PH.D. PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WELFARE

STUDENT HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024
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INTRODUCTION

The PhD Program in Social Welfare is above all a research doctorate. The Program strives to produce scholars who use research to answer leading edge, social policy, and practice-relevant questions. We prepare students to compete for academic positions in public and private universities and to occupy influential positions as policy analysts and leaders in foundations and government. The Program does not privilege any particular methodology or approach. Instead, we offer courses in both quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis and require students to deepen their research skills through elective courses in advanced and mixed methods. We fully engage our students in the policy and practice issues of the day, and students’ scholarship explores social welfare concerns that emerge from student interests in areas such as criminal justice, child welfare, immigration, mental health, higher education, etc. We offer a basic set of required courses in the areas of qualitative and quantitative research methods, social welfare policy, theory, and statistics.
**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

To obtain a Ph.D. degree in Social Welfare, students must accumulate 51 course credits (8 required courses, 1 required Theory elective, 6 additional electives, and 2 semesters of the Dissertation Seminar), successfully pass the First and Second Examinations, and complete the dissertation.

**Pathway to Degree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in Program</th>
<th>Level and Milestones in Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall semester (9 credits)</td>
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</table>
SSW 71000: Social Welfare Policy & Planning I (3) |  
SSW 75000: Development of Practice Knowledge in Social Work (3) |  
SSW 77000: Methods of Qualitative Analysis (3) |  
Eligible for Completion of 1st Examination |  
Spring semester (9 credits) |  
SSW 70000: Theory Development & Use (3) |  
SSW 71100: Social Welfare Policy & Planning II (3) |  
SSW 75100: Methods of Quantitative Research (3) |  
**Completion of 1st Examination** |
|                 |  
[1st Exam Requirements: Pass the following courses with a grade of “B” or higher: SSW 71000; SSW 75000; SSW 77000; SSW 70000; SSW 71100; and SSW 75100; and complete a Special Project. Students must meet these requirements within 4 semesters of matriculation.] |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall semester (9 credits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
SSW 76000: Methods of Data Analysis (3) |  
Elective Course¹ (3) |  
Elective Course¹ (3) |  
Elective Course¹ (3) |  
Required Theory Elective2 (3) |  
*Must have completed 1st Examination by this Point* |  
Spring semester (9 credits) |  
SSW 76100: Advanced Statistical Analysis (3) |  
Elective Course¹ (3) |  
Elective Course¹ (3) |  
**Completion of 45 credits (after 5th semester)** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall semester (9 credits)</td>
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Spring semester (7 credits) |  
<p>|</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SSW 89900: Dissertation Seminar (3)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elective Course(^1) (3)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Elective Course(^1) (3)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elective Course(^1) (3)</strong></td>
<td><em>Add 1 to 7 weighted units, as needed</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible for Completion of 2(^{nd}) Examination(^3)</strong></td>
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**Level 2**

Completion of 2\(^{nd}\) Examination

[2\(^{nd}\) Exam Requirements: Students may submit their 2\(^{nd}\) Examination upon completion of all course work or 45 credits. The 2\(^{nd}\) Examination tests the student’s ability to develop a research proposal.]

Completion of all coursework (51 credits)

**Level 3**

(Candidacy for PhD in Social Welfare)

Begin identifying Dissertation Committee Chair and committee members\(^5\)

Dissertation Proposal and Defense

Dissertation Project\(^6\) and Defense

[Completion of doctoral program by end of 10\(^{th}\) semester or 5 years]

\(^1\)Students must take at least two of their electives outside of the PhD Program in Social Welfare. Elective course selection should consider how the content will support the student’s dissertation research

\(^2\)Theory electives are selected by the student and approved by the EO. The course should have a substantial focus on theory relevant to the student’s research focus

\(^3\)Students are required to pass the Second Examination within 10 semesters of their matriculation (excluding leaves of absence) to move to Level 3

\(^4\)SSW 90000 bears 1 credit, yet students are billed at 12 credits, thus meeting the 7-credit requirement to maintain full-time status. Students register for SSW 90000: Dissertation Supervision once they reach Level 3: Candidacy for PhD in Social Welfare.

\(^5\)Committee must include three members of the Social Welfare faculty; A fourth outside member may serve with EO approval

\(^6\)IRB approval before any data collection
DESCRIPTION OF REQUIRED SOCIAL WELFARE COURSES

Organizational Theory (SSW 70000)

Social work is largely an organization-based profession. Policy mandates and practice innovations are implemented most often by and through organizations. The capacity to analyze organizations and organization environmental forces as they impact on service implementation and innovation is a critical skill for those seeking to develop knowledge for social work practice. This course aims to assure that students have mastery of the key streams of organization theory and their application in human service organizations. It focuses on the major schools of organization theory and their utility in understanding the functioning and dynamics of human service organizations.

Social Welfare Policy and Planning I (SSW 71000)

In this course, students develop an advanced capacity to analyze and think critically about social welfare policy though exposure to ideological frameworks, economic concepts, and political theory. The course then looks at the impact of social welfare policy (tax, spending, etc.) on service delivery and agency practice. Racism, sexism, heterosexism and decision making power are examined as analytic variables rather than descriptors and applied to explore disparities within social welfare program as well as differential welfare state outcomes. The frameworks presented provide students with the skills and knowledge to analyze the impact of changes in social welfare policy on individual, families and communities; to contextualize social work practice and to advocate for social change.

Social Welfare Policy and Planning II (SSW 71100)

Inequality of access to society’s resources, rewards, and privileges based on the often intersecting socially defined categories of race/ethnicity, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation/identity, class, and disability is a prominent and persistent feature of social arrangements in the United States. These inequalities and the societal values, norms, ideologies, and economic arrangements that underpin them have had a pervasive and powerful influence on social policy across all spheres of social functioning throughout the nation’s history. This course considers the relationship between US social policy and social inequality
based on the above-described socially defined categories. More specifically, it gives a platform for students in their advanced capacity as a social policy analyst to critically examine the extent to which US social policies and their underpinning factors impose and/or supports social inequality to the detriment of the affected in areas such as the economy, health care, housing, immigration, criminal justice, education, and the labor market.

**Development of Practice Knowledge in Social Welfare (SSW 75000)**

This course brings students to an advanced level of understanding issues in social work research. The course covers the nature of empirical knowledge, critical thinking, and the ontology, epistemology and, methodology of various research approaches. Presentations by doctoral faculty members and Ph.D. candidates will illustrate methodological pluralism as closely linked to decision making about methods researchers employ in actual studies. Students will consider the philosophical context and ethical issues in social work research; problem/issue formulation, and the elements of a well-conceptualized, comprehensive, and critical review of the literature that organizes existing knowledge related to a problem/issue of interest.

**Methods of Quantitative Research (SSW 75100)**

The course introduces knowledge and skills needed to design and carry out research that addresses social needs, problems, and social work interventions using quantitative research designs. The course focuses on problem formulation, developing research questions and hypotheses, conceptualizing phenomena, basic sampling, survey research, and pre-experimental, quasi-experimental, and experimental designs. The course will address the strengths and limitations of quantitative research designs and various sampling techniques. The focus is on the logic and design of such studies rather than on data analysis methods addressed in other courses in the program.

**Methods of Qualitative Research I (SSW 77000)**

The purpose of this course is to introduce doctoral students to the field of qualitative research and prepare them in the skills, techniques, and knowledge necessary to undertake independent research using this methodology. The course focuses on five qualitative research perspectives:
narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies. These methods are valuable for collecting rich textured data; discovering themes and categories from textual data; and developing mid-range theories that explain how people experience and work through various problems. This course aims to familiarize students with the different ways of knowing and doing qualitative research on a more advanced level, culminating in the written and oral presentation of a qualitative research proposal.

Methods of Data Analysis (SSW 76000)

This course introduces concepts and provides experiences that enable students to gain a solid understanding of statistical procedures. The goal is to enable students to conduct univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistical analysis of data. This is a course in basic statistical methods used throughout social sciences. It will cover both descriptive and inferential statistics. Class sessions combine lecture and in-class exercises. The statistical computing package used for the course is an open source program called “R.” SPSS or SAS is often used for courses like this one. Major benefits of “R” are that it is free and versatile. Having one free software that does it all, rather than needing many types of expensive software to accomplish the same task, makes it an obvious choice. The course also introduces different software packages throughout, so students become accustomed to reading different formats of the same thing.

Advanced Statistical Analysis (SSW 76100)

This is the second statistics course in a two-course sequence. The major content of the course will have to do with a set of statistical models called analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression. These models are used frequently in all of the social sciences, including social work, education, and psychology. They are also used by public health researchers and others interested in trying to determine if a dependent variable is a function of one or more independent variables. Thus, the course covers material that those interested in quantitative research should find extremely useful. The course may also provide an introduction to some of the more popular, cutting edge techniques used in social science today, such as multilevel modeling, mediation, moderation, structural equation modeling and path analysis.

Dissertation Seminar (89900)
The Dissertation Seminar supports Level 2 students in their submission of the Second Examination and prepares them for the next steps in their progress towards degree completion during Level 3. This includes issues in forming a dissertation committee, writing a dissertation proposal, submitting an IRB/HRRP application, and developing a realistic timeline for completion of the dissertation. It includes professional development activities, including how to write an effective CV, preparing abstracts for conference presentations and papers, writing articles for publication, securing dissertation and other funding, navigating the job market for academic and non-academic employment, pilot research, and other undertakings to maximize the student’s post-graduation experience.

**Dissertation Supervision (90000) By Advisor**

**ELECTIVES**

Students begin to take a series of seven elective courses in the Fall of their second year, which will extend through the Spring of their third year. This coincides with the students beginning to define their area of inquiry, and the use of electives can allow them to develop their specialization. One elective course must be a theory course offered in another social science discipline. Elective courses are chosen under the guidance of the Executive Officer or the student’s mentor and can be taken at the GC or at any one of the member universities of the Interuniversity Doctoral Consortium.

**Required Theory Elective**

The Required Theory Elective is a theory course offered in another social science discipline and includes the reading, critique, and application of theory to a specific topic or research area. This course is chosen under the guidance and approval of the Executive Officer (EO) or faculty advisor/mentor. The following are a few examples of courses that have fulfilled the theory elective for past students:
• WSCP 81000: (De)Constructing Modes of Power
• WSCP 81000: Contemporary Feminist Theories
• UED 72100: Critical Discourse Theory & Analysis
• SOC 86800: Sociology of Culture
• PHIL 77600: Critical Philosophy of Race
• CTCP 71088: Critical Theory
• CHSS 820: Social and Behavioral Dimensions of Health: Theory and Methods (CUNY SPH)
• ASCP 81500: Key Questions in American Studies

Graduate Center Certificate Programs, Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Programs, and the New York Doctoral Consortium

Each semester, several Graduate Center doctoral courses appropriate as electives for Social Welfare students are cross listed with other disciplines. Students may also enroll in other Graduate Center courses offered in Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Educational Psychology, among others. Students may also elect to meet the requirements for certificate programs offered through the Graduate Center in Women’s Studies, Interactive Technology and Pedagogy, Africana Studies, and Demography, among others. Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Programs are also open to students. In addition to fulfilling the requirements of the doctoral program, students can choose to complete a specialization, such as Advanced Social Research, Public Policy and Urban Studies, and Lesbian/Gay/Queer Studies among others.

ADVICEMENT

Students enrolled in their first and second year of the program are formally advised by the Program’s Executive Officer (EO). Students will meet with the EO at least once a semester to review coursework grades, construct an individualized “pathway to degree” and review ways
in which the program is meeting the student’s personal and professional goals. The students are provided with a “self-assessment” document to review and reflect upon prior to the advisement session.

EXAMINATIONS

The First Examination

The First Examination calls on mastery of student’s foundational knowledge of the core content areas of Social Welfare Policy, Theory, Knowledge Development and Research Methods and Analysis.

The First Examination consists of two parts: (1) the students are to pass the following courses with a grade of “B” or higher: SSW 71000; SSW 75000; SSW 77000; SSW 70000; SSW 75100; and SSW 71100; and (2) the students complete an examination project that demonstrates analytic, communication, and dissemination skills by applying the content learned in Year 1 coursework (i.e., knowledge building, social policy, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods, and theory) to a topic of relevance to social welfare.

The First Examination must be completed by the end of four semesters.

Goals for the First Exam:

I. Students are expected to demonstrate a basic understanding of the key concepts presented in the core courses (i.e., knowledge building, social policy, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods, and theory). Students can demonstrate this knowledge by active participation in the core courses and by completing all reading and written assignments with an overall course grade of “B” or higher.

II. Students are expected to integrate the theories and concepts they have learned in the core
courses into their examination project.

III. Students are expected to demonstrate analytic, communication, and dissemination skills by applying the content learned in the core courses to a topic of relevance to social welfare through the examination project.

Instructions and Procedures for the First Exam:

A. Students are to select a project that will demonstrate the application of knowledge acquired from two or more of the six core program courses offered in Year One (i.e., knowledge building, social policy 1 & 2, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods, and theory). Each project must incorporate theory and then at least one other content area (knowledge building, social policy, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods), and other content areas where applicable. We encourage you to be creative in your project and link your project to your future professional and personal goals. The following serve as example projects to consider as you develop your proposal:

a. A paper developed into a manuscript to be submitted for publication. This manuscript can be a new paper or could be reworked from a paper submitted to a course in Year One. The manuscript should be in APA format (7th ed.) and within the word limit/page numbers as specified by the journal. Note: the manuscript does not have to be accepted by a journal when submitting the project for the First Exam, but, at a minimum, should be submitted to the journal and currently under review. Students who select this option for the First Exam must also submit the name of the journal and its guidelines for the type of submission you have selected (e.g., policy review; literature review; original research).

b. A conference presentation at a recognized, professional and/or academic conference relevant to Social Welfare. The submitted project could consist of the submitted abstract,
the presentation slides or poster, and an (actual or mock) audio or visual recording of the student presenting the presentation or poster. Note: the abstract for conference presentation does not have to be accepted when submitting the project for the First Exam.

c. An advocacy project portfolio. The aim of this project is to demonstrate planning, organizing, implementing, and/or participating in an advocacy project. This could include elements of: leveraging social media in ways that are informative and combat misinformation; detailing a policy campaign, conducting a policy analysis; or detailing the involvement in the legislative process.

d. A media and/or creative expression project. The aim of this project is to use media and/or the creative arts to demonstrate and disseminate knowledge. This could include a film/video, a play or theatre production, a portfolio of poetry or photography, or the creation of a virtual platform or emergent virtual reality space.

e. Applying a quantitative and/or qualitative research methodology to a new topic or research question in a way not done before (e.g., writing a research proposal to do a phenomenological inquiry around the experience of marginalization due to immigration status building from an existing study that quantitatively surveyed folks about their experiences). The aim of this project would be on the research methodology that is being applied in a novel way.

f. A collection of pedagogical resources. The aim of this project would be to develop new pedagogical resources, such as syllabi, course assignments with rubrics, and/or learning materials and resources.

B. The student will complete the proposal form for the First Examination and submit the form to the Executive Officer for approval by the end of the spring semester of the first year.
If the Executive Officer does not approve the proposal, the student must re-submit the proposal within two weeks for approval.

C. The student will submit the First Examination final project to the APO before the Fall semester of the second year. The submission should include the final project product as well as a written statement that details how the project is rooted in, and represents the application and/or exploration of, the content and knowledge acquired from theory and at least one other content area from the core program courses offered in Year One (knowledge building, social policy, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods). Note: Students must have passed the First Examination, including any revisions and second attempts no later than the end of the fourth semester.

D. The APO will distribute the submitted project to two faculty members for grading; one member will preferably be a faculty member who has taught one of the six core program courses.

E. The exam is graded on a Pass/Fail basis by the two faculty members as detailed below. Both faculty members must agree to a passing grade in order for the student to pass the First Examination.

**Grading:**

Students will receive a narrative assessment that incorporates comments and feedback from the exam readers according to the following:

1. **Pass**

2. **Fail**

If a student fails the exam, the student will have one opportunity to revise their project. The student must submit their second attempted exam no later than the end of the student’s fourth
semester. A student who fails the second time will no longer be in good academic standing and will be separated from the program.

**First Examination Grading Rubric**

First Examination Project Details:

Students are to select a project that will demonstrate the application of knowledge acquired from two or more of the six core program courses offered in Year One (i.e., knowledge building, social policy 1 & 2, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods, and theory). Each project must incorporate theory and then at least one other content area. The submission should include the final project product as well as a written statement that details how the project is rooted in, and represents the application and/or exploration of, the content and knowledge acquired from theory and at least one other content area from the core program courses. Students are expected to demonstrate analytic, communication, and dissemination skills by applying the content learned in the core courses to a topic of relevance to social welfare through the examination project.

Student Name:
Title of Project:
Type of Project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Pass/Fail: Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Statement</td>
<td>Details how the project is rooted in, and represents the application and/or exploration of, the content and knowledge acquired from theory and at least one other content area from the core program courses offered in Year One (knowledge building, social policy, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Concepts</td>
<td>Identifies as least one theory and integrates the theory within the project</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides a thorough rationale (either within the written statement or the actual project) for how and why the theory was applied to the project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Content Areas</td>
<td>Identifies as least one other content area from the core program courses offered in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year One (knowledge building, social policy, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods) and integrates the content within the project.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a thorough rationale (either within the written statement or the actual project) for how and why this content was applied to the project</td>
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**Critical Analysis**
Can be evidenced through the following:
Accurately and thoroughly interprets evidence, statements, graphics, questions, literary elements, etc.; Asks relevant questions; Analyzes and evaluates key information and alternative points of view clearly and precisely; Fair-mindedly examines beliefs, assumptions, and opinions and weighs them against facts; Draws insightful, reasonable conclusions; Justifies inferences and opinions; Thoughtfully addresses and evaluates major alternative points of view; Thoroughly explains assumptions and reasons.

**Communication**
Written material is clearly presented without typographical or grammatical errors while adhering to APA (7th ed.) format both in the structure/organization of the material and in referencing. Visual/graphic material is clearly presented and labeled and/or described. Audio/verbal communication is well-paced and clearly articulates information.

**Dissemination**
The selection of the project format is appropriate for the intended audience.

**Examiner’s Final Assessment:**
The Second Examination

Students are eligible to submit the Second Examination once they have reached Level 2, which involves passing the First Examination and completing 45 credits. They must be registered for the semester they submit the examination. Ideally, students submit the Examination in April of their Sixth Semester. A timely submission ensures that the examination committee will read the document and meet for the oral portion of the examination by the end of the Spring semester. The faculty is not available to sit for the oral portion of the Second Examination from mid-June through the third week in August. Submissions received after the due date are not guaranteed faculty review until the following semester.

There are two possible outcomes for the Second Examination, Pass or Not Pass. If the student does not pass the Second Examination on the first attempt, they may resubmit a revised examination. The outcomes for the resubmission are Pass or Fail. Failure to pass the Examination a second time results in separation from the Program. Students are required to pass the Examination within 10 semesters of their matriculation (excluding leaves of absence) to move to Level 3.

Upon successfully passing the Second Examination, the student advances to Level Three or candidacy for the Ph.D. in Social Welfare. The Examination Committee informs the Administrative Program Officer (APO) that the student has passed, and the APO reports the change of status to the Registrar’s Office. The student will receive notice of eligibility for the M.Phil. Degree.

Purpose of the second examination

The purpose of the Second Examination is to determine whether a student is ready to move to Level Three or candidacy. The written material and oral presentation and faculty consultation
will enable students to demonstrate their ability to: construct a problem formulation; summarize and synthesize a thorough literature review; identify, describe, and apply the policy context to the problem in its historical and contemporary context; identify, describe, and apply at least one theory to the topic and identified problem; and identify and critically evaluate the research questions that are ‘left unanswered’ and what research methods might be appropriate to answer these questions and why.

Requirements: Second Exam Rubric

The second examination consists of two components: 1) a written paper that covers the content detailed in the second exam outline, and 2) a 90-minute oral presentation and faculty consultation. For the first component, all examination panel members will read the written paper. The second component provides students the opportunity to orally present their second examination and to present specific questions to the faculty that will help the students hone their research study. This time should be used to elaborate and ask questions about the written component of the second exam, but also to discuss students’ plans for their future research with faculty providing guidance and support in moving students more toward their future dissertation proposal. The second exam rubric is used to evaluate the written and oral components of the second examination. Faculty comments are optional unless the student fails a section at which time faculty comments are required. The second examination is graded as a Pass or Fail. A Pass is achieved if students receive a score of 2 or 3 on each of the elements of the grading rubric.

Examination Process
The student will submit the written component of the second examination to the APO. The APO will contact two faculty members to serve on the examinations committee and will request one of the two faculty members to serve as the Chair of the second exam. The APO will schedule the oral presentation and faculty consultation component. The Chair of the examination will lead the discussion of the 90-minute oral presentation and faculty consultation. A recommended process includes the following:

- The chair and one other committee member meet prior to the student joining the meeting (it is recommended that no more than 30 minutes is allocated for this meeting). The Chair and committee member will discuss initial impressions and any general questions or concerns that they want to raise with the student.
- The Chair will determine the order in which the committee members will ask questions and provide feedback to the student.
- The student will then join the meeting with the committee members and will provide an oral presentation of their second exam. Students will not be informed of whether they have passed or failed the examination until the conclusion of the oral presentation and faculty consultation.
- The Chair will facilitate the asking of questions and general feedback.
- At the end of the oral presentation, discussion and sharing of feedback, the student will present specific questions to the faculty members to initiate the faculty consultation portion of the meeting. Students should pose questions related to the student’s research study that will generate consultation on how to move toward their dissertation proposal.
- At the end of the presentation and consultation portions of the meeting, the committee may ask the student to leave for the committee to deliberate in their final decision. The
committee must decide whether the student has successfully achieved the goals and met the requirements of the second examination, which consists of passing at all sections on the examination rubric with a rating of 2 or 3.

- Once the decision is reached, the Chair will ask the student to return and will provide the student with the result of the exam.
- The Chair will report the results to the EO and APO.
- If the student fails, they will be provided with written feedback on the rubric, and they may reach out to any committee member and seek further guidance in preparation for revising and resubmitting the exam.

Outline for Second Examination

The second examination tests a student’s ability to construct a problem formulation; summarize and synthesize a thorough literature review; identify, describe, and apply the policy context to the problem; identify, describe, and apply at least one theory to the topic and identified problem; and identify and critically evaluate the research questions that are ‘left unanswered’ and what research methods might be appropriate to answer these questions and why. The paper component of the exam should not exceed 50 pages excluding references. In order to Pass, students must receive an 80% or above on all sections (i.e., at least a 4 out of 5 rating). A student will Fail if they receive less than 80% on one or more sections. If the student fails, the student will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit the exam within one academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Questions to Answer within Each Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Formulation</td>
<td>Does this introductory section provide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• an introduction to the research problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• an argument for the significance of the problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• research and/or theoretical evidence for the significance of the problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a rationale for the relevance of the research topic to the knowledge base, practice, and/or policy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• an ending to the section that clearly articulates the research aim that aligns with the problem and study purpose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• an overall discussion that moves from the general discussion of the research topic to the specific focus of your study area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context of Social Policy</td>
<td>Does this social policy section provide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading Rubric</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The learning outcomes of the second examination consist of the following:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• able to construct a problem formulation;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• able to summarize and synthesize a thorough literature review;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• able to identify, describe, and apply the policy context to the problem;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• able to identify, describe, and apply at least one theory to the topic and identified problem;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• identify and critically evaluate the research questions that are ‘left unanswered’ and what research methods might be appropriate to answer these questions and why.

Based on the learning outcomes above, the rubric below will be used to assess the second examination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 Exceeds Standards</th>
<th>2 Meets Standards</th>
<th>1 Does Not Meet Standards</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background &amp; Rationale</strong></td>
<td>The introduction makes a strong case for the significance of the inquiry into the research topic. The topic of inquiry has clear capacity to affect social welfare and contribute to the research literature. Broader political and theoretical context is well-delineated. Provides clearly appropriate evidence to support position.</td>
<td>The introduction makes a case for the significance of the inquiry into the research topic. The topic of inquiry has capacity to affect social welfare and contribute to the research literature. Broader political and theoretical context is introduced. Provides adequate evidence to support position.</td>
<td>The introduction does not provide sufficient evidence to support and justify the significance of the inquiry into the research topic, or does not sufficiently introduce the topic of inquiry. There is little or no introduction and discussion of the broader political and theoretical context. Provides no evidence to support position.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review of Relevant Literature</strong></td>
<td>The literature review situates the study in the context of previous research, presents a critical synthesis of empirical literature according to relevant themes, variables, or concepts, justifies how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap or problem in the literature, and outlines the theoretical or conceptual framework of the study.</td>
<td>The literature review provides a meaningful summary of the literature that demonstrates some understanding of relevant literature. Basic literature search. Minimal mention of seminal or landmark studies (where appropriate). The majority of the literature is published within the past 10 years.</td>
<td>The literature review is incomplete and provides partial coverage with limited empirical studies. The review lacks synthesis of the literature, logical organization, or rationale for study addressing gap in literature. No mention of seminal or landmark studies (where appropriate).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualization</td>
<td>Minimal relevance of the literature to the larger political and theoretical context.</td>
<td>appropriate). No relevance of the literature to the larger political and theoretical context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Conceptualization</td>
<td>The manuscript demonstrates originality and critical thinking. The purpose and significance are clear. The manuscript integrates political and theoretical content as appropriate to the topic of inquiry. The research question(s) and/or hypotheses, aim(s), or objective(s) in relation to the topic of inquiry are clearly explained. Parts fit together in a coherent whole.</td>
<td>The manuscript demonstrates minimal originality and critical thinking. The purpose and significance are reasonable. The manuscript refers to political and theoretical content, yet is not fully integrated as appropriate to the topic of inquiry. The research question(s) and/or hypotheses, aim(s), or objective(s) in relation to the topic of inquiry are reasonably explained. Parts generally fit together in a coherent whole.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style and Format</td>
<td>The manuscript consistently follows APA style and format requirements and models the language and conventions used in scholarly literature. Literature is properly cited.</td>
<td>The manuscript generally follows APA style and format requirements and models the language and conventions used in scholarly literature. May have a few instances in which citations are missing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The manuscript does not follow APA style or format requirements. The manuscript lacks proper citations or includes no citations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>The manuscript is well written and ideas are well developed and explained. Sentences and paragraphs are grammatically correct. Writing is well-organized with appropriate transitions and logical flow for a coherent argument.</td>
<td>The manuscript effectively communicates ideas. The writing is grammatically correct, but some sections lack clarity. Writing is generally well-organized with appropriate transitions and logical flow for a coherent argument.</td>
<td>The manuscript is poorly written and confusing. Ideas are not communicated effectively. Many sections lack clarity. Writing does not follow academic conventions and is not well organized. The transitions and logical flow are poorly developed and prevent the reader from following the argument.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Upon passing the Second Examination, the student advances to Level Three and can begin the formal process of identifying a Dissertation Committee Chair and committee members. Students decide which faculty members they will approach, and faculty members may accept or decline the role as chair for that dissertation. Students may consider preparing a précis describing their ideas for dissertation research for faculty members they may approach to serve as their dissertation chair or committee members.

Selecting the Dissertation Chair and Committee Members

The dissertation committee is comprised of a chair and two committee members. All committee members must be members of CUNY’s Doctoral faculty with the chair and at least one other committee member serving on the PhD in Social Welfare faculty. Current faculty members are listed on the program website. A student or dissertation chair may request a faculty member from within CUNY, who is not already a CUNY Doctoral faculty member, to serve as a full member of the dissertation committee. That faculty member must agree to serve on the Social Welfare doctoral faculty for the purpose of sitting as a full member of the student’s dissertation committee. The Executive Committee votes on the appointment, and the Graduate Center must approve the appointment. In addition, in consultation with the dissertation chair, the student may request a fourth member who is not a member of the Social Welfare doctoral faculty or a CUNY faculty member. Outside committee members must be approved by the Executive Officer, and it is the student’s responsibility to provide a current curriculum vitae for a proposed outside member. Once the chair and committee are agreed upon, the student informs the APO of the names of the chair and all committee members with their contact information.

Identifying a Chair
The student is responsible for selecting a currently sitting Social Welfare doctoral faculty member to chair their dissertation. Choosing a chair requires a mutual agreement, and faculty members may decline to serve. Students should keep in mind the activities involved in chairing a dissertation. The chair oversees the dissertation from proposal through the defense. The chair works with the student to develop and design the dissertation research; decides when the proposal is ready for defense; runs both the proposal defense and the dissertation defense; reviews and signs the IRB/HRHP application; works with the student to complete the writing of the dissertation; and determines when the dissertation is ready for defense. The student and chair should develop a clear agreement about how they will work together and agree on their mutual expectations. Students who have difficulty identifying a faculty member to serve as chair should consult with the Executive Officer.

**Identifying Committee Members Other than the Chair**

The student is responsible for asking two doctoral faculty members to serve as committee members with at least one of these members serving on the PhD in Social Welfare faculty. Alternatively, the student and chair may propose a CUNY faculty member willing and eligible to serve on the doctoral faculty for the purpose of serving on the committee who is approved as above. Composing the dissertation committee is best done in consultation with the student’s chair. Choosing the committee members requires mutual agreements, and faculty members may decline to serve. The committee members usually read dissertation drafts and participate in the proposal defense and the dissertation defense. The responsibilities of committee members vary during the process of preparing the proposal and the dissertation for defense, depending on the chair’s style of working with the student and with the committee. The student,
chair, and the committee members should develop a clear agreement about the process of working together and understanding of their mutual expectations. Students who have difficulty in identifying faculty who might serve as committee members may consult with the Executive Officer.

Writing the Dissertation Proposal

The proposal is written under the guidance of the chair, and the chair may select a format for the proposal that they find suitable; there is no departmental format requirement for the Proposal. The proposal should include a timeline for completing the dissertation. The chair may or may not suggest that the student consult with the committee members prior to submission of the proposal for defense. However, the committee members must have copies of the proposal three weeks prior to the defense. The chair decides when the proposal is ready for defense and may or may not ask committee members for their approval of its readiness. The student is responsible for proposal draft conforming to APA 7th Edition style. Students may not begin data collection without HRRP approval.

The Dissertation Proposal Defense

The dissertation chair runs the defense. Under the chair’s guidance, the student may be asked to prepare a short presentation summarizing the key elements of the dissertation, for example using a PowerPoint presentation. The Proposal Defense should include discussion of the proposal’s merits and any suggestions for revisions or reworking the design for the dissertation or other input from the committee members. The committee decides if the student is ready to proceed to work on the dissertation. At the end of the defense, the student is informed of the committee’s disposition, and the student and the chair and/or the committee agree to next steps in the dissertation process. The student may be asked to revise the proposal, and if so, the
student will rewrite the proposal as discussed in the defense. If the committee decides on a
revision, the committee may or may not convene an additional defense.

The following are the current guidelines and procedures for the Proposal Defense.

**Dissertation Proposal Defense Pre-Process Steps**

1. The student submits the final proposal to the chair (approximately 5 weeks before the planned defense date)
2. Once the chair has determined the final proposal is ready for dissemination, the chair sends the proposal out to the committee members. Committee members are given 3 weeks to read the materials and complete the dissertation proposal evaluation form, which is to be sent back to the chair.
3. If all committee members indicate that the proposal requires minor or no revisions (e.g., grammatical errors; clarification or further elaboration of existing content; adaptions to presentation of data or findings), then the chair will move forward with having the student schedule the proposal defense (step 4). If one or more committee members indicate the proposal to require major revisions (e.g., additional data collection and/or data analysis; additional chapters; entire rewrites or restructuring of existing chapters), the committee chair will have a further conversation with the committee members regarding the concerns. It is anticipated that a defense will not be scheduled if a committee member recommends major revisions. If major revisions are required the student will make the revisions and the chair will approve the revisions before moving to the scheduling of a defense.
4. The student will schedule the defense date for approximately 2 weeks from the point when the materials are deemed to require minor or no revisions.
5. Upon successful completion of the defense, the student will send the *Dissertation Proposal Approval Form* to the APO.
IRB (HRPP) Application

The student must secure IRB/HRPP clearance before collecting any original data or analyzing...
any secondary data for any research project conducted while they are a student and for the dissertation research. The student may have received IRB/HRPP approval for a pilot study before the proposal stage, in which case they may only need to submit amendments to the protocol for expanding the research for the dissertation. The chair will help the student determine when IRB/HRPP submission for the dissertation research is required. The student’s application must go through the IRB/HRPP office of the chair’s CUNY campus. If the chair is a central line Graduate Center faculty member, the application must go through the Graduate Center IRB/HRPP. As part of the electronic IRB/HRPP application process, the student electronically invites the chair to be on the research team to enable the chair’s signature. The student must ensure their CITI certificate and the chair’s CITI certificate is up to date. For questions and concerns about preparing the IRB/HRPP application, please consult Rebecca Banchik at the Graduate Center HRPP Office at rbanchik@gc.cuny.edu. Please also view CUNY’s HRPP Policy on Faculty Advisor Responsibilities.

THE DISSERTATION

Completing the Dissertation: Research, Analysis, and Writing

The student should develop a working contract with the dissertation chair, which can be informal or formal as per the chair’s discretion and set up a timeline for completion of the research. The student works in consultation with the chair while conducting the research and writing the dissertation and consults with committee members as warranted. It is advisable to schedule regular meetings.

Guidelines for the conventional and three-paper dissertation options are available on the program website.
The dissertation is written under the guidance of the chair, and the chair may select a format they find suitable. The dissertation must comply with the *Dissertation Office Manuscript Format Checklist*. The student is required to ensure the dissertation conforms to *APA 7th Edition* style and should seek editorial assistance if necessary to achieve proper formatting.

**The Dissertation Defense**

The faculty is not available to sit for a dissertation defense from mid-June through the third week in August. Customarily, the defense has been closed to people other than the chair, committee members, and the student; however, students may invite guests to hear the defense with the approval of the chair.

There are four possible outcomes for the defense: pass without revisions; pass with minor revisions; pass with major revisions; and fail. If the outcome is pass with minor revisions, only the dissertation chair will review the changes. If the outcome is pass with major revisions, it must be resubmitted for approval by the chair and two members of the examination committee. If the student fails the defense, the chair and committee members make written recommendations for the student to follow.

Revisions and corrections are common, and students should factor in time to respond to any concerns raised by faculty members in the defense. The EO must sign off on all dissertations and may also raise concerns about the quality of the work and the presentation of the dissertation for deposit.

The following are the current guidelines and procedures for the Dissertation Defense.

**Dissertation Defense Pre-Process Steps**

1. The student submits the final dissertation to the chair (approximately 5 weeks before the planned defense date)
2. Once the chair has determined the final dissertation is ready for dissemination, the chair sends the dissertation out to the committee members. Committee members are given 3 weeks to read the materials and complete the final defense evaluation form, which is to be sent back to the chair.

3. If all committee members indicate that the dissertation requires minor or no revisions (e.g., grammatical errors; clarification or further elaboration of existing content; adaptations to presentation of data or findings), then the chair will move forward with having the student schedule the dissertation defense (step 4). If one or more committee members indicate the dissertation to require major revisions (e.g., additional data collection and/or data analysis; additional chapters; entire rewrites or restructuring of existing chapters), the committee chair will have a further conversation with the committee members regarding the concerns. It is anticipated that a defense will not be scheduled if a committee member recommends major revisions. If major revisions are required, the student will make the revisions and the chair will approve the revisions before moving to the scheduling of a defense.

4. The student will schedule the defense date for approximately 2 weeks from the point when the materials are deemed to require minor or no revisions.

5. Upon successful completion of the defense, the student will send the *Report of Final Examination Form* to the APO.
Student submits final dissertation to Chair
(approximately 5 week prior to proposed defense date)

Chair sends dissertation out to committee members for review with the dissertation evaluation form

Committee members have 3 weeks to review the dissertation, and assess the dissertation for "minor or no revisions" or "major revisions". Members document the decision on the dissertation evaluation form, and send the form to the Chair.

Chair will discuss with any member their concerns if a recommendation of "major revisions" is given and the student will revise to the point of "minor or no revisions"

The student will schedule the defense for approximately 2 weeks from the point of "minor or no revisions". After the defense, the student will send the Final Dissertation Approval form to the APO.
Dissertation Deposit

The process for depositing the dissertation and resources for students planning to deposit can be found on the Mina Rees Library website.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT RESEARCH

Graduate Center Dissertation Fellowships

Level Three students who have made substantial progress in their dissertation research and who are entering their final year of doctoral study are the most successful competitors for dissertation-year fellowships from The Graduate Center. The strong likelihood that the student will complete the dissertation during the award year is a criterion for selection. These fellowships are administered through the Office of the Provost. Each award is given for one year and cannot be renewed. When they apply for a fellowship, students must be registered or on an approved leave of absence and must be officially advanced to candidacy. They should also carefully read application instructions that describe submission requirements.

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

Definition of Levels and Advancement to Candidacy

Tuition charges are based on a student's level within the Program as follows:

Level I: Students remain at Level One until they have completed all 45 credits of required course work, including the first semester of the Professional Seminar.

Level II: After completion of all 45 credits of course work and the first semester of the Professional seminar, students advance to Level Two. At Level Two, they may submit the Second Examination.

Level III: Upon passing the Second Examination, students advance to candidacy and are eligible for the degree Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.).

Maintaining Full Time Status
The program does not accept students on a part-time basis, and students must maintain full-time status while in the Program. If a student registers for less than the seven credits required for full-time status, they must also register for Weighted Instructional Units (WIUs) to make up the balance.

**Transfer Credit**

Students may transfer up to six credits of doctoral level courses as electives towards the seven-course elective requirement. Students requesting transfer of credits must submit course outlines to the EO for review and must be prepared to submit official transcripts to the Registrar. Once approved, the EO submits a transfer recommendation form to the Registrar’s office for final approval.

**Registration Procedures**

Continuing students who are enrolled may sign up for courses during the initial registration period that runs about four weeks, usually in May and June for the Fall Semester and December and January for the Spring Semester. At that time, on-line registration is open to all students who do not have holds because of financial, academic concerns, or other concerns. The Registrar’s Office sends instructions for completing registration to every student’s preferred email address. Students may change their registration during the add/drop period which extends through the third week of every semester.

**Interuniversity Doctoral Consortium**

The Graduate Center is a member of the New York City Interuniversity Doctoral Consortium. Schools in the Consortium include Columbia (GSAS and Teachers College), Fordham (GSAS),
The New School for Social Research, NYU (GSAS), Rutgers, SUNY Stony Brook, and Princeton. The student must have completed at least one year of study in the doctoral program and may only register for courses not normally available at the Graduate Center. Students must obtain approval from the Executive Officer to take courses through the Consortium.

To register for a consortium course, students initiate the process by completing the **Inter-University Doctoral Consortium Registration Form**. Once the request has been reviewed, students will be notified of their approval status as well as the next steps. Please see the website regarding **consortium permits**.

**Grades**

The following grades and quality points are given to students in the Ph.D. Program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>A+</th>
<th>4.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To remain in good standing in the Ph.D. Program, students must maintain a 3.0 (B) average or better. The Registrar’s website has a complete listing of **possible grades** assigned for doctoral level courses.

**Grades of Incomplete and Their Removal**

Students who are unable to complete their work for a course within the allotted time period may request a grade of incomplete ("INC") from the faculty member. The Registrar puts a hold on the registration of any student who has more than two grades of incomplete, and Ph.D.
Program administration oversees their removal. Incompletes must be resolved within one year.

Maintaining Satisfactory Progress

The Ph.D. Program takes each student's steady movement toward the doctorate seriously. Student progress is assessed each semester. The following are impediments to maintaining status in the program and may result in separation from the program:

- Failure to pass the First Examination;
- Failure to maintain a B average in coursework;
- Failure to pass the Second Examination within one year after completing all coursework and before the end of 10 semesters of matriculation;
- Accumulation of three or more grades of incomplete ("INC") or two grades of no record of progress ("NRP")
- Exceeding 16 semesters of matriculation for completing the Ph.D. or without approval from the student’s dissertation chair and the Executive Officer’s assertion the student is making satisfactory progress towards completion.

Leaves of Absence

Students who wish to interrupt their doctoral study may be granted leaves of absence for up to a total of four semesters. Students should submit the Application for a Leave of Absence to the EO least two weeks before the first day of classes for the semester in which the leave is to begin. If the leave is warranted, the EO will forward the application to the Office of the Registrar for approval. Leaves of absence must be cleared by the Office of Financial Aid, the Mina Rees Library, the Bursar, the Business Office, and, if applicable, the Offices of International Students and Residence Life. No changes in academic status may occur during the leave period. These include scheduling or taking the required examination, moving from one tuition level to another, advancing to candidacy, or defending a dissertation proposal or
dissertation. Students who are not United States citizens should ensure that a leave of absence does not affect their visa status.

The Office of the Registrar automatically generates registration materials for returning students based on the period of time stipulated for the leave of absence.

Withdrawal from the Ph.D. Program

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the Program should submit the Request for Withdrawal form to the EO. Withdrawals must be cleared by the Office of Financial Aid, the Mina Rees Library, the Bursar, the Business Office, and, if applicable, the Offices of International Students and Residence Life. To return to the Program, a student applies for readmission and is evaluated by the Executive Officer. Students who have been withdrawn from the program for less than four years may fill out an electronic Application for Readmission. Readmission is at the discretion of the Executive Officer. Students who have been withdrawn from the program for four or more years must apply to the program as a new student and must complete an Application for Admission available online.

GOVERNANCE

Governance and Student Membership on Committees

Under the Bylaws, the Program has three standing committees, each with two student members elected by the student body. Each student member serves for a two-year term. The Executive Committee provides consultation and advice to the Executive Officer and meets at least twice a semester. The Curriculum Committee works on curriculum issues and meets as necessary during the year. All members of the Admissions Committee conduct initial review of applications to the program and participate in the Committee’s final decision process. The
Admissions Committee conducts its work primarily in the Spring semester. Each year students elect two members to represent them on each of the Program’s standing committees. In addition, students elect a representative to the Graduate Council, which is the central curricular policy-making body of the Graduate Center.

See the GC’s Student Handbook for more Graduate Center policies and procedures.