

PHD PROGRAM HANDBOOK
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
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SIMMONS UNIVERSITY
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GENERAL INFORMATION

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook describes the general guidelines, practices, and procedures that pertain to the Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work Program. We hope it will be a useful resource during your time in the PhD Program. Changes to specific policies and procedures may be introduced during the academic year, and can be found in the online version of this Handbook posted and dated on the School website. Please check the online Handbook if you have questions about the currency of particular policies and procedures.

This handbook is not a contract, but rather an informational guide for students and faculty alike. Simmons University in general, and the School of Social Work (SSW), specifically, retain the unilateral right to modify or change the guidelines, practices, and procedures reflected in this handbook, or to tailor those guidelines, practices and procedures for the particular situation in the interest of the University and the School.

Students are responsible for knowing School of Social Work policies and the policies of Simmons University.

PROGRAM MISSION

The School of Social Work at Simmons University has offered a Ph.D. degree in Social Work since 1983. The PhD Program prepares students to assume a variety of leadership roles within the profession as advanced clinical practitioners, educators, scholars and researchers. The curriculum is designed to help expert clinicians become research-trained scholar practitioners. Doctoral students graduate with extensive research training and experience and the ability to translate research into practice.

OVERVIEW

The PhD Program is a total of 51 credits. Required courses are taken in the first phase of the program followed by a comprehensive exam in both written and oral format. After successful completion of the comprehensive exam, in the second phase, students must submit an empirical research paper to a peer reviewed scientific journal to demonstrate their substantive expertise in a specific area before a student can advance to candidacy and progress into the dissertation phase. The third phase, is the dissertation phase. Students are also required to complete a teaching practicum and research practicum during their time in the program. Students usually complete the PhD Program within 4 - 8 years.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

GENERAL PROCEDURES

The PhD Program runs on a three-semester calendar Fall, Spring, Summer (September – July). Applicants should apply by February 1st for full consideration for admission and financial aid for the following September. Applications submitted after February 1st will be considered on a case by case basis after that.

All applicants must have experience as social workers and, in most cases, must hold a master's degree from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Applicants must submit a personal statement, a resume, a writing sample, three letters of recommendation, academic transcripts, the results of the GRE exam, and participate in an interview as part of the admissions process. An applicant for whom English is not the native language must achieve a satisfactory score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Details regarding application for admission can be found on the School of Social Work's website.

In order to hold a place in the PhD Program for the following fall, a tuition deposit must be received by June 1. Deferrals are permitted at the discretion of the School of Social Work. If an applicant is admitted to the PhD Program but requests a deferral, any deferral that is granted would extend until the start of the following Fall semester only.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

If a person wishes to transfer into the SSW PhD Program from another PhD program attended within the past five years, the individual must complete the regular admission application. In addition, transfer applicants must submit official transcripts and syllabi for those courses and assignments completed that the applicant seeks to transfer in as credited courses in order for the School to determine if material covered is equivalent to that covered in courses in our PhD Program.

If the applicant is accepted, a simple majority of the Doctoral Committee will be needed to approve the courses and number of credits that can be transferred. The Director of the PhD Program will inform the applicant in writing of the committee's determination of transfer credits.

Transfer credits will not be accepted after the first semester in the program. To be transferred, a grade of "B" or better must be received in the course. Courses for transfer must be at least 3 credits, and they must be taken on a doctoral level. A maximum of 9 credits may be transferred. The transfer student is required to complete all other PhD program requirements at the SSW.

FINANCIAL AID

The PhD Program offers scholarships to eligible students who demonstrate exceptional promise. For questions about non-scholarship based financial aid contact Student Financial Services.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Charge: The faculty delegates the PhD Program Committee to set policy and implement procedures for the PhD Program. This is accomplished within the general guidelines, policies, and procedures of the School of Social Work through the Faculty Policy Manual Implementation Guidelines. In implementing this charge, the Doctoral Program Committee:

- Reviews the applications of prospective students and determines their admission to the PhD Program;
- Develops, reviews, and revises the PhD Program's curriculum and procedures;
- Develops, administers, and determines the outcome of the Comprehensive Examination;
- Develops, reviews and revises procedures for the dissertation process;
- Makes recommendations to the Faculty regarding awarding of the PhD degree.

Committee Membership: The Committee consists of all full-time SW faculty who teach in the PhD Program within any two-year period, the Director of the PhD Program (who serves a term as Director by appointment of the Director of the School of Social Work), the MSW Program Director, the BSW Program Director, and one SSW faculty member who does not teach in the PhD Program who holds an earned PhD degree, and is actively engaged in peer-reviewed scholarship including research. The doctoral qualified faculty member will be elected by the SSW faculty to serve on the committee for a term of two years. In addition, the committee includes as the School of Social Work Director. The SSW Director, MSW and BSW Program Directors serve as ex-officio. Every faculty member of the committee, except for ex-officio, has one vote when it is called for. Two doctoral students (one from the dissertating cohort and one from the pre-dissertation cohort) will be selected by their classmates each year to serve one-year committee terms. Student members do not have a vote, and are excluded from participating in meetings when individual student issues are discussed.

STUDENT ADVISING

A faculty advisor is assigned to each student when they enter the PhD Program. Students are free to change advisors after the first semester, but must alert their current advisor to this change. When a student chooses their dissertation committee, the chairperson of the dissertation committee becomes the student's advisor. The advisee is expected to meet with their advisor at least once each semester at a minimum. Students have primary responsibility for scheduling these meetings. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor regularly to establish a productive mentoring relationship. Typically, this is 2-3 times a semester prior to completing the comprehensive exams. Once a student advances to candidacy, meetings are scheduled with the dissertation committee chair as needed. Both the time of the advisor and the advisee should be respected in regards to the scheduling of and frequency of meetings.

During the period of time when students are taking courses, before the comprehensive exam, meetings between students and advisors focus on progress through the program, development of professional identity including areas of research interest. After the comprehensive exams, when a student has

advanced to candidacy and selected a dissertation chair, advising focuses on the dissertation work and professional development.

Students who require support related to personal issues or general academic concerns that fall outside of the traditional advisor role are encouraged to seek assistance through the SSW Academic Services Coordinator, Student Counseling Center, the Writing Center, the Student Success Center or other student resources on campus.

Students experiencing emergencies or who are in crisis should contact 911 Emergency Services.

DOCTORAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION

The Simmons College School of Social Work Doctoral Student Organization (DSO) is a student group that is designed to provide mutual support among PhD students at all phases of the program. The DSO's primary goals are to assist students through the normal challenges of the program, to provide support during transitions and adjustments, and to provide a forum for information sharing among students and with faculty. The DSO is student-led and operated.

COMPONENTS OF THE PhD CURRICULUM

OVERVIEW

PhD program requirements include required and elective coursework, research and teaching practicums, a publishable paper, comprehensive exams, and a dissertation. From time to time the curriculum will be revised by the Doctoral Committee to meet student learning needs. Current PhD students will be advised of any changes and related implications for their course of study by the Director of the PhD program.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

All students are required to take and pass the following courses prior to taking the comprehensive exam:

- SW 626 Critical Analysis of Clinical Practice
- SW 631 Philosophy of Science
- SW 610 Social and Behavioral Theory
- SW 650 Quantitative Scientific Methods
- SW 651 Introduction to Statistics and Data Analysis
- SW 652 Introduction to Multiple Variable Statistics
- SW 654 Qualitative Scientific Methods
- SW 635 Qualitative Data Analysis
- SW 634 Policy Analysis in Political, Social and Economic Contexts
- SW 670 Integrating Public Policy Issues and Outcomes into Social Work Research
- SW 633 Survey Research Methods
- SW 624 Intervention Research

In addition, all students are required to take before their dissertation hearing:

- 2 elective courses
- SW 671 Teaching methodologies, course design and assessment
- SW 691 Educational Application and Immersion Experience: Teaching Practicum
- SW 690 Community-Based Participatory Research: Models and Methods + Research practicum

ELECTIVE COURSES

Students are required to take two elective courses and may take additional courses in excess of the required coursework. Elective courses should focus on areas of interest and knowledge that fall outside the scope of required courses. Elective courses can be taken at any time. Students should consult with their advisor about the selection of elective courses.

Electives may be taken at Simmons or outside of the University. Electives taken outside of Simmons University require prior approval of the Director of the PhD program. Students must fill out a formal request to take electives externally (see Appendix). Students taking external courses must submit an official college or university transcript and officially request to transfer elective credits to Simmons through the university registrar. Non-Receipt of a transcript by the proper deadline could impact on a student's graduation date.

After the course is completed, students must submit a copy of the course syllabus (if they did not already), an official copy of a transcript from the external institution, along with a written email request to transfer credits into the PhD program. Students must earn a B in the elective in order to transfer credits.

In rare circumstances, after an elective is approved, transfer of credit from an external institution may be denied if the external course is abbreviated or deviates substantially from what is presented in this proposal.

HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION CERTIFICATE

Social Work PhD students may obtain a certificate in teaching from the Health Professions Educational Doctoral program while they are enrolled at Simmons. This is a three-course certificate. To obtain the certificate, students substitute the following SW courses

- SW 671 Teaching methodologies, course design and assessment
- SW 691 Educational Application and Immersion Experience: Teaching Practicum

With the equivalent HPED courses:

- HPED 531 Teaching methodologies, course design and assessment
- HPED 541 Educational Application and Immersion Experience: Teaching Practicum

And add this third course:

- HPED 521 Learning theory and practice

HPED 521 will count as an elective for the PhD program.

INDEPENDENT STUDY

An Independent Study provides an opportunity for doctoral students to pursue knowledge and research in fields related to professional interests or objectives not represented in regular course offerings. Students may earn three elective credits by successfully completing an Independent Study with a Simmons University faculty member. No more than two Independent Studies can be undertaken during a student's progress through the Program. To complete an Independent Study, the student must submit a proposal to the Director of the PhD Program for approval using the Independent Study form (See Appendix). Students must register for the independent study in the semester that it takes place.

TEACHING PRACTICUM

A teaching practicum is required for all students regardless of prior teaching experience. Students register for the 3-credit teaching practicum course SW 691 concurrent with the practicum experience. The practicum experience requires 100 hours of teaching-related activities. Students design their practicum experience in coordination with the faculty member they select as their teaching mentor and guidelines for the practicum course.

In rare cases, a teaching practicum may need to be extended or repeated if it is determined by the practicum mentor and/or the PhD Program Director that the 100 hours requirement was not met or that the student performed below expected standards in their practicum work.

Guidelines for the teaching practicum are found in the Appendices.

RESEARCH PRACTICUM

A research practicum is required for all students regardless of prior research experience. Students register for the 3-credit research practicum course - SW 690 Community-Based Participatory Research: Models and Methods either before or concurrent with their research practicum experience. Students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of research-related activities. Students design their practicum experience in coordination with the faculty member they select as a research mentor.

Options for a research practicum include:

Option A: Students may identify and affiliate with ongoing funded research projects relevant to social work that are situated in their geographic areas.

Option B: Members of the SSW faculty who hold an earned doctorate may offer the opportunity to one or more selected PhD students to participate in a specific piece of faculty-directed research.

Option C: Any student or group of students may propose a student-generated research project provided that the student(s) is able to recruit a faculty member with an earned doctorate to supervise the project.

Students' involvement in any of these options should not be limited to one role, task, or activity (e.g., coding only, or interviewing only), but should allow students to become acquainted with both the substance and the processes of the research.

A written proposal is submitted to the PhD Program Director (see the Appendices). A report on the research practicum is submitted at the completion of the practicum describing the work done and activities engaged in, how learning objectives were met, and reflections on the practicum experience. The research mentor will also submit a brief statement evaluating the student's performance in the practicum.

In rare cases, a research practicum may need to be extended or repeated if it is determined by the practicum mentor and/or the PhD Program Director that the 100 hours requirement was not met or that the student performed below expected standards in their practicum work.

THE PUBLISHABLE PAPER

Students are required to submit an empirical manuscript to a scientific peer review journal prior to advancing to candidacy. The manuscript must be approved for submission by the student's adviser and the Director of the PhD Program. Students are permitted to have co-authors on the paper with the provision that co-authors contribute to the paper, and that the student will be listed as first author and have participated in all aspects of the study the paper is reporting on and writing of all sections of the paper. The manuscript must be submitted in accordance with the journal's instructions. Detailed description of all authors contributions to the manuscript must be delineated on the Publishable Paper submission form provided in the Appendix.

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Students must complete all required coursework with passing grades to be eligible to take the comprehensive exam. The exam has a written and oral component. Students must pass both components during the same exam period in order to pass the comprehensive exam. The process for the exam is as follows:

- Each instructor who teaches a required course will submit two (2) exam questions that capture key concepts from their course to the Director of the PhD program.
- The questions will be peer-reviewed by the entire Doctoral Committee and a final set of questions will be agreed upon as constituting the exam.
- Students will receive the exam by email at an appointed start date. The exam will contain detailed instructions for completing it.
- Students will submit the exam electronically by the appointed submission date and time.
- The Doctoral Committee will review each written exam.
- Students must attend an oral examination with the Doctoral Committee at an appointed date and time. The oral exam is a discussion between the Doctoral Committee and the student about the written exam.

- At the end of the oral exam, the student is verbally given an assessment of pass or fail for the comprehensive exam.

If a student is unable to take the written or oral component of the comprehensive exam on the assigned date or schedule, due to significant illness or emergency circumstances, the student must contact the Director of the PhD program in writing to report this inability and request an alternate exam date. In this situation, the Director of the PhD program will consult with the Doctoral Committee to determine when an alternate exam date can be scheduled. In most cases, the exam will be rescheduled no more than 2 weeks later than the original exam date.

Students who have approved accommodations through Simmons University Disability Services for coursework, and who intend to request accommodations for the comprehensive exam, must provide an accommodation letter to the Director of the PhD program at least 4 weeks prior to the beginning of the exam period.

QUALIFICATION INTO DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

Students advance into doctoral candidacy when all of these conditions are met:

- All required coursework has successfully been completed.
- The student has a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- The student has passed the comprehensive exam.
- The student has completed the publishable paper requirement.

Only when these conditions are met may students formally identify themselves as doctoral candidates. It is highly advised that students do not list an anticipated year of graduation as part of their student status as time to completion of the program is variable.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL CONTINUANCE AND DISSERTATION CONTINUANCE

After attaining candidacy continuance course registration is required until graduation. Students register for the Dissertation Proposal Continuance through the semester that a dissertation proposal is approved by their dissertation committee. After that, students register for the Dissertation Continuance until they have successfully completed the dissertation hearing. Continuance credits are registered for, but not counted towards the final degree credit count.

Enrollment in the dissertation proposal continuance and/or dissertation continuance courses is required to retain active student status at Simmons University and retain student benefits such as access to professors, email, and library privileges. Failure to register for continuance courses will result in administrative withdrawal from the program.

Candidates are required to submit a dissertation proposal a maximum of two academic years after completion of all required coursework. The dissertation must be completed within three academic years after the dissertation proposal is successfully defended. Candidates may apply to the Doctoral Committee for extensions to these time periods. Extensions will be considered on a case by case basis.

and are not guaranteed. Common reasons for extensions may include life events, health and wellness issues, among others.

Students who are granted accommodations through Disability Services in coursework should discuss the dissertation process with the Director of the PhD program to better understand the components of dissertation work if they intend to seek accommodations for this portion of the program.

DISSERTATING STUDENT MEETINGS

Regular meetings of dissertating students will be organized by the Doctoral Student Organization in collaboration with the PhD Program Director during the fall and spring semesters. All doctoral candidates are strongly encouraged to attend. Seminar topics are wide ranging and cover areas of research, job searches, career paths, and other topics. The Dissertating Student Seminar is not for credit and does not require registration.

THE DISSERTATION

All students are required to complete a dissertation to qualify for the PhD degree. The dissertation has two phases: development and defense of the dissertation proposal and execution and defense of dissertation research. The objectives of the dissertation are:

1. To extend empirical and conceptual knowledge in a substantive area of concern to society.
2. To demonstrate the application of rigorous scientific methodology to the substantive area of study.
3. To articulate the relevance of the scholarship and science resulting from the execution of the study to society, other disciplines, and social work practice, policy and research.

The dissertation must use a research design appropriate to the formulation of the problem and developed in accordance with the canons of sound research principles. The research design should be formulated in such a way that they can be feasibly carried out by a single investigator within the time frame required by the PhD program's policies.

THE DISSERTATION CHAIR

Each PhD candidate identifies a SSW faculty member to serve as their dissertation chair. It is the responsibility of the candidate to discuss their interests with the identified faculty member and ask that person to serve as their dissertation chair. Faculty members are free to decline the request to be a candidate's dissertation chair.

Candidates are not required to work with a previous advisor, research practicum mentor or specific faculty member. Candidates should select a dissertation chair whom they believe best fits with their interests and working style and who can provide mentorship in the areas they need assistance with most. In nearly all cases, the dissertation chair does not change during the dissertation process. In cases

where there are significant concerns regarding the continuance of a faculty member in the role of dissertation chair, by either the faculty member or the candidate, a change may be warranted. The Director of the PhD Program should be consulted in cases where a change in dissertation chair is sought.

The dissertation chair is responsible for leading the dissertation committee through all phases of the dissertation process. The chair must be a full-time SSW faculty member and have substantial familiarity with the PhD program curriculum, understand the expectations regarding the level of required scholarship demonstrated in dissertation work, and a demonstrated record of recent, active research experience including publication in peer-reviewed journals. The chair is expected to provide regularly mentorship, including timely feedback, to the PhD candidate.

THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The PhD candidate forms a dissertation committee in consultation with their advisor and the Director of the PhD Program. Committee members should have substantive, theoretical, and methodological expertise related to the topic and be academically and professionally qualified to serve in a mentoring and advising role. The proposed committee membership is submitted to the Director of the PhD program using the Dissertation Committee form found in the Appendices, who will defer to the dissertation committee chair regarding the committee's composition unless the Director has serious concerns about the qualifications of the committee members.

Dissertation committees must have at least three committee members, two SSW faculty members and at least one member outside of the SSW. Additional external committee members may be added to the committee as appropriate. All committee members must hold an earned PhD and a demonstrated record of recent, active research experience including publication in peer-reviewed journals. External community-based experts are permitted to serve as advisory group members to a doctoral student and dissertation committee, however these experts are not permitted to be signatories on the dissertation proposal or dissertation. External committee members are required to complete an MOU affirming their willingness to serve on the committee. See the Appendices.

In nearly all cases, the dissertation committee composition remains the same during the dissertation process. In cases where there are significant concerns regarding the continuance of a committee member, by either the committee member, the chair, or the candidate, a change may be warranted. The Director of the PhD Program should be consulted in cases where a change in committee membership is sought.

All committee members agree to advise the candidate; however the chair retains the right of final approval of all dissertation materials. Committee members will make their own arrangements with candidates when they are on sabbatical or leave regarding how they will engage in the dissertation process. Committee members who are unable to participate during their sabbatical or leave period may be temporarily or permanently replaced on the committee if they are unable to participate as committee members during their sabbatical or leave and this is determined by the chair or Director of the PhD program to hinder the candidate's ability to make adequate progress towards graduation.

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Within the context of the previously stated objectives, the specific topic area of the dissertation should develop out of and foster the intellectual and professional interests of the candidate. In selecting a topic and developing a research proposal plan, the student should be attentive to the following criteria:

- The topic must be in an area of significance to the field of social work.
- The dissertation must aim to develop new knowledge, address issues that have not been adequately empirically explored.
- The dissertation must be an independent project. The proposed research must include independent conceptualization, development and execution of a scientific study.
- The dissertation must meet current standards for scientific rigor in its design and execution.

Dissertations may be quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods. Candidates who use non-publicly available secondary data sets should secure an MOU regarding data set use signed by the candidate, dissertation Chair, Director of the PhD program, and the principal investigator responsible for the data set.

All dissertation research must be approved by the Simmons University Institutional Review Board prior to beginning the study. The IRB approval governing the dissertation study must be in current and in good standing throughout the dissertation process and at the time of the dissertation defense in order for a candidate to continue engaging in the study and using study data.

There are two options for the dissertation format: standard dissertation (Option A), or three paper dissertation (Option B). Outlines for these options can be found in the Appendices. Candidates should select a dissertation option in consultation with their dissertation committee chair.

Candidates are responsible for all aspects of their dissertation study including timely progression towards completion of the dissertation document. The dissertation committee Chair and members are responsible for providing timely feedback to the candidate. Candidate progress towards completion of the dissertation phase will be monitored by the Director of the PhD program.

THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND PROPOSAL HEARING

Candidates prepare a dissertation proposal in consultation with their dissertation Chair and committee. An outline for the dissertation proposal is found in the Appendices. The dissertation proposal must state the problem for study; summarize relevant theoretical and empirical literature; specify the expected contribution of the study; provide a detailed methodology of the study including plans for data analysis and state the relationship to the field of social work. The proposal may also include a completed IRB (Institutional Review Board) proposal and should identify any expected difficulties and explicit plans for solving them in the course of carrying out the dissertation research.

The dissertation committee Chair provides primary mentorship to the candidate in developing the dissertation proposal. Committee members should be consulted on proposal drafts prior to the dissertation proposal hearing to obtain feedback and recommendations. Candidates should expect their dissertation proposal to go through several draft iterations before it is ready for the proposal defense.

The dissertation committee Chair will set a date for the proposal hearing in consultation with the candidate and committee members. It is the candidate's responsibility to distribute the final proposal to all participants three weeks prior to the date of the proposal hearing. An electronic copy should also be

sent to the Director of the PhD Program. It is the responsibility of the Chair to send an email to the doctoral program staff assistant with the relevant information to complete the Dissertation Proposal Hearing form (see the Appendices). The staff assistant will reserve a room and notify all participants of the time and place, prepare the forms required for the meeting, and reserve any technology required for the hearing.

At the proposal hearing, the candidate presents a summary of their proposal and the committee discusses any relevant concerns or recommendations based on the written proposal and presentation. The committee chair leads the hearing. Required attendees at the proposal hearing include the candidate's dissertation committee. The Director of the Doctoral Program may also attend. Guests may attend at the approval of the Chair. The Dean may attend ex officio. In all cases, the Chair must be advised prior to the hearing if individuals other than the dissertation committee members plan to attend the hearing.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee must reach a unanimous decision regarding the proposal. The committee can approve the proposal without modification, approve with modification, or disapprove the proposal. A proposal approved without modification permits the candidate to begin dissertation work immediately. If a proposal is approved with modification, the committee Chair will prepare and written summary of required modifications for the candidate. The candidate must make these modifications and submit the revised proposal for review to the committee. The Chair will then query the committee to obtain their approval of the revised proposal. If the proposal revisions are not approved, further revision may be requested and this process repeated. If a proposal is disapproved without a request for revision, the candidate will consult with their Chair and the Director of the PhD Program in Level 2 meeting (see Section X) to assess the candidate's progress in the program. Inability to prepare an approved dissertation proposal may result in administrative termination from the PhD program.

When approved by the dissertation committee, the proposal becomes a formal agreement between the student, the committee, and the SSW regarding the work that will be completed in fulfillment of the dissertation requirement.

THE DISSERTATION AND DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The dissertation must conform to the standards presented for Option A and Option B in the Appendices. The candidate is responsible for adherence to these standards. The dissertation committee Chair provides oversight of the candidate's dissertation work including adherence to these standards.

The dissertation must be independent work. The dissertation document must be independently written. Committee members may provide guidance to candidates on the dissertation work, but not directly collaborate.

The dissertation committee Chair provides primary mentorship to the candidate in developing the dissertation. Committee members should be consulted on the dissertation document prior to the dissertation hearing to obtain feedback and recommendations. Candidates should expect their dissertation document to go through several draft iterations before it is ready for the defense.

The doctoral candidate must complete all requirements for graduation prior to the dissertation hearing.

The submission of the complete dissertation manuscript and the scheduling of the oral defense may take place when, in the judgment of the Chair and with the concurrence of the other committee

members, the document has reached the stage at which final acceptance is appropriate. It is the responsibility of the Chair to communicate with the other members of the committee in order to ensure that all members have an agreed consensus on the general acceptability of the document.

The dissertation committee Chair will set a date for the dissertation hearing in consultation with the candidate and committee members. It is the candidate's responsibility to distribute the final dissertation to all participants three weeks prior to the date of the proposal hearing. An electronic copy should also be sent to the Director of the PhD Program and the SSW Director. It is the responsibility of the Chair to send an email to the doctoral program staff assistant with the relevant information to complete the Dissertation Hearing form (see the Appendices). The staff assistant will reserve a room and notify all participants of the time and place, prepare the forms required for the meeting, and reserve any technology required for the hearing.

This dissertation abstract is also given to the staff assistant to the PhD program who distributes it to the SSW community who are invited to attend the hearing.

At the dissertation defense, the candidate presents a summary of their dissertation and the committee discusses any relevant concerns or recommendations based on the written document and presentation. The committee chair leads the hearing. Attendees at the dissertation hearing include the candidate's dissertation committee. The Director of the Doctoral Program may also attend.

The defense consists of three components: an oral presentation, discussion and response to questions, and the decision of the committee regarding approval. The committee's options are: to approve the dissertation, to approve with specific modifications, or to withhold approval. In the first two cases the work of the committee is finished at this point and all members sign the signature approval form. Specific modifications that may be requested by the committee are reviewed and approved by the Chair. In the case where the committee withholds approval. The candidate will be asked to revise the dissertation within a specific timeline and repeat the dissertation defense within a 6-month period. The committee has the same three options for a decision. In the situation where approval is withheld twice for a candidate's dissertation, the candidate will be administratively withdrawn from the PhD program.

TIME FRAME FOR DISSERTATION AND GRADUATION

Simmons University graduation dates include December, May, and August. Candidates must notify their Chair, the Director of the PhD Program, and the Registrar's office at least 2 months before they intend to graduate. Each graduate date has specific filing deadlines. All dissertation materials must be filed by the specific semester's deadline.

Candidates are encouraged to complete their dissertation defense at least 6 weeks before graduate to make certain they meet the filing deadlines and allow time for any required revisions to the dissertation document.

DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

Format and submission guidelines for the dissertation can be obtained from the staff assistant to the doctoral program. This includes information related to copyright, abstracting, and other publication agreements.

A student cannot graduate until the Director of the PhD Program has verified receipt of a corrected and filed complete dissertation manuscript.

It is the candidate's responsibility to monitor the time table for submitting all required materials to graduate.

AUTHORSHIP AND PUBLICATION OF STUDENT WORK

All doctoral students are encouraged to publish scholarly work and present scholarly presentations while they are in the program.

When students submit work where they are the principal investigator or the lead researcher or scholar on a project, they retain the right for first authorship on the paper or presentation. Students who submit a paper for publication or a presentation for a conference that stems from a course paper or other course work in a doctoral class, where they are the main author or project lead, retain the right of first authorship and are not required to offer authorship to the course instructor. In cases where students invite others to collaborate on their work, including faculty members, they should discuss authorship and author order prior to beginning the collaboration. Faculty members who provide technical assistance including guidance on research, editing, or other types of assistance should not assume authorship will be offered by a student if prior discussion has not been had regarding authorship before the faculty member provides the assistance.

Students retain the right of first authorship on all dissertation work. Students may invite committee members to co-author scholarly papers or presentations after the dissertation has been defended. In order to warrant authorship, committee members must demonstrate contribution to the dissertation-related publication in accordance with the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors* authorship guidelines which have been recommended for adherence to by scientific journals by COPE, the International Committee on Publication Ethics.

ICMJE guidelines for inclusion as an author are:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

In addition to being accountable for the parts of the work he or she has done, an author should be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work. In addition, authors should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.

All those designated as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, and all who meet the four criteria should be identified as authors. Those who do not meet all four criteria should be acknowledged.

See:

<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

REGISTRATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students must maintain continuous registration in order to retain matriculation in the PhD program. Registration schedules are disseminated to students each semester. If you have a registration question, please contact the Registrar's Office.

Students must register for at least 5 credits to be considered part-time or 9 credits to be considered full-time. Students who have completed coursework must continue to register for dissertation proposal continuance or dissertation continuance for the Fall and Spring term until they have graduated.

COURSE SCHEDULES

PhD course schedules are posted for the academic year in the spring of the year prior. Course times are subject to change.

Faculty who are not teaching PhD courses in the Summer term may not be fully available to PhD students in the summer months for mentorship or advising. Students are responsible for working through summer scheduling plans with their mentor or advisor. In most cases, dissertation proposal hearings or dissertation defenses are not scheduled during June, July or August.

DROP/ADD A COURSE

Prior to the start of classes and until the end of the second class, students may add or drop a class on AARC. Students are responsible for informing the instructor and for making up any missed coursework in an added class. For courses dropped after week two, students must contact the PhD Program Director for the specific course to determine the correct procedure. Students may not add a class after the second class meeting.

Students who change their schedule by dropping or adding a course should consult with an advisor to ensure that they will continue to meet degree and graduation requirements. Students should meet with their advisor and subsequently receive permission from both the advisor and the PhD Program Director when dropping or adding a class. Students should also consult with the Student Financial Services to be fully apprised of the impact of course changes on their financial aid.

WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE

Doctoral students must meet with the course instructor, their advisor, and the PhD Program Director before withdrawing from a course in a Level 2 meeting.

Student transcripts will show a “W” grade for “withdrawn” for any courses withdrawn from after the 4th week and up to the end of the 8th week. No withdrawals are permitted after week 8; the instructor will record the grade the student has earned. Students are not allowed to withdraw from the same course more than once. Withdrawal deadlines are adjusted for summer term courses. Withdrawals after the 4th week count as “credits attempted” for purposes of the Federal SAP policy.

Doctoral students may withdraw from a maximum of 3 courses during their tenure in the program.

WAITLIST POLICY

Students must use the AARC automatic waitlist system when they wish to be placed in line for a closed/full class. Professors cannot override the system and add students to their classes. The student should not contact the professor to be put into the class.

Waitlisted students should monitor their Simmons email for further information and for notification that they may enroll in an open seat. Students have 72 hours from when notified via Simmons email to make the change and register for the open seat or they will be automatically removed from the waitlist and the seat will be offered to the next student on the waitlist.

AUDITS

Audits are permitted if there is space in a given class. Registration to audit a course in the SSW, may occur ONLY two weeks prior to the start of class, not before. Only one class may be audited per semester. The cost to audit is the equivalent of one credit tuition. Auditing students are typically exempt from submitting papers and exams, but are expected to attend all class sessions, complete the readings, and meet any additional requirements at the discretion of the instructor. The audit will appear on the student transcript; students receive no grade and no credit. Students may not register to audit a course in the SSW and then change the status from audit to enrolled. Instructors cannot approve an audit for which a student has not registered. Students interested in auditing should contact the Instructor for permission and notify the PhD Program Director. To register, the student should contact the School of Social Work registration manager for doctoral students.

TRANSFER OF AN ELECTIVE COURSE TAKEN AT ANOTHER INSTITUTION

Matriculated students with special interests may be given permission to take elective courses at another institution or in another Simmons graduate program if:

- it is a graduate level course at an accredited, degree-granting institution
- the course content shows clear relevance to the social work doctoral degree
- the course is not offered at the School of Social Work of Simmons University
- the course earns a minimum of 3 credits

Students must notify the PhD Program Director of their intention to transfer elective credits in writing, prior to the registration period for the elective course. If permission is granted, the student is responsible for the transfer of credit to Simmons at the end of the semester in which the course was taken. Non-receipt of a transcript and the executed Transfer of Credit Form by the proper deadline in the final year could affect the student's ability to graduate on time. Students must receive a grade of "B" or better to transfer credit. The form can be obtained from the School of Social Work Registration Manager.

Matriculated students may not take any required courses outside of the School of Social Work.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

Each course is evaluated by students by the end of the last class meeting. The evaluations can be reviewed by the instructor only after student grades have been submitted. Evaluations are reviewed by the instructor, the Doctoral Program Director, the Associate Director and the Director of the School of Social Work.

ATTENDANCE

Classroom Attendance

Instructors are permitted to and will consider individual class attendance when determining a student's final grade for a course. In addition to lowering a grade, excessive absences may justify a failing grade for the entire course. At the SSW, "excessive absence" is typically defined as missing more than 20% of a course.

Religious Observance/Student Absence

Simmons abides by the Massachusetts law on Religious Observances. Students who are unable, because of their religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in an examination, class, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from the class, study, or work requirement and shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the examination, study, or work they may have missed consistent with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 151c, Section 2b. That law states:

"Any student in an educational or vocational training institution, other than a religious or a denominational education or vocational training institution, who is unable, because of his/her religious beliefs, to attend classes or to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on a particular day shall be excused from any such examination or study or work requirement, and shall be provided

with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work missed because of such absence on any particular day; provided, however, that such make-up examination or work shall not create an unreasonable burden upon such school. No fees of any kind shall be charged by the institution for making available to the said student such opportunity. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student because of his/her availing himself of the provisions of the sections.”

A student should inform the instructor prior to missing a class if he/she expects to miss class as a consequence of his/her religious observances.

Questions about absences for religious observances should be directed to the Associate Dean or the Office of Student Life.

GRADING

PhD grading is comprised of written and oral feedback. Students should expect critical review of their work as well as constructive feedback from instructors. Students who are unclear about written or oral feedback on assignments provided inside or outside of the classroom are encouraged to meet with instructors to clarify the feedback. Oral feedback within the classroom is considered formal feedback to students. Instructors may or may not use grading rubrics in their courses – this is at the discretion of the instructor. Doctoral students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking skills, intellectual curiosity, and professionalism in their work.

Students are expected to maintain a B (3.0) grade average throughout the PhD Program in the SSW. Courses are graded using the A-F grading system, however a grade of B- or lower is considered a failing grade. School of Social Work students must take all classes for a letter grade. The numerical equivalent for each grade is as follows:

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	GPA equivalent	100 point scale equivalent
A	4.0	100-94
A-	3.67	93-90
B+	3.33	89-87
B	3.0	86-84
B-	2.67	83-80
C+	2.33	79-77
C	2.00	76-74
C-	1.67	73-70
D+	1.33	69-68
D	1	67-64
D-	.67	63-60
F	0	59 or below

Non-Matriculation Grade Policy

A non-matriculated student must receive a "B" or better in his or her first class to remain eligible to take a second class.

Extensions for Assignments

Students are expected to complete coursework assignments on time; instructors should clearly articulate policies regarding extensions on the course syllabus and their grading policy for work/assignments passed in after the deadline. An extension must be requested by a student prior to the due date of the assignment and a revised date for submission of work must be approved by the instructor. A student who submits work late even with the instructor's permission, may nonetheless receive a lesser grade from the instructor to reflect the missed deadline. The decision to grant an extension or to accept work late rests in the discretion of the faculty member.

Rewriting of Graded Papers

Students may, at the instructor's sole discretion, be given the option of rewriting a paper that has received a grade of "B-" or below. However, final course assignments may not be rewritten.

INCOMPLETE POLICY

Completion of coursework by the last day of the semester is essential. An instructor may use their discretion to grant an Incomplete when the majority of the course requirements and assignments have successfully been completed and when the student is unable to complete assignments due to extenuating circumstances. In permitting an Incomplete, the instructor must establish a completion date no later than three weeks from the last day of classes or by the first day of classes of the following semester (including summer)-whichever is earlier. The instructor must attach the student's request to the Incomplete Form forwarded to the PhD Program Director.

If the student completes the requirement(s) by the extension date, the mark of Incomplete will be changed to a letter grade. If not, the student will be assigned a grade based on the work completed to date. Grades not submitted by the Instructor to the Office of the Registrar by the approved deadline will automatically be converted to a grade of "F."

Students will not be permitted to take the Comprehensive Exam if they have an outstanding mark of Incomplete in a course.

TUTORING & WRITING CENTER RESOURCES

The PhD program does not provide tutoring services to students to learn course material. Students may obtain a private tutor at their own expense if desired, however it must be clear to doctoral faculty that a student has completed work independently on their own.

PhD students may use the services of the Writing Center at Simmons University, however these services are primarily designed for master's and undergraduate level students. PhD students should be aware that guidance provided by Writing Center staff may not meet the standards for doctoral level work.

Students may use editing services, however it must be clear to doctoral faculty that a student has completed work independently on their own.

APPEAL OF FINAL COURSE GRADE

Students have the right to be awarded grades that are calculated correctly and assigned based on a fair evaluation of work. Students have the right to understand how a grade was calculated and why the faculty member evaluated the work as they did.

The School of Social Work is guided by the principles of academic freedom and respects the integrity, expertise, and professional judgment of its faculty in the evaluation of students' academic work. Faculty members' right and obligation to evaluate students' academic work and determine student grades are fundamental to this principle.

Faculty members have the right to set grading standards in their courses and the responsibility to advise students of their grading standards at the outset of the course; to use their best judgment in applying those standards; and to assign grades based on methods of evaluation they deem appropriate so long as those methods are not arbitrary or capricious or the product of prejudice or discriminatory animus.

Simmons faculty are strongly encouraged to advise students in writing of their grading methods and standards at the beginning of each term in each course they teach, preferably as part of the course syllabus. Students are encouraged to raise questions about how the instructor will calculate the final grade at the beginning of the semester.

Discussion with Instructor

Students should talk to their instructor about any grade concerns or questions before initiating the Grade Appeal Process described below.

Within one week of the posting of the course grade, students should meet (or speak on the phone/email) with their instructor and express their concerns about their course grade, providing information the faculty member would need to reconsider the grade. If the faculty member agrees to change a grade, they will submit the changed grade to the Registrar. If, after the discussion, the faculty member decides to let the grade stand, a student may wish to initiate a formal grade appeal.

Basis of Grade Appeal

Simmons formal grade appeal process addresses situations in which a student believes a grade has been assigned for one of the following reasons:

- Computational or clerical error;
- Arbitrariness or capriciousness (including where grading criteria have changed after assignment submission and without explanation)

If a student believes that one of these reasons applies to a grade they have received, they should follow the procedures and timelines outlined below.

Only the final grade in a course is subject to this process. As a result of the process, the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same. No new or revised course work can be requested by the student or accepted by the faculty member as part of the grade appeal process.

GRADE APPEAL PROCESS

Overview

As noted above, before initiating a formal grade appeal, students are encouraged to meet with their faculty member and discuss their concerns and/or ask questions about the grade. Grade concerns are frequently resolved through these “informal” (i.e., before formal appeal) discussions, most often when there is a computational error. A grade appeal has two stages: to the PhD Program Director and to the Director of the School of Social Work.

Appeals must be submitted within 1 week of posting of the grade on AARC which is the subject of the appeal. At each level of appeal, a denial of the appeal means that the grade will not be reviewed or changed. Granting of an appeal may mean the final grade may be raised, lowered, or stay the same.

Process and Deadlines

If the student’s discussion with the instructor has not reached a satisfactory conclusion, the following process and timeline are to be followed for a formal grade appeal:

Step 1: Appeal to the Director of the PhD Program

A student should obtain a grade appeal form from the Academic Service Center Coordinator or online at the School of Social Work website. Students must submit the Grade Appeal Form with any supporting information to the Director of the PhD Program.

The PhD Program Director will respond in writing within 1 week and indicate whether one of the basis for appeal (computational error; arbitrary or capricious) appears to have been met. If the appeal proceeds, within 1 week of receiving the form, the PhD Program Director will discuss the case with the instructor (and student, if necessary) and reach a determination. The PhD Program Director is encouraged, but not required, to meet with the student and with the faculty member. The student and faculty member will be notified of the outcome in writing, as appropriate to the outcome, the PhD Program Director will contact the Registrar to change the grade.

Step 2: Appeal to the Director of the School of Social Work.

If the student is not satisfied with the response of the Director of the PhD program, within 1 week of receipt of their decision, the student may appeal that decision to the Director of the School of Social Work (or the Director’s designee). The Grade Appeal Form, faculty response, and PhD Program Director’s outcome determination are then forwarded to the Director of the School of Social Work

Within one week, the Director of the SSW will decide whether the appeal should move to the next stage. If the appeal is granted, the Director will appoint a 3-person faculty panel comprised of SW doctoral teaching faculty to review the appeal and related information. The panel may seek additional

information from the student and/or the instructor. The panel will forward a decision to the Director of the SSW within 2 weeks of receipt, who will inform the instructor and student of the outcome and, if the appeal results in a change of grade, complete and submit the change of grade to the Registrar.

The grade appeal policy respects the privacy of students and faculty. All parties are responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Students have the right to appeal a final grade, a dismissal or an Honor Board finding by following the procedures and guidelines outlined in the grade and dismissal appeal sections of this handbook. Students can appeal Honor Board findings by following the Honor Board finding appeal process. Students who believe they have encountered bias, harassment or discrimination can follow the Simmons Bias Response Protocol by filing a bias claim.

Bias Response Protocol

Simmons is committed to inclusive excellence in all aspects of an individual's community experience. Our values vision and mission mandate that we strive to create an environment that is free of bias, prejudice, discrimination and hurtful acts. Individuals who believe they have experienced or encountered bias, harassment or discrimination can utilize the Simmons bias response protocol to have their concern addressed. Information about protocol can be accessed here:

<http://www.simmons.edu/about-simmons/why-simmons/diversity-and-inclusion/bias-response-protocol/>

MAINTENANCE OF ACADEMIC STANDING

REQUIRED COURSE GRADES BELOW A "B"

Any student earning a grade lower than a B in a required course is required to have a Level 2 review no later than the first day of the subsequent term. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the grade, the reasons for the low academic performance, and to develop a Corrective Plan, which will be sent to the student. A student's failure to attend this meeting will result in the administrative withdrawal of the student's registration.

If the earned grade is a B-, the student may be asked to retake the class and earn a passing grade as part of the Corrective Plan. If the earned grade is a C or below, the student will be required to retake the class as part of the Corrective Plan. Students required to retake a class will do so at their own expense.

Students who earn a grade of a B- or below proceed to the Level 2 review. Students who earn a second grade of B- or below are administratively dismissed from the PhD program without a Level 2 review.

WHEN A STUDENT IS REQUIRED TO RETAKE A CLASS

As part of a Corrective Plan, a student may be required to retake a course and to achieve a grade of B or better. In such cases, both grades remain on the transcript and are accounted for in the GPA. All students are required to earn the requisite number of unique degree credits to graduate. A student is allowed to repeat a maximum of one course in which they have earned a grade below a B. The same course cannot be taken more than twice.

Students who are required to retake a course must repeat that same course at the SSW. Students should be aware that not all PhD courses are offered annually. Repeating a course will very likely extend the time to complete core course requirements in the PhD program.

Students must retake and pass all courses prior to taking the comprehensive exam.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Poor academic performance is grounds for a student to be placed on academic probation. For the purposes of academic probation, poor performance is defined as: one grade below a B, and/or a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0. A student on academic probation will have a Level 2 review no later than the end of the first week of class of the subsequent semester. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a Corrective Plan. A copy of the plan must be forwarded to the student, the advisor, and the Director of the PhD program. A student's failure to attend a Level 2 review meeting and to follow the Corrective Plan will result in the administrative withdrawal of the student's registration.

REMOVAL FROM ACADEMIC PROBATION

To be removed from academic probation, a student must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher by the end of the following term and/or earn a grade of B or better in a course that the student is required to repeat. A student will be informed by the PhD Program Director when they are removed from academic probation.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM: FAILING GRADE

If a student fails the comprehensive exam, they will have only one additional opportunity to retake it within one year. The date of the second exam will be determined by the PhD Program Director in consultation with the student and the Doctoral Committee. Failure to pass the exam after the second attempt will result in administrative dismissal from the program. If dismissed from the program, the student will be notified of the decision orally and in writing by the Director of the PhD Program. Students have the right to follow the GRADE APPEAL PROCESS for the comprehensive exam as delineated above.

TIMELY PROGRESS IN THE PROGRAM

Program Time Constraints

The program is structured for completion within 4-6 years for full-time students, 4-8 years for part-time students, except in unusual circumstances. The student must graduate from the Doctoral Program within 8 years of their matriculation start date for full-time students and 10 years of their matriculation start date for part-time students. Students may appeal to the Director of the PhD Program for an extension. The Director will consult with the Doctoral Committee regarding the granting of an extension. If granted an extension, a Level 2 meeting will be convened and a timeline for completion of the program put in place.

If the student does not request an extension or is unable to meet the timeline requirements laid out in the Level 2 meeting, the student will be administratively dismissed from the program. A student is not able to appeal this termination.

VOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students may take a voluntary leave of absence from their studies as a result of medical, mental health, or other personal matters that compromise their ability to continue in an academic program. A student may apply for a Leave of Absence (LOA) at any time after enrolling. To request a Leave of Absence, students should follow the process listed on the [Registrar's web page](#) and also contact the PhD Program Director. The maximum combined duration of all leaves of absence is one year.

If the student chooses to take a voluntary leave of absence in order to receive intensive clinical health care treatment, the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee will assist with processing this request. In some instances, the student may be asked to complete the Process for Returning from an Involuntary Leave of Absence as a requirement of returning.

Involuntary Leave of Absence

Simmons is committed to the safety and well-being of its community members and to the integrity of our living and learning environment. Our goals therefore are to maintain the health and safety of every member of the Simmons community and to enable all enrolled students to participate fully in the life of the community.

As noted above, students may take a voluntary leave of absence from their studies as a result of medical, mental health, or other personal matters that compromise their ability to continue in an academic program. There may be times when it will be necessary for Simmons to require a student to take an *involuntary* leave – a leave, which Simmons has concluded, is in the best interest of the student but which the student may object to.

In instances where a student's mental, emotional, or medical health pose a threat to themselves and/or others, or where health circumstances or conditions become a barrier to appropriate or prescribed levels of self-care, or when a student's health condition causes significant disruption to

the activities of the Simmons community, students may be required to take an involuntary leave of absence for a specific period of time.

In instances when a student's mental, physical or emotional health may pose a direct, imminent, threat to the safety and well-being of the Simmons community, or the student has been admitted to a healthcare setting to undergo medical or psychological treatment (hospitalization, intensive outpatient or inpatient program), the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee, as an interim measure, can place the student on an involuntary leave of absence from the University. When applicable, the student will be informed in writing of the actions that lead to her/him being placed on leave and direct the student to the process for return. The student's parent/guardian/emergency contact person may also be notified that the student is in a potentially dangerous situation.

Any student placed on an involuntary leave of absence will not be allowed to remain on campus. This includes living in residence, attending classes, and participating in Simmons sponsored events. Students are also prohibited from participating in Simmons-related activities online.

In circumstances when the student has not met direct threat/inpatient criteria, the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee may, based on observable/recorded behavior, still require a student to undergo an individualized psychological and/or medical assessment to make an informed decision regarding the student's ability to meet the academic, social, and emotional requirements of a Simmons student. This evaluation can be conducted by a member of the Simmons clinical staff, or by an external health care provider who is treating the student. The student will be required to sign a release that gives permission to the designated clinical personnel at Simmons to speak with their external evaluating health care provider and to allow for the release of any relevant medical reports as part of the assessment. If the student chooses not to engage the process above, then they will be required to take an involuntary leave of absence and if applicable, an immediate removal from the residence halls.

If, following the evaluation, a leave is deemed unnecessary, the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee may impose other conditions and/or requirements which the student would be required to comply with as a condition of continued enrollment.

In any instance in which a leave is required, the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee will provide written notice to the student, including the specific requirements that must be met as a condition of eligibility for re-enrollment, the timeline for initiating and completing the return process, as well as the procedure for appealing the decision.

The duration of the leave is typically no fewer than six months, although the specific length of the leave will be based on the individualized assessment and determined by the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee on a case-by-case basis. The School of Social Work Director, or designee and the PhD Program Director, will be consulted about the duration of the leave. When a student takes a leave before the end of a semester, whether voluntary or involuntary, Simmons' standard tuition and residence hall refund schedule applies.

Process for Returning to Simmons After an Involuntary Leave

Simmons students who have been placed on an Involuntary Leave of Absence will be required to undergo an individualized assessment to be cleared their return, prior to their return. They are also

required to sign an authorization form that enables the hospital, treatment facility, and/or all pertinent external healthcare providers to release information necessary for the review process. The review process will involve an interview with the appropriately licensed Simmons clinical staff member as well as the Dean of Student Life or designee.

Following the interview with the clinical staff, a recommendation based on the student's report, their treatment history, information gathered from the external treatment facility, and/or a student's personal health care provider, will be shared with the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee regarding the student's readiness to return. Then, on a case-by-case basis the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee will decide if the student shall be permitted to return to the Simmons community. If it is determined that the student can return, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Student Life or designee to establish a plan to return and identify community resources. The Doctoral Program Director will be consulted for purposes of establishing the plan to return to active student status. As a condition of continued enrollment and, if applicable, as a condition of re-admittance to the residence halls, the following criteria must be met:

1. The consulting health care provider must find that the student has maintained a significant level of physical, mental, or emotional stability along with the skill set necessary to successfully engage in the student's academic program and all activities associated with being a Simmons student.
2. The student and the consulting Simmons clinical staff member, in conjunction with all relevant external health care providers, must establish and agree upon a plan for continued managed care after returning to the University.
3. The student must commit to follow the recommended and established treatment plan.

If, after reviewing all pertinent information, the Associate Dean of Student Life or designee denies a student's request to return from an involuntary leave of absence, or the student disagrees with the conditions established as part of the return process, the student can appeal the decision in writing to the designated Student Life Administrator.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISMISSAL FROM THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

A student is allowed to repeat a maximum of one courses in which he/she has earned a grade below a B. The same course cannot be enrolled in more than twice. Students who earn a second grade below a "B" in that course will be dismissed from the program. Students are not allowed to withdraw from the same course more than once.

Two grades below a B will lead to automatic administrative dismissal.

Students who do not register for classes or dissertation proposal continuance or dissertation continuance in consecutive semesters (excluding summer semester) and are not on an official leave, or have not officially withdrawn, will be administratively withdrawn by Simmons. A new admissions application is required to be considered for return to the active student status.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Students who withdraw from Simmons should first meet with the PhD Program Director prior to submitting withdrawal forms to the Registrar. PhD students who voluntarily withdraw must meet with the Director of the Doctoral Program for an exit interview as part of the withdrawal process. Students who withdraw from the PhD program and who wish to seek re-admission at some later time, must apply for readmission through the standard admissions process applicable to all candidates. Admissions once does not guarantee admissions a second time. Recipients of financial aid should also notify the Office of Student Financial Services of their withdrawal.

Federal Student Academic Progress Policy

To be eligible to continue to receive Federal Student Aid (FSA), students must make satisfactory academic progress toward achieving and completing their program of study through measurement of qualitative (GPA) and quantitative (completed credits) standards. The full SAP policy can be found on the Student Financial Services website and should be read to understand how and when this is evaluated.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

School of Social Work PhD students are expected to abide by their respective profession's standards for ethical practice as well as the NASW Code of Ethics. PhD students are required to abide by commonly held standards of scientific integrity including publication and authorship standards as well as standards for engagement with human subject research.

GPA Required for Graduation

Students must achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to be eligible for graduation.

ACADEMIC AND CONDUCT ISSUES LEADING TO DISMISSAL

PhD students will be dismissed from the doctoral program due to academic performance. The following circumstances lead to dismissal:

- Earning a single semester cumulative GPA that falls below a 3.0 for two consecutive semesters
- When it is determined at the end of a semester that a student cannot return their overall cumulative GPA in the PhD program to at least a 3.0 at the conclusion of the following semester
- Earning two grades below a B
- Failure to progress through the PhD program in a timely manner as described in in this Handbook.

CONDUCT ISSUES LEADING TO DISMISSAL

- Behavior judged to be in violation of Simmons College Policies

- For Social Work Students: Behavior that is deemed unprofessional per the NASW Code of Ethics and the Simmons School of Social Work Standards of Professional Practice Behavior
- Any threat or attempt to harm someone else inside or outside of the Simmons community
- Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice, occurring during the course of study at Simmons or occurring prior to admission to the School of Social Work and becoming known after admissions

For SW PhD students:

- Behaviors and actions judged to be in violation of human subject protocols and/or IRB ethical standards as articulated by the Simmons University Institutional Review Board.
- Behaviors and actions judged to be in violation of commonly held scientific ethical standards.

NOTIFICATION OF DISMISSAL

A student who is dismissed will be informed in a letter from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or designee. The reasons for the dismissal will be outlined in the letter.

APPEAL OF DISMISSAL

The student may appeal the decision, in writing, to the School of Social Work Director. A written appeal must be received within seven (7) days of the date of the letter from the School of Social Work Associate Director or designee. This appeal does not constitute a new review process. Rather, it is a request from a student to have the Director review the original record of the dismissal on either one or more of the following three grounds: (1) one or more errors in the dismissal process; or (2) new evidence or information material to the case that was not available at the time of the dismissal process; or (3) a substantive error occurred because the decision maker misinterpreted evidence used in the dismissal process. The appeal letter should include an explanation regarding the grounds for appeal and should reference one or more of the three grounds for appeal listed in this policy. The student shall provide the SSW Director all documentation necessary for the appeal to be considered. The SSW Director will respond to the student appeal within 10 business days its receipt. The decision of the SSW Director is final.

STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Professional Standards and Policy for Professional Performance

NASW Code of Ethics

Students are expected to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics and Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice. Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and established norms, values, and behavior while earning their Social Work degree. The NASW Code of Ethics outlines behaviors and responsibilities expected of all professional social workers. The NASW considers students to be professional social workers from the time they enroll into a social work

program. Students should obtain a copy of the NASW code of ethics and become familiar with its contents.

Simmons SSW Standards for Professional Practice Policy

Social Work students are also expected to be familiar with and abide by the Simmons School of Social Work Standards for Professional Practice (available on the College's website). Students are informed about the Standards for Professional Practice during new student orientation; they are instructed to read the Standards of Professional Practice as a required component of orientation. At orientation, students are informed about the consequences of not meeting the standards for professional practice. Specifically, failure to meet generally accepted standards for professional conduct, ethics and personal integrity requisite for professional social work practice, as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics and the SSW Social Work Standards for Professional Practice Education, may constitute grounds for a Level Three Review or a referral to the Simmons College Honor Board, and could result in dismissal or other academic sanctions.

Commonly Held Scientific Ethical Standards

Ethical guidelines for research can be found on the Simmons IRB website. In addition, below are guidelines for scientific ethical standards that provide guidance:

- World Health Organization: Ethical Standards and procedures for research with human beings:
<https://www.who.int/ethics/research/en/>
- National Institutes of Health: Ethics in Clinical Research:
<https://www.cc.nih.gov/recruit/ethics.html>

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE ISSUES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The SSW is committed to supporting student success and the achievement of academic and practice proficiency while also upholding professional standards and the expectations set forth by the university-wide code of conduct. A three-level review process is used to address student academic performance and professional conduct issues. The specific level of review depends upon the severity of the concern. Information shared by the student with faculty and school administrators related to the concerns being reviewed will not be treated as confidential if the information shared raises concerns about professional performance or student safety. Students are advised that faculty or administrators will share pertinent information with each other on a need to know basis for the purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about those issues and concerns. A student will be reviewed at the level (1, 2 or 3) that is appropriate to the concern.

Reviews of students can occur for the following reasons:

- To identify need for academic support
- To determine a remediation plan for an Honor Board violation
- If a student fails to meet or maintain academic requirements

- If a student is terminated from a teaching or research practicum due to performance issues
- If a student exhibits behavior judged by faculty to be in violation of professional ethics and/or Simmons College and/or SSW policies and/or commonly held scientific ethical standards
- If a student exhibits consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior in the classroom, in practicums, or in the dissertation phase of the program

The Three Levels of Review

In the SSW, there are three levels of review to address student academic performance and conduct issues. A student can be reviewed at any level, and consecutive level review is not required. Specifically, a student may have undergone a Level 1 review and then may be asked to engage in a Level 3 review, without having engaged in Level 2 review.

Level 1

A Level 1 review involves a consultation between a faculty member and a student, typically at the request of the faculty member. When a faculty member has concerns about a student meeting any of the academic criteria, whether related to professional behavior or academic performance, that faculty member will:

- Discuss those concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the difficulties.
- Apprise the PhD Program Director or the student's advisor of the concerns
- Summarize plans and or recommendations in an email to the student

The purpose of the Level 1 review is to provide the student an opportunity to receive feedback from their instructor about areas of concern and suggestions for addressing the concerns.

The outcome of many Level 1 consultations is that, together, the faculty and students resolve the concerns and no further reviews are desired or required. Examples of situations triggering a Level 1 review are attendance issues, a poor grade or missed assignment.

Level 2

A Level 2 meeting can be convened when concerns have not been resolved at Level 1 or when a student appears to be developing a pattern of not following academic or program standards, policies, or procedures. All students on academic probation will have a Level 2 review meeting.

A Level 2 review usually involves a meeting with the appropriate faculty member, student, and PhD Program Director, Associate Director of the School of Social Work, and the student's advisor.

The student will be informed of the Level 2 review by their advisor or their instructor. In preparation for the Level 2 meeting, the PhD Program Director will gather information about the nature of the concern. The meeting will be used to discuss the concerns and to develop a Corrective Plan to address that concern. If the outcome of the meeting is that no further action is needed, the meeting will be documented to the student and the program director but no Corrective Plan will be created. When a Corrective Plan is determined to be appropriate next steps, the Corrective Plan may address the need for the student to modify his or her behavior and/or seek appropriate help or academic assistance. All parties to the Level 2 meeting, including the student, shall receive a copy of the Corrective Plan.

The purpose of a Level 2 review is to assist students in fully understanding and addressing the academic or behavioral concerns that are negatively impacting their success in the program. Examples of issues that may lead to a Level 2 review are repeated attendance problems, poor grades, other difficulties meeting the standards and expectations of a course.

The PhD Program Director may consult with the Director or Associate Director of the School of Social Work to determine if the Level 2 assessment is sufficient or whether it would be in the Student's and Simmons's best interests to conduct a more comprehensive review, pursuant to Level 3.

Level 3

A Level 3 review involves the Associate Director of the School of Social Work and the PhD Program Director, members of the Academic Standards Committee and the student. Generally, the Level 3 review is called when serious or complex problematic patterns are identified with students or when the issues are serious enough to require formal consultation with faculty and the student. The Associate Director for the School of Social Work, in consultation with the committee, decides whether or not a Level 3 meeting shall be convened. The Associate Director informs the Dean for Student Life or appropriate University office about the decision to convene a Level 3 review.

A Level 3 review may be conducted when concerns have not been fully resolved at prior Level 1 or Level 2 meetings; when a student continues to not meet the criteria for academic performance or when a student exhibits unprofessional or unethical behaviors in a classroom or other academic setting.

When a Level 3 review is called, the Associate Director for the School of Social Work will convene a meeting with the appropriate faculty, the student, and the student's advisor. Information will be provided by the student and by appropriate faculty to determine the nature of the problem and to identify alternatives for its remediation.

The student will be notified in writing of the concerns and meeting date by the Associate Director, with sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting. If a student chooses not to attend, a finding can be made with the available information in the student's absence.

Once an understanding has been reached, the student will be excused from the meeting. Faculty conducting the Level 3 review will confer and agree on recommendations, which will then be made to the Associate Director who will implement a course of action based on the recommendations.

The Associate Dean or designee will inform the student of the decision, which can include one of the following:

- Continue the student in the program with no conditions.
- Establish written conditions for the student's continuance in the program.
- Consult with or referral to the Simmons Dean for Student Life
- Dismiss student from the program

In any Level 3 review, there must be clear, concise documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that the concerns have been discussed with the student and attempted to be ameliorated when appropriate. Students must be notified of the decision within 10 business days of the review.

Level 3 Reviews and Referral and/or Consultation with the Simmons University Dean for Student Life

In some instances, depending on the nature of the issue, either the Director of Academic Integrity or the or the Assistant Dean for Community Standards may be consulted to determine whether a Level 3 Review or a referral for a Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity violation is required.

After consultation, the student will be notified in writing that the referral is taking place. Situations that may result in referral include: academic dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating, gender-based misconduct (which includes unlawful harassment), damage or destruction of University property, and conduct that endangers the health or safety of any University student, employee, campus visitor or member of the Simmons community and conduct that disrupts the functioning of the College as an open, educational community.

Students who are referred for Academic Integrity violations or Code of Conduct Violations may be referred back to the SSW Associate Director for the purpose of developing an implementation of sanctions plan (Corrective Plan) The Associate Director may consult with the Academic Standards Committee for guidance in the sanctions implementation plan.

ADDITIONAL POLICY INFORMATION

TUITION REFUND

Please consult the Student Financial Services representatives or see online at

<http://www.simmons.edu/admission-and-financial-aid/student-financial-services/student-accounts/cou rserefunds> for the exact dates for all semesters and a description of the financial implications. Please note: The schedule differs from semester to semester.

HEALTH INSURANCE WHILE IN SCHOOL

Please check the Simmons University website for detailed information about the student health insurance policy.

State Requirements: Massachusetts law requires all students registered for 3/4 time or more to carry health insurance. Students may be covered by individual or family coverage, or may participate in the College's Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) offered through University Health Plans and provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts.

To ensure compliance with the law, all undergraduate and graduate students registered for nine credits or more are enrolled in and billed for the school plan at the beginning of the academic year. Although students wishing to be covered by the plan will be enrolled automatically (after the allowable waiver period is over), to avoid any interim coverage issues between the beginning of the plan year on August 15, and the time the automatic enrollment lists are sent by the College to Blue Cross in mid-September, students should fill out the enrollment form online. Even if students are currently enrolled in the plan, they will get their new insurance card more quickly if they enroll online.

Students wishing to substitute other individual or family coverage for the school plan must demonstrate comparable coverage by filing a waiver online or at the Student Financial Services' office at the beginning of the academic year.

It is the policy of the College that all international students be enrolled in the school plan to ensure accessible coverage.

The law does not allow out-of-state Medicaid coverage as comparable insurance, although MassHealth qualifies. School insurance coverage is also available to students entering in January or the summer.

Part-time students and dependents are not eligible for the College's Student Health Insurance Plan. Part-time students and dependents should investigate market-rate plans and subsidized plans offered through the Massachusetts Health Connector (www.mahealthconnector.org) if of higher education are required to be covered by health insurance for the twelve months following September 1, or from the date of enrollment.

OTHER SIMMONS COLLEGE POLICIES

Information on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) can be found at <http://www.simmons.edu/academics/registrar/resources/student-record-privacy>.

Please visit <http://www.simmons.edu/student-life/handbook/> for College Policies on the following topics:

- Prohibited Conduct
- Judicial System
- College Policies & Procedures
- Residence Hall Policies and Procedures
- Policies about your use of Technology
- [Notice of Non-Discrimination and Grievance Procedures](#)
- [Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Hazing Policy](#)

- [Gender-based Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Student Rights and Responsibilities Statement](#)
- Policy on Valuing Diversity
- CORI Report and Crime Statistics

For more information about required forms, procedures, and processes related to the doctoral curriculum not specified in this Handbook, students should consult with their Advisor or the PhD Program Director.

APPENDICES

TOC

Appendix A: Request to take external elective form

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program Request to Take External Elective

PhD students should complete and submit this form for approval to their advisor and the PhD Program Director prior to taking an elective course. A copy of the course description should accompany this request and if possible, the course syllabus.

After the course is completed, students must submit a copy of the course syllabus (if they did not already), an official copy of a transcript from the external institution, along with a written email request to transfer credits into the PhD program. Students must earn a B in the elective in order to transfer credits.

In rare circumstances, after an elective is approved, transfer of credit may be denied if the external course is canceled, abbreviated or deviates substantially from what is presented in this proposal.

Date:

Student name:

Name of elective course:

Number of credit hours:

Name of institution course will be taken from:

Dates/semester course will be taken:

Student Advisor:

Advisor signature of approval:

PhD Program Director signature:

Appendix B: Independent Study form

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program Independent Study Proposal

PhD students should complete and submit this form for approval to their advisor and the PhD Program Director prior to registering for the independent study.

Date:

Student name:

Independent Study Instructor:

Student's Advisor:

Number of credit hours:

Semester of registration:

Brief description of the focus of the independent study:

Specific learning objectives:

Method of student evaluation:

Meeting schedule of student and instructor:

Student Advisor:

Advisor signature of approval:

PhD Program Director signature:

Appendix C: Teaching Practicum Proposal

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program

Doctoral Teaching Practicum Proposal

A teaching practicum is required for all students. Students register for the 3-credit teaching practicum course - SW 691 Educational Application and Immersion Experience concurrent with their teaching practicum experience. Students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of teaching-related activities. Students design their practicum experience in coordination with the instructor for this course and the faculty member who will mentor them in their teaching practicum. Options for a research practicum include co-teaching, course design and development, and other activities. Students must participate in a mentored-teaching experience for this course. Teaching practicums must be completed at Simmons University.

In rare cases, a research practicum may need to be extended or repeated if it is determined by the practicum mentor or the PhD Program Director that the 100 hours requirement was not met or that the student performed below expected standards in their practicum work.

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program

Doctoral Teaching Practicum Proposal and MOU

Date:

Student name:

Student's Advisor:

Teaching practicum mentor:

Email:

Phone:

Practicum start and end date:

Brief description of the focus of the practicum:

Specific learning objectives:

Specific activities to be engaged in:

Meeting schedule of student and mentor:

Student signature/date:

Teaching practicum mentor signature/date:

PhD Program Director signature/date:

Appendix D: Research Practicum Proposal

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program

Doctoral Research Practicum Proposal

A research practicum is required for all students. Students register for the 3-credit research practicum course - SW 690 Community-Based Participatory Research: Models and Methods either before or concurrent with their research practicum experience. Students are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of research-related activities. Students design their practicum experience in coordination with the faculty member they select as a research mentor. Options for a research practicum include:

Option A: Students may identify and affiliate with ongoing funded research projects relevant to social work that are situated in their geographic areas.

Option B: Members of the SSW faculty who hold an earned doctorate may offer the opportunity to one or more selected PhD students to participate in a specific piece of faculty-directed research.

Option C: Any student or group of students may propose a student-generated research project provided that the student(s) is able to recruit a faculty member with an earned doctorate to supervise the project.

Students' involvement in any of these options should not be limited to one role, task, or activity (e.g., coding only, or interviewing only), but should allow students to become acquainted with both the substance and the processes of the research.

A written proposal is submitted to the PhD Program Director, describing the following content below. A report on the research practicum is submitted at the completion of the practicum describing the work done and activities engaged in, how learning objectives were met, and reflections on the practicum experience. The research mentor will also submit a brief statement evaluating the student's performance in the practicum.

In rare cases, a research practicum may need to be extended or repeated if it is determined by the practicum mentor or the PhD Program Director that the 100 hours requirement was not met or that the student performed below expected standards in their practicum work.

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program

Doctoral Research Practicum Proposal and MOU

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between the Simmons University School of Social Work (SSW) PhD Program and (name) to serve in the role as a research mentor for (student's name) research practicum. It is a non-binding agreement executed for the purpose of establishing shared understanding of the role and activities the research mentor agrees to provide and support the doctoral student in throughout the time the research practicum. All parties agree to abide by the guidelines of research ethics and publication as outlined in the PhD Handbook.

Date:

Student name:

Student's Advisor:

Research practicum mentor:

Institutional affiliation:

Email:

Phone:

Practicum start and end date:

Brief description of the focus of the practicum:

Specific learning objectives:

Specific activities to be engaged in:

Meeting schedule of student and mentor:

Student signature/date:

Research practicum mentor signature/date:

PhD Program Director signature/date:

Appendix E: Submission of the Publishable Paper Form

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program
Publishable Paper Submission Verification

Student's Name:

Date the paper was submitted to the journal:

Peer-reviewed journal submitted to:

Title of the manuscript:

Comments:

Student's signature:

Date:

Advisor's signature:

Date:

Advisor's signature:

Date:

NOTE: A copy of the email verification of the manuscript submission must be attached to this form.

Appendix F: Comprehensive Exam Form

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program
Comprehensive Examination Status

Student's Name:

Date of the exam:

- Student passed the comprehensive examination.
- Student did not pass the comprehensive examination.

Comments:

Program Director's Name:

Program Director's Signature:

Date:

Date the exam was retaken: _____

- Student retook and passed the comprehensive examination.
- Student retook and did not pass the comprehensive examination.

Comments:

Program Director's Name:

Program Director's Signature:

Date:

Appendix G: Dissertation Committee Establishment Form – Pre-proposal Defense

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program
Dissertation Committee Agreement – Proposal Development

The below signed have agreed to serve as members of the Dissertation Committee for the listed PhD candidate. In these roles, the Chair and Committee Members agree to provide timely and relevant feedback to the PhD candidate in the preparation of the Dissertation Proposal as outlined in the SSW PhD Student Handbook. The PhD candidate agrees to provide Dissertation Proposal materials and responses to the Dissertation Committee’s feedback in a timely manner as outlined in the SSW PhD Student Handbook. The proposed timeline for development of the Dissertation Proposal is listed on this form.

PhD Candidate:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Proposed Dissertation Title:

Proposed timeline milestones:

Estimated date of first draft submitted: Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____

Estimated date of proposal defense: Month: _____ Year: _____

Committee Members

Committee Chair:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Signature:

Date:

SSW Committee Member:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Signature:

Date:

External Committee Member:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Signature:

Date:

Received by:

Doctoral Program Chair Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H: External Dissertation Committee Member MOU

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program
Memorandum of Understanding: External Dissertation Committee Member
Between Simmons University School of Social Work PhD Program

and

(Committee Member)

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between the Simmons University School of Social Work (SSW) PhD Program and (name) to serve in the role as a committee member on (student's name) doctoral dissertation. It is a non-binding agreement executed for the purpose of establishing a shared understanding of the role and activities of the external dissertation committee members and the role and activities of the SSW throughout the time the dissertation committee is in effect.

Purpose

This MOU will serve as formal recognition of the appointment of (committee member) to the dissertation committee of (student name).

As a committee member, the following activities will be required:

- Reading of dissertation proposal and dissertation documents in a timely manner
- Provision of constructive and timely feedback to the doctoral candidate
- Participation in the dissertation proposal defense and dissertation defense
- Occasional communication with the doctoral committee

The PhD program, through the Chair of the Committee, will undertake the following activities:

- Provide primary guidance and mentorship to the doctoral candidate
- Engage in regular communications with all committee members
- Coordinate dissertation committee meetings

Should any questions, challenges, or problems arise in the dissertation proposal development or dissertation paper process the Dissertation Chair will serve as the first point of contact for the external committee member.

This MOU is in effect from the time of signature through the dissertation proposal defense date of the below candidate. If for any reason, there is a need to resign from the dissertation committee or adjust the committee member's role or participation, the committee member should alert the Dissertation Chair as soon as feasible.

External Committee Member

Name
Position
University/Employer
E-mail

_____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Simmons University Committee Chair

Name

_____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Simmons University PhD Program Director

Name

_____ Date: _____
(Signature)

PhD Candidate:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Preliminary Dissertation Title:

Proposed timeline milestones:

Estimated date of first
draft submitted: Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____

Estimated date of
dissertation defense: Month: _____ Year: _____

Appendix I: Standard Dissertation: Option A

Option A: Standard Dissertation General Outline

1. Introduction
 - a. Background to the problem/issue
 - b. Aims of the study
 - c. Significance of the study
2. Conceptual Framework for the Study
 - a. Theories that inform the conceptual framework of the study
 - b. Key concepts and/or domains
3. Literature review
 - a. Current literature informing the study
 - b. Identification of the knowledge gap/rationale for study
4. Methodology
 - a. Research aims/questions
 - b. Overall research approach
 - c. Research location or sites
 - d. Sample population and sampling strategy
 - e. Measures, instruments and/or sources of data
 - f. Data collection procedures
 - g. Data analysis procedures
 - h. Issues of validity/reliability and/or trustworthiness/credibility
5. Results/Findings
 - a. Detailed presentation of findings
 - b. Summary of findings
6. Discussion
 - a. Interpretation of study findings in relation to
 - i. Existing literature
 - ii. Theory
 - b. Identification of new knowledge from the study
7. Study limitations
8. Conclusion
9. References

Appendix J: Three Paper Dissertation: Option B

Option B: Three Paper Dissertation General Outline

1. Introduction
 - a. Background to the problem/issue
 - b. Aims of the overall study
 - i. Focus of each individual paper
 - c. Significance of the study overall and the contribution each paper will make
2. Conceptual Framework for the Study
 - a. Overarching conceptual framework for the study
 - b. Theories that inform conceptual frame of the study and individual papers
 - c. Key concepts and/or domains overall and in each individual paper
3. Paper 1 (should contain all of the elements of Option A, but within 20-page format)
4. Paper 2 (should contain all of the elements of Option A, but within 20-page format)
5. Paper 3 (should contain all of the elements of Option A, but within 20-page format)
6. Discussion
 - a. Interpretation of study findings in relation to
 - i. Existing literature
 - ii. Theory
 - b. Identification of new knowledge from the study overall
7. Study limitations
8. Conclusion
9. References

Appendix K: Dissertation Proposal Outline

The Dissertation Proposal Outline

1. Introduction
 - a. Background to the problem/issue
 - b. Aims of the study
 - c. Significance of the study
2. Conceptual Framework for the Study
 - a. Theories that inform the conceptual framework of the study
 - b. Key concepts and/or domains
3. Literature review
 - a. Current literature informing the study
 - b. Identification of the knowledge gap/rationale for study
4. Methodology
 - a. Research aims/questions
 - b. Overall research approach
 - c. Research location or sites
 - d. Sample population and sampling strategy
 - e. Measures, instruments and/or sources of data
 - f. Data collection procedures
 - g. Data analysis procedures
 - h. Presentation of pilot data or preliminary research
 - i. Issues of validity/reliability and/or trustworthiness/credibility
5. Study limitations
6. Current IRB status
7. Timetable
8. Conclusion
9. References
10. Appendices
 - a. Data collection instruments
 - b. IRB approval documents
 - c. Other relevant materials

Appendix L: Dissertation Proposal Approval Form

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program
Dissertation Proposal Approval – Advance to Dissertation

The below signed Dissertation Committee Members have reviewed and approved the dissertation proposal by the doctoral candidate listed below and agree that the candidate can proceed with the dissertation study outlined within it.

PhD Candidate:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Dissertation Proposal Title:

Proposed timeline milestones:

Estimated date of first
draft submitted: Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____

Estimated date of
dissertation defense: Month: _____ Year: _____

Committee Members

Committee Chair:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

SSW Committee Member:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

External Committee Member:

Title:

Signature:

Date:

Title:

Received by:

Doctoral Program Chair Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix M: Dissertation Defense Information Form

Simmons School of Social Work PhD Program
Dissertation Defense Committee Information

Please type committee names and academic degrees, and licenses as they should appear on official documents. CV required for all outside readers, if applicable.

PhD Candidate

Name:

Telephone:

Email:

Dissertation title:

Dissertation defense

Date:

Time:

Location:

Media required:

Parking tickets required:

Candidate brief bio (paste here)

Committee Members

Dissertation Committee Chair:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Simmons SSW Committee Member:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

External Committee Member:

Title:

Phone:

Email:

Dissertation Committee Chair Signature:

Date:

Appendix N: Dissertation Approval Signature Page

The PhD Proposal of (student name) entitled
(Title of Dissertation Proposal)

has been approved by the candidate's dissertation committee of Simmons College Graduate School of Social Work on (Day, Month, Year) as affirmed by the signatures below and the Director of the PhD Program.

(name, title, institution)

Chair, Dissertation Committee

(name, title, institution)

Dissertation Committee Member

(name, title, institution)

Dissertation Committee Member

(name, title)

Director of the SSW PhD Program

Appendix O: Dissertation Submission & Graduation Procedures

After the dissertation is defended, all students must submit their dissertation to the University as a condition of graduation. For specific information on how to prepare the dissertation, submit it to Simmons University, timelines and other procedures, please obtain a copy of the Dissertation Protocol and Graduation Information Packet from the Director of the PhD program.

In addition, students are requested to do the following:

- A) Submit the dissertation to NASW Press's Dissertation Abstracts so that it can be indexed in the social work knowledge base. For more information on how to do this, go to:
<https://www.naswpress.org/students/dissertation.html>

- B) Submit the dissertation to ProQuest, which is the dissertation repository for the Library of Congress. For more information on how to do this, go to:
<https://www.proquest.com/products-services/dissertations/submit-a-dissertation.html>

Graduating students should consult the Dissertation Protocol and Graduation Information Packet for specific information about the graduation process, timelines and deadlines for submission of graduation materials, and graduation ceremonies.

Contents of the Dissertation Protocol and Graduation Information Packet are subject to change. Students should make sure they have the current academic year's packet when they are preparing their dissertation and for graduation.

Appendix P: Program Checklist

Program Checklist for Doctoral Students Entering Fall 2019

Name:

Date entered program:

Required Courses (Check box when complete.)	Course #	Credits	Sem/Year completed
Required courses			
<input type="checkbox"/> Social and Behavioral Theory	SW610	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention Research	SW624	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Critical Analysis of Clinical Practice	SW626	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy of Science	SW631	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey Research Methods	SW633	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Analysis in Political, Social and Economic Contexts	SW634	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative Data Analysis	SW635	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative Scientific Methods	SW650	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Statistics and Data Analysis	SW651	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Multiple Variable Statistics	SW652	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative Scientific Methods	SW654	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Integrating Public Policy Issues and Outcomes into Social Work Research	SW670	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching methodologies, course design and assessment	SW671	3	
Electives			
<input type="checkbox"/> Elective 1		3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Elective 1		3	
Required courses			
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Application and Immersion Experience + 100 hours teaching practicum	SW691	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Community-Based Participatory Research: Models and Methods + 100 hours research practicum	SW690	3	
Other requirements			
<input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive exam passed		0	
<input type="checkbox"/> Publishable paper submitted		0	
Dissertation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation proposal continuance		0	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation Proposal Defended	SW628	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation continuance		0	

Dissertation Defended

SW636 3

Total Required Credits: 51

Appendix Q: Student business card request form

Simmons College Doctoral Student Business Card Request

Instructions:

Please fill out this form and submit it by email to the Doctoral Program Director for approval. Once approved, the form will be forwarded to Patrick Cunniffe, Operations Manager who will place the order. The doctoral program will fund the first box of cards for all doctoral students. Additional boxes may be purchased directly through Simmons at an approximate cost of \$30 per box.

Contact information for how to reach you regarding this request and/or when the order arrives:

Date:

Name:

Email address:

Contact information to be printed on the cards:

Your Name as you wish it to appear:

Please indicate one of these:

_____ Doctoral student (if have not yet passed the qualifying exam)

Or

_____ Doctoral candidate (if you have passed the qualifying exam)

Simmons email address:

Telephone number if you wish to list one:

Note: Simmons College's address will be listed as the mailing address on all card orders.