



Ph.D. Student Handbook

School of Social Policy & Practice

Updated April 14, 2025

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
A University Degree	5
Program Administration	5
Basic Requirements	5
Time Limitations	7
Active Status	7
Leave of Absence.....	8
Withdrawals and Continuous Registration.....	9
Terminations	10
Transfer Students.....	10
Academic Advisor.....	10
Academic Progress	11
Evaluations and Examinations.....	11
Grades and Academic Standing	12
Code of Academic Integrity.....	14
Exchange Scholar Program and other cooperative agreements.....	15
Courses Taken Outside Penn.....	15
Curriculum for Ph.D. Students*†.....	16
Independent Study	17
Dissertation	17
Tuition, Fees, and Financial Support	24
Research/Teaching Assistantship and Teaching Practicum Requirements	26
Registration, Billing and Fee Payments	27
Professional Development Allocation.....	27
Student Financial Obligations to the University.....	30
Policies on Refunds of Tuition and Fees due to Program Withdrawal or Absence	31
Grievances and Appeals	31
Additional Policies.....	33

Purpose

The purpose of the Ph.D. Student Handbook of the School of Social Policy & Practice is to present the policies and procedures that guide and govern the School's Ph.D. program. Although substantial effort has gone into the Handbook and it is updated regularly, we anticipate that there might be occasional items that it does not address. If after reviewing the Handbook, a student comes upon such an item, the student is encouraged to seek guidance from the Director of the Ph.D. Program and/or the Ph.D. Coordinator of the Program.

Disclaimer

The policies and procedures described in this Handbook are continually revised and updated. The program reserves the right to revise the manual on an as-needed basis. Changes are effective immediately unless otherwise communicated by the Ph.D. Director.

In addition to the contents of this Handbook, students must also comply with the rules stipulated in the Provost's Educational Policies.

Local Acronym Guide

DSSC	Doctoral Student Steering Committee
SP2	School of Social Policy & Practice
GAPSA	Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
GSC	Graduate Student Center
SAS-gov	Student Government of the Graduate Students at the School of Arts & Sciences
SHS	Student Health Services
CAPS	Counseling and Psychological Services
SIS	Student Intervention Services
OSC	Office of Student Conduct
ISS	International Student Services
ABD	All but Dissertation
WIP	Work-in-Progress

Introduction

The field of Social Welfare draws from all the basic social science disciplines and the experience of social work and other professions. The practice of social welfare is the vigilant application of this knowledge toward improving our collective life, with particular attention to those who are most vulnerable to a loss or lack of resources. The vitality of Social Welfare is maintained by the passion for social justice brought by those who enter the field. Our Ph.D. students receive the training necessary to augment the student's passion with disciplined scholarship.

Like all Ph.D. programs at Penn, the Social Welfare Ph.D. program is operated as an interdisciplinary enterprise through a Graduate Group that includes the faculty of SP2 along with faculty with interest in social welfare from other departments and Schools, including but not limited to Anthropology, City Planning, Communication, Education, Family and Community Health (Nursing), Family Medicine, General Internal Medicine, Political Science, Psychology, Psychiatry, Public Health, and Sociology. After completing a required set of courses in research methods, theory, and policy, students have the opportunity to take full advantage of taking courses across the broader University. Many students use this time to make a “home away from home” in another department or program by supplementing the required coursework with substantive training in a compatible discipline.

The Ph.D. in Social Welfare prepares students for careers as outstanding researchers and scholars. This is accomplished through a curriculum that is rigorous yet flexible. Every student is held to high standards in the examination and dissertation processes. Each student is encouraged to develop unique work and an individual voice through relationships with mentors and colleagues.

With this vision in mind, the Penn program in Social Welfare focuses its Ph.D. training on the following components:

- Required core courses providing a common foundation of social welfare – theory, history and philosophy of social welfare, research and policy
- Elective courses that allow students to explore and develop specific expertise
- Research fellowships to foster the development of new knowledge and gain skills related to carrying out research, publishing research, presenting research, and funding research
- Examination and dissertation processes that focus on the careful development of a scholarly colleague

This manual is a guide to each of these elements in the process of earning a Ph.D. in social welfare.

A University Degree

The Ph.D. is a University degree, meaning that it is not granted by any specific department or School, including the School of Social Policy & Practice.

The University, through the Graduate Division <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/graduate-division>, sets the calendar of deadlines, creates forms, and processes degrees.

The websites of the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) <https://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/> and Graduate Student Center <https://gsc.upenn.edu/> (GSC) are key sources of information. All Ph.D. students are encouraged to consult and familiarize themselves with these resources.

Program Administration

The Social Welfare Ph.D. program is administered by the Graduate Group in Social Welfare, which includes the faculty of SP2 and selected faculty from other schools and departments within the University. A list of the members of the Graduate Group <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/phd-resources/> is available on the program website.

The Director of the Ph.D. program chairs both the Graduate Group and the Steering Committee.

The program's Steering Committee generally includes four (4) faculty members, the Dean of the School of Social Policy & Practice (who attends as the schedule allows), two (2) students, and the Graduate Group Chair. Together this committee monitors the program, recommends changes in policies and procedures, and serves, without student representation, as the Admissions Committee for the program.

Basic Requirements

A minimum of 20 credit units (CUs) are required for the Ph.D. degree. Of this number, a minimum of four (4) CUs of core-program credits will be granted to applicants with an appropriate master's degree in social work or a related profession or allied discipline. **Only graduate level courses are eligible for credit.** Because each Penn school uses different course numbers, students must confirm if the credits are at the graduate level with Ph.D. Coordinator or SP2 Registrar.

Students must pass a written preliminary examination after completion of coursework. Failing the preliminary exam may lead to expulsion from the program. If a student fails the exam, they have one opportunity to retake the exam.

All required and elective coursework must be at the graduate level and must be completed before a student defends their dissertation proposal. Successful defense of the dissertation proposal (also known as the candidacy exam) admits the student to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

All students in the program are responsible for the successful completion of the required classes listed below of the curriculum in Social Welfare. In addition, students are expected to conduct research (e.g., participate in research and publishing collaborations with faculty) throughout the program.

Required Core Component (7 CUs)

The required core curriculum consists of:

- One course unit in the history and philosophy of social welfare (SOCW 8030)
- Two course units in social welfare research methods (SOCW 8520 and SOCW 8550)
- Two course units in advanced statistics (SOCW 6300 and SOCW 8970)
- One course unit in social theory (SOCW 8110)
- One course unit in policy analysis (SOCW 8610)

Required Advanced Component (9 CUs)

The advanced curriculum consists of:

- One additional course in qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods complementing the students' substantive area to be chosen in consultation with the advisor (one course unit).
- One theory course complementing the students' substantive area to be chosen in consultation with the advisor (one course unit).
- Four semesters of Proseminar (SOCW 9010), a half-credit course offered in the fall semester and spring semester.
- A minimum of five additional elective courses (five course units).

Methods and Theory Requirement Guidelines

Methods and theory course selections require approval from the academic advisor.

Theory Elective

The theory elective course should deepen a student's knowledge and understanding of one or more social theories—analytical frameworks, or paradigms, or a set of explicatory principles— with the majority of the readings, class activities and/or assignments designed to study, examine, explain, or interpret social phenomena.

Advanced Methods

The Advanced Methods course extends or complements research methods covered in the curriculum by covering/teaching essential concepts of methods or statistical techniques to broaden and deepen a student's knowledge and understanding to apply to their respective research areas.

At least four (4) of the courses in the advanced curriculum must be taken in the University but outside of SP2. Students are encouraged to use electives to develop content and methodological expertise in the areas of research in which the student has an interest. These courses must relate to the substantive content that students select for individualized program of study and must be listed by the University as graduate level courses*. In some cases, students are allowed to take graduate-level courses at other universities. The student's advisor must approve the students' selection of elective courses.

*Only graduate level courses are eligible for credit. Because each Penn school uses different course numbers, students must confirm electives with Ph.D. Coordinator or SP2 Registrar.

Time Limitations

Students are admitted to candidacy after a successful dissertation proposal defense, commonly during the third year of study, and after all coursework and preliminary examinations have been successfully completed.

Five years is the maximum time allowed for a student to advance to candidacy. If a student has not advanced to candidacy within five years of matriculation, the student will be dropped from the program.

As of 2010-2011, the University allows up to 10 years for students to complete the Ph.D. Students who have not completed all requirements (including the dissertation) for the Ph.D. within 10 years from the date the student begins the Ph.D. program may not be current with knowledge and research in the field. Students who exceed 10 years of study may petition the Graduate Group to return as a student **for a maximum of 1 year** in order to achieve recertification and defend the dissertation. Recertification criteria will be designated by the Graduate Group in Social Welfare and must be approved by the University's Graduate Council of the Faculties.

Penn Policy and SP2 Policy <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text> outline the recertification details on how to petition for readmission if students fail to meet the 10-year maximum time to degree.

Active Status

A student is in an active status and in good standing when registration is complete, tuition and fees paid, and the student's program of study represents approved coursework acceptable in accordance with the requirements of the Ph.D. program. A student also may be on active status when registered as being on dissertation-status. A student is considered full-time when taking 3-4 courses in a semester or being on dissertation-status.

A student who has completed all course requirements will, for registration purposes, be considered to have entered “dissertation-status.” The term “dissertation-status” also covers students who may have completed all course requirements but who have not yet passed the dissertation proposal. See the tuition section for additional information on tuition costs.

Leave of Absence

Ph.D. in Social Welfare Student Leave of Absence Policy

SP2 follows the University’s Ph.D. Student Leave of Absence Policy. Students and staff should refer to Pennbook’s Graduate Catalog for up-to-date Ph.D. leave of absence policies.

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/phdstudentleaveofabsence/>

Procedure for Ph.D. students to request leave

How does a student request a leave?

Students requesting Family Leave should go to <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/family-friendly-policies-phd-students/> for guidance. Students wishing to take a **Family Leave** should fill out this form <https://vpe.wufoo.com/forms/r72pat10x6xvtk/>.

Students wishing to take other types of leave – military, medical, or personal -- should fill out the Ph.D. Leave of Absence Request form. <https://powerforms.docuSign.net/122ab3ef-a7cc-4beb-b062-62c08386da85?env=na3&acct=8b2243ad-df30-428e-8cf4-800f104218d1&accountId=8b2243ad-df30-428e-8cf4-800f104218d1>

How does a student request a return from leave?

Students should fill out the Ph.D. Request to Return from Leave of Absence form <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/resource/phd-leave-of-absence/>. Requests to return from leave should be made at least 30 days in advance of the term beginning that a student wishes to return.

How long can a leave be?

Leave is typically for one or two semesters. In order to ensure successful completion of the Ph.D., a student’s leave(s) should generally not exceed two years over the course of the doctoral program. If, however, it is determined in an individual case that extension of the leave period(s) beyond two years is appropriate, students may need to repeat coursework or other requirements, as determined by the Ph.D. Program Director. Original funding limits remain in place for students who must repeat requirements.

Leave of Absence Checklist for Students:

- Student Bills/Financial Aid – check your student account; any outstanding balance will result in late fees and your account will be placed on hold. Students who have borrowed

from the Federal Loan Program must complete the online exit loan counseling session <http://www.sfs.upenn.edu/loans/loans-exit-interview.htm>. Please note that depending on the length of the leave, students may be required to begin repayment of federal loans before returning to Penn.

- Tuition – if the leave is requested before the end of Add/Drop students will receive a full refund of tuition and fees. If the leave occurs after Add/Drop, partial refunds may apply. Leaves processed after the 6th week of classes are not eligible for any tuition refund. Consult your school for tuition refund information.
- Penn Student Insurance Plan – if a student takes medical or family leave and would like to apply to continue PSIP for one semester, please refer to the Provost's website for details and instructions <https://provost.upenn.edu/covering-psip-phd-students-medical-or-family-leave>.
- On campus housing (Sansom) – if the leave occurs within the semester, complete Request for Early Termination.
- International students – Immigration status is dependent upon full-time enrollment and students are required to depart from the U.S. within 15 days of a posted leave, except in certain cases requiring medical care in the U.S. International students must communicate their intention to take a leave of absence with their ISSS advisor. <https://global.upenn.edu/iss/absence>. You may need to obtain new immigration documents for re-entry.
- Medical Documentation – If medical documentation is requested, please ask your healthcare provider to fax documentation to Student Health Service (attention: Request Leave of Absence at 215-746-1032) and/or CAPS (attention: Request Leave of Absence at 215-573-8966). Do not provide medical documentation to faculty or staff in your Graduate Group.
- Students with an approved leave of absence will receive a letter from the program Director outlining the terms of the approved leave and any conditions for return.

Withdrawals and Continuous Registration

A student is considered to have withdrawn from the program when, in accordance with a written request prepared by the student and accepted by the Director of the Ph.D. program, a request to terminate active status is granted. At the time of withdrawal, the student's Academic Advisor or Dissertation Committee Chairperson will prepare a written statement on the status of the student's work and the reasons for withdrawal. A student who has withdrawn may reapply for active status by written request to the Director of the Ph.D. program. If the application is accepted, previously completed work will be evaluated, and the student will be expected to fulfill all requirements in effect for active students at the time of readmission.

Per the University-wide academic rules governing Ph.D. students, continuous registration as a graduate student is required unless a formal leave of absence is granted.

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text>

Terminations

A student will be terminated from the Ph.D. program if any of the following occur:

- The student does not meet the required course GPA (a minimum of 3.0);
- The student fails the preliminary examination and the one-time exam make-up opportunity;
- The student does not complete the dissertation requirements according to the required time limits <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text> ;
- The student is dropped from the program for other reasons (e.g., plagiarism, unethical behavior, or criminal behavior). In the latter case, a student may be terminated by action of the Director of the Ph.D. program only if, after due process and in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Graduate Group and the University, continued presence in the program is judged inimical to its interests and purposes. In such circumstances, the student's Chairperson/Advisor will prepare a written summary of the student's work completed and the reasons for termination, and the summary will be filed in the student's record.

In addition, the student may terminate connections with the program by requesting such action of the student's own initiative, in writing. Such requests will be handled and granted by the Director of the Ph.D. program.

A student who has been terminated may reapply for admission. All application requirements – new letters of recommendation, etc. – must be met. If readmitted, previous completed work will be considered for credit in light of course requirements at the time of the student's readmission and time since completion. Those applying five years or more years after termination must retake all courses.

Transfer Students

In some cases, students may apply to the program while a Ph.D. student is in another program. If admitted, these students, after consideration by the Director of the Ph.D. program, may transfer up to eight (8) courses for credit and the student will join the program at the appropriate stage.

Academic Advisor

Upon entering the program, the Program Director and the admissions committee will assign each student an Academic Advisor, who assists the student in becoming oriented to the program. The first-year advisors are selected based on students' area of interest as designated on the incoming student's application for admission. This faculty member remains the student's advisor for the first year of the program. A student may change Advisors in the second year of the program and beyond but must choose an advisor from the Graduate Group <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/phd->

[resources/](#). If a student wants to change Advisors, the student must first discuss this with either the current Advisor or the Program Director, and then submit a written request for the change to the Program Director outlining the change. The new Advisor must be a member of the Graduate Group. Students may also choose to remain with the first-year advisor for the duration of the program but are not required to do so.

The responsibilities of the Academic Advisor include discussing the nature and scope of the student's interests in the development of an academic plan that guides the selection of electives. The Advisor also monitors the student's academic progress, counsels as needed, and meets with the student on a regular basis to assist the student with the development of the student's dissertation proposal and the selection of a dissertation committee. Advisor-Advisee regular meetings are recommended to facilitate good mentoring relationships.

For best practices regarding academic advising, please see University Guidelines <https://catalog.upenn.edu/graduate/academic-resources/advising-mentoring/> that promote good mentoring relationship, as well as our Advisee and Advisor Guide for SP2 Ph.D. Students <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/phd-resources/>.

Academic Progress

Evaluations of the student's work for courses and seminars should be provided to the student at appropriate intervals during each term by the course instructor. Such evaluations should be made in relation to course content and to general performance at the Ph.D. level, including the student's level of conceptualization and ability to relate substantive content and research methodologies to the field of social welfare. Students whose work does not meet program expectations should be notified in writing at mid-term by the instructor. Students whose performance is below what is acceptable for Ph.D. work should be so informed in writing as soon as possible. Instructors should indicate the areas of identified weakness and specify what is needed to satisfy course requirements. In such situations, a copy of the notification should be sent to the student's Advisor and the Director of the Ph.D. program.

Evaluations and Examinations

Academic milestones that must be passed by all Ph.D. students:

Preliminary Examination

The preliminary examination must be taken at the end of the semester during which the student has completed all their course work requirements, generally at the end of the spring semester of the second year. The purpose of the examination is threefold:

1. To test the student's ability to integrate the knowledge gained from course work and faculty research mentoring into a rigorous analysis of a specific policy, intervention, or program (PIP) that addresses a significant social problem.

2. To assess student's capacity to present field-specific analyses to a general academic audience, as one would when writing articles, books, and grants.
3. To serve as a preparatory step towards the formulation of the dissertation proposal.

The examination will be comprised of two components:

1. A one-page proposal that identifies and describes the specific policy, intervention, or program (PIP) used to address a significant social problem that the student would like to address, to be submitted to the student's advisor and the Ph.D. Steering Committee. The proposal readers must respond to the student within 30 days.
2. A paper that critically examines: 1) the PIP and the social problem it aims to address; 2) the history of the PIP; 3) the theories/conceptual frameworks that undergird the chosen PIP; and 4) directions for future research that addresses critical, emerging fields and knowledge.

Students who fail the exam have one opportunity to retake the exam. They have access to the comments from the graders prior to retaking the exam.

Candidacy Examination/Dissertation Proposal Defense

A successful dissertation proposal defense admits a student to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. A student who fails the proposal defense twice must withdraw from the program. Students can schedule the dissertation proposal defense only after completion of all required coursework and successful preliminary examinations. A student's Dissertation Chair and the Committee members determine the format and length of both the written dissertation proposal and the oral defense for each individual student.

Dissertation Defense/Examination

The dissertation examination consists of an oral examination on the contents of the written Ph.D. dissertation. Each student must consult with the Dissertation Chair and Committee members to determine the format and length of both the dissertation and the oral examination.

Grades and Academic Standing

Letter Grades

The letter grade evaluation system of the Graduate Group in Social Welfare is consistent with the system used by the MA and Ph.D. programs at the University.

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text>

“Specifically: A, excellent; B, good; C, fair; D, poor but passing; and F, failure. At the graduate level, the grade of C, while passing, does not constitute satisfactory performance. Letter grades may be modified by a plus (+) or minus (-) sign at the discretion of the School.”

The mark of S is used to indicate satisfactory progress. An “S” may be used as a permanent grade only for 999 courses and SOCW 9010 (Proseminar). It is a temporary grade for all other courses.

- The mark of “I” is used to indicate that the work for the course is incomplete.
 - A student who fails to complete a course and does not withdraw or change the registration status in the course to auditor within the prescribed period will receive, at the instructor’s discretion, a grade of “I” (incomplete) or “F” (failure).
 - Students are expected to complete the work of a course during the term in which the course is taken.
 - To request an incomplete grade students must complete the [Incomplete Grade Request Form](#).
- In exceptional circumstances, the instructor may permit an extension of up to one year for the completion of the course.
 - In such cases, any course that is still incomplete after one calendar year from its official ending remains as “incomplete” on the student’s official record and cannot be credited toward a degree.
 - An ‘incomplete’ course must be completed prior to taking any course that requires the ‘incomplete’ course as a prerequisite.

Grading Scales

GPA Scale	Letter Grade Scale
A+: 4.0	A+: 97-100
A: 4.0	A: 94-96
A-: 3.7	A-: 90-93
B+: 3.3	B+: 87-89
B: 3.0	B: 84-86
B-: 2.7	B-: 80-83
C+: 2.3	C+: 77-79
C: 2.0	C: 74-76
C-: 1.7	C-: 70-73
D: 1.0	D: 60-69
F: 0	F: Below 60
I: Incomplete	

Required Core Course Grades

A letter grade of less than B (including a B-) in a required core course constitutes failure in that course.

- Students earning less than a B in any required core course will be placed on probationary status and must repeat and earn a B or better in the course.
- Students may repeat a failed required core course only once.
- Students who fail a required core course on the second attempt will be dismissed from the program.

Elective Course Grades

A letter grade of C or lower in an elective course will constitute a failure of that course.

- Students who fail an elective course will be permitted to retake that elective once.
- With the prior approval of both the Director of the Ph.D. program and the student's advisor, substitute another suitable elective for the failed course.
- Students who fail two or more elective courses (after retaking the course) will be dismissed from the program.

Overall GPA

Grade Point Averages (GPAs) are tabulated at the end of each semester and on a cumulative basis. The minimum standard for satisfactory work is a B average in each academic year.

- A student whose overall GPA falls below the B (3.0) average will be dismissed from the program.

Dismissal

- In summary, a student will be dismissed from the program in any one of the following three circumstances:
 - If a student's GPA falls below B.
 - If a student fails a core course a second time.
 - If a student fails two or more elective courses (after retaking the course).
- The Graduate Group may set additional requirements that determine advancement, which may require a student to withdraw despite a satisfactory GPA. Such a situation may arise only if the quality of the student's work is determined to not be at a level that predicts successful dissertation research.
- In extreme and special cases, the Director of the Ph.D. program, in consultation with the Ph.D. Steering Committee, will make decisions regarding the academic standing of individual students in light of circumstances that may affect performance. Such circumstances may include personal or family health matters, a leave of absence, changes in course requirements or the timing of such courses, transfer of external credits, etc.

Code of Academic Integrity

The University of Pennsylvania has a well-articulated set of policies and procedures pertaining to the academic and professional conduct of graduate students. The policies and procedures are published online in the Pennbook. The two most important policies in the Pennbook are the Code of Student Conduct <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-student-conduct/> and the Code of Academic Integrity <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>. These two policies outline the general responsibilities of being a student at Penn, define academic integrity, and establish what constitutes a violation of academic integrity. For example,

plagiarism and self-plagiarism are considered violations of academic integrity. Ph.D. students are expected to read, understand, and agree to uphold these policies, seeking guidance from the student's Advisor and/or Ph.D. Program Director should anything be unclear.

Self-plagiarism can be a particularly tricky area to navigate as a Ph.D. student. It is defined as the use of one's own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously in a different context, for example in a course or any published document. The idea is that the writer may use the material but must let the reader know that this was not the first use of the material. Just like plagiarism, self-plagiarism is prohibited in assignments completed for all coursework, work products related to research assistantships, the preliminary exams, the dissertation proposal, and dissertation itself. Violations or infractions of these policies, including violations of the Code of Academic Integrity, will be processed in accordance with these policies and procedures by the Graduate Group Chair and the Committee on Academic Standing. Students who are found to violate the Code of Academic Integrity may be terminated from the program.

All students must review and sign the Code of Academic Integrity as required by University policy.

Exchange Scholar Program and other cooperative agreements

The Exchange Scholar Program allows Penn Ph.D. students to apply to study for up to one year at specific institutions: UC Berkeley, Brown, Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, and Yale. More information about the Exchange Scholar Program can be found at <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/graduate-division/programs/exchange-scholar-program>.

Penn also has a cooperative arrangement with Bryn Mawr College, where any University of Pennsylvania student may, upon presentation of the proper credentials and with the permission of the instructor concerned, enroll for up to the equivalent of three course units at Bryn Mawr. Details regarding the institutional exchange agreements are available from the Office of the Vice Provost for Education <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text>.

Any student wishing to take courses in universities not affiliated with the Exchange Scholar Program or other cooperative agreements must seek the permission of the Director of the Ph.D. Program and pay for such courses at the student's own expense.

Courses Taken Outside Penn

Credit for courses taken outside of the University of Pennsylvania may be approved by the Director of the Ph.D. Program provided that the following criteria are satisfied:

- No comparable course is available at the University of Pennsylvania;
- The content does not lend itself to a structured independent study;
- The proposed course is of sufficient quality and rigor to warrant Ph.D. credit;
- The proposed course is taken for elective credit;

- The student prepares a brief statement of justification outlining the special need to take the course outside of the University; and
- The student's Advisor approves the designated course as appropriate for inclusion in the student's educational plan.

Prior written permission to register for the course must be granted by the Director of the Ph.D. Program. Under no circumstances will transfer credit be given to students for courses taken outside of the University of Pennsylvania without the prior approval of both the student's Advisor and the Director of the Ph.D. Program. Students will pay for such courses at the student's own expense.

Curriculum for Ph.D. Students*†

First Year

Fall Semester (3.5 units)

SOCW 6300: Quantitative Reasoning/Social Statistics

SOCW 8110: Social Theory

SOCW 8520: Social Welfare Research Methods

SOCW 9010: Proseminar

Spring Semester (4.5 units)

SOCW 8030: Advanced History & Philosophy of Social Welfare

SOCW 8550: Advanced Social Welfare Research Methods

SOCW 8970: Applied Linear Modeling

SOCW 9010: Proseminar

Elective

Second Year

Fall Semester (4.5 units)

SOCW 8610: Advanced Policy Analysis Research Methods

SOCW 9010: Proseminar

Elective

Theory Course or Elective
Advanced Methods Course or Elective

Spring Semester (3.5 units)

SOCW 9010: Proseminar

Advanced Methods Course or Elective

Theory Course or Elective

Elective

End of all coursework requirements

Preliminary Examination

Third Year (generally reserved for dissertation research writing and teaching practicum)

Fall & Spring Semester

Candidacy Examination: Dissertation
Proposal Defense

Fourth Year (generally reserved for dissertation research writing and teaching practicum)

Fall & Spring Semester

Completion of the Dissertation

* Subject to change

† Only graduate level courses are eligible for credit. Each Penn school uses different course numbers; confirm electives with Ph.D. Coordinator or SP2 Registrar.

Independent Study

Approval of independent studies is arranged through the student's Advisor. Independent studies should further the student's educational plan and must complement, rather than substitute for, existing courses. Students requesting an independent study must send an independent study course description along with a syllabus they have created and approvals of both the course instructor and their advisor to the Ph.D. director. *Students must also complete the [Independent Study Form](#) and send it to the SP2 Registrar.*

Dissertation

In many ways, the dissertation is the focal point of the student's entire program. Ideally, the student will gain focus on a topic early in the program and begin working with a member of the Graduate Group as a potential dissertation chair. Through this collaboration, the student may be able to write scholarly papers and develop skills that will help in the completion of the anticipated dissertation.

The dissertation is an original work of research scholarship to advance knowledge in the field of Social Welfare. At its best, the dissertation is the first of many significant contributions the student will make to a field of study. As such, the importance of the dissertation topic and its contribution to Social Welfare should be clear. It is the responsibility of the student, with guidance from the dissertation committee, to develop this clarity of purpose and direction.

Both the University and the Graduate Group in Social Welfare set requirements for the dissertation process. Some Social Welfare requirements augment the University policies, but in no case do these requirements conflict.

Dissertation Advisor and Committee Chair

When a student selects an Academic Advisor (either deciding to continue with the first-year Advisor or to select a new Advisor at the end of the first year), the student is generally seeking a potential dissertation chair. Students are free to select any Standing Faculty member of the Graduate Group as a dissertation chair. This is the first step in the process of selecting a committee. Students are encouraged to select a chair first and then consult with that individual about possible committee members.

A useful guide for identifying and selecting a dissertation chair and committee members is available here: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/graduate/academic-resources/advising-mentoring/dissertation-committee/>

Committee Composition

The Chair must be a Standing Faculty member of the Graduate Group. The rules for committee composition are:

- A committee must consist of at least three voting members that are faculty of the University, including at least two members of the Graduate Group.
- All voting committee members must be Social Welfare Graduate Group members or members of the Standing or Associated Faculty of the University.
- At least one voting member must be from a school or department of the University other than SP2.
- Dissertation committees need not include a member of the SP2 faculty.
- Students may have a committee larger than three, as long as at least half of the voting members are members of the Social Welfare Graduate Group.

With the consultation of the Dissertation Chair, a student may include non-voting members on the Dissertation committee. Such persons may include advocates, social work practitioners, or policy leaders who can contribute their expertise. However, the majority of voting members of the Dissertation committee must be Graduate Group members.

The phrase “Standing Faculty” includes all tenure line faculty (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, & Professor) and Clinician-Educator faculty. “Associated Faculty” are those with Research, Adjunct, Clinical, Practice, and Visiting appointments. Associated Faculty cannot chair dissertation committees. Emeritus faculty may be members of a dissertation committee so long as the Emeritus faculty remains an active member in the Ph.D. in Social Welfare Graduate Group: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/faculty-handbook/i/i-f/> and <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#text>

The Supervisor of dissertation work and the dissertation Chair need not be the same person. For example, if a student is working closely with a member of the Associated Faculty, that faculty

member is not eligible to chair the dissertation committee. However, the student may appoint an eligible member of the Standing Faculty in the Graduate Group to be the Chair with the mutual understanding that the roles of Chair and Supervisor of the dissertation work are divided among different committee members. The Graduate Group Chair must petition the Vice Provost for Education, in advance, for approval of the member of the Associated Faculty that serves as dissertation Supervisor.

A summary of rules for the composition of the Dissertation Committee and eligibility of voting members is described below.

Ph.D. in Social Welfare Dissertation Committee: Summary of Rules and Eligibility of Voting Members

Rules for the composition of Ph.D. dissertation committee

- The Chair must be a Standing Faculty member of the Graduate Group.
- The dissertation committee must include a minimum of 3 voting members.
- Only University of Pennsylvania Faculty can be voting members.
- A majority of voting members of the dissertation committee must be Graduate Group members.
- At least one voting member must be from a school or department of the University other than SP2.
- A student may have additional scholars or practitioners, including advocates and policy leaders, who consult on your dissertation as non-voting members.
- Non-voting members are not included in determining the size of the committee.
- To determine who can be a part of your committee as a voting member and in what role they play, see the table on the next page.

Table on the Composition of Voting Members

Standing faculty ^a	<i>Graduate Group</i>	<i>Not Graduate Group</i>
<i>SP2</i>	• Eligible to serve as a chair ^d, supervisor ^d, or member.	• All members of the Standing Faculty are ipso facto members of the graduate group.
<i>Not SP2</i>	• Eligible to serve as a chair, supervisor, or member.	• Eligible to serve as a member or supervisor if a majority of the committee are GG members and with approval of the GG.
Associated faculty ^c	<i>Graduate Group</i>	<i>Not Graduate Group</i>
<i>SP2</i>	• Eligible to serve as a member. • Eligible to serve as a supervisor only with approval of the Vice Provost for Education.	• Eligible to serve as a member if a majority of the committee are GG members and with approval of the GG. • Eligible to serve as a supervisor only with approval of the Vice Provost for Education.



<i>Not SP2</i>	• Eligible to serve as a member. • Eligible to serve as a supervisor only with approval of the Vice Provost for Education.	• Eligible to serve as a member if a majority of the committee are GG members and with approval of the GG. • Eligible to serve as a supervisor only with approval of the Vice Provost for Education.
----------------	--	--

^a Standing Faculty include all faculty members with tenure or in tenure-probationary status and Standing Faculty-Clinician-Educator Faculty (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor).

^b Graduate Group is a governance body of faculty from SP2 and elsewhere in the University responsible for developing and administering the Ph.D. Program in Social Welfare.

^c Associated Faculty are non-standing faculty that do not acquire tenure. Associated Faculty include Research Faculty, Academic Clinician, Clinical Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Visiting Faculty, and Practice Faculty. Ranks in the Associated Faculty are those used in the Standing Faculty preceded by a descriptive modifier (for example, Research Assistant Professor, Research Associate Professor, and Research Professor).

^d The Chair is the faculty member that oversees the progress of a student's dissertation; they convene meetings, facilitate discussions, advise the student on Graduate Group and University expectations, and ensure that the Graduate Group's requirements have been made. The Supervisor is the faculty member primarily responsible for overseeing your dissertation research. Students and their supervisors meet at least twice a year to establish expectations and review the progress of research. The Chair and Supervisor may be the same person, or they may be different people.

The University and Graduate Group require that the student and the Dissertation Advisor meet regularly to review the progress of the student's research. In addition, each Dissertation Committee is required to meet at least annually with the student and provide an annual dissertation progress report. A copy of this report must be submitted to the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

Proposal and Proposal Defense/Candidacy Examination

The dissertation proposal is a written proposal in which a student outlines plans for the dissertation. Typically, the dissertation proposal reflects the student's knowledge of the field, provides justification for the proposed dissertation study, and outlines the methodologies and analyses to be carried out. However, the exact components of the dissertation proposal may vary depending on the nature of the proposed project, the conventions of the specific field of research in which it is situated, and the expectations of the Dissertation Chair and committee members. Students are therefore responsible for working with the student's choice of Dissertation Chair and committee to determine an acceptable format and length for the written dissertation proposal well in advance of the planned time frame for the dissertation proposal defense. Students should begin these conversations with the Dissertation Chair and/or Advisor early in the program.

Students are also responsible for working with the Chair and committee to determine an acceptable length and format for the oral defense of the proposal and to choose an agreeable date and time for this defense. After agreeing on a date and time, the student then notifies the Ph.D. program coordinator at least two weeks before the scheduled proposal defense date.

The student must send the date and time, along with a title and an abstract of the proposal. The Ph.D. Coordinator will secure a location, or this may be held online, for the proposal defense and send an email to the Standing Faculty and Ph.D. listserv notifying them of the defense. If this event is being held virtually, student should set this up, and send the corresponding event link to the Ph.D. Coordinator. The student may have someone else, i.e., their Advisor, act as the host if they prefer.

The proposal defense is a discourse between the candidates and the student's committee built around the contents of the written dissertation proposal and oral proposal presentation by the student. Other faculty and Ph.D. students may attend the presentation and participate in the discussion segment of the defense. The proposal should demonstrate a high level of scholarship and research competence to substantiate the implementation of the planned proposal.

The dissertation research proposal defense is commonly characterized by five components:

1. A brief meeting between the Chair and other committee members prior to the student's presentation.
2. An introduction and explanation of the process of the proposal defense/candidacy examination by the Chair.
3. The student's presentation and discussion.
4. Voting by the Chair and committee members on the acceptability of the proposal.
5. Feedback by the Chair and Committee members to the student.

The voting and feedback occur in a closed meeting; that is, the committee's formal vote is attended by the committee members only and the presentation of that vote to the candidate is attended by the committee members and the candidate only.

Upon passing the candidacy examination, the student Advisor must send an email to the program Coordinator and Director to inform them. The program Coordinator then submits the online

milestone form for approval by the committee. The proposal defense form is available here <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/resource/phd-manual-proposal-defense-evaluation-form/>.

A successful proposal defense admits the student to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

Monitoring and Completion of the Dissertation

The Ph.D. candidate is responsible for making adequate progress toward completing the dissertation. Per the University-wide policy <https://catalog.upenn.edu/graduate/academic-resources/advising-mentoring/dissertation-committee/>, the dissertation committee must meet with the student as a committee at least once per year to assess the student's progress in the program and to provide advice on future work. The committee is responsible for submitting a written report to the Graduate Group Chair (Ph.D. Program Director), at least once per year, detailing its observations of the student's progress and its recommendations. The student will be given the opportunity to respond to the committee's report/recommendation and to append a response to the committee's report. Both the student and the Ph.D. program office will receive copies of the report.

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee or Director of the Ph.D. Program may also require additional reports from the student to ensure adequate progress is made toward completion of the dissertation.

The length and formatting of the final dissertation should be reviewed with and approved by each student's Chair and committee members. The student should discuss any substantive formatting changes with the Chair and committee members prior to implementing these changes. Additional University-wide requirements for basic formatting can be found in the Dissertation Manual, available here https://provost.upenn.edu/graduate-degrees.https://guides.library.upenn.edu/dissertation_manual/formatting

Defending the Dissertation

The dissertation defense is a scholarly discourse between candidates and the student's Committee on the substantive work to be submitted to the Graduate Group evidencing independent research and the individual's mastery of a chosen subject and research methods. The dissertation defense is open in that members of the Social Welfare Graduate Group, other faculty of the University, and Ph.D. students can attend. The student's Chair facilitates the dissertation defense.

Like the proposal defense, students are responsible for working with the Dissertation Committee Chair and all members of the student's chosen committee to agree on a date and time for the dissertation defense. Once a date and time are agreed upon, the student must notify the Ph.D. Coordinator about the defense at least two weeks, preferably longer, before the scheduled defense. The student must send the names of the committee members, the date and time, along with the title and an abstract of the dissertation to the Director of the Ph.D. Program and copy the Ph.D. Coordinator. The Ph.D. Coordinator will reserve a room for the

defense and then send an email to the standing faculty and all-doc listserv notifying them of the defense. The dissertation may also be held virtually, in which case the student should set this up, and send the corresponding event link to the Ph.D. Coordinator to include with the faculty and student announcement. The student may have someone else, such as their Advisor, act as the host if they prefer.

The dissertation defense, similar to the dissertation proposal defense, is typically characterized by four components: (1) a brief prefatory meeting of the Chair and Committee members, (2) a presentation of the dissertation research by the degree candidate that is followed by discussion, (3) voting by the Chair and Committee members, and (4) reporting the decision on acceptability by the Chair to the degree candidate.

Voting is conducted in a closed meeting of the Committee. Decisions about acceptability are based on majority vote of the committee. The Chair reports, within three days of the defense, the results of the vote to the Director of the Ph.D. Program and copies the Ph.D. Coordinator. The Ph.D. Coordinator will file the online form regarding the status of student passing their dissertation defense.

Refer to the Provost's website here: <https://provost.upenn.edu/graduate-degrees> for details regarding: dissertation completion, dissertation defense and deposit.

If significant revisions are to be made, the Chair may decide to delay signing until revisions are made.

Applying for Graduation

The degree candidate must apply for graduation <https://provost.upenn.edu/graduation-information> to the Provost's Office by the deadline designated for the particular semester (e.g., usually mid- to late-September for December graduation and usually by mid-April for May graduation) and can be made before the dissertation defense. Submission of the application registers the student for graduation, however, applying for graduation does not obligate the student to finish at the designated date. Upon registering for graduation, the candidate is provided information, by the Provost's Office, about relevant administrative processes including procedures and policies for depositing the completed approved dissertation.

Students are expected to consult the University calendar for the specific dates and to meet given deadlines. Refer to this link for the Graduate Degree Calendar <https://provost.upenn.edu/graduate-degree-calendar> and here <https://provost.upenn.edu/graduate-degrees> for those seeking a tuition waiver by defending early in the semester.

Please note, the School of Social Policy and Practice has one graduation ceremony each year in May. To be eligible to participate, students must have successfully defended the dissertation in the summer or fall of the previous year or be a spring expected graduate of the current year. Summer expected graduates are not eligible to participate in the earlier May ceremony but can do so the following May.

Depositing the Dissertation

Candidates for the Ph.D. in Social Welfare are required to adhere to the guidelines of the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences. The Dissertation Manual for the University provides specific information about formatting and depositing the final copy of the dissertation. It can be found here <https://provost.upenn.edu/dissertation-deposit>.

After a successful dissertation defense, completing any revisions requested during the defense, and obtaining the approval of the Committee members, the Ph.D. candidate is responsible for providing the required documentation and for depositing the dissertation to the University. Deadlines for filing the dissertation are provided in the University's graduation calendar <https://provost.upenn.edu/graduate-degree-calendar>. Information regarding requirements for formatting and depositing the dissertation can be found here <https://provost.upenn.edu/dissertation-deposit>.

Other Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate, degree candidates must have a zero balance with the University, complete an exit interview with Student Financial Services, document current health insurance coverage, and complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates. Degree candidates can contact the Provost's office for up-to-date information on all associated fees and requirements.

Tuition, Fees, and Financial Support

Upon notification of acceptance for admission to the University, applicants are required to deposit \$500. The deposit due date is provided with the offer of admission. The deposit will be credited to the student's account upon matriculation. If the applicant does not matriculate, the deposit is not refundable.

All full-time students accepted into the Ph.D. program (Fall 2007 and after) and who meet all course and examination requirements will receive four years of full funding. Full funding includes tuition, a stipend, and individual health insurance coverage.

Funding does not cover tuition for summer courses.

Funding does not cover tuition for courses taken after the end of the fourth year of fellowship.

Note that any course, audited or otherwise, taken in addition to the required course load in the fall and spring semesters requires permission from the Graduate Chair and students' Ph.D. academic advisor.

Full funding is contingent upon the student working as a research fellow with a faculty member or with one of the school's research centers.

After three years of study, students are placed on dissertation status with reduced tuition and fee amounts. The fourth year of fellowship covers individual health insurance through student health



services, but after the fourth year of fellowship health insurance is available through the University to be paid by the student. All students must be covered by the University's health insurance or provide proof of alternate, equivalent health coverage.

Qualified candidates may be admitted without guaranteed funding. These students will be required to cover all tuition and related expenses from the student's own resources. If a student is admitted without funding, then full-time tuition and a general fee* are charged the first three years of study.

*The general fee is a contribution toward the support of the Student Health Service, Placement Service, graduate student activities, and other services not directly associated with specific courses.

SP2 External Funding Policy for PhD Students

External grants and fellowships provide additional financial resources while enhancing SP2 students' grant-writing skills and academic credentials. This policy clarifies the mechanisms for using external funding awarded to SP2 PhD students.

- External funding is defined as grants/fellowships from sources outside of SP2 that cover tuition, fees, and stipend.
- The Presidential Fellowship and similar awards, applied for and secured by the school or the PhD program on behalf of a student, are excluded from this policy.
- Small grants or awards obtained for research, training, or conference travel are not covered by this policy.

A PhD student awarded external funding (e.g., grants or fellowships) covering tuition, fees, and stipend during their four years of SP2 fellowship support has the option to bank the external award for use in the 5th year when the student will no longer be receiving the SP2 research fellowship.

- SP2 will not top-up funding in the 5th year or beyond.

Reporting and Coordination with SP2 Financial Aid (SP2FinancialAid@sp2.upenn.edu).

Timely coordination with the SP2 Financial Aid Office and Office of Sponsored Research is crucial to ensure compliance with university policies and to optimize the financial benefits of external awards.

1. Students who receive an external grant/fellowship should immediately notify the SP2 Financial Aid Office and Office of Sponsored Research and send a copy of their Notice of Award to the office and to the Office of Sponsored Research upon receipt.

Research Fellowship/Teaching Assistantship and Teaching

Practicum Requirements

Research Fellowship

Students devote 15 hours a week to a research fellowship in the 1st year of the Ph.D. program. Students devote 20 hours a week to research fellowship in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of the Ph.D. program. Any teaching-related hours associated with the research fellowship count toward the 20-hour commitment. In the 3rd and 4th years of the Ph.D. program, distribution of the student's time between teaching and research activities is approved by the faculty member overseeing the research fellowship and the Director of the Ph.D. Program.

Students who are admitted without guaranteed funding will not be required to serve as research fellows but may volunteer to do so.

Teaching Compensation

Students are encouraged to gain teaching experience during the PhD program. However, all Ph.D. student teaching assignments—whether as a TA or instructor— must be arranged through consultation with the student's advisor and confirmation from the Ph.D. Program office of the student's good academic standing (please refer to [Grades and Academic Standing](#)).

- The university injunction against students from taking on additional work outside of the research fellowship while in coursework applies to teaching opportunities.
- Guidelines per year of PhD program:
 - Students in the coursework phase (generally the first two years) may accept a teaching position and compensation for these positions are considered part of the student's Ph.D. program stipend unless teaching is undertaken during breaks (winter, spring and summer).
 - Students not in coursework (generally year three and beyond) may accept teaching positions and compensation outside of the stipend throughout the academic year and summer.
- Compensation for teaching can take two forms:
 - With approval from their advisor, a student can opt to use 50% of their research fellowship hours on teaching endeavors. There would be no additional compensation in this case.
 - In consultation with their advisor, a student can take on a teaching assignment as additional work beyond their research fellowship hours. Compensation in this case would follow university and school guidelines.

Teaching Practicum

The PhD program supports the development of essential skills and competencies in teaching through a required course and a supervised teaching practicum designed to aid students in the development of teaching skills.

Beginning with the cohort entering in Fall of 2024, the following will be required:

- A Teaching Seminar course to be completed during the second year in the PhD program.
- A one semester Teaching Practicum to be completed after the course work, generally during the third or fourth year in the PhD program.
 - The teaching practicum is a required educational rather than occupational component of the program, and as such, is to be distinguished from all other types of teaching which the student may do as an employee
 - The student will work closely with a faculty member to observe and learn methods of course and classroom preparation, management, and classroom delivery and acquire hands-on teaching experience, but is not an assistant to the faculty teaching mentor.
 - Students are expected to devote approximately ten hours per week to the teaching practicum. Thus, during the semester the student is in practicum, the twenty hours per week required for the student's research fellowship will be reduced to ten hours per week.

Registration, Billing and Fee Payments

Students who owe tuition for a previous semester's work will not be permitted to register for the next semester unless special arrangements for payment have been made with the Bursar's Office or SP2. Students who owe tuition or any other University-related fees (such as library fees) will be excluded from graduation lists. The only exception is for students who are granted a deferment through the Graduate Loan Office while awaiting loan approval.

Students who wish to withdraw from the program must take immediate and formal responsibility for doing so in order to avoid debts to the University. If written notice is not submitted, the student risks being billed by the University which may include penalties for late payments. If a student intends on withdrawing, the student must notify the Ph.D. Program Director in writing.

Professional Development Allocation

All students in the Ph.D. in Social Welfare program are granted an annual allocation of \$500 to use for educational and research purposes, conference registration, conference travel, or other professional development activities. Students must use this allocation within the University's fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th of each year). Funds cannot be carried over from one year to the next if the student does not use all the annual allocation.

The student is required to obtain written approval from the Director of the Ph.D. Program for all expenses to be reimbursed through the professional development fund prior to making the purchase. For all expenses, the student should send an email to the Ph.D. Coordinator and state the items or services to be purchased. The Ph.D. Coordinator will let the student know if the request is approved by the Director and how to make the purchase.

Travel/Research Reimbursement

For Travel Reimbursements

- Once the student has returned from travel, the student is required to complete a request

for reimbursement by preparing and submitting an online report via Concur <http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/penntravel/expense-report.html>.

- The student should keep the original receipts for all travel expenses and should upload and submit scanned copies along with the Concur report. If there is a flight included in expenses, student should include boarding passes. Students should also be prepared to provide documentation of written approval for travel from the Director of the Ph.D. Program to the staff member reviewing the Concur report upon request.
- Any meal receipts must have an itemized list of exactly what was ordered. Students will not be reimbursed for purchases of alcoholic beverages.

- The student should also provide documentation that provides a description of the attended event (i.e. a conference registration confirmation or scanned copy of cover of conference brochure or the student's talk listing in brochure).
- Students must prepare and submit all Concur travel reimbursement reports within 180 days of travel to be eligible for reimbursement. Students should contact the SP2 Financial Administrative Coordinator with questions about the reimbursement process or Concur.

For Other Reimbursements (Expense Reports)

- Failure to obtain written approval in advance may make the purchase ineligible for reimbursement through the professional development fund.
- The Director of the Ph.D. Program reserves the right to review and determine if requests for reimbursements from the professional development fund meet the requirements for professional development activities.
- Examples of expenses other than professional travel that may be eligible for reimbursement through the professional development fund include software purchases, laptops, research-related equipment, and professional association membership dues.
- Students must save all receipts indicating the expense has been paid by the student and submit original receipts, along with written explanation/justification for the purchase, through the Concur Expense Report site.
- For more information and for a link to the Concur report system, please visit <http://cms.business-services.upenn.edu/penntravel/expense-report.html>.

Student Financial Obligations to the University

Students beyond the 4th year of fellowship funding are required to keep tuition and other University accounts current. Students who fail to pay tuition or have other outstanding debts to the University (library fees, health services charges, etc.) either in whole or part, must work out a satisfactory plan for payment of the delinquent amounts before the student will be allowed to begin a new semester of study. In addition, no student will be granted a certificate of withdrawal or be recommended for a degree who has not paid in full all their financial obligations.

Failure to pay outstanding University bills on a timely basis will result in the student's academic status being frozen such that no further coursework may be taken or academic advising provided. In unusual situations, students may be expelled from the program and required to submit a new application for admission. No application for readmission for financial reasons will be considered until the student has settled in full any financial obligations to the University.

Even students with full funding should check the student billing system regularly, as students are responsible for such charges as late library fees, parking tickets, student health services charges not covered by the student health insurance plan, meal charges to student account, etc. The student is responsible for any late fees due to such charges.

University Grants and Fellowships

Please be advised that under the current policy, all requests for extra funding not covered by the external funding guidelines must be submitted through the established hardship procedures established by student affairs and financial aid. For hardship related options, please see below.

The Office of the Provost sponsors several individual grant and fellowship programs for current Penn graduate & professional students. Please visit the links below to learn more about these programs.

<https://gsc.upenn.edu/graduate-grants#apply>

Need-Based Grants

Graduate Emergency Fund provides grants to assist currently enrolled graduate and professional students with urgent financial needs and acute financial hardship due to unanticipated one-time expenses.

Apply here: <https://gsc.upenn.edu/grad-emergency-fund>

PhD Family Grants- The University offers a PhD Family Grant to help offset costs incurred about childcare and related expenses for PhD students with dependent children.

Apply here: <https://gsc.upenn.edu/family-grants>

Insurance grants for PhD Students- The University offers three grant programs for PhD students to help offset the cost of purchasing dependent health insurance and/or their own health and dental insurance coverage.

Apply here: <https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/graduate-funding-and-finances/insurance-grants>

Merit-Based Awards

The Office of the Provost sponsors a number of additional, merit-based individual awards and fellowships, administered through different University offices.

Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellowship at the Netter Center
GAPSA-Provost Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Innovation
Penn Prize for Excellence in Teaching by Graduate Students
Penn Global Dissertation Grants

Policies on Refunds of Tuition and Fees due to Program Withdrawal or Absence

For students who no longer receiving tuition and fee support from the School (i.e., those who are beyond the fourth year in the program). See here <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/masters-student-handbook/>.

Grievances and Appeals

Students and faculty are expected to use contact in class and individual appointments to resolve any differences that may arise while working together.

When faculty or students find that normal channels of communication fail to resolve differences that may affect the status of the student, either or both parties may ask for consideration of such differences by the Director of the Ph.D. Program. The decision of the Director will stand, unless either or both parties wish to appeal the decision further. If there is such an appeal, the following policies and procedures will prevail:

- A written appeal of the Director of the Ph.D. Program's decision may be made through the Dissertation Chair to the Dean of the School of Social Policy & Practice, who will determine if a review by the Committee on Academic Standing is warranted. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Dean or the Academic Standing Committee, the student may then appeal to the Provost of the University.
- When differences between a student and Advisor, Chairperson, or Committee are such as to require consideration by the Committee on Academic Standing, the student may select a student representative to present the student's case to the committee and to speak or

intervene on the student's behalf during the appeal process. The representative will be free to intervene on the student's behalf at any point in the appeal process. The representative will attend meetings of the committee only if explicitly requested to do so by the appealing student. It is the appealing student's responsibility to request the services of the representative. The representative will serve only in an advisory and advocacy role and will not have a vote on the final committee decision.

- For non-academic grievances, students should contact the Associate Dean of Student Affairs <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/person/jennifer-jones-clinkscales/>.
- The Director of the Ph.D. Program may not vote on a committee decision if the Director is a member of the appealing student's Dissertation Committee.

Additional Policies

FERPA

Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, in general, personally identifiable information can be disclosed to people outside the University only with the written consent of the student or alumnus involved. A statement setting forth specific University policy concerning: (1) disclosing information to people outside the University; (2) disclosing information to people within the University; (3) permitting a student to inspect and review the student's records; and (4) providing students with the opportunity to seek the collection of the student's records is available in the Graduate Academic Bulletin. Students in the School of Social Policy & Practice may review records in the student's own file only through the Records Office of the School of Social Policy & Practice. For more information and the complete Code of Academic Integrity, refer to the Graduate Academic Bulletin or the University's Privacy web site at <http://www.upenn.edu/privacy>.

Discrimination Policies and Violence Prevention

The University of Pennsylvania has strict rules on discrimination and violence prevention. The University values diversity and seeks talented students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, national or ethnic origin, citizenship status, age, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected class status in the administration of its admissions, financial aid, educational or athletic programs, or other University-administered programs or in its employment practices.

Below is a list of useful University websites outlining policies as well as available resources:

Sexual Harassment Policy

<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/sexual-misconduct-resource-offices-complaint-procedures/>

Racial Harassment Policy

<https://oaaeop.upenn.edu/about#:~:text=The%20University%20of%20Pennsylvania%20prohibits,any%20other%20legally%20protected%20class>

Office of Student Disabilities Services

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/>

Gender Neutral Restrooms

http://www.facilities.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/gender_map_5_3_lr.pdf

Penn Violence Prevention

<https://secure.www.upenn.edu/vpul/pvp/definitionsandpolicies>



Reporting Responsibilities for Sexual Violence
<https://secure.www.upenn.edu/vpul/pvp/staffandfaculty.php>

For a Complete List of University Policies and Regulations
<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/>

University Wide Policies

[Academic Calendar](#)

[Academic Rules for PhD Programs](#)

[Academic Rules for Research Master's Programs](#)

[PhD Student Leave of Absence Policy](#)

[Family Friendly Policies for PhD Students](#)

[Code of Academic Integrity](#)

[Code of Student Conduct](#)

[Guidelines for Addressing Academic Issues of Students with Disabilities](#)

[Guidelines for Student Protection in Sponsored Research Projects](#)

[Fairness of Authorship Credit in Collaborative Faculty-Student Publications for PhD, AM, and MS Students](#)

[Policy on Secular and Religious Holidays](#)

[Alcohol and Other Drug Policy](#)

[Evaluation and Certification of the English Fluency of Undergraduate Instructional Personnel](#)

[All other policies for Penn students](#)

Graduate Student Resources

[Graduate Student Center](#)

[New Student Resources](#)

[Resources for PhD Students](#)

[Resources for Students with Children](#)

[Academic Policies and Support](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[Engagement & Wellness](#)

[Funding & Finances](#)



Confidential Resources

Special Services, Division of Public Safety (DPS)
4040 Chestnut Street
(215) 898-6600

Penn Women's Center (PWC)
3643 Locust Walk
(215) 898-8611

Student Health Service (SHS)
3535 Market Street, Suite 100
(215) 746-3535

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)
3624 Market Street
(215) 898-7021

The Office of the Chaplain
240 Houston Hall
(215) 898-8456

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Center
3901 Spruce Street
(215) 898-5044

African American Resource Center
3643 Locust Walk
(215) 898-0104

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
(888) 321-4433

Office of Sexual Violence Prevention & Education
VPUL, 3611 Locust Walk
(215) 898-6081

Office of the Ombudsman
113 Duhring Wing
236 S. 34th Street
(215) 898-8261