

**HANDBOOK FOR THE PHD. PROGRAM  
IN SOCIAL WORK**

**MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
BALTIMORE, MD 21251**

**January 2011  
[Revised July 2012]**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS .....	1
OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM .....	3
PHD. CURRICULUM SEQUENCES .....	7
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION.....	9
THE DISSERTATION .....	10
THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE .....	11
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND PROPOSAL HEARING .....	13
THE FINAL ORAL DISSERTATION EXAMINATION .....	15
PREPARATION OF DISSERTATION FOR FINAL SUBMISSION .....	17
APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION .....	18
GRADING SYSTEM AND REQUIREMENTS.....	19
ACADEMIC CONDUCT.....	22
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.....	24
ACADEMIC DISMISSAL AND APPEALS .....	26
ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT .....	27
TRANSFER CREDITS .....	27
PHD. PROGRAM COMMITTEE.....	28
APPENDICES .....	30
APPENDIX A: COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RATING FORM	
APPENDIX B: DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AGREEMENT FORM	
APPENDIX C: DISSERTATION PROPOSAL HEARING FORM	
APPENDIX D: DISSERTATION ORAL DEFENSE FORM	
APPENDIX E: APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION	

APPENDIX F: COURSE LISTING AND DESCRIPTIONS  
APPENDIX G: SOCIAL WORK FACULTY RESEARCH INTERESTS

**PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS**

Morgan State University's PhD program in social work is primarily designed to prepare students for leadership roles in urban social work research, social policy analysis and advocacy, and social work education. The urban focus recognizes that inner-city residents bear the brunt of the social, economic, political, and health-related problems of American society. The disproportionate occurrence of these problems in urban areas represents a crisis in American democracy. To address this crisis, the PhD program in social work prepares students to apply a social justice framework to analyze and solve the catastrophic problems and challenges of contemporary urban society.

The social justice framework adopted by the PhD program can be understood as a belief system and a practice. As a belief system, social justice affirms the core values of democracy and equality. All persons are believed to have the inherent right to freely express their views and to have equal opportunities to acquire resources and power. From this perspective, human stigmatization and subjugation are twin evils. Both deprive individuals and groups of their potential to prosper, and they create distortions that prevent people from working together to solve human dilemmas. As a practice, social justice promotes actions that identify, describe, and eliminate human oppression and inequality. These actions can be expressed in many ways, but the common thread that cuts through them all is the implementation of positive social change. Positive social

change is the behavioral outcome of social justice and represents efforts that expand the freedom, dignity, and opportunity of those who are vulnerable and who have been historically oppressed. In essence, social justice activities rectify the abuses in the stewardship of power that prevent people and social systems from exercising compassion and from acknowledging the universal origin and destiny of humanity.

While the program is amenable to the application of the social justice framework to all vulnerable populations, it is particularly concerned with applying the framework to examine, alleviate, and eliminate social problems relevant to urban African-American families, communities, and organizations. Urban African Americans are overly represented in many socioeconomic and public health problem categories. Producing social work PhD.s who generate research that can be used to diminish this overrepresentation and provide critical social policy recommendations is a primary objective of the program. This objective speaks to the important role of the scholar/activist in making her or his research relevant to social change activities.

However, an exclusive focus on social problems and pathology often denies the resiliency among vulnerable populations. To this extent, the program promotes research that examines and chronicles the strengths and accomplishments of urban African-American families, communities, and organizations. African-American families, communities, and organizations have employed creative survival and coping strategies to resist oppressive forces, and these strategies should be systematically examined and documented.

The PhD. program, therefore, seeks to achieve the following goals:

- 1) To produce competent and socially conscious leaders in the field of social welfare who will work assiduously to affect positive social change;
- 2) To produce researchers, scholars, and social policy advocates who will contribute to the knowledge base of social work and to the general social science literature in the areas of urban social problems and urban social strengths;
- 3) To produce social work educators who will infuse knowledge of urban social problems and urban social strengths in the social work curriculum;
- 4) To produce graduates who are competent in and knowledgeable of urban social policy, urban social work and family theory, urban organizations and communities, and research methods and statistics.

### **OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM**

The PhD program consists of 42 credit hours (beyond the master's degree) of the core curriculum and a minimum of 6 credit hours of dissertation research for a minimum total of 48 credit hours to complete the program. The program has both a full-time and part-time option. Whether one is full-time or part-time, there is a seven-year statute of limitations for completion of the PhD degree in social work. This means that students have no more than seven (7) years from the date of admission to the PhD program to complete all requirements, which include the successful completion, defense, and approval of the dissertation. Students who exceed the seven-year statute of limitations may be dismissed from the program. In addition, students who have not been enrolled in

the program and the School of Graduate Studies for three (3) consecutive semesters and have not corresponded with the PhD Program Director and the School of Graduate Studies during that period are no longer considered continuing students. In this case, students may be required by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies to reapply for admission.

The full-time sequence of the curriculum is presented on page 7. At Morgan, graduate students are considered full-time when they are registered for at least 9 credit hours per semester. The full-time sequence requires two years of course work and then two years of dissertation research. In the first year, students are required to complete 18 credit hours, 9 credit hours each semester. In the second year, students are required to complete 18 credit hours, 9 credit hours each semester. Summer courses are not offered between the first and second years of course work; however, elective courses may be taken in the summer after students complete their first year of course work. These courses, however, would be taken in other departments or in other universities within Morgan's consortium. Students must receive approval from their advisor before taking summer, elective courses.

Part-time students will take about a year and a half longer to complete the program. To be considered part-time, students must register for a minimum of 6 credit hours of course work per semester. Like full-time students, part-time students must take courses in sequential order. This means that students cannot enroll in or register for higher level courses until they have taken and passed the appropriate lower level courses. The preferred part-time curriculum sequence is presented on page 8. This model is

preferred because its design is based on the best possible logical sequencing of the courses. Students take 6 credit hours per semester for a total of three and a half years. If students select a different part-time model, or a combination of full-time and part-time enrollment, they must obtain approval from their academic advisor and the Chair. Like full-time students, summer courses are not offered in the program.

The completion of classroom course work provides students with a total of 42 semester credit hours. After students complete the 36 credit hours of classroom course work, they are eligible to sit for the *Comprehensive Examination*, which is discussed later in the handbook. After taking and passing the Comprehensive Examination, students are then officially eligible to form a dissertation committee and commence their dissertation research. Students must register for at least 3 semester credit hours to work on their dissertation after completing the comprehensive exam. **Students must also complete additional hours of an elective course.**

Two courses are designated for dissertation research: 1) SOWK-998 (Dissertation Seminar), and 2) SOWK-997 (Dissertation Guidance). These courses are not classroom courses but rather represent the autonomous work of the dissertation student along with consistent guidance she or he receives from dissertation committee members.

*Dissertation Seminar* is the first and mandatory course in which one must enroll.

Dissertation Seminar is worth 6 credit hours and is only taken once. This is the course in which the student receives a final grade for her or his dissertation research. The student receives a “CS”-Continuing Student until the dissertation is completed and then she or he will receive either a “P”- Pass or “F”-Fail. However, because Dissertation Seminar is

only taken once, and since students will normally take more than one semester to complete their dissertation, there is *Dissertation Guidance*, which is worth 3 credit hours. Dissertation Guidance can be taken more than once and is used to maintain the student's enrollment status throughout the dissertation process. Students must be enrolled until they complete their dissertations. Dissertation Guidance is not a graded course but rather students receive an "S"-Satisfactory until they complete their dissertations.

As indicated, both the full-time and part-time curriculum sequences offer a two year model for completion of the dissertation. This is attributed to research that shows that, on average, doctoral students take two years to complete their dissertations. Of course, some students will require a shorter period of time and others a longer period to complete the dissertation. This variance is associated with a number of factors, some of which are as follow: 1) the level of focus, discipline, and motivation displayed by the student, 2) the degree to which being employed is an impediment to the student's ability to consistently work on her or his dissertation; 3) the degree to which a student experiences stressful life events (e.g., a family death) during the dissertation process, and how she or he copes with these events; 4) the quality of the relationships between the student and her or his dissertation committee members and among the dissertation members themselves; and 5) the type of research one is executing (some take longer).

#### **FULL-TIME COURSE SEQUENCE**

		<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>FALL (1<sup>st</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 701	History of Social Welfare Policy	3
SOWK 702	Social Work and Human Services Statistics	3
SOWK 704	Knowledge and Theory Development for Urban Social Work	3
<b>SPRING (1<sup>st</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 703	Research Methods for Urban Social Institutions	3
SOWK 705	Contemporary Social Policy Analysis	3
SOWK 706	Social Work and Human Services Statistics II	3
<b>FALL (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 802	Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research	3
SOWK 804	Social Work with Urban Organizations and Communities	3
SOWK 805	Advanced Statistical Applications in Social Work	3
<b>SPRING (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 803	Urban Family Theories	3
SOWK 807	Issues in Social Work Pedagogy and Education	3
SOWK 899	Guided Research	3
<b>TOTAL MINIMUM HOURS REQUIRED TO SIT FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS</b>		<b>36</b>
<b>FALL (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 998	Dissertation Seminar	6
SOWK 808	Teaching or Research Practicum in Social Work	3
<b>SPRING (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 997	Dissertation Guidance	3
SOWK 811	Elective (see Appendix "F" for listing)	3
<b>FALL (4<sup>th</sup> Year)</b>		
	Dissertation Guidance	3
<b>SPRING (4<sup>th</sup> Year)</b>		
	Dissertation Guidance	3
<b>TOTAL HOURS INCLUDING TWO YEARS OF DISSERTATION RESEARCH</b>		<b>57</b>

\*Indicates Change, SOWK 805 New Name, SOWK 808 & SOWK 811 Moved

#### PREFERRED PART-TIME COURSE SEQUENCE

		<b>Credit Hours</b>
<b>FALL (1<sup>st</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 702	Social Work and Human Services Statistics	3
SOWK 704	Knowledge and Theory Development for Urban Social Work	3
<b>SPRING (1<sup>st</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 703	Research Methods for Urban Social Institutions	3

SOWK 706	Social Work and Human Services Statistics II	3
<b>FALL (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 701	History of Social Welfare Policy	3
SOWK 805	Advanced Statistical Applications in Social Work	3
<b>SPRING (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 705	Contemporary Social Policy Analysis	3
SOWK 807	Issues in Social Work Pedagogy and Education	3
<b>FALL (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 802	Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research	3
SOWK 803	Urban Family Theories	3
<b>SPRING (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 808	Teaching or Research Practicum in Social Work	3
SOWK 899	Guided Research	3
<b>FALL (4<sup>th</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 804	Social Work with Urban Organizations and Communities	3
SOWK 811	Elective (see Appendix "F" for listing)	3
<b>SPRING (4<sup>th</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 998	Dissertation Seminar	6
<b>TOTAL MINIMUM HOURS REQUIRED TO SIT FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS</b>		<b>36</b>
<b>FALL (5<sup>th</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 997	Dissertation Guidance	3
<b>SPRING (5<sup>th</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 997	Dissertation Guidance	3
<b>FALL (6<sup>th</sup> Year)</b>		
SOWK 997	Dissertation Guidance	3
<b>TOTAL HOURS INCLUDING TWO YEARS OF DISSERTATION RESEARCH</b>		<b>57</b>

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Once students have successfully completed the 36 credit hours of the core curriculum, they are eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination. This Examination

assesses the student's total understanding and synthesis of the core curriculum. The Comprehensive Examination includes three areas on which the student is tested. These areas are as follows:

- 1) theories and methods of urban social work,
- 2) social welfare history and policy analysis, and
- 3) research methods and statistics.

The Comprehensive Examination is administered once per academic year – in May. The Examination occurs over a three day period, six hours each day. Students are given six hours to respond to each examination question. No notes, books, or other aids are permissible while taking the examination.

The student's performance on the Comprehensive Examination is assessed by a program faculty committee comprised of the authors of the examination questions. The authors of the Comprehensive Examination questions are usually the professors who taught the course or content area from which the question is formulated. A standard rating form (see Appendix "A") is used to rank the student's performance. Once the student's performance has been evaluated by the committee members, the forms are returned to the PhD Department Chair. The Chair will notify the student in writing as to whether she or he passed or did not pass the examination. The notification will not be mailed to students until evaluations have been submitted for all students. Notification of examination results also are reported to the Dean of the School of Social Work and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Once the student has been notified that she or he has passed the Comprehensive Examination, she or he can officially begin the formal

process of the dissertation. The student must not select a chairperson, other members of her or his dissertation committee, or register for Dissertation Seminar until official written notification indicating passing of the Comprehensive Examination has been received.

The Comprehensive Examination may be repeated only once in September. If a student fails portions of the examination, she or he is required to retake only those questions for which she or he did not pass. If the student does not pass the second time, she or he will be dismissed from the program. Students have the right to appeal this and other adverse decisions, and this process is discussed under the section *Academic Dismissal and Appeals*. Lastly, the student must be enrolled to be eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination.

## **THE DISSERTATION**

The dissertation is the last phase of the PhD program. It is a written analysis of a specific academic topic that applies traditional scientific methods of inquiry to examine specific research questions or hypotheses. The purpose of the dissertation is fivefold:

- 1) To provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to execute original and independent research;
- 2) To provide students with the opportunity to apply social science logic, language, methods, and statistics to investigate a topic consistent with the program's urban mission;
- 3) To provide students with the opportunity to integrate, through social science writing, the diverse skills obtained throughout their course work;
- 4) To provide students with the opportunity to thoroughly explore and examine a

topic for which they are interested; and

5) To provide students with the opportunity to establish a foundation for what is conceived to be the beginning of their future scholarly endeavors.

Although this handbook provides some critical information about the dissertation process, students are required to obtain a copy of the *Handbook for Dissertations and Theses* published by the School of Graduate Studies. The School of Graduate Studies Handbook governs the dissertation and thesis process and guidelines for all graduate studies programs (including the social work PhD program) and departments at Morgan. The Handbook can be downloaded from the following website:

<http://www.morgan.edu/academics/Grad-Studies/index.html> and then click on the “Current Students” tab.

### **THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE**

Once the student has received official written notification that she or he has passed the Comprehensive Examination, she or he can then begin the process of selecting a chairperson and members to constitute the dissertation committee. A dissertation committee is a group of holders of the doctoral degree, preferably professors in the student’s field of interest. The committee supervises and guides the student in selecting a dissertation topic, in conceptualizing the research problem and research questions, in executing the research design and data analysis, and in organizing and presenting the ideas that shapes the dissertation.

The dissertation committee must comprise at least three (3), but no more than five (5), members. A majority of the committee members must be full-time faculty in the

School of Social Work at Morgan State University. The student can also select outside persons (that is, persons who are not affiliated with the School of Social Work or Morgan State University) to be on the committee. Outside persons can be professors, community practitioners, or administrators, so long as they have doctorates and have expertise in the area of study. Thus, if a dissertation committee comprises three members, only one member can be an outside person. If it comprises five members, two members can be outside persons.

### **Dissertation Chairperson**

A key person on the student's committee is the dissertation chairperson. The dissertation chairperson is that committee member who takes the lead in guiding the student through the dissertation process. She or he is the person with whom the student works the closest. The chairperson convenes members of the committee when indicated. All decisions regarding the student's dissertation must be approved by the chairperson; thus, students must consistently consult the chairperson throughout the dissertation process. The dissertation chairperson must be a full-time faculty member in the School of Social Work at Morgan State University.

Once students have identified a dissertation chairperson and other committee members, and have received verbal approval from each to serve on their committee, they must provide written confirmation of this approval to the Chair of the PhD. department. This is achieved through the *Dissertation Committee Agreement Form* (see Appendix "B"), which allows signatures of all committee members indicating their agreement to serve on the student's committee.

## **DISSERTATION PROPOSAL AND PROPOSAL HEARING**

Once the student has completed an acceptable draft of the first three chapters of the dissertation, she or he is considered to have a dissertation proposal. Once the draft of the dissertation proposal is completed and has been approved by the dissertation chairperson, the student is to schedule, in concert with her or his chairperson, a *dissertation proposal hearing*. The Chair and other committee members must be informed in writing of the time, date, and location of the hearing. The purpose of the dissertation proposal hearing is for the student to orally present the ideas contained in the proposal in a context in which the chairperson, all committee members, and the PhD department Chair are present. Other faculty and students also may be invited to the proposal hearing. The dissertation proposal includes all the components of the dissertation up through the methodology section:

- 1) statement of problem and purpose of the study;
- 2) review of the literature and theoretical or conceptual framework
- 3) methodology (See Appendix \_\_\_\_ for Steps to successfully completing the Dissertation Proposal Process)

The hearing provides an opportunity for the student to:

- a) orally present the ideas and plan of the dissertation, and
- b) receive feedback and suggestions on how to improve the proposal.

Once the hearing is completed, the chairperson of the committee and committee members immediately meet and vote on whether the proposal is acceptable or not acceptable and whether the student may or may not proceed with data collection. The dissertation

chairperson informs the student of the decision verbally following the group's deliberations. The dissertation chairperson also is required to complete the *Dissertation Proposal Hearing Form* (see Appendix "C") to verify the committee's decision about the proposal. The committee's decision about the proposal hearing can generate the following outcomes:

- 1) Passed (no corrections are needed);
- 2) Conditionally passed (minor adjustments are needed in substance and/or format, and must be approved by the dissertation chairperson);
- 3) Deferred (major adjustments are needed in substance and/or format and a second and final proposal hearing is warranted), and
- 4) Failed (needed adjustments are too extensive for the candidate to execute the proposed research).

#### IRB Approval

Once the dissertation proposal has been approved by the committee, the student may prepare the IRB Proposal for review and approval by the Dissertation Chair. Once the IRB approves the study, the student may proceed with data collection. Even if IRB approval is not required, a student must submit the application in order for them to make that determination.

### **THE FINAL ORAL DISSERTATION EXAMINATION**

The final oral dissertation examination is a meeting in which the student presents the entire dissertation, including the findings and implications, to the dissertation committee. It is the formal defense of the student's dissertation. The final oral

dissertation examination has three (3) objectives:

- 1) assessment of the examinee's ability to orally defend the dissertation;
- 2) assessment of the dissertation itself in terms of its scientific problem-solving ability, research methodology, analysis, and scholarly writing; and
- 3) assessment of the dissertation's contribution to the existing knowledge base.

Before the dissertation examination can be scheduled, the student must have completed the dissertation and secured approval of the completed work by the dissertation chairperson and other committee members (See Appendix \_\_\_ Dissertation Guide). If the student wishes to graduate at the end of the semester in which the oral examination takes place, the examination must be scheduled early enough so that the student can meet the School of Graduate Studies deadline for submission of the completed dissertation. Consideration also must be given for the time it will take the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies to review the dissertation and provide feedback to the student. The Graduate School Dean (or his or her designee) reads and reviews all University dissertations. The Graduate School Dean reviews the dissertations to ensure that they meet the standards and requirements identified in the *School of Graduate Studies Handbook for Dissertations and Theses*. All dissertations must be finally approved by the School of Graduate Studies.

The official examining committee of the oral defense is the student's dissertation committee. Although other faculty and students may be invited to the final oral defense, only the official examining committee can render the final decision concerning the quality of the examinee's performance in the oral defense. Once the oral defense is

finished, the examinee will be asked to leave the hearing room. Discussion of the student's presentation will take place and a vote will be taken immediately by the official examining committee to determine if the student successfully defended the dissertation.

Four outcomes of this vote are possible:

- 1) Passed (no corrections are needed);
- 2) Conditionally passed (minor adjustments are needed in substance and/or format and must be approved by the dissertation chairperson);
- 3) Deferred (major adjustments are needed in substance and/or format and a second and final oral defense is warranted), and
- 4) Failed (needed adjustments are too extensive or candidate failed to satisfactorily defend).

The student will be verbally informed of the committee's decision immediately after the vote is taken by the chairperson of the committee, and confirmation of this vote will be documented by the dissertation chairperson's completion of *Dissertation Oral Defense Form* (see Appendix "D").

The final oral dissertation examination must be scheduled by the student's dissertation chairperson at a time mutually agreeable to the student and members of the examining committee. The final oral dissertation examination is open to all faculty members and students in the school of social work and in the other graduate and professional schools at Morgan.

Typewritten copies of the dissertation must be presented to the student's dissertation chairperson at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the final oral

examination so that they can be distributed by the student to all committee members prior to the defense. The student is required to provide each person who attends the oral examination with a dissertation abstract.

### **PREPARATION OF DISSERTATION FOR FINAL SUBMISSION**

After the successful defense of the dissertation, students must submit the dissertation for review to the School of Graduate Studies for final approval. The School of Graduate Studies *Handbook for Dissertations and Thesis* includes specific guidelines for the format and organization of dissertations and instructions on how and when students should submit their dissertations to the School of Graduate Studies. In addition, the School of Graduate Studies *Handbook* also includes a list of available professional style manuals to be used to write and type dissertations. Professional style manuals provide authors of professional manuscripts with specific methods and guidelines for writing and citations. In the School of Social Work, all written assignments, including dissertations, must conform to the style and citation guidelines of the American Psychological Association's Publication Manual (2009, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition). Each student is responsible for the dissertation conforming to this professional style and any other guidelines included in the School of Graduate Studies *Handbook*. Although the dissertation committee chairperson and other committee members review the dissertation for style consistency, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the correct and consistent application of required style and citation guidelines belongs to the student.

### **APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION**

To be officially awarded the PhD degree, students must file an *Application for Graduation* (see Appendix “E”) with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies by November 1<sup>st</sup> if they expect to complete all requirements for graduation by the May commencement ceremonies (i.e., by the end of the Spring Semester of any year). Students also must file an Application for Graduation with the School of Graduate Studies Dean by May 31<sup>st</sup> if they expect to complete all requirements for graduation after the May commencement ceremonies but by the end of the fall semester (i.e., December of any year). Students who file an Application for December graduation and who successfully complete all graduation requirements will receive their diploma but are expected to participate in the commencement ceremonies held the following May.

Before the Application for Graduation is filed with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, it must be signed by the School of Social Work Dean, Department Chairperson, and stamped by the Bursar after the application fee has been paid. If a student does not complete all requirements for graduation by the end of the semester indicated on the Application for Graduation, a new form must be completed for the year (and semester) in which the degree is to be awarded. Although a new Application for Graduation must be filed whenever a student does not finish in the semester indicated on the application, the application fee is paid only once. Students applying for graduation should also make arrangements with the University Bookstore for the rental of academic robes and regalia.

### **GRADING SYSTEM AND REQUIREMENTS**

The grading system identified and explicated below applies to all course

assignments, all required core courses, all elective courses, and to the academic credit given for the dissertation. Graduate programs at Morgan use the following grading system:

**A**=Superior  
**B**=Average  
**C**=Unsatisfactory  
**F**=Failing work, must repeat course  
**I**=Some phase of work is incomplete  
**P**=Pass for non-letter grade courses  
**CS**=Continuing Student (for thesis and dissertations students)  
**AW**=An administrative withdrawal given for appropriately documented financial, sickness, or unusual nonacademic reason  
**W**=Official Withdrawal

Grades of “D” are not given to graduate students at Morgan.

Graduate students at Morgan are required to maintain a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 (B-average). A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 at the end any semester is automatically placed on academic probation. If the student’s cumulative GPA at the end of two (2) consecutive semesters continues to fall below a 3.0, she or he will be dismissed from the PhD program and the School of Graduate Studies. Thus, when placed on academic probation, students are allowed only two (2) consecutive semesters to improve their cumulative GPA. A student’s semester GPA is computed by dividing the total number of quality points earned by the number of courses taken in a given semester. A total of 4 quality points is given for a grade of “A;” three (3) quality points are given for a grade of “B;” and two (2) quality points are given for a grade of “C.” The GPA is officially determined and calculated by the Office of the Registrar.

At Morgan, graduate students may not possess “C” grades totaling more than 20

percent of the total credit hours required for satisfying degree requirements. Since completing the PhD program in social work requires a minimum total of 48 credit hours, this means that students can have no more than 9.6 credit hours of “C” grades. Since there are no courses in the program that offer .6 credit hours of course work, the 20 percent policy implies that social work PhD. students must not have more than 9 credit hours of “C” grades. Students who earned more than 9 credit hours of “C” grades will be dismissed from the program.

A grade of “F” indicates failure and carries no credit, but is counted in computing the grade point average until the course is repeated and a passing grade is earned. A student who earns a grade of “F” in any course must repeat the course and earn a passing grade. Students who earn more than two (2) grades of “F” will be dismissed from the program.

Sometimes “I” grades (or Incompletes) are given. A grade of “I” indicates that the requirements for a course have not been completed. In the School of Graduate Studies, “I” grades are given only in exceptional cases. Examples are documented illnesses or other documented emergencies that are beyond the student’s control and that preclude the student from completing course requirements. A student’s work in a course must be satisfactory to be granted an “I” grade. An “I” grade must be removed by the end of the next semester of enrollment following the granting of an “I” grade, or the incomplete grade will be changed to a grade of “F.” Accumulating two or more Incompletes that have become “F” grades demonstrates failure to make satisfactory academic progress and is grounds for academic dismissal. Furthermore, students may not graduate with a grade

of “I” on their Morgan State University transcript.

The evaluation of students’ academic performance is the sole responsibility of the faculty member who teaches or supervises a course in which the student is enrolled. It is also the responsibility of the individual faculty member to clearly and precisely indicate and explicate in the syllabus exactly how she or he will evaluate students’ performance and how grades will be determined. If students disagree with a professor’s evaluation – whether it is an individual assignment or the professor’s final grade – they might consider scheduling a meeting with the professor to share their concerns. This meeting may or may not result in changing the student’s grade, but it can be used as a vehicle to help answer questions the student may have. However, before any such meeting is schedule, students should first critically examine their role in the grade they have received and the degree to which their performance could have been better.

At the end of each semester, each enrolled student is expected to evaluate the course and key areas of the faculty member’s teaching competence and effectiveness. The evaluation instruments used are distributed by a student and a student is responsible for collecting the evaluations and submitting them to the Office of the Chairperson of the School of Social Work.

### **ACADEMIC CONDUCT**

Although doctoral students’ academic performance is critical to their success, so too is their academic conduct. Academic conduct is the degree to which students behave ethically and honestly as they execute their academic responsibilities and interact with their peers and professors. The PhD program in social work strongly encourages and

expects all students to behave ethically and honestly. However, when students have been found to engage in unethical and dishonest behaviors, strong sanctions can be imposed (see below). Some examples of unethical and dishonest behavior are cheating, plagiarism, abuse of academic/library materials, stealing, and lying. Plagiarism is especially egregious. The School of Graduate Studies Graduate Catalog defines plagiarism as “submitting, orally or in writing, the words, ideas, drawings, or other works of another person as one’s own without appropriate citation in order to receive credit for having completed an academic assignment or exercise.” The School of Graduate Studies Graduate Catalog also gives several examples of plagiarism that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Submitting material or work for evaluation, in whole or in part, which has been prepared by another student, by an author of a published article or textbook, or persons producing papers for profit?
- b. Using a direct quote from another student’s papers or from an author of a publication without including the appropriate citation;
- c. Paraphrasing or summarizing another’s work without including the appropriate citation; and
- d. Using information stored electronically (e.g., submission of papers and or information found on computer disks, the Internet, etc) without including appropriate citation and/or acknowledging the source.”

According to the School of Graduate Studies Graduate Catalog, “any graduate student at Morgan State University, who is found to have engaged in academic dishonesty, including plagiarism in the preparation of a dissertation or thesis, may be subjected to suspension, expulsion and/or revocation of a previously awarded degree. Such sanctions may be imposed even though the accused graduate student may never

have received a lesser penalty or penalties for previous academic dishonesty.” For definitions of the terms *suspension*, *expulsion*, and *revocation*, see the School of Graduate Studies Graduate Catalog.

### **Academic Tolerance**

Another important dimension of academic conduct is academic tolerance. In the course of their studies, students will invariably be exposed to ideas and values that run contrary to their own. These ideas and values may be presented in the classroom, in course readings and assignments, or in informal interactions with peers and professors. Critical to the academic process is the exchange and dissemination of a diverse range of ideas and values. Therefore, displaying academic tolerance is a major skill that PhD students in social work must possess.

Essentially, this skill requires that one be able to receive and consider diverse ideas and values without becoming belligerent. This does not imply that one has to agree with the ideas or values, but it does require the ideas or values to be examined and discussed in a professional, scholarly, and civil manner. The PhD program in social work encourages a learning milieu that supports diversity in thought and comfort in sharing one’s ideas and interpretations.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Professional conduct is both inclusive of and broader than academic conduct and integrity. It fundamentally requires students to behave in a manner consistent with the ethical principles and standards of the social work profession, as formalized in the

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) **Code of Ethics** (see the NASW website @ [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)). Specifically, the relevant NASW Code of Ethics indicates the following:

1. Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.
2. Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.
3. Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

PhD students in social work are required to demonstrate their commitment to the social work profession's core values of service, social justice, honesty, and competence. With core professional values as its foundation, proper professional conduct is more specifically the student's ability to maintain constructive interpersonal relations with university faculty, staff, fellow students, and others, and the ability to behave ethically and conform to the Morgan State University standards, School of Social Work policies and procedures, and professional social work values. Some examples of improper professional conduct include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) physical or verbal altercations, 2) starting and spreading erroneous and malicious rumors, 3) verbal and written (including electronic mail) harassment, 4) meddling in others' affairs without their permission, 5) lying and cheating, and 6) involvement in criminal activity. The PhD program takes very seriously violations of proper professional conduct and strongly

encourages students to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the expectations of a social work PhD student.

### **ACADEMIC DISMISSAL AND APPEALS**

Throughout this handbook, several events were said to constitute grounds for student dismissal:

1. unethical and dishonest academic conduct;
2. failing to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0;
3. exceeding the seven-year statute of limitations;
4. failing the comprehensive examination;
5. failing both the dissertation proposal and final dissertation defenses;
6. earning “C” grades totaling more than 9 credit hours of course work; and
7. receiving more than two grades of “F.”

If students experience any of the above and are dismissed from the program, they have the right to appeal the decision. All appeals, including a student’s academic progress, probation, or dismissal, must be addressed in writing to the Dean of the School of Social Work who, in consultation with the PhD Department Chair, will review the appeal and prepare a report and written recommendation for review by Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Studies Dean renders the final decision regarding a student’s appeal.

### **ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT**

When the student begins the PhD program, the Chair will assign her or him an academic advisor. The academic advisor will be a full-time PhD program faculty member in the PhD Department of the School of Social Work or the Director of the PhD program. Students should maintain consistent contact with their academic advisor. This contact should especially be made during the following times: a) registration periods; b) when the student approaches the time when she or he is eligible to sit for the Comprehensive Examination; and c) when the student is deciding on a dissertation chairperson and topic. The purpose of academic advisement is twofold:

- 1) ensure that the student selects and enrolls in classes that are necessary for his or her successful completion of the curriculum, and
- 2) facilitate the professional and personal growth of the student so that he or she can be properly socialized into the academic discipline or profession in which they seek entry.

The academic advisor will serve as the student's advisor until she or he passes the Comprehensive Examination.

### **TRANSFER CREDITS**

At Morgan State University, no more than twelve (12) semester hours of graduate credit taken at other accredited institutions may be applied towards the specific degree program. However, students cannot transfer credits if the courses they wish to transfer were counted as either a required course or elective in a previous program in which they earned a degree. Credits can only be transferred in cases where the credit was not counted toward the student's degree. Although a request for the transfer of credits taken

prior to enrollment in the School of Graduate Studies can be made, the transfer of credits will not be applied to the student's transcript until she or he has completed twelve credit hours at Morgan. Transfer credit is not counted in the cumulative average or overall average of the PhD program in social work. Transfer students can get courses waived only under the following conditions:

- 1) they have taken comparable courses in another accredited social work doctoral program in the United States within four (4) years of the date of their acceptance into the PhD program in social work at Morgan State University, and
- 2) they have received a grade of "B" or better.

Credits for correspondence courses, workshops, and extension classes are not acceptable for transfer. The final decision about whether and what courses can be transferred resides with the Chair of the PhD department in social work.

### **PHD PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

The PhD Department committee is the official governing body of the PhD program in social work. This committee reviews existing program policies and procedures and establishes new ones. These policies and procedures, however, must not contradict the policies and procedures of the School of Graduate Studies, which governs all graduate programs at Morgan State University.

The PhD Department committee comprises all full-time social work faculty who are primarily or exclusively assigned to the PhD program. Committee membership also includes the Dean of the School of Social Work and one, second year PhD student. This student's role is to represent the concerns of all students. Each committee member has an

equal vote, but the student member cannot vote on matters specific to an individual faculty member. The chairperson of the PhD Department committee is the Chair of the PhD program.

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A:  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RATING FORM

APPENDIX B:  
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AGREEMENT FORM

APPENDIX C:  
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL HEARING FORM

APPENDIX D:  
DISSERTATION ORAL DEFENSE FORM

APPENDIX E:  
APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION

APPENDIX F:  
COURSE LISTING AND DESCRIPTIONS

APPENDIX G:  
SOCIAL WORK FACULTY RESEARCH INTERESTS

APPENDIX H  
STEPS TO COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL PROCESS

APPENDIX I  
DISSERTATION GUIDE

**APPENDIX A:  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RATING FORM**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Examination Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Question/Content Area: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Performance (Check Appropriate Box):**

*Passed* (response is fully acceptable) [  ]

*Conditionally Passed* (minor clarification in the response is needed) [  ]

*Failed* (needs to retake the exam for this question) [  ]

Evaluator's Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B:  
DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AGREEMENT FORM**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title:

---

---

The below persons willingly agree to serve on the dissertation committee of the above named student:

Chairperson's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Committee Members' Signatures

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C:  
DISSERTATION PROPOSAL HEARING FORM**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Hearing Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title:

---

---

Dissertation Committee's Decision (Check Appropriate Box):

- Passed* (no corrections are needed)
- Conditionally Passed* (minor adjustments are needed in substance and/or format and must be approved by the dissertation chairperson)
- Deferred* (major adjustments are needed in substance and/or format and a second and final proposal hearing is warranted)
- Failed* (needed adjustments are too extensive for the candidate to execute the proposed research)

Dissertation Chairperson's Signature:

---

Additional Committee Members' Signatures:

---

---

---

---

**APPENDIX D:  
DISSERTATION ORAL DEFENSE FORM**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title:

---

---

Dissertation Committee's Decision (Check Appropriate Box):

- Passed* (no corrections are needed)
- Conditionally Passed* (minor adjustments are needed in substance and/or format and must be approved by the dissertation chairperson)
- Deferred* (major adjustments are needed in substance and/or format and a second and final oral defense is warranted)
- Failed* (needed adjustments are too extensive or candidate failed to satisfactorily defend)

Dissertation Chairperson's Signature:

---

Additional Committee Members' Signatures:

---

---

---

---



**APPENDIX F:  
PHD SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM COURSE LISTING AND DESCRIPTIONS**

**SOWK 701 History of Social Welfare Policy**

**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course provides information on the history and evolution of professional social work and social welfare values, practices, policies, and organizations in the United States. Covering the history of American social welfare from colonial times, this course places considerable emphasis on the effects of social, cultural, political, and economic factors on the development of social welfare policies and the social work profession.

**SOWK 702 Social Work and Human Services Statistics I**

**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course equips students with basic statistical techniques. Students will learn to apply descriptive and some intermediate statistical procedures to social problems and human service programs. In addition, beginning knowledge and use of computer statistical software packages will be emphasized.

**SOWK 703 Research Methods for Urban Social Institutions**

**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course examines the assumptions and the underlying logic and methods of social science research. Special attention is given to an examination of the sundry methods of social science data collection, to the criteria that determine the selection of a specific method, and to an understanding of the strengths and limitations of the various methods. These methods are explained and their applicability examined within the context of urban social institutions.

**SOWK 704 Knowledge and Theory Development for Urban Social Work**

**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course will present an in-depth exploration of a broad array of psychological, socio-cultural, political, and economic theories that undergird urban social work knowledge, values, and skills. Theories relevant to community development and empowerment will also be included. Tools and skills of analysis will be emphasized as this form the basis of urban social work practice and research.

**SOWK 705 Contemporary Social Policy Analyses**

**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course provides students with frameworks and methods of analyzing contemporary social welfare policies and the programs through which they are implemented. The course also explores the dimensions of policy analysis including policy development, implementation, management, and control, and it examines methods and dilemmas of policy advocacy for urban populations.

**SOWK 706 Social Work and Human Services Statistics II**

**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course acquaints students with more intermediate statistical procedures that is begun in SOWK 702, but also introduces students to the logic, significance, and appropriate application of advanced (i.e., multivariate) statistical procedures. In addition, intermediate knowledge and use of computer statistical software packages will be emphasized.

**SOWK 801 Administration, Management, and Organizational Policy****Three Hours; 3 Credits (ELECTIVE)**

This course introduces students to theoretical and applied approaches to human service administration, leadership, management and policy development. Emphasis is placed on human resource development and management and program development and implementation.

**SOWK 802 Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research****Three Hours; 3 Credits**

The course is designed to prepare students to conduct ethnographic participatory action research. Students will master methods such as interpreting qualitative data and building theory; qualitative methods of analysis, such as successive approximation and analytic comparison; and the use of computer software for qualitative data.

**SOWK 803 Urban Family Theories****Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course familiarizes students with various theories, perspectives, and methodologies used to study the structure and functioning of urban minority families focusing on conceptual models commonly used in family analysis: family structure and functionalism, interactionism, exchange theory, conflict theory, and the family developmental perspective.

**SOWK 804 Social Work with Urban Organizations and Communities****Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course examines urban organizations and communities with a focus on community-based agencies as levels of macro intervention for problem solving with urban and historically oppressed populations. The course will focus on administrative roles, organizational management, resource acquisition, planning, and community relations in a context of financial devolution.

**SOWK 805 Advanced Statistics for the Human Services****Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course focuses exclusively on multivariate analyses that are commonly used in social work and human services research. These procedures are ordinary least squares multiple regression, logistic regression, and structural equation models. In addition, advanced knowledge and use of computer statistical software packages will be emphasized.

**SOWK 806 Program Evaluation**  
**Three Hours; 3 Credits (ELECTIVE)**

This course provides students with an in-depth look at, and assessment of, evaluation methods in social work practice, administration, and policy. It prepares students to systematically evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of human service interventions with urban populations.

**SOWK 807 Issues in Social Work Pedagogy and Education**  
**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course examines the role and structure of social work education at the BSW, MSW and PhD. levels. The course will emphasize pedagogical issues in social work education, curriculum development, educational design, and instructional delivery. Emphasis will be placed on preparing students for effective and competent teaching and the transmission of knowledge and skills in academic and agency settings.

**SOWK 808 Teaching or Research Practicum in Social Work**  
**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

Doctoral students will have the opportunity to either teach a social work course at the BSW or MSW level under the supervision of a faculty mentor, or work with a professor on a research project.

**SOWK 809 Health Policy Issues and Practice**  
**Three Hours; 3 Credits (ELECTIVE)**

This course presents an overview and analyses of critical health policy issues that disproportionately and adversely affect urban populations. This course also examines the various macro practice methods used to resolve these issues from a social justice perspective.

**SOWK 810 Scholarly Writing and Productivity**  
**Three Hours; 3 Credits (ELECTIVE)**

This course examines the expectations and necessity of scholarly writing and productivity in social work. Preparing students for the role of “publishing scholar,” this course provides students with the knowledge, values, and skills associated with writing scholarly articles and books.

**SOWK 899 Supervised Researches**  
**Three Hours; 3 Credits (Required as of fall 2009)**

This course prepares doctoral students for the major components of the graduate research process. The course provides students with the opportunity to develop a draft research proposal that potentially could be used as a foundation for their dissertation work.

**SOWK 997 Dissertation Guidance**  
**Three Hours; 3 Credits**

This course is conducted informally with assistance provided by the student's dissertation chairperson/advisor and other committee members. Students register for this course to maintain enrollment until they complete the dissertation.

**SOWK 998 Dissertation Seminar**

**Six Hours; 6 Credits**

Students register for this course to receive a letter grade when the dissertation has been completed and approved by the dissertation committee and the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. This course is taken only once.

**APPENDIX G:  
FULL-TIME SOCIAL WORK FACULTY RESEARCH INTERESTS**

1. Dr. Sandra Chipungu—Children and Families (with a special focus on African American Children and Families); Child Welfare & Social Policy
2. Dr. Jay Chunn—Public Health; Health Policy and Practice; Health Behavioral Change (with a special focus on urban populations)
3. Dr. Kevin Daniels—Spirituality and Social Work (with a special focus on Black Churches and Communities)
4. Prof. Linda Darrell—Spirituality and Black Americans; Health Care Issues (with a special focus on End of Life Care & End Stage Renal Disease)
5. Prof. Yvonne Greene—Health and Medical Social Work; Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment
6. Dr. Melissa Littlefield—Multiculturalism in Social Work Education; Cultural Competence with Black Women; Human Services Computer Technologies
7. Dr. Anna McPhatter—Child Welfare; Children, Youth, & Families (with a special focus on African American Families); Cultural Competence
8. Prof. Thelma Rich—Children and Families (with a special focus on African American Families); Child Welfare; Human Service Administration
9. Dr. Belinda Smith—Child Welfare Decision-Making; Black Children & Foster Care; Incarcerated Children & Families; & Elderly Women of Color
14. Dr. Claudie Thomas—Health and Public Health (with a special focus on urban populations)
15. Dr. Taqi Tirmazi—Adolescents; Hip Hop Culture; Research and Evaluation
16. Dr. Rhonda Wells-Wilbon—Child Care; Africancentered Social Work; Hip Hop Culture; Cultural Competence; Social & Economic Justice; Macro Practice

## **Steps to Completing a Proposal**

### Step 1. Completed Three Chapters of Proposal

#### Chapter 1

- a. Introduction and Statement of Problem
- b. Rationale and purpose of study

#### Chapter 2

- c. Review of Literature
- d. Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

#### Chapter 3

- e. Methodology

### 2. References

### Step 2. Submit to Committee Chairperson for Review

After Approval by the Committee Chair submit to committee for review

- a. Committee members discuss required changes with Committee Chairperson
- b. Student makes required changes

### Step 3. Chairperson schedule the Dissertation Proposal Hearing

Inform the PhD Chair in writing of the time, date and location of hearing

- a. Student Prepare PowerPoint Presentation (30 minutes)
- b. Student/Chair Practice presentation
- c. Prepare a PowerPoint Presentation of above sections
- d. Present for 30 minutes to committee
- e. Discussion by committee, vote on whether may proceed with data collection research process
- f. Inform student of committee's decision
- g. Chair complete the Dissertation Proposal Hearing Form

### Step 4. Student prepares and submits IRB Proposal with Chair's Committee approval

APPENDIX I  
MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
PhD Department  
Dissertation Guide

Chapter I: Introduction

- Statement of the Problem
- Purpose of the Study

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

- Literature arranged by empirical articles on the major variables under consideration in the study
- Theoretical or Conceptual Framework used in the study

Chapter III: Methodology

- Research Design of the Study and organization of chapter
- Subjects or Sample
  - Source of sample
  - Size of sample
- Instrumentation: Describing Research Tools
- Measurement Characteristics of Instrument
  - Reliability
  - Validity
- Administration and Scoring of Measures
  - If design own instruments
- Data Collection Procedures (When, where and how data collected)
- Data Analysis
  - Statistical Tests used to address hypotheses and research questions
  - Nature of hypotheses, number of independent and dependent variables & level of measurement of each variable

Chapter IV: Results

- Description of Sample
- Research Questions or Hypotheses Findings by Subheadings
- Findings by Research Question or Hypotheses One
- Findings by Research Question or Hypotheses Two
- Findings by Research Question or Hypotheses Three

Chapter V: Summary and Discussion

- Overview of significant findings
- Consideration of findings in light of existing research studies

- Implications of the study for current theory
- A careful examination of findings that fail to support or only partially support your hypotheses
- Limitations of the study that may affect the validity or generalizability of the results
- Recommendations for further research
- Implications of the study for social work practice and policy

#### Appendices

#### References

Taylor, Maurice, (2006-2007). *Dissertation & Thesis Handbook*, The School of Graduate Studies, Morgan State University.

Garrison, Mark, (2010). *Handbook and Style Guide for Dissertations and Theses*, (3d Ed.) Morgan State University.

Rudestam, K.E, and Neton R.R, (1992) *Surviving Your Dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process*. New York: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cone, J.D. & Foster, S.L. (1993). *Dissertations and Theses: From Start to Finish Psychology and Related Fields*. Washington, DC: The American Psychological Association.

Date Approved: November 18, 2010