be addressed in the proposal. Dissertation proposals should be written with strict adherence to APA style. Proposals should follow the structural guidelines outlined below.

#### **I. Cover Page**

The cover page should include the title of the dissertation, the student's name, and the names of all dissertation committee members.

#### **II. Statement of the Research Problem and Major Questions**

This part of the proposal describes a research problem that is clearly relevant to social work. The research problem must be described in sufficient detail to ensure that any faculty member reading the proposal can become acquainted with the problem and its relevance to the field. After the introduction of the problem, a brief review of the state of theory and knowledge about the problem is provided, along with citations from the most pertinent literature.

This section concludes with a small set of research questions and research aims that are clearly linked to the problem and the state of theory and knowledge in the field about the problem.

### **III. Methodology**

This section explains how a student plans to produce original knowledge that is clearly responsive to the research questions posed. Although a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods may be appropriate, this section must provide a detailed and unambiguous description of the exact research methods to be used. The methods chosen must be of sufficient scope and rigor to clearly show strong potential for an important advancement in the state of knowledge relevant to the research questions. Whether primarily qualitative or quantitative methods are used, key concepts are to be clearly articulated and defined in operational terms. Sampling methods, measures, data collection, and data analysis techniques must be described in sufficient detail to allow assessment of their appropriateness, both to the questions and the overall approach. Sources of risk to subjects and the methods that will be used to ensure the participants are protected from harm and abrogation of basic rights should be identified.

### **IV. Timeline and Resources**

This section provides a timeline for the completion of major phases of the dissertation (e.g., human subjects' approval, data collection, data management, analysis, etc.) and the resource requirements of each phase. The timeline provides a series of benchmarks for both the candidate and their committee to assess the progress of the research. The timeline and resources required will vary by the type of dissertation research; however, students should be both thorough and realistic. In particular, some margin should be built in for the unanticipated difficulties that are common to this level of research. The resource requirements that should be identified at each stage of the dissertation include such items as the cooperation of outside agencies, research assistants, software and computer access beyond that routinely provided, consultation, and internal/external funding sought or received.

### **V. References**

An APA style reference section should be included in the proposal.

#### Evaluating the Dissertation Proposal

Each student submits an electronic copy of the completed dissertation proposal to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator. The Ph.D. Program Coordinator will forward the proposal to the student's dissertation committee, the group responsible for evaluating the proposal. The dissertation committee members will provide written feedback within two weeks of receiving the proposal by submitting the feedback to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator. The proposal feedback will then be distributed to the student and committee members once all feedback has been received. While discouraged, students submitting their dissertation proposal during holiday or summer breaks will need to work with their advisor and faculty readers to determine committee member availability and should not presume availability of faculty during these times. As such, the two-week time window for receiving feedback on the dissertation proposal may be longer for these students.

An oral review of the proposal with all committee members present is held within two weeks following the distribution of the feedback. Students receiving dissertation proposal feedback from faculty during holiday or summer breaks will need to work with their advisor and faculty readers to determine committee member availability and should not presume availability of faculty during these

times. As such, the two-week time window for scheduling of the dissertation proposal meeting may be longer for these students.

The dissertation proposal oral review may be held in person at DU or via Zoom or other videoconferencing technology, as long as all members of the committee agree to a virtual meeting. Approval forms and rubrics should be submitted by the Committee chair electronically, and should be signed using the DocuSign-enabled forms available from the GSSW PhD Program Office.

The oral dissertation proposal review is intended to address any shortcomings in the proposal. An approved proposal serves as a benchmark for evaluating the adequacy of a student's completed dissertation.

In assessing a student's proposal, the dissertation committee will consider the:

- relevance of the research for social work;
- clarity of the study's purpose, research questions, and specific aims;
- rigor of the proposed study;
- originality of the research; and,
- feasibility of the overall proposal.

The dissertation director and the student schedule a meeting of the dissertation committee to discuss the document, seek clarification, and assess the viability of the proposal as the basis of a dissertation. Approval of the proposal requires a unanimous decision by members of the committee. A student is given up to three hearings in order to obtain approval of the dissertation proposal. If the dissertation proposal has not been approved after three hearings, the student may dissolve or reconstitute their committee and begin the process again. This stage may be repeated as frequently as necessary or until the seven-year timeline has been exhausted.

When the dissertation committee is satisfied with the formulation of the problem and the study design, the Dissertation Proposal Form, which provides for written approval of a student's dissertation proposal by all committee members, will be completed and put in the student's file. An electronic copy will be forwarded to the student. The student is responsible for submitting the "Thesis/Dissertation Oral Defense Committee Recommendation Form" to the Office of Graduate Education (please carbon copy the Ph.D. Program Coordinator). The form can be found here: <http://www.du.edu/media/documents/graduates/committee.pdf>.

### Conducting Research and Writing the Dissertation

The dissertation director takes the lead role in coordinating work with the student in completing the dissertation. However, all committee members are to be involved in decisions and checkpoints in a very active manner. For example, committee members shall be involved in the review and approval of the final design statement, data collection instruments, sampling plan, the final draft of the study, and other similar issues. Based on expertise, some committee members may be more involved in some sections of the research process than others. For example, a methodologist may be more involved in the development of the research design, sampling plan, etc. than in the substantive sections of the process.

For all research involving the use of human subjects, students are required to complete the *Application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects*. A copy is available on

the University of Denver website (<http://www.du.edu/orsp/policies-procedures/forms.html>). The approved application is to be completed and filed with the dissertation proposal prior to beginning any work with human subjects. Please note that proposals to conduct dissertation research with human subjects should be submitted to the Institutional Review Board after the dissertation proposal is formally approved.

The form and other procedures to be followed in writing the dissertation should be in accordance with the instructions contained in the most current copy of the APA style handbook. Format, footnotes, etc., must be internally consistent. Specific instructions for final formatting and arrangement of the content of the dissertation are contained in the document. Dissertation instructions are available on the Graduate Studies website [https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2018-11/thesisdissertation\\_formatting\\_guidelines18-19.pdf](https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2018-11/thesisdissertation_formatting_guidelines18-19.pdf)

### Dissertation Defense

The complete dissertation draft is submitted to the Ph.D. Program Coordinator who distributes the document to the student, the student's dissertation committee members, including their outside chair, and the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education. The dissertation defense date will be scheduled for approximately 2-4 weeks after the dissertation has been distributed.

The student is responsible for scheduling the oral examination, which must be conducted prior to the beginning of the third week before the quarter closes. Specific deadlines can be found on the Graduate Education webpage: <https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2019-07/Graduate%20Studies%20Schedule%20of%20Deadlines%202019.pdf>

The dissertation should be in the hands of the examining committee at least four weeks prior to the scheduled examination. The dissertation director will confirm in writing to each member of the examining committee the date, time, and place of the examination. The examination can be open to individuals not on the examining committee. The examining committee chairperson will clarify the role of such individuals if such individuals are in attendance at the examination. Everyone other than the committee must leave during deliberations and are not permitted to vote or voice their opinion on the quality of the dissertation. If time permits, they may ask questions about the dissertation once the dissertation committee has completed its questioning and discussion.

The chairperson of the oral examination represents the Graduate School of Social Work and Office of Graduate Education, which has established the policy of having a tenured full-time faculty member from another department or school serve as chairperson of the examination committee. The chairperson has the responsibility for making certain that the examination is conducted in a professional manner and that the student has a fair opportunity to defend their dissertation. The chairperson is expected to provide opportunities for each voting member of the examination committee to participate in the examination and to see that the examination is of high quality while staying within proper limits of inquiry. The chairperson is expected to have read the dissertation prior to the examination and to participate in the examination as their academic expertise permits, but the chairperson does not vote on the recommendation of the committee.

## Preparing for Graduation

Students must apply to graduate in accordance with the University of Denver Office of Graduate Education deadlines available at <https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2019-07/Graduate%20Studies%20Schedule%20of%20Deadlines%202019.pdf>. The application for graduation instructions can be found at <http://www.du.edu/registrar/graduation/index.html>. Students are responsible for submitting the “Oral Defense Schedule” to the Office of Graduate Education at least four weeks prior to the date of oral defense. This form is also available at [https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2018-11/schedule\\_of\\_oral\\_defense.pdf](https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2018-11/schedule_of_oral_defense.pdf)

After final approval of the dissertation, students must officially submit their dissertation to an online submission site, ETD Administrator. Instructions are found here: [https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2018-11/thesisdissertation\\_submission\\_instructions18-19.pdf](https://www.du.edu/sites/g/files/lmucqz251/files/2018-11/thesisdissertation_submission_instructions18-19.pdf). Additional information about graduation instructions, deadlines, and required forms are available at the Office of Graduate Education website <https://www.du.edu/registrar/graduation/graduationapp.html>. The website also has forms for students to order bound copies of their dissertation (optional) and a request to participate in commencement.

Only students who have successfully defended their dissertation may participate in the GSSW graduation ceremony. Students who plan to defend their dissertation and graduate in summer are eligible to participate in the GSSW ceremony the following spring.

## Beyond Graduation

To provide an opportunity for marketing graduating doctoral students, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education will oversee the production of the annual CV website which will be distributed electronically to deans of schools of social work, Ph.D., MSW, and BSW program directors, and others who are likely engaged in hiring decisions. Guidelines for inclusion of photo and CV in the website include:

- Student is planning on being on the national, academic job market;
- Student has not been included in the CV website more than one other time;
- Student complies with deadlines for obtaining photograph and CV;
- Student prepares CV in the format provided.

Graduate students are responsible for closing out any open IRB protocols housed at DU. To do so, students should adhere to the following guidelines.

1. Open IRB Protocols that have been completed

If a student has completed their research project, has graduated from DU, and will no longer be affiliated with DU, the student should submit an IRB Final Report through IRBNet. This will allow the IRB to review the study outcome and formally close the project from further IRB review or monitoring. The student should also work with any other DU investigator to formally remove their name from any other project that they may be listed on. A project should only be closed if there is no further interaction with the potential participants AND the data being analyzed does not involve the use or access to personally identifiable information.

Note: If the student does not close the project after they have left DU, it is the responsibility of their faculty sponsor to submit the final report. The student and their faculty sponsor will receive three notifications if a project expires or a Next Report Due (status report) date has passed.

2. Continue to work on data analysis or manuscript preparation involving the use or access to personally identifiable information is ongoing
  - a. Depending on where the student goes after leaving DU: if the student is hired by another university, they have the option to transfer their ongoing study to the other university's IRB or transfer the study to another DU-affiliated investigator to serve as the Principal Investigator and request that they be added to the project through a reliance agreement.
  - b. If the student is not affiliated with any organization that has an IRB and they want to continue to work on the data analysis independently, the DU IRB would no longer be able to maintain regulatory oversight unless the study is transferred to another DU-affiliated investigator to serve as the Principal Investigator and request that they be added as an Individual Investigator to the project.

For both of these scenarios, if personally identifiable information will be used and another DU-affiliated investigator will serve as the PI, it is strongly recommended that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Data Use Agreement (DUA) be established to clearly outline who has ownership of the data and how it will be shared.

### **Compliance with the Ph.D. Program Handbook and Guidelines**

The Associate Dean for Doctoral Education, Ph.D. Program Coordinator, and faculty advisors are available to clarify the policies and procedures contained herein and to provide related guidance. Please note however, that students are wholly responsible for knowing requirements and adhering to designated deadlines and time limits.

### Policies Subject to Change

The Student Handbook will be revised from time to time. Students will be informed of these changes through written and web updates. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware that policies are subject to change.

Appendix A

**Rubric Definitions – Comprehensive Exam Paper, PhD Program, GSSW**

Please enter a score from 1 to 5 using the guidelines for Emerging, Developing, and Mastering levels as anchor points:

***Required Elements***

	<i>Emerging (1)</i>	<i>Developing (3)</i>	<i>Mastering (5)</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
RE1.1 Statement of substantive/problem area (requires prevalence and nature of the problems; its history & recent trends; analyzes biases & omissions, particularly around vulnerable populations)	Begins to define the problem, may present one needed element. Many areas missing or poorly covered. Discussion of vulnerable populations is superficial	Covers most of the required elements but not in enough depth – more like completing an annotated list than an analysis. Begins to analyze biases and omissions, particularly for vulnerable populations, citing convincing evidence	Analyzes the required elements in depth, shows ability to synthesize rather than annotate. Covers biases and omissions, particularly for vulnerable populations, in depth. If gaps are identified, goes beyond documentation of the evidence for that, and demonstrates original thought about the social justice implications	
RE1.2 Analysis of theoretical frameworks for examining problem	Uses only one theory, or the coverage of two theories is superficial	Describes two theories in some detail, but does not evidence much critical review. Discussion of the utility of the theory is there, but without enough application to the problem area	Uses at least 2 theories – defines and critically reviews each. Analyzes the utility of the theories to inform social intervention in the substantive/problem area	
RE1.3 Review of key policy approaches	Describes a policy but either misses one much more relevant to the topic or misses many details of the policy's impact and limitations	Defines a relevant policy for the area, begins to analyze its impacts and limitations, but lacks context, doesn't provide enough examples, may list, but not describe, reform suggestions	Discusses at least one relevant social policy impacting the problem. Analyzes its impacts and limitations; suggests reforms	
RE1.4 Critical review of relevant research	Concretely discusses some research in this area, with no synthesis of the overall body of research. Does not indicate awareness of extent of research	Begins a discussion of the scope of the available research, but may be unsure of the dominant research methods, may write by listing, rather than critically comparing. May be unsure of the gaps in this area	Critically analyzes the existing research in this area, analyzing dominant methods, and identifying gaps in the knowledge. May describe the search, or the scope of what is available. Suggests two thoughtful research questions (depending on year of comp)	



***Critical Thinking Expectations (from Washington State University Critical Thinking Project: <http://wsuctproject.wsu.edu/ctm.htm>, resource guide)***

	<i>Emerging (1)</i>	<i>Developing (3)</i>	<i>Mastering (5)</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
CT1.1 Considers the influence of context and assumptions	<p>Approach to the issue is egocentric or socio-centric. Does not relate issue to other contexts (cultural, political, historical, etc.). Shows little awareness of social justice.</p> <p>Analysis is grounded in absolutes, with little acknowledgement of own biases.</p> <p>Does not fully recognize context or surface assumptions and underlying ethical implications</p>	<p>Presents and explores relevant contexts and assumptions regarding the issue, although in a limited way.</p> <p>Analysis includes some empirical verification, but primarily relies on established authorities.</p> <p>Provides some recognition of context and consideration of assumptions and their implications, begins to frame this problem in the context of societal privilege and prejudice</p>	<p>Analyzes the issue with a clear sense of scope and context, including an assessment of audience. Considers other integral contexts.</p> <p>Analysis acknowledges complexity and bias of vantage and values, although may elect to hold to bias in context.</p> <p>Identifies influence of context and questions assumptions, addressing ethical dimensions underlying the issue.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding of the ways societal privilege and prejudice have not only impacted the problem, but set the frame for analysis and intervention with the problem</p>	
CT1.2 Presents, assesses, and analyzes appropriate supporting data/evidence	<p>No evidence of search, selection or source evaluation skills.</p> <p>Repeats information provided without question or dismisses evidence without adequate justification.</p> <p>Does not distinguish among fact, opinion, and value judgments.</p> <p>Conflates cause and correlation; presents evidence and ideas out of sequence.</p> <p>Data/evidence or sources are simplistic, inappropriate, or not related to topic.</p>	<p>Demonstrates adequate skill in searching, selecting, and evaluating sources to meet the information need.</p> <p>Use of evidence is qualified and selective.</p> <p>Discerns fact from opinion and may recognize bias in evidence, although attribution is inappropriate.</p> <p>Distinguishes causality from correlation, though presentation may be flawed.</p> <p>Appropriate data/evidence or sources provided, although exploration appears to have been routine.</p>	<p>Evidence of search, selection, and source evaluation skills; notable identification of uniquely salient resources.</p> <p>Examines evidence and its source; questions its accuracy, relevance, and completeness.</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding of how facts shape but may not confirm opinion.</p> <p>Recognizes bias, including selection bias.</p> <p>Correlations are distinct from causal relationships between and among ideas. Sequence of presentation reflects clear organization of ideas, subordinating for importance and impact.</p> <p>Information needed is clearly defined and integrated to meet comprehensive requirement.</p>	

CT1.3 Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications, and consequences	<p>Fails to identify conclusions, implications, and consequences, or conclusion is a simplistic summary.</p> <p>Conclusions presented as absolute, and may attribute conclusion to external authority.</p>	<p>Conclusions consider or provide evidence of consequences extending beyond a single discipline or issue.</p> <p>Presents implications that may impact other people or issues.</p> <p>Presents conclusions as relative and only loosely related to consequences.</p> <p>Implications may include vague reference to conclusions.</p>	<p>Identifies, discusses, and extends conclusions, implications, and consequences. Considers context, assumptions, data, and evidence. Qualifies own assertions with balance.</p> <p>Conclusions qualify as the best available evidence within the context. Consequences are considered and integrated.</p> <p>Implications are clearly developed, and consider ambiguities.</p>	

### *PhD Level Writing Expectations*

	<i>Emerging (1)</i>	<i>Developing (3)</i>	<i>Mastering (5)</i>	<i>SCORE</i>
WE1.1 Writing flows well – thoughts, transitions, grammar are good	Not proofread	Problems with grammar & transitions between topics slow down, confuse the reader	Smooth flow of ideas and informative transitions between topics	
WE1.2 Literature references are specific and analyzed in enough detail	Numerous non-specific references grouped in parenthetical citations.	Mixes specific and non-specific references, some works clearly analyzed, others included hastily.	Gives the sense that each work read and referenced is unique, makes some contribution to knowledge in this problem area.	
WE1.3 Primary sources are used	Many secondary citations to works that are in print and need to be read in this problem area	Most citations are to primary sources but may rely on secondary citation when the original author is difficult to understand	Minimizes use of secondary citations; reads original works for theory, history, research, etc. The exception is out of print works.	
WE1.4 APA style used for citations and references	Barely there	Most APA citing/referencing conventions are met, sometimes inconsistently	References and citations follow APA style requirements	

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Each committee member should score the comprehensive exam paper using the rubrics above, recording the score in the column titled *SCORE* on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high). The rubric form should NOT be submitted with the comments that are to be distributed to the full committee and the student, but should be brought to the meeting and turned into the chair of the committee at the end of the comprehensive exam meeting. The chair of the comprehensive exam committee should complete the attached summary of the ratings for all three members of the comprehensive exam committee. Scores for each element range from a low of 1 to a high of 5. This summary rating sheet should be included with the paperwork indicating pass/fail and returned to the PhD Program Coordinator.

	<i>Reader 1</i>	<i>Reader 2</i>	<i>Chair</i>
REQUIRED ELEMENTS 1.1			
REQUIRED ELEMENTS 1.2			
REQUIRED ELEMENTS 1.3			
REQUIRED ELEMENTS 1.4			
CRITICAL THINKING 1.1			
CRITICAL THINKING 1.2			
CRITICAL THINKING 1.3			
WRITING EXPECTATIONS 1.1			
WRITING EXPECTATIONS 1.2			
WRITING EXPECTATIONS 1.3			
WRITING EXPECTATIONS 1.4			

## Appendix B

Potential sources for external funding of research (particularly dissertation research) are listed below. The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development and/or the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education frequently have copies of sample proposals for many funding mechanisms, Please involve them in your consideration of application for funding early in the process.

- Alcohol Research Group (pre- and post-doctoral fellowships):  
[www.arg.org/training](http://www.arg.org/training)
- American Association of University Women – American Fellowships:  
<http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/american-fellowships/>
- American Association of University Women – International Fellowships:  
<http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/international-fellowships/>
- American Cancer Society, Training Grants in Oncology Social Work:  
<http://www.cancer.org/research/applyforaresearchgrant/granttypes/doctoral-training-grant-oncology-social-work>
- American Education Research Association, Dissertation Grants:  
<http://www.aera.net/ProfessionalOpportunitiesFunding/FundingOpportunities/ERAGrantsProgram/DissertationGrants/tabid/12812/Default.aspx>
- Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work, Pre-Dissertation Initiative:  
<http://agesw.org/about-agesw/pre-dissertation-initiative>
- Centers for Disease Control, R49 Dissertation Mechanism
- Council on Social Work Education, Minority Fellowship Program:  
<http://www.cswe.org/CentersInitiatives/ScholarshipsandFellowships/MFP/31830.aspx>
- Doris Duke Fellowship for the Promotion of Child Wellbeing:  
<http://www.chapinhall.org/fellowships/doris-duke-fellowships>
- Fahs Beck Foundation: <http://www.fahsbeckfund.org/>
- Fulbright US Student Program: <http://us.fulbrightonline.org/about/types-of-grants/study-research>
- Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Dissertation Fellowships:  
<http://www.hfg.org/df/guidelines.htm>
- Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy: <http://www.horowitz-foundation.org/grant-info/>
- Korean American Scholarship Foundation: <http://www.kasf.org/western>
- Myra Sadker Foundation, Dissertation Grant: <http://www.sadker.org/awards.html>
- National Academy of Education/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship:  
[http://naeducation.org/NAED\\_080200.htm](http://naeducation.org/NAED_080200.htm)
- National Association of Social Workers, Jane B. Aron Dissertation Fellowship:  
<http://www.naswfoundation.org/aron.asp>
- National Association of Social Works, Eileen Blackey Dissertation Fellowship:  
<http://www.naswfoundation.org/blackey.asp>

- National Institute of Health, F31, Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards for Individual Predoctoral Fellows. Through various institutes.
- National Institute of Health, R36 Dissertation Awards. Through various institutes in NIH (e.g., CDC, NIMH, AHRQ)
- The Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship: [pdsoros.org](http://pdsoros.org)
- Social Science Research Council, Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship: <http://www.ssrc.org/programs/dpdf/>
- Social Science Research Council, International Dissertation Research Fellowship: <http://www.ssrc.org/programs/idrf/>
- Society for Social Work & Research, Doctoral Fellows Award: <https://secure.sswr.org/awards.php#fellows>
- Spark Policy Institute Fellowship: [www.sparkpolicy.com](http://www.sparkpolicy.com)
- University of Denver, Interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Study of (In)Equality Research Grants: <http://www.du.edu/irise/research-grants/graduate-student.html>

Appendix C

**PROJECT PROPOSAL/DATA USE AGREEMENT**

Prior to working on a collaborative project, parameters of the project should be identified and agreed upon by all parties. This form may be used to identify and document the parameters agreed to by all parties.

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF PROPOSAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF PROJECT: From:** \_\_\_\_\_ **To:** \_\_\_\_\_

(If the project continues outside the scope of this date range, a written request for an extension should be submitted outlining the new date range.)

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**POSSIBLE JOURNALS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CO-AUTHORS AND ORDER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT IS YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT DATASET(S) (Name and Year) DO YOU PROPOSE USING:** \_\_\_\_\_

**WHERE WILL THE DATASET(S) BE HOUSED AND WHAT SECURITY**

**MEASURES WILL BE USED:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**WHAT VARIABLES (if applicable) DO YOU INTEND ON USING (identify**

**DV, IV, and control variables):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**WHAT IS YOUR ANALYTIC PLAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**IS THERE AN ADDITIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT THAT**

**NEEDS TO BE SIGNED? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO**

**ARE THERE ANY CHANGES NEEDED TO THE IRB PROTOCOL. IF**

**YES, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DOING THEM?**

\_\_\_\_\_ YES (Who: \_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ NO

**ANY OTHER INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD:** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
(Proposal Submitted by, signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(PI/Dataset owner)

## Appendix D: Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage

### GSSW PhD Program Preliminary Guidance on Generative AI Usage

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging technology that harnesses computing power to generate and manipulate text, including written products such as prose, poetry, [and](#) computer code. AI is also used to generate image-based products such as graphs and artwork. Part of the innovation of AI is that it learns from information that is input—thus, with every use, AI learns more and evolves in capabilities. As such, policies that define and regulate its use are rapidly evolving as well.

These emerging technologies offer capabilities that promise to streamline many research and writing tasks, and for PhD students who are juggling multiple competing demands on their time, the efficiencies offered by AI may make them a compelling option as they work to complete class assignments, programmatic milestones, and GRA work. However, there are also concerns being raised by scholars and technology experts about potential harms of AI, which include breaches of privacy as well as potential for plagiarism, factual errors, and introduction or reification of implicit bias (as well as the environmental impacts of these energy-intensive technologies). There is also a need to balance the efficiencies offered by automation with the learning benefit of completing certain research tasks manually, because core aims of the PhD program include helping students develop mastery in critical thinking, scholarly writing, and independent research design and implementation.

For the purposes of using AI to assist in fulfilling requirements of the GSSW PhD program (in coursework, research assistantships, and milestones such as the comprehensive exam and dissertation), the following policy should be considered a working guideline, and additions, amendments, or refinements may be issued periodically as the technology and our understanding of it evolves.

1. In accordance with many leading scientific journals (see a review of recent policies here: <https://factor.niehs.nih.gov/2023/3/feature/2-artificial-intelligence-ethics>), AI cannot be credited as an “author” of scientific writing, and so should not be used to generate contributions that would be equivalent to authorship on any academic paper or written product. Specifically, verbatim use of sentences or paragraphs written by AI-based technologies in course assignments, program milestone proposals or documents, scientific manuscripts, and any similar written products will be considered plagiarism and addressed as outlined in the University of Denver Honor Code. If an AI-based program is used to generate any draft text for written product, the ideas must be the student’s and the generated text must be fact-checked. Students are fully responsible for any factual errors or inadvertent plagiarism that occur through use of AI to generate or edit written products and/or visual elements of a paper.
2. Many AI-based applications are now available to assist with editing documents once they are drafted. Use of AI for proof-reading, grammar-correction, and stylistic advice is permitted in the PhD program, so long as the final written product still reflects the voice and thinking of the student. As stated above, students are fully responsible for any factual



errors or inadvertent plagiarism that occur through use of AI to generate or edit written products and/or visual elements of a paper.

3. Emerging AI-based technology is now available to help generate code for a variety of statistical analysis tools, such as R, Stata, and SAS. Students should abide by the policy of the course instructors and/or research supervisors when considering whether to use AI to help with statistical analysis for work completed to fulfill PhD program requirements. In general, it is permissible to use AI-generated code to complete statistical analysis for the dissertation, so long as the dissertation committee is aware of how the student is using AI and has given prior approval for the use. As stated above, students are fully responsible for any errors or plagiarism that occur through the use of AI.
4. Similarly, AI-based technologies are now available to conduct analysis of qualitative data. Using AI in this way raises important privacy questions since, in many cases, data entered into an AI-based app becomes part of that program's memory bank, and may then be used in part or in whole to respond to another user's prompt. Thus, unless study participants have been made aware of the possibility that their words will become part of the public domain and have explicitly given consent for such use, AI should NOT be used for the purposes of qualitative data analysis. Students should check with course instructors, research supervisors, the DU IRB, and/or dissertation committee members as appropriate to discuss any possible use of AI to assist with qualitative research.
5. Many AI-based applications are now available to assist with literature searches, including applications that provide brief summaries of papers. In general, these programs may be used in a manner similar to Google—that is, they should not be considered the final word on whether literature is available and appropriate for use in a paper or literature review, but they may be used as part of the overall strategy for identifying relevant literature. Students should continue to do their own reading and critical review of literature as they would in any literature search. Refer to the policy above regarding verbatim use of the article summaries, as this would constitute plagiarism unless the wording is changed substantively.
6. As with any emerging technology, students should check with their advisor, research supervisor(s), and/or the Associate Dean for Doctoral Education to inquire about any AI use in courses or research work that isn't addressed in this policy, as new uses may emerge before a new policy can be written. In general, students are advised to check with their advisors, instructors, and the Associate Dean before using AI in a way that is not specifically addressed in this document.